The John P Greene Document

Expanded Biographical Edition and Historical Context

Jacob Wyrick v John P Greene and Jonathan Taylor
Hancock County Circuit Court No 78 October Term 1841

Prepared as a reusable biographical reference for nineteenth century Latter-day Saint and Hancock County research

Expanded narrative edition
September 2026

Highlights of the people behind the summons

John P Greene

- **1813** - Married Rhoda Young, Brigham Young's sister, long before either man joined the Church.
- **1830–1832** - A Book of Mormon left by Samuel H. Smith reached his household; Rhoda believed first, and John was baptized in 1832.
- **1839** - Published an early account of the Missouri expulsion and worked to aid displaced Saints.
- **1844** - As Nauvoo marshal, carried out the order against the Expositor press; supported the Twelve after the martyrdom and died on 10 September.

Jonathan Taylor

- **1834** - Welcomed Joseph Smith and his traveling companions into his Ohio home.
- **1835** - Visited Joseph Smith in Kirtland and was shown the Egyptian records.
- **Nauvoo years** - Served as a school trustee; his household reportedly sheltered a widow and five children.
- **1845–1846** - Received his Nauvoo Temple endowment; a later tax record places him alive in 1864.

Jacob Wyrick

- **1839** - A Latter-day Saint refugee who claimed $3,300 in losses connected with the Missouri expulsion.
- **1841** - Sued Greene and Taylor over an alleged promise or debt; the surviving summons leaves the underlying transaction unknown.
- **Later life** - Probably the Jacob Wirick who left the Church and became a Lee County tavern owner; that identification remains provisional.

Samuel Otho Williams

- **1841** - Issued the summons as Hancock County court clerk; also known as S. Otho or S. O. Williams.
- **1844** - Served as a Carthage Greys lieutenant; his rank alone does not establish a role in the murders.
- **10 July 1844** - Wrote a letter denying participation in the conspiracy after Joseph and Hyrum Smith's deaths.
- **28 November 1844** - Died only five months after the martyrdom.

Purpose and principal conclusions

A routine 1841 summons opens onto an unusually rich group of lives. Jacob Wyrick sued John Portineus Greene and Jonathan Taylor for an unidentified promise or debt; Samuel Otho Williams issued the process, Sheriff William D. Abernathy received it, and Deputy Michael Barnes Jr. served both defendants. The surviving paper does not reveal the bargain behind the action, but it joins people whose later lives touched missionary expansion, refugee advocacy, Nauvoo government, temple worship, county development, militia service, and the violence of 1844. This edition therefore treats the summons as a doorway into biography while carefully separating the proved lawsuit from the larger histories of its participants.

The central life is Greene's. He was a Methodist reform preacher who initially failed to recognize the importance of the Book of Mormon placed in his household, while his wife Rhoda read it and believed. That apparently modest encounter became one of the first enduring fruits of Samuel H. Smith's discouraging 1830 mission and helped carry the book into the Young and Kimball family circle. Greene eventually followed Rhoda into the new faith and gave the remainder of his life to preaching, defending displaced Saints, preserving testimony of the Missouri expulsion, and serving Nauvoo. Jonathan Taylor's quieter record supplies a complementary story: hospitality, neighborhood responsibility, family loss, temple worship, and a life that mattered locally even though it left only scattered documentary traces.

The surviving summons

Field	Reading or conclusion
Court	Hancock County Circuit Court, Illinois
Case	Jacob Wyrick or Wirick v John P Greene and Jonathan Taylor
Docket	No 78, October Term 1841
Action	Assumpsit, described as trespass on the case on promises
Claimed damages	$300
Issued	28 May 1841 at Carthage
Clerk	Samuel Otho Williams
Service	Personal service on both defendants, 14 June 1841
Sheriff	William Abernathy
Serving deputy	M Barnes, D S, identified with high probability as Michael Barnes Jr
Fees	$3.37 1/2, apparently including 36 miles travel

Assumpsit was the ordinary common-law vehicle for enforcing an express or implied promise. The $300 figure was the damages demanded in pleading and need not equal the principal amount of any note or account. Without a declaration, plea, account, note, judgment, or minute-book entry, the transaction cannot responsibly be reconstructed. The fact that Greene and Taylor were sued together may indicate a joint note, partnership account, guaranty, purchase, or other shared undertaking, but each possibility remains conjectural.

John Portineus Greene

3 September 1793 to 10 September 1844

The preacher who almost missed the book

John Portineus Greene's life turns on an irony. When Samuel H. Smith carried the newly printed Book of Mormon into the Greene household in 1830, John was already a preacher and was preparing to travel. He saw a book that might be circulated; Rhoda Young Greene saw a religious claim that demanded attention. Her willingness to read when her husband hesitated helped transform a discouraging missionary journey into a conversion chain that eventually included some of the most influential leaders of the early Church.

Greene did not remain the hesitant husband in that story. Once convinced and baptized, he used the very skills formed in Methodist reform - itinerant preaching, public argument, printing, fundraising, and the organization of scattered congregations - in sustained Latter-day Saint service. His later record included spiritual enthusiasm in Kirtland, danger at Crooked River, documentary advocacy after Missouri, and responsibility in Nauvoo. The same energy that made him useful also drew him into controversial decisions, especially his execution of the city order against the Nauvoo Expositor in June 1844.

Identity and family

John Portineus Greene was born at Herkimer, New York, on 3 September 1793, the son of John Coddington Greene and Anna Chapman. The middle name appears in variant spellings, including Portenus and Portineus. Greene married Rhoda Young on 11 February 1813. Rhoda was a daughter of John Young and Abigail Nabby Howe and a sister of Brigham Young, Phinehas Howe Young, Joseph Young, Lorenzo Dow Young, and other members of a family that became central to early Latter-day Saint leadership.

The marriage made Greene Brigham Young's brother-in-law years before either man encountered the restored Church. It also placed Greene inside a dense religious network that included Heber Chase Kimball, whose wife Vilate Murray was associated closely with the Young circle. Greene's significance to the conversions of Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball was therefore relational as well as missionary: books, testimony, and itinerant preaching moved through households already connected by blood, marriage, neighborhood, craft, and friendship.

Rhoda died in Nauvoo in January 1841. Greene married Mary Eliza Nelson on 6 December 1841 under a Hancock County license issued the previous day; the certificate was dated 9 December and recorded 30 December. Their daughter Mary Emma Greene was born 8 January 1843. Mary Eliza later became connected to Brigham Young's household through Nauvoo Temple ordinances, but that later relationship must be described by its exact ritual terms rather than assumed to be an ordinary nineteenth-century marriage.

Early movements and Methodist ministry

Greene and Rhoda lived through a sequence of New York communities that mirrors the mobility of artisan and preaching families in the early republic. Their reported residences included Aurelius by 1814, Brownsville in Ontario County by 1819, Watertown in Jefferson County by 1821, Mentz in Cayuga County by 1826, Conesus by 1829, and the Mendon area by the early 1830s. Greene supported his family through farming and shoemaking and also worked as a printer and publisher. His most consequential occupation, however, was religious.

Greene first belonged to the Methodist Episcopal tradition and then participated in Methodist reform. He helped organize a Methodist Protestant congregation in 1828 and served as an itinerant preacher. This

background explains both his initial reserve toward the Book of Mormon and his later effectiveness as a Latter-day Saint missionary. He already understood circuit travel, public preaching, religious controversy, print, subscription selling, and the organization of scattered believers.

Samuel Smith and the Book of Mormon conversion network

Samuel Harrison Smith, younger brother of Joseph Smith, began one of the Church's earliest missionary journeys in 1830 carrying copies of the newly printed Book of Mormon. Samuel later remembered the mission as discouraging because he sold or placed few books and saw no immediate harvest. The Greene and Young households demonstrate why that judgment was premature.

Accounts of the episode differ in chronology and detail, but two books appear to have entered the extended family network. Samuel left one with John and Rhoda Greene while John was preparing for a preaching circuit, asking him to seek subscribers or purchasers. A second copy reached Phinehas Howe Young. John initially showed little interest, but Rhoda read and believed. When Samuel returned and learned that no copies had been sold, he reportedly felt impressed to leave or give the book to the household and prayed with Rhoda. Phinehas read another copy intending to test or refute it, became persuaded of its claims, and circulated it among the Young family and their associates.

The conversion was a process rather than a single encounter. Samuel Smith introduced the text; Rhoda Greene and Phinehas Young became early readers and transmitters; later missionaries supplied preaching and baptism; and the Young-Kimball circle examined the new movement over many months. Greene was baptized by Eleazer Miller in April 1832 at Mendon. Brigham Young was baptized on 15 April 1832, and Heber C. Kimball entered the Church in the same regional awakening.

Greene's role must be stated with precision. Samuel's first mission produced no immediate baptisms, and John and Rhoda should not be described as converts baptized during the 1830 journey. They were, however, among its first enduring fruits. Samuel introduced the book; Rhoda read and believed; Phinehas Young examined another copy and circulated it; later missionaries taught and baptized members of the connected households. John was baptized by Eleazer Miller in April 1832, Brigham Young on 15 April 1832, and Heber C. Kimball in the same regional awakening. It is too simple to say that Greene alone converted Brigham or personally handed him the decisive copy, but it is equally misleading to omit the Greene household from the chain. The exact month of Samuel's visit remains disputed between spring and a period after the June 1830 conference.

Rhoda Young Greene as a religious actor

Rhoda deserves to stand in this history as more than Brigham Young's sister or John Greene's wife. The surviving narratives consistently make her the more receptive reader in the Greene home. Her response gave Samuel Smith evidence that the book had not been left in vain, and her position within the Young family gave belief a path into an extended network already joined by affection, kinship, work, and religious searching.

Her influence was quiet rather than institutional. She left no great officeholding record and no extensive published defense of her own experience. Yet the household act of taking a neglected book seriously had consequences far beyond the home. Rhoda's death in Nauvoo in January 1841 removed Greene's companion of nearly twenty-eight years just months before the Wyrick summons was issued. His legal and civic life in 1841 therefore unfolded amid bereavement and the reordering of a large family, although no evidence makes that loss the cause of the suit.

Mary Eliza Nelson and the second Nauvoo household

Greene married Mary Eliza Nelson on 6 December 1841. Their daughter Mary Emma was born in January 1843. Mary Eliza entered a household defined by missionary absences, public duty, unresolved finances, and memories of Rhoda. During Greene's mortal illness in September 1844, sealing ordinances reportedly connected him with both deceased Rhoda and living Mary Eliza. On 31 January 1846 Mary Eliza was sealed to Greene for eternity and to Brigham Young for time. These arrangements should be described in their recorded ritual language rather than flattened into modern assumptions about marriage.

Missionary work and Church leadership

Greene began preaching almost immediately after baptism. He helped organize a branch at Warsaw in Genesee County, New York, and moved with his family to Kirtland in October 1832. In the spring of 1833 he was appointed to preside over the branch at Parkman. He was ordained a high priest by early 1834 and received a printed ministerial license dated 25 February 1834, signed or issued through Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and Sidney Rigdon. The license belongs among the earliest surviving printed Church credentials.

Date	Mission or assignment	Evidence and significance
May 1832	Ohio mission	Missionary service began within weeks of baptism.
20 Feb 1834	Strongsville, Ohio, with Sidney Rigdon	Institutional chronology records the call; details are sparse.
Spring 1834	Western New York and Canada	Sought men and funds in connection with relief of Zion.
7 May 1834	Mount Pleasant, Upper Canada	Baptized converts and helped develop a branch reported at forty-three members.
May 1835	Mission to Indigenous peoples	Assigned with Brigham Young and Amos Orton to preach to the remnants of Joseph; a Book of Mormon was left with Seneca people.
Jul-Aug 1835	Eastern states	Reported from Huntington, Connecticut, that he had traveled, preached, and baptized.
1836-1838	New York and Upper Canada	Repeated missions, including Toronto associations; some release dates are unknown.
6 May 1839-20 Oct 1843	Eastern States Mission president	Presided over eastern branches, advocated for Missouri refugees, raised funds, and supported gathering.

In Kirtland, Greene sat on the high council on 13 January 1836 and participated in efforts to finance the Kirtland Temple. He held stock in the Kirtland Safety Society, a fact that placed him within the community's ambitious and ultimately disastrous financial experiment. His continued missionary service during the Kirtland crisis indicates that his commitment survived the collapse that alienated many early leaders.

Kirtland Temple and spiritual experience

Greene's Kirtland record includes fundraising and institutional leadership rather than a presently documented craft assignment on the building. At the 1832 visit of Brigham Young, Joseph Young, and

Heber C. Kimball to Kirtland, Greene and Brigham Young spoke in tongues in Joseph Smith's presence. Joseph's history identifies this as the first occasion on which he heard the gift among the brethren and reports that others, including Joseph, also participated. This episode belongs in Greene's biography as a firsthand intersection between the Mendon converts and the developing charismatic worship of Kirtland.

Missouri and the Battle of Crooked River

Greene moved into the Far West, Missouri, community in 1838 and served in the Caldwell County Mormon militia. On 25 October 1838 he joined the expedition to Crooked River. The force, approximately sixty men under David W. Patten, sought to free three Latter-day Saint prisoners held by Captain Samuel Bogart's Ray County militia. The expedition encountered a militia picket before dawn and a brief, deadly battle followed.

Greene later provided a published account. He stated that the picket fired without warning and that one of the Mormon prisoners was exposed between the opposing lines. He also described the later discovery and mutilation of Gideon Carter's body. These statements make Greene a firsthand witness to an episode that helped trigger Governor Lilburn W. Boggs's extermination order and the surrender of Far West.

Whether Greene commanded one of Patten's detachments is disputed. Parley P. Pratt and Charles C. Rich named Patten, Rich, and James Durphee in the command arrangement; Lorenzo Young later substituted Greene for Durphee. Greene may have exercised subordinate leadership, but a definite detachment command should not be asserted without qualification. No reliable evidence located in this research establishes that Greene was a Danite. Membership in the Caldwell militia and participation at Crooked River are not proof of Danite affiliation.

Missouri redress and publication

After the Missouri expulsion, Greene reached Quincy, Illinois, and became an important collector and publicizer of refugee testimony. On 6 May 1839 Joseph Smith authorized him to preside over the Church in New York and surrounding regions and to collect assistance. The authorization praised his fidelity in temporal affairs. In Cincinnati, Greene published Facts Relative to the Expulsion of the Mormons or Latter Day Saints from the State of Missouri under the Extermination Order. The pamphlet assembled affidavits and official evidence and was among the earliest substantial histories of the Missouri persecution produced by a Church member.

The pamphlet should be read as both advocacy and documentary preservation. Greene was partisan, but he reproduced claims and official texts that might otherwise have disappeared. A family tradition reports an edition of approximately five thousand copies; that figure should remain attributed to family history unless printing records are found.

Nauvoo civic responsibility and family transition

Greene settled in Nauvoo by 1840. He served on the city council from 1841 to 1843 and participated in the practical work of municipal government. The death of Rhoda in January 1841 and his marriage to Mary Eliza Nelson in December framed the year of the Wyrick lawsuit. Nothing presently proves that the marriage, household transition, or Missouri claims caused the suit.

His civic record included a November 1841 measure concerning firearms and public order, assessment and collection duties in the Fourth Ward, and appointment as city marshal in December 1843. He joined the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge and appears on a Nauvoo Legion rank roll about 1842. On 26 March 1844 he became a member of the Council of Fifty. These overlapping roles placed him near the center of Joseph Smith's final civic, political, and religious administration.

Nauvoo Temple support and ordinances

Greene's temple contribution is best documented as fundraising and organization. During the 1842-1843 eastern mission, Hyrum Smith instructed departing elders to seek donations for the Nauvoo Temple and subscriptions for the Nauvoo House. At an October 1842 conference at Olive Green, Ohio, Greene urged the Saints to advance both buildings through gathering, tithing, and consecration. In March 1843

he asked Joseph Smith how the two houses were progressing and described his own interest as building up the work. A specific ledger entry for Greene's personal construction labor has not been located.

On 11 May 1844 Greene received the early Nauvoo endowment and entered the circle usually called the Anointed Quorum. No secure record has been found that he received a second anointing during life. During the first week of September 1844, while he was mortally ill, Brigham Young reportedly administered sealing ordinances connecting him with deceased Rhoda Young and living Mary Eliza Nelson. Reconstructed sources differ between 2 and 7 September, so the exact date remains provisional. On 31 January 1846 Mary Eliza was sealed to Greene for eternity and to Brigham Young for time. Greene had died before the completed Nauvoo Temple endowment period of December 1845 to February 1846.

No securely identified patriarchal blessing for Greene has been located. This means only that the online indexes and cited collections consulted here did not reveal one; it does not prove that he never received a blessing.

The Nauvoo Expositor and the martyrdom crisis

As city marshal, Greene received the Nauvoo City Council's 10 June 1844 order declaring the Nauvoo Expositor a nuisance and directing its abatement. He did not merely stand near the event: he supervised the posse that entered the office, removed the press and type, and destroyed or scattered the equipment. John Lytle later remembered opening the door with a sledgehammer. Greene acted under a municipal order rather than as a private vandal, but obedience to local authority did not settle the constitutional and political question. The action was a grave miscalculation. It intensified opposition, produced riot charges, and became a direct step in the chain leading to Joseph and Hyrum Smith's confinement and murders at Carthage.

On 17 June Greene received a further mayoral order connected with preserving the peace. On 20 and 21 June he executed affidavits describing threats and military preparations against Nauvoo. These are valuable firsthand documents from the immediate crisis. Greene was not one of the prisoners in Carthage Jail when Joseph and Hyrum were killed on 27 June. His importance lies in his official actions, sworn observations, and place inside the Nauvoo response, not in an invented eyewitness account of the shooting.

Succession crisis and death

Greene supported the leadership of Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve during the August 1844 succession crisis. He participated in meetings after the Twelve returned and was present in the leadership's prayer and consultation circle on 11 August. Strangite writers later claimed that Greene endorsed James J. Strang and was poisoned for revealing Strang's appointment. No persuasive contemporary evidence located here substantiates either the endorsement or poisoning allegation. Greene's recorded conduct and intimate family relationship with Brigham Young point toward support for the Twelve.

Greene died at Nauvoo on 10 September 1844, aged fifty-one. His son Evan Melbourne Greene prepared a biographical sketch in 1857. That manuscript is indispensable because it preserves family knowledge, but it was written thirteen years after the death and should be distinguished from John's own diary, letters, affidavits, licenses, and published pamphlet.

Assessment

Greene's historical importance rests on linkage. He connected Methodist reform to the Restoration, Samuel Smith's first mission to the Young and Kimball conversions, Kirtland charisma to missionary expansion, Crooked River to the documentary campaign for Missouri redress, and Nauvoo's temple project to its civic government. His 1841 appearance as a defendant in a routine assumpsit action also restores an ordinary dimension often missing from leadership biography: Greene lived amid debts, contracts, remarriage, property, travel, and family obligations as well as extraordinary religious events.

Jonathan Taylor

6 June 1793 to after 30 April 1864

The host whose life survives in fragments

Jonathan Taylor's surviving record lacks the abundance of Greene's papers, but it reveals a recognizable life. He appears first as a Connecticut-born settler building a household in northern Ohio, then as a man willing to receive Joseph Smith and traveling companions beneath his roof, later as a Nauvoo property holder and school trustee, and finally as a temple participant whose trail fades in post-Nauvoo Illinois. His importance lies less in high office than in the domestic and neighborhood labor by which religious communities survived.

Taylor's obscurity should not be mistaken for insignificance. Homes such as his gave missionaries rest and believers a place to gather; trustees made schools function; petitioners opened streets; households absorbed widows and children; and ordinary members carried communities through death, migration, and litigation. Taylor's biography is therefore a study in consequential faithfulness preserved only in scattered records.

Identity and family

Jonathan Taylor was born 6 June 1793 at Burlington, Hartford County, Connecticut. The surviving biographical indexes identify his mother as Eliza Taylor but have not supplied a securely documented father. He must not be confused with Apostle John Taylor, the British-born editor and later Church president.

Taylor married Lydia Azulah Robinson in Medina County, Ohio. Several derivative profiles give 12 June 1821, but the cited image of the original Medina County marriage register records 12 June 1828. The original record controls. Lydia died at Nauvoo about 23 October 1843; her death was reported in the Nauvoo Neighbor of 25 October. Taylor married Martha Pierce at Nauvoo on 22 January 1846.

Ohio residence and conversion

On 19 April 1834 Joseph Smith and his companions reached Taylor's home during a journey through northeastern Ohio. Joseph's history records that the travelers were received kindly and then withdrew into the woods for united prayer and supplication for the Church. The scene gives Taylor's biography its clearest human image: his house became a temporary refuge, while the nearby woods became a place of collective prayer. Hospitality to traveling leaders establishes his association with the movement before his surviving license, although the date and officiator of his baptism remain unknown.

On 20 December 1835 Taylor and Ambrose Palmer visited Joseph Smith in Kirtland. Joseph showed them the Egyptian records or sacred record then in his possession and recorded their joy and satisfaction. Taylor received a Church license on 23 May 1836. The license establishes recognized standing and authority, although the surviving description does not specify a long missionary itinerary comparable to Greene's.

Nauvoo residence and neighborhood service

Taylor acquired or occupied Nauvoo property by 1841-1842 and lived in the Third Ward. On 10 February 1842 he joined a petition asking the city to open a street between the properties of Taylor and Bentley from Parley Street to Lumber Street. The petition helps locate him within the city's developing street grid and identifies his immediate property neighborhood.

Taylor served as a school trustee with Andrew Moore and Charles C. Rich. In 1843 his household reportedly sheltered Widow Warner and her five children. Those details are modest but revealing. They show a man whose religion took a domestic and civic form: maintaining a household large enough to

assist a bereaved family, helping administer local education, and petitioning for a workable street grid. They place him within Charles C. Rich's civic orbit without proving a military or business partnership.

The 1841 Wyrick suit

Taylor and Greene were jointly summoned to answer Jacob Wyrick's complaint in assumpsit. Both were personally served on 14 June 1841. No online declaration, plea, judgment, or execution has been found. Taylor's exact connection to Greene outside the suit is likewise unknown. Both were Church members with Ohio and Nauvoo associations, but shared religion alone does not explain joint contractual liability.

Temple ordinances and later life

Taylor received an endowment in the Nauvoo Temple during the ordinance season extending from 10 December 1845 to 8 February 1846. His entry is cited to page 73 of the Nauvoo Temple Endowment Register. Lisle G. Brown's Nauvoo Sealings Adoptions and Anointings cites Taylor on page 308, but searchable metadata does not reveal whether that entry records a sealing, adoption, anointing, spouse, or proxy relationship. The underlying images should be examined before adding specifics.

Taylor executed or received a Hancock County deed recorded 14 May 1846 at page 438, evidence that his Illinois affairs continued as the main body of Saints began leaving Nauvoo. A federal internal-revenue assessment dated 1 May 1864 proves that he remained alive after 30 April 1864, but the available index does not expose the district, occupation, or taxable activity. No secure death record, western migration record, Missouri militia service, Nauvoo Legion enrollment, firsthand martyrdom account, or indexed patriarchal blessing has been located. The honest ending to his life is therefore not a fabricated migration or death place, but a documented disappearance from the presently accessible record.

Assessment

Taylor's biography remains fragmentary but coherent. He was a Connecticut-born settler in northern Ohio, an early supporter who hosted Joseph Smith, a licensed Church member, a Nauvoo property holder and school trustee, a participant in temple ordinances, and an Illinois resident into the Civil War era. The evidence does not presently support identifying him as a major Church officer or militia figure. His enduring research importance comes from the social history visible in his house, neighborhood, school service, assistance to a widow's family, and joint appearance with Greene in the 1841 suit.

Jacob Wyrick

Plaintiff and Missouri refugee

Jacob Wyrick, also rendered Wirick and Werick, was a Latter-day Saint associated with Ohio, Missouri, Nauvoo, and later Lee County, Illinois. On 11 May 1839 at Quincy he made a redress affidavit before C. M. Woods claiming losses totaling $3,300: $150 for moving into Missouri, $3,000 in land and other property, and $150 for leaving and related loss. The claim confirms his presence in the Missouri refugee community and the scale of the economic injury he alleged.

A later Lee County history describes a Jacob Wirick who converted in Ohio, followed the Church to Missouri and Nauvoo, lost property, left the Church, and moved north about 1842 or 1843. He reportedly purchased William Rogers's tavern in Wyoming Township and later prospered. The sequence is compressed and retrospective but is probably the same man. The identification should remain qualified until vital and land records explicitly bridge the two settings.

Wyrick's family network includes a daughter identified as Camilla or Cornelia Wirick, who married Justin Jared Merrill on 28 June 1840. A George Wyrick married Juliette Atwood on 8 December 1842, but George's relationship to Jacob has not been proved. Justin Merrill appears in Nauvoo Temple records; Camilla's corresponding participation requires inspection of the original page.

No militia position, patriarchal blessing, Nauvoo Temple ordinance, or firsthand martyrdom account has been securely identified for Jacob. His lawsuit against Greene and Taylor may have arisen within the refugee and Church economic network, but there is no evidence that the action concerned Missouri

redress funds. His later departure from the Church, if the Lee County identification is correct, should be described without assuming hostility or anti-Mormon activism.

Michael Barnes Jr

Deputy sheriff, constable, and Carthage Grey officer

The reverse of the summons bears the return of Sheriff William Abernathy by “M. Barnes D. S.” Contemporary Hancock County evidence makes Michael Barnes Jr. the strongest identification. Barnes personally served Greene and Taylor on 14 June 1841 and calculated the sheriff’s fees and travel.

By June 1844 Barnes was a lieutenant in the Carthage Greys under Captain Robert F. Smith, alongside lieutenants Franklin A. Worrell and Samuel O. Williams. The Backenstos list gives the officers and then separately names the jail guard. Barnes’s officer status therefore does not by itself prove that he stood among the eight guards immediately outside Carthage Jail or participated in the attack. No responsible biography should call him a shooter without additional evidence.

On 13 August 1844 Barnes executed an affidavit before Robert F. Smith describing statements by Joseph H. Jackson. According to Barnes, Jackson planned to enter Nauvoo, expose Joseph Smith, blamed Smith for an attempt on his life, and sought revenge. The affidavit was later published with Jackson material and must be read in the intensely partisan aftermath of the murders.

Barnes continued as a Carthage constable. He was subpoenaed as a prosecution witness on 22 May 1845 in State of Illinois v Levi Williams and others, the martyrdom prosecution. In September 1845 he and an unnamed brother entered Nauvoo with treason writs against Church leaders. James D. Barnes appears on the Carthage Grey roll and is a plausible candidate for that brother, but the relationship has not been proved. Thomas L. Barnes, the Carthage coroner who wrote important recollections in 1897, and Alexander W. Barnes may belong to the same local cluster; their exact kinship awaits census, probate, or family Bible evidence.

Barnes’s religious affiliation, parents, spouse, children, dates of birth and death, landholdings, and later migration remain unresolved online. He should presently be classified as a Carthage civil officer and militia lieutenant whose documented acts intersected both routine legal administration and the post-martyrdom conflict.

Samuel Otho Williams

Court clerk and Carthage militia officer, about 1819 to 28 November 1844

A young officer of the courthouse

Samuel Otho Williams - also written S. Otho or S. O. Williams - signed the Wyrick summons as clerk of the Hancock County Circuit Court. He was a son of Wesley Williams and worked in the clerk’s office by at least 1839, first as deputy and later as clerk pro tempore. His signature appears on the ordinary machinery of litigation: summonses, certifications, witness-attendance papers, and costs. Before the violence of 1844 defined Carthage in historical memory, Williams’s daily world was the disciplined work of making legal process valid.

The middle name should be rendered Otho, not Ortho. He must also be distinguished from Samuel Arthur Williams, another Hancock County legal officer. That distinction matters because the careers, documents, and later historical associations of the two men are not interchangeable.

Carthage militia and the crisis of 1844

By June 1844 Williams was a second lieutenant in the Carthage militia or Carthage Greys environment under Captain Robert F. Smith. His office placed him inside a military establishment in which hostility toward the Latter-day Saints was widespread. It establishes proximity, responsibility, and access to information. It does not by itself prove that Williams joined the mob at the jail, fired a weapon, or participated in a murder conspiracy.

Williams's most revealing personal evidence is a letter of 10 July 1844, written less than two weeks after the killings. A modern documentary edition describes him as a non-Mormon who disliked the Saints but did not regard himself as an anti-Mormon and who denied participation in the conspiracy. The letter matters because it preserves his attempt to define his own position at the moment when rumor and collective blame were hardening around Carthage. His claim must be evaluated against other evidence, but it should not be replaced by assumption.

Family death and assessment

Later biographical material identifies his wife as Helen Baldwin Williams. Williams died on 28 November 1844, only five months after Joseph and Hyrum Smith. His birth details, complete parentage, children, landholdings, probate record, and cause of death still require primary documentation.

Williams's short life tells a sobering story of institutional continuity and rupture. In 1841 he issued process in an ordinary debt action; in 1844 he stood within the militia world surrounding an extraordinary political murder. His biography should neither condemn him merely by association nor sanitize the hostility of the institution in which he served. The responsible conclusion is that his office and letter make him an important contemporary witness, while personal participation in the jail attack remains unproved.

William Abernathy

Hancock County sheriff town founder and development promoter

From Georgia to the founding of Augusta

William D. Abernathy was an early settler of southern Hancock County, a public officer, and one of the founders of Augusta. He and his brother-in-law Joel Catlin came to the area in 1832 from Augusta, Georgia, and transferred the familiar name to the developing Illinois settlement. When a post office was established in March 1834, Abernathy became its first postmaster. Catlin, Abernathy, and their associates later surveyed and formally laid out the village.

The naming of Augusta captures the constructive side of Abernathy's life. He was not merely an officer appearing on court papers; he helped turn a frontier settlement into a recognized community with a post office, surveyed lots, roads, and commercial expectations. His later career repeatedly joined public authority to private development.

Sheriff amid growth debt and faction

Abernathy served as Hancock County sheriff while the county expanded rapidly and legal process became entangled with land speculation, debt collection, political division, and the growth of Nauvoo. In the Wyrick action the summons went to him in his official capacity, and Deputy Michael Barnes Jr. performed the actual service. In a separate 1841 suit in which Abernathy himself was the defendant, the coroner properly handled process that the sheriff could not execute against himself.

A sheriff served writs, took property under process, conducted sales, summoned juries, made arrests, and returned official acts to the court. Those duties required judgment and could generate personal liability when a plaintiff alleged wrongful entry, seizure, levy, or detention. Nothing in the Wyrick summons suggests misconduct by Abernathy; here his signature and office represent routine administration.

Development networks and later public service

Abernathy belonged to Hancock County's development network. The Illinois legislature named him an incorporator of the Des Moines Rapids Railroad Company alongside Calvin A. Warren, Daniel S. Witter, Joel Catlin, Isaac N. Morris, Isaac Galland, Mark Aldrich, former governor Joseph Duncan, and others. In 1843 he also appeared as a defendant in a school-trustee foreclosure involving the Wilcox estate. His precise property or surety interest remains unknown, but the records place him where public improvements, school finance, land, and private obligation overlapped.

In May 1845 Abernathy and Thomas Owen executed venire facias writs used to summon jurors for the trial of men accused of conspiring to murder Joseph and Hyrum Smith. That was an important procedural duty in one of the county's most charged trials. It does not establish sympathy with the prosecution or defense; it shows an officer continuing to make the judicial system function amid deep factional distrust.

Assessment

No dependable evidence identifies Abernathy as a Latter-day Saint, Nauvoo Legion officer, temple participant, anti-Mormon committee member, or Freemason. His significance is civic rather than sectarian. He helped found a town, carried public authority as postmaster and sheriff, participated in ambitious development schemes, and remained part of the county's legal machinery through the aftermath of the Smith murders. His choices illustrate both the usefulness and the risks of a frontier world in which the same men acted as officials, investors, creditors, neighbors, and litigants.

George Ogden Bachman

Attorney in the Hancock County and Nauvoo legal network

Friendship declaration and the David and Jonathan covenant

George Ogden Bachman, born about 1802 and living after March 1857, practiced law in Springfield and Hancock County during the 1840s. His surviving papers place him repeatedly in Joseph Smith and Nauvoo related litigation, but the most personal evidence of their relationship is Bachman's own letter of 21 January 1843.

Writing to Joseph Smith as a respected friend, Bachman enclosed a warning he had sent to Missouri militia general Moses Wilson concerning renewed extradition efforts. He asked that the letter be retained as evidence of his esteem and invoked the biblical covenant of David and Jonathan. In that story Jonathan used arrows to warn David that Saul intended him harm. Bachman adapted the image to his own intervention and assured Smith, “You may rely on the Secrecy and assistance of the writer and command his services at all times both professional and personal.”

The allusion deserves a central place in Bachman’s biography. It shows that he chose the language of covenant loyalty, confidential warning, and personal as well as professional service. Joseph Smith’s journal adds a revealing sequel. On 4 April 1843 Smith spent five hours preaching to a small Carthage group that included Bachman, Chauncey Robison, and members of the Backenstos family; the entry records Bachman’s near-persuasion in the language of Acts. This supports religious interest and personal access, but it does not by itself establish baptism or formal Church membership.

Professional complexity and the 1844 to 1845 crisis

Bachman’s legal practice nevertheless crossed factional lines. Joseph Smith, acting as mayor, authorized payment to Bachman and Onias Skinner in October 1843 for services to the City of Nauvoo. On 9 April 1844, however, Bachman, Skinner, and Chauncey L. Higbee appeared for Orsamus F. Bostwick in a trespass action against Smith and city marshal John P. Greene. In May 1844 Bachman, Skinner, and Almon W. Babbitt represented Smith in Francis M. Higbee’s defamation action. The rapid change of sides is strong evidence that a retained attorney’s appearance cannot safely be treated as proof of political allegiance.

At the May 1845 trial of men accused of murdering Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Bachman testified that he had seen defendants Levi Williams and Mark Aldrich before the jail firing. Aldrich had eaten at Hamilton’s tavern shortly before the attack, and Bachman saw Williams while Bachman’s company, commanded by Thatcher, marched toward the jail. He did not place Thomas Sharp, William Grover, or Jacob Davis with them and reported no incriminating statement by Aldrich or Williams. The testimony establishes Bachman’s proximity to the military movement and his observations; it does not establish that he joined the murder conspiracy.

Assessment: the David and Jonathan passage is affirmative evidence of Bachman’s declared friendship and willingness to protect Joseph Smith. It should be remembered alongside, not erased by, his professional appearances for clients on opposing sides. Neither category alone settles Bachman’s later political loyalties or the separate accusations concerning the Smith and Edmund Durfee murders, which require independent documentary proof.

Family and institutional network

Connection	Nature	Historical consequence
John P Greene to Rhoda Young	Marriage, 1813	Placed Greene inside the Young family before conversion.
Rhoda to Brigham, Phinehas, Joseph, and Lorenzo Young	Sibling relationship	Created the household network through which books and testimony circulated.
Greene to Heber C Kimball	Kin-associated friendship and religious network	Linked Methodist seekers and later senior Church leadership.
Greene to Mary Eliza Nelson	Civil marriage, 1841; sealing in 1844 reported	Created Greene’s second Nauvoo household and daughter Mary Emma.
Mary Eliza to Brigham Young	Time-only sealing, 31 Jan 1846	Connected Greene’s widow to Young while preserving her eternity sealing to Greene.

Connection	Nature	Historical consequence
Jonathan Taylor to Lydia A Robinson	Marriage, 12 Jun 1828	Anchored Taylor in Medina County, Ohio.
Jonathan Taylor to Martha Pierce	Marriage, 22 Jan 1846	Places Taylor in Nauvoo immediately before the exodus period.
Jacob Wyrick to Camilla or Cornelia	Parent-child relationship reported	Connects Wyrick to Justin Jared Merrill and the broader Nauvoo network.
Williams and Barnes	Fellow Carthage Grey lieutenants	Connects the 1841 court process to the 1844 militia crisis.
Barnes cluster	Possible sibling or extended kin ties	Remains unproved; requires probate and census reconstruction.

Militia and public service findings

Person	Missouri affiliation	Illinois affiliation	Confidence
John P Greene	Caldwell County Mormon militia; Crooked River participant	Nauvoo Legion rank roll about 1842; city marshal	High, except disputed Crooked River detachment command
Jonathan Taylor	None located	No Nauvoo Legion record located	No affiliation should be inferred
Jacob Wyrick	No position located	None located	Missouri residence does not establish service
Michael Barnes Jr	None located	Lieutenant, Carthage Greys	High for rank; jail-guard presence not proved
Samuel Otho Williams	None located	Lieutenant, Carthage Greys	High for rank; personal role in attack not proved
William Abernathy	None located	Sheriff; no militia company located	Civil office established

Research cautions and unresolved questions

- The underlying promise in Wyrick v Greene and Taylor is unknown. No case theory should be presented as fact without additional pleadings or minute-book entries.
- Greene’s exact deathbed sealing date remains disputed between 2 and 7 September 1844.
- No securely indexed patriarchal blessing has been located for Greene, Taylor, or Wyrick. Absence from an online search is not proof that no blessing existed.
- Jonathan Taylor’s endowment is established, but page images are needed for the exact date and any associated sealing, adoption, or anointing.
- Taylor’s 1864 tax entry proves survival but requires the original image to identify place and taxable activity.
- Michael Barnes Jr’s relationship to James D, Thomas L, Alexander W, and the unnamed Barnes brother is not established.
- Carthage Grey membership, kinship, or political opposition does not prove participation in murder or conspiracy.
- Greene’s participation at Crooked River does not establish Danite membership.

- Later family biographies and reminiscences preserve unique evidence but must be labeled separately from contemporary diaries, letters, affidavits, and legal records.

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Biographical record status

This expanded edition presents the participants as people rather than lists of offices. Greene's life is now organized around the transformation of a hesitant Methodist preacher and the decisive reading undertaken by Rhoda, followed by mission, persecution, advocacy, civic responsibility, and a consequential error in the Expositor crisis. Taylor's record remains incomplete, but his hospitality, neighborhood service, bereavement, temple worship, and persistence in Illinois form a coherent life. The Williams and Abernathy sketches now incorporate the stronger biographies developed elsewhere in the Hancock County project. Remaining gaps are stated openly so that future census, probate, land, militia, newspaper, and manuscript discoveries can enlarge the story without distorting what is presently known.