

## Jerome Messenger Benson (Jarome Benson on original transcript)

Jerome Benson was born November 5, 1810 in Fabius, Onondaga County, New York to Benjamin and Keziah Messenger Benson. He married Mary Rhodes in Lafayette, Tippecanoe County, Indiana on October 1, 1830. Mary was the daughter of George and Susannah Prugh Rhodes and was born on July 12, 1812.



Jerome and Mary joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in 1832. They endured the trials of persecution of the Saints as they moved from Missouri to the Nauvoo area. His family lived in a small community called Ramus which was about 22 miles southeast of Nauvoo. He was a millwright by trade.

Jerome left the Nauvoo area with Brigham Young to find a new home in the West. He was a member of the Pottawattamie High Council. (13) On the 1850 U. S. Census, Jerome's family was living in Big Pigeon, Pottawattamie County, Iowa. Listed were Jerome (Jarome), age 39; Mary 36; Evaline, 14; Mary 11, Louisa, 9; Amelia 5; John Stephen, 2; Lovina, 3; and Jerome, 1. They were enumerated in dwelling #654. Two sons, George and Benjamin had passed away previously and a daughter, Susannah, had married Isaac Hawk Vail on June 8, 1848, possibly in Big Pigeon. Two sons may have been born in Big Pigeon, John Stephen in 1848 and Jerome Messenger Benson, Jr. in July 1849.

Jerome was given the responsibility helping Martha Bartholomew and Mary Cartwright cross the plains. He married both on April 14, 1848, possibly in Big Pigeon. The exact date the family left for the Salt Lake Valley is not known but it was probably in 1851.

The family settled in Springville, Utah County, Utah Territory. Twins were born in June 1852, Alma and Alvah Mosiah Benson. On December 1, 1852, Jerome married Jane Eliza Pine. They had a daughter, Eliza Jane Benson, who was born September 21, 1852 in Springville.

Mary, his wife, died unexpectedly in 1853. She had visited her daughter in Provo and was returning home in Springville. The July 30, 1853 issue of *The Deseret News* relates the story, "We learn by letter from Elder L. N. Scovil, June 25<sup>th</sup> that Sister Mary Benson, wife of Jerome Messenger Benson, aged 41 years, 11 months, and 7 days, was drowned on the ninth of June attempting to cross from the bank to a portion of the bridge on a log. Brother Alanson Norton was leading her and was drawn into the water at the same time and came near drowning. Sister Benson has left eight children and numerous relatives. She joined the Church on February 8, 1832. She was driven with the Saints from Jackson County in 1833 and was with them in their persecutions to the end. She has gone to rest with the faithful, to come forth in the first resurrection." (14)

Unfortunately, according to the Springville, Church records, Jerome was cut off from the Church in 1853 and decided to leave Utah with his wife Jane and other members of his family. They settled in San Bernardino, California in 1854. Later they moved to San Jacinto, San Bernardino County, California where he operated a large ranch until his death. He died on April 17, 1877.