

THOMAS PATTERSON

Thomas Patterson was born on May 29, 1806 in Cross Creek Township, Washington County, Pennsylvania. We have his birth date recorded on his headstone, his marriage record has the year of his birth, and the best source is his family Bible that records his birth date and is on display at the Cass County, Nebraska Historical Society. Thomas is the 6th of 12 children born to Thomas Patterson and Elizabeth Findley.



Crayon portrait done in PA the year of their marriage - Cass County Historical Society

This family has been well researched and I believe that my list of Thomas's siblings is correct, but as always, new research sometimes uncovers new items. This family was well known and active in politics and business in Washington County. As I add additional generations those details will be shared.

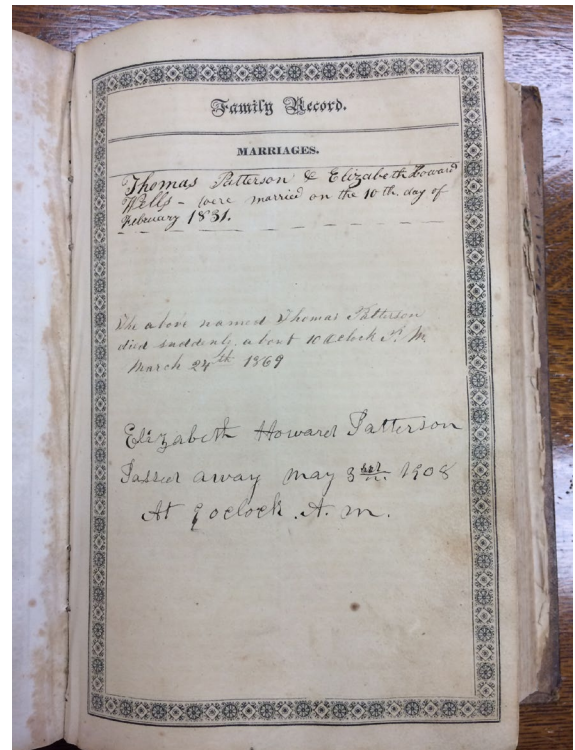
We know from the Family Bible, that Thomas Patterson married Elizabeth Howard Wells on February 10, 1831. I believe that this was also in Washington County, Pennsylvania.

Thomas Patterson was a surveyor, and a book on the History of Marshal and Putnam Counties in Illinois, "Records of The Olden Times or Fifty Years on the Prairies", by Spencer Ellsworth, states that he came to that area of Illinois in 1834. Thomas receives credit for laying out the town of Magnolia, IL. In that same book, we learn that Magnolia is the oldest settled town in the county. The first school house was built by Thomas Patterson. The book states "Thomas Patterson, the founder of the town, which he hoped to see grow into a populous city, built this humble edifice, and dedicated it to science." From this same history we learn that Thomas Patterson also built the Prospect House in 1836. It was an "exceedingly pretentious building" and was erected as a hotel or half way house on the Ottawa road.

Accordingly, we see Thomas and his family in the 1840 Federal Census in Illinois, Putnam. No family member names are listed as only the head of household was listed in this census along with tic marks for each person in the designated age category.

In the 1850 Federal Census Thomas is enumerated in Illinois, Marshall, and now we see the names of 5 of their children. Here he lists his occupation as farmer and lists his real estate value at \$4000. This is the highest value listed on the page.

The Cass County Historical Society Magazine, Pioneer Stories of Cass County, states that the family came to Nebraska Territory in 1855. From this same document, we learn that Indian scares among the settlers were “quite common, whether real or imaginary”. We learn that Governor Cuming called for volunteers to protect the first settlements and that The Rock Bluffs Horse Guards were organized where Thomas Patterson was made Captain. This same document also tells is that the Rock Creek Claim Association in documents filed for record on September 1, 1855 recognizes Thomas Patterson as the first resident of Rock Bluff and as the government surveyor who sectionized the river tier of townships from Nebraska City to the Platte River. His contract was awarded on October 31, 1855 by Surveyor General John Calhoun.



Patterson Family Bible - Record of Marriage and Death for Thomas and Elizabeth

Thomas Patterson is listed with the Nebraska Genealogical Society as a “First Family of Nebraska” for his early settlement in the state. Nebraska was established as a territory in 1854 and became a state in 1867.

Thomas apparently kept a diary from 1827 forward and snippets show up in documents. The Cass County Historical Society Magazine referenced above shares these two snippets from his diary:

“James Buchanon Patterson was born on the 28th day of April, 1856 at 9 o’clock AM – was the second child born in the town of Rock Bluffs, Cass County, Nebraska Territory and in the first house built in the town. About an hour after the birth the steamboat Omaha landed in front of the house with freight and groceries much needed it being the first landing made by steamboat at this place. The first dwelling house was on lot four, block one south and two east from the public square.”

“James Buchanon Patterson died February 5, 1857 at 9 o’clock AM age 9 months and 16 days, was buried on top of the hill south of Rock Bluffs in Cass County, Nebraska Territory, the first burial in the place which was selected for this purpose by his father and mother in April, he having been temporarily buried near the residence until that time.”

We see Thomas listed in the 1856 Nebraska Territorial Census as Cass County, Nebraska with no township provided.

The 1860 Federal Census enumerates Thomas and his family in Cass, Nebraska Territory. Three of the children are living with them, and there are three laborers also listed at their residence. Thomas lists his Real Estate value at \$1800 and his personal estate at \$1200.

Thomas Patterson died on March 24, 1869 as recorded in his obituary, his grave, and the family Bible. His obituary states that he died of a disease of the heart at his residence and had been ill but was apparently getting better. "He had only been abed a few moments when Mrs Patterson, hearing him make a strange noise, stepped to the bed side and found him breathing his last." His obituary references him as Col. Patterson and I assume this comes from his appointment in the Rock Bluff Horse Guards, but would have to do some additional research in the Nebraska Archives as they have some records of these volunteer militia groups. Thomas is buried in the Rock Bluffs Cemetery in Plattsmouth, Cass County, Nebraska.

Thomas and Elizabeth had several children and thanks to their family Bible we have good records of all of them. By that record I have 17 pregnancies, with three of those resulting in twins, with a total of 20 children born. Sadly, only 7 of those children survived to adulthood, with most of the children dying very young and sometimes at birth. I'll include with each of these children who died young their death record from the family Bible. It always makes me so sad to read through this list of children and think of the heartbreak that must have come with each baby that didn't survive. Direct images of the family bible are available.

- **Philander Chase Patterson (1831 - 1896)**
- **Narcissa Patterson (1833 - 1921)**
- **Levinus Patterson (1835 - 1910)**
- **Elizabeth Patterson (1836 - 1836)**
- **Twin Boys Patterson (1837 - 1837)**
- **Unnamed Son Patterson (1838 - 1838)**
- **Moses Patterson (1839 - 1840)**
- **Cyrus Findley Patterson (1840 - 1841)**
- **Lucina Patterson (1842 - 1923)**
- **Lysander Patterson (1844 - 1845)**
- **Cassandra Patterson (1844 - 1845)**
- **Mary Patterson (1846 - 1889)**
- **Maria Patterson (1848 - 1849)**
- **Twin Boys Patterson (1849 - 1849)**
- **Unnamed Son Patterson (1850 - 1850)**
- **Richard Jackson Patterson (1851 - 1852)**
- **Frederick Patterson (1854 - 1931)**
- **James Buchanon Patterson (1856 - 1857)**

Elizabeth Patterson fourth child and second daughter of Thos & Elizabeth H Died on Sunday morning the 13th day of November 1836 as the age of six weeks and about six hours – it breathed its last while laying on it's mother's arm in bed just as day began to break and was buried in the grave yard set apart for that use by its father adjoining and on the west side of the town of Magnolia, Illi on the evening of the same day Cause, The Croup. The throat and mouth being filled with phlegm it had bad cold for several days previous

Twins (boys) died, one on the 8th of July only five to ten minutes old, the other on the 9th of July about twenty hours old both put in one coffin and buried at Magnolia July 9th 1837 North of the first. The first born much the smallest out lived the longest, cause untimely birth

A babe (a son) died on the 5th day of April in the year 1838; at half past 8 o'clock forenoon only about 30 minutes old. Cause untimely birth. Buried on the evening of the same day north of the above

Moses Patterson died Feby 27th, 1839 at 2 o'clock PM at the age of eight days. Cause. The Croup it being a lusty child buried on the north side of the above

Cyrus Findley Patterson the ninth child and seventh son of Thomas and Elizabeth H departed this life on Saturday the 25th day of Sept 1841 at 2 o'clock PM aged 19 months. Cause Dysentary. Buried on Sunday 26th at 10 o'clock north of the others

Casander (Cassandra?) Patterson fourth daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth departed this life on Thursday the 24th of July 1845 at noon – aged seven months lacking one day. Cause summer complaint Buried on the 25th, north of the others

Lysander Patterson – eighth son of Thomas & Elizabeth departed this life on Wednesday the 17th of Decr 1845 at 3 o'clock afternoon aged one year lacking eight days. Cause The Croup Buried on the 18th north of the others

Maria Patterson sixth daughter of T & E departed this life on the 4th of March 1849 at 8 o'clock evening aged 4 months & 20 days. Cause dropsy on the brain. Was buried east of Lysander on the 5th March

Twin boys the 15th & 16th children of T & E died on the 30th Octr 1849 and were buried on the 31st in one coffin south side of Maria's grave

August 25th 1850 an infant died and was buried in the orchard

Richard Jackson Patterson died on the 1st day of July 1852 at 10'oclock PM aged 8 month & 11 days and was buried next south side of twin goys on 2nd July Cause Whooping Cough

James Buchanon Patterson died on Fby the 5th 1857 at 9 o'clock AM aged 9 months and 16 days. Was buried on top of the hill south side of Rock Bluffs in Cass County Nebraska the first buried in the place which was selected for that purpose by his Father and Mother in April he having been temporarily buried near the residence until that time.

ELIZABETH HOWARD WELLS

Elizabeth Howard Wells was born on July 28, 1814 in Washington County, Pennsylvania to Richard Wells and Helen Wells. This information is in the family Bible, in her obituary, headstone, and on her official death certificate. Yes, her parents had the same surname before they married. It is believed that Richard and Helen were first cousins once removed. I haven't independently proven that yet, but the evidence points that direction. I believe Elizabeth was the youngest of 8 or 9 children born to Richard and Helen.

Most of Elizabeth's information has been included with Thomas's information, but she outlived him for several years, so there is a bit more to her story.

In the 1870 Federal Census she is recorded in Rock Bluffs, Cass Nebraska with two of her children Mary and Fred at home. She lists her occupation as keeping house. The value of Real Estate she lists at 3000, and personal estate at 500. Compared to most of the entries on the census page this is a significant amount.

So far I have not found an entry for Elizabeth in the 1880 Federal Census. She may have missed the enumerator, or may have been visiting one of the children, or any number of things.

We do find Elizabeth in the 1885 Nebraska State Census. In 1885 E H Patterson is living with her daughter Mary Patterson Storm in Peru, Nemaha, Nebraska.

From there I don't find Elizabeth again until the 1900 Federal Census. In this census she is listed in Prairie Creek, Nance, Nebraska and is living with her daughter Lucina Pocock. In this census it is recorded that she was born in 1813, that she is 86 years old, that she was married for 69 years, had 20 children and that 5 survive. She records being born in Pennsylvania, and that both of her parents were born in Scotland. She also records that she can read and write.



Elizabeth - photo received from Marc Strong, another family researcher

Elizabeth died on May 3, 1908 as recorded on her official death certificate, her obituary and her Find A Grave Record. Elizabeth is buried in the Rock Bluffs Cemetery in Plattsmouth, Cass County, Nebraska. Elizabeth's obituary notes that she was converted to Christianity early in life and joined the Presbyterian church. Her obituary praises her with the following: "She had lived a faithful and helpful Christian life, and been a good wife and mother and a generous and kind neighbor." It also mentions her wonderful vitality and references that three years prior she had broken an arm which knitted together as strong as in a younger person. I personally am always amazed at the longevity of Elizabeth. Someone who bore 20 children, watched most of them perish as infants, lived through the earliest settlements of Illinois and Nebraska and still lived to be almost 94 years old I just can't imagine what fortitude that takes.