

Feb. 12, 2000

THE STORY OF THE THOMAS-HUMISTON BOOK OF MORMON

As told by Gary F. Breylinger

The Thomas and Humiston families have been linked together for over 144 years through a series of events which began in Green County, Wisconsin in 1856. In order to try to tell the story it seems necessary to put down some limited historical information about the main people involved in the saga.

My great great grandfather Ira Tracy Humiston was born in Allegheny County, New York on Dec. 19, 1824. When he was four the family moved to Chautauqua County, New York. He was educated there in a subscription school, and at the age of 14 was apprenticed to a blacksmith to learn the trade. He served five years, then opened a shop in Chautauqua County. In 1849 he married Helen Maria Woodworth, who was born in Cayuga County, New York on March 31, 1826. Two sons were born to the union in Chautauqua County, Robert in 1851, and Fred in 1854. In 1856 the family moved to Wisconsin and Ira established himself in business at the village of Monticello, in Green County.

Aranthus Thomas was born in Ira Township, (the first spooky coincidence?), New York, on Feb. 1, 1812. At age 15 he moved with his father to Salem, Michigan. In 1830 they moved to Battle Creek, Michigan, where they continued to farm. In 1834 he married Melissa Ann Goddard. Six children were born to the union in Michigan, including Daniel D. in 1838. In 1845 the family sold out and moved to Rockford, Illinois. Daughter Susan was born there. Then in 1848 they moved to a new farm in Mt. Pleasant Township, Wisconsin. The rest of the children were born there.

Aranthus Thomas must have been an able and well liked citizen for when the Town of Mt. Pleasant was organized in April, 1849, he was among the first officers elected. That year he was elected Treasurer of School District No. 1. In 1850 he was elected a Justice of the Peace. At some point he was Chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

By the time the Humiston family got to the area in 1856 the small village of Monticello was growing within the Township of Mt. Pleasant. As the town blacksmith Ira would have to come to know Aranthus Thomas, both through his trade and Aranthus' place in the community.

After the Civil War began Ira Humiston enlisted on Feb. 12, 1862 as Third Sargent of the Sterling Patriots, Co. I, under Capt. Luxton, 2nd Wisconsin Cavalry Regiment, commanded by Col. Cadwallader C. Washburn. The Regiment was organized at Camp Washburn, Milwaukee, WI. The Regiment left the state on March 24, 1862 and proceeded to Benton Barracks, St. Louis, MO, where they drew their horses and were outfitted for battle.

On May 19th the battalion left for Jefferson City, MO. By mid June Co. I was in Springfield, MO where their action finally began as an escort to a supply train loaded

for rations for Gen. Curtis' army. The fifteen men of Co. I, among a total of sixty, were sent in pursuit of a party of rebels which was under the command of the notorious McBride. They overtook a party of 150 of the enemy, with whom they had a running fight for 10 or 15 miles, killing six Rebels, capturing three prisoners, some horses and other property, with out any losses on their side.

The supply train itself was 10 miles long and the heavy train had great difficulty in getting over the almost impassible spurs of the Ozark Mountains. A rebel force, reported 2500 strong, annoyed them greatly for 150 miles but did not make any attack upon them. The safety of the train required constant vigilance on the part of Col. Washburn, with his command of a thousand men, to prevent its capture. Near Batesville, Lt. Ring of Co. I, while the Company was reconnoitering, had his left arm broken in two places by rebel shots. By July 6th the army had joined General Curtis in Augusta, having marched 400 miles without the loss of a man, and having captured 150 prisoners.

On the 8th of July the Second Cavalry, under to command of now Brig. Gen. Washburn, took part in the battle of Cotton Plant, and pursued the enemy to Cash River, destroying two ferry boats and capturing several prisoners. Moving by way of Clarendon, they reached Helena on the morning of the 12 of July. The Regiment remained in Helena until January, 1863, engaged in scouting and sundry expeditions against the enemy. Among others, in November, 1862, together with a cavalry force of 2500 men, under General Washburn, they made a raid into Mississippi and succeeded in getting on the enemy's communications, in the rear of Abbeville, where the rebel forces were confronting the forces of General Grant, which were marching southward to get into the rear of Vicksburg, causing the rebel force to retreat from their position. The battle of Oakland was fought while on their raid, the forces of Gen. Washburn driving a brigade of Texas troops, under Gen. Whitfield, entirely from the field, with considerable loss.

Early in February, 1863, the Regiment moved to Memphis, Tenn. and remained during the months of February, March, April and May. In April, a detachment of the Second Cavalry took part in the action at Coldwater and did very effective service. On April 17th Com. Sgt. Ira T. Humiston was discharged on account of disability. Discharges were mostly on account of disease or disability. Disability usually indicated impairment due to a serious wound.

Study of the official Roster of Wisconsin Volunteers. War of the Rebellion. 1861-1865, shows that the cause of most deaths was listed as disease. In the 1883 U.S. List of Pensioners. Ira T. Hu[n]liston, Green County, Wisc, is listed as receiving \$10.00 per month on account of chronic diarrhea, the most common disease of the war. Family oral history relates that Ira was wounded, although there is no question as to the chronic diarrhea. The 1884 History of Green County relates that he "returned home with an impaired constitution. He has never recovered sufficiently to perform any manual labor."

This unpleasant subject is brought up because of the reality that Ira, like thousands of Civil War veterans, became addicted to morphine for the rest of his life, as a result of medical treatment in the military. There were no medicines then.

Doctors could only dress wounds and try to relieve pain using morphine. From there on a sick or wounded soldier either just lived or died.

Ira bought a farm in Mt. Pleasant in 1864 and lived there until 1882, when he moved to Monticello. He died there in 1905. The Mt. Pleasant farm was taken over by Ira's son Fred W. Humiston, and my paternal grandmother, Myrtie Teresa Helen Humiston Breylinger, was born there in 1880. The Fred Humiston family later moved to Madison, Wisc, and finally, to Los Angeles about 1922-23.

In 1900 Myrtie Humiston married Leon J. Breylinger, a banker in Monticello, and they built a house there. Their only child, Fred Humiston Breylinger, was born at home in 1901. The family later moved to Monroe, Wisc, and when Leon retired in 1920 they moved to Los Angeles, Calif.

Fred H. Breylinger met Bernadine M, Johantgen at the University of Southern California, and they were married in 1926. Their children were myself, born in 1933, and John Barry, born in 1940, both in Los Angeles. In 1953 I met Barbe W. Ballard at Pomona College, Claremont, Calif. and we were married in 1955.

Getting back to the Thomases, there seems to be some confusion as to the movements of Aranthus and his family between 1860 in Mt. Pleasant, and 1870 in Calmar, Iowa, where he was Justice of the Peace. In MORT'S RELATIONS. Vol. 5, No. 2, Page 20, we read that "Sometime after the youngest son Will's birth in 1860; probably during the Civil War period; Aranthus must have sold the farm in Green County and moved west to Winneshiek County in Iowa where Melissa died at Lawler late in 1864." However, on Page 24 of the same publication we read "Note: There seems to be some doubt as to where Melissa Ann Thomas is buried." It goes on to say: "There is some speculation she died in Wisconsin during the war period and while Aranthus was away, and that he moved to Iowa only then as the children were small (William was age 4) and the grandparents - Josiah and Hannah Goddard - were in Iowa."

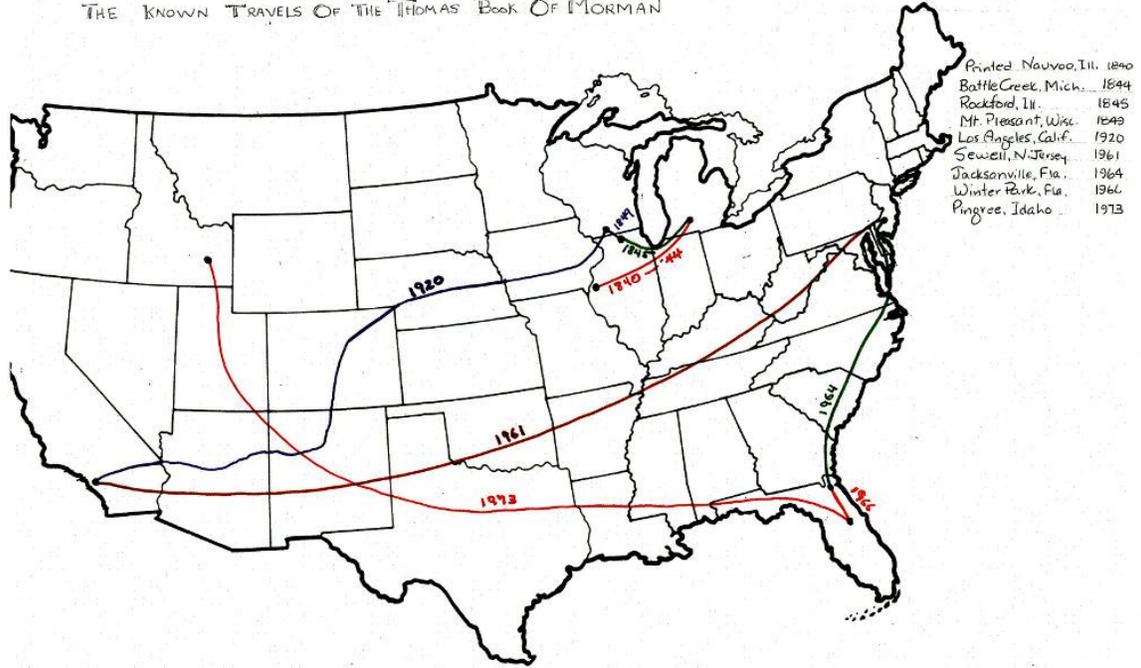
We do know that Aranthus died at Lawler, Iowa in 1875. His son, Daniel D., following the death of his mother, became a gold miner at Scott Bar, Calif. In 1872 he married Harriet Marie Tyler at Scott Bar. Their son William H. was born in 1874 at Scott Bar. Daniel D. died at the home of his son Will at St. Maries, Idaho in 1916.

William H. Thomas was a miner in Idaho, and in 1908 married Martha C. Fjeldsted at Blackfoot, ID. Their son Daniel Darrow was born at Jem, ID, in 1909. William H. died at Blackfoot, ID in 1922.

Now that main people, places, and dates have been sketched out to provide the framework upon which to build the story of "The Book," perhaps I can get on with the rest of it!

Myrtie Humiston (Breylinger), my "Nana Myrtie," was the member of her generation most interested in family history. Because of that interest and because she was the eldest grandchild, she was given custody of many family artifacts treasured by her grandfather, Ira Tracy Humiston. One of those items which was passed down to her was a well worn Book of Mormon, inside the cover of which Ira T. Humiston had written in pencil: "A war relick."

THE KNOWN TRAVELS OF THE THOMAS BOOK OF MORMON



The known travels of the "Thomas Book of Mormon"

The oral story which has been passed down from Ira T. Humiston through the generations is this: Sometime during his Civil War service, Sgt. Humiston came upon a dying man on the battlefield. He stopped to give the man what help he could, but the man was clearly dying. When the man learned that Sgt. Humiston was from Wisconsin and would be passing through Illinois, the man's home, when the war ended, he asked Sgt. Humiston to try to locate his wife and give her his bible. Sgt. Humiston agreed, and the man died in his arms. Sgt. Humiston did go to find the wife but was told in the town that she had "moved on." He then went on to his own home, and the Book was preserved as a war relic.

The volume in question is The Book of Mormon. 3rd Edition, published in 1840 by Robertson and Smith in Nauvoo, III. Written on the flyleaf is: "Aranthus Thomas and Melissa Thomas. Left Michigan August 5, 1845, Arrived Rockford, Illinois, August 15, 1845. Book bought of Elder Savage, July 9, 1844, Michigan." Contained in the book were two swatches of cloth and a lock of brown hair, which have always been assumed to be Melissa's.

Following Myrtie's marriage to Leon J. Breylinger the Book of Mormon was displayed in their home in Monticello, and then later in their home in Monroe. In 1920 the family moved to Southern California when Leon retired. They lived in several different areas around Los Angeles before settling in Santa Monica in 1928. I have very clear memories of the Book on a shelf, along with a stone Indian axe head and "The Breylinger Knife," in a tall, black, bookcase with curved glass doors, in the living room in Santa Monica, in the late 1930's. The reason I remember so well is that Nana frequently warned me to "stay out of that bookcase! You could cut yourself with that knife." (Naturally, I ignored the warning and did indeed cut myself badly with the knife. I have that same knife today, and am very careful when I handle it.)

In the late 1940s Pop Leon and Nana Myrtie moved to a large home in Redlands, Calif. The Book continued to be on display in the same bookcase there. Following Leon's death in 1951 Nana moved back to Los Angeles to be closer to her sisters. The Book remained with her, but stayed inside a fine wooden chest in which she kept her family artifacts.

In 1960 I finished my service as a Naval Officer and Barbe, daughter Katrina, and I moved into my parents home in Escondido, Calif., so that I could attend San Diego State University as a graduate student, working on a teaching credential. During a visit with Nana Myrtie she mentioned that she was thinking of selling the Book of Mormon as she knew it was a valuable rare book, and asked me what I thought about it. I urged her not to do that, because it was a family heirloom and should continue to be passed down in the family. I did not realize it at the time, but Nana had just given me a test. That August we moved to New Jersey, and daughter Heidi was born.

The following year I was teaching school in New Jersey and we had a rented home in the hamlet of Sewell. At Christmastime a box of presents arrived from Nana Myrtie, and included was the Book. This note was also included:

1961

A Merry Christmas to
Gary and Family!

Do let Katrina wear the
little robe before she
outgrows it.

The hair brush is for Barb,
and the Farmington picture
of my Grandfather Opa T,
was taken in 1862, and
the Mormon Bible I have told
Gary the story. I hope you
will cherish it as I have
since I was 18 (I had no
intention of selling it, was
trying to find out if you
would care for it). The
silver gravy ladle was one
of silver given to us by Leo's
parents for wedding gifts.
The plate a gift 60 yrs. ago from
Jessie Willaughby (Grandma B's sister.)
Hope it arrives without breaking.
Hope Sooko for Heidi. Nana B

I kept the Book safely packed away in Sewell, through our move to Jacksonville, Fla. in 1964, and to Winter Park, Fla. in 1966. In 1969 I shared an office with Dick Braby, who was a member of a local LDS Stake. Somehow we started talking about the Book over lunch one day. He got quite excited about it and asked if he could see it. Soon after that the Braby family came to the house and Dick examined the Book. He pointed out three things: first, that the Book was the Third Edition, and, therefore, the definitive edition. Second, that it was a very valuable book from a rare book collector's point of view as well as from within the Church. Third, that it might be possible to learn the history of the original owner's family, and even to locate a direct living descendant of Aranthus and Melissa Thomas as well, through the resources of the LDS Library in Salt Lake City.

That information put me on the horns of a dilemma. I did not want to give up such a family heirloom, but at the same time I felt I should try to fulfill an obligation which had been assumed over 100 years ago by my great great grandfather. Over time my conscience won out and I wrote the following letter:

Oct. 15, 1969

The Church Historian
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Sir,

I would like to enlist your assistance in a curious quest which has spanned over one hundred years. The completion of this quest could result in the keeping of a promise which has not been forgotten since the Civil War. Let me relate to you a story which has been handed down in my family, and which has led me to contact you.

During the Civil War Sgt. Ira T. Humiston of the 2nd Reg. Wisconsin Volunteer Cavalry (my Great Great Grandfather) came upon a dying man on the battlefield. He stopped to give the man what help he could, but the man was clearly dying. When the man learned that Sgt. Humiston was from Wisconsin and would be passing through Illinois, the mans home, when the war ended, he asked Sgt. Humiston to try to locate his wife and give her his bible. Sgt. Humiston agreed, and the man died.

Sgt. Humiston did go to find the wife but was told in the town that she had "moved on." He then went on to his own home, and the bible was preserved as a war relic. It has been passed down with the story and is now in my possession.

The volume in question is the Book of Mormon, 3rd Edition, published in 1840 by Robinson and Smith in Nauvoo, Ill. Written Inside are the name's of the soldier and his wife, Aranthus Thomas and Melissa Thomas, and the legend "Left Michigan August 5, 1845, Arrived Rockford, Illinois, August 15, 1845. Book bought of Elder Savage, July 9, 1844, Michigan." Contained in the Book are two swatches of cloth and a lock of brown hair, which I assume were Melissa's.

I feel that it is quite possible that Melissa remarried, and that the children did not keep the Thomas name, or that she left the Church or joined the Reformed Church, so that no records of her line can be found. Nevertheless, I would like to locate the head of that line of the Thomas family in order to deliver the book to its rightful home. I must qualify that statement though, by saying that I will only give up the Book if I can be assured that it will be preserved and treasured in the Thomas family as it has been in mine.

I hope that you have found this story interesting enough to perhaps see what can be done to locate the descendants of Aranthus Thomas and to put me communication with them. I certainly will appreciate your help.

Sincerely,
Gary F. Breylinger
495 Jo-Al-Ca Ave.
Winter Park, Fla. 32789

One month later I received the following reply:

**THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
OF
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS INC.
107 SOUTH MAIN STREET
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84111**

7 November 1969

Mr. Gary F. Breylinger
495 Jo-Al-Ca Avenue
Winter Park, Florida 32789

Dear Mr. Breylinger:

Your recent letter of October 15, 1969 and addressed to the Church Historian of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been forwarded to us.

It is commendable that you would still be willing to return the Book Of Mormon back to the family again. I am sure that both Aranthus Thomas and your ancestor Sgt. Ira T. Humiston would be pleased with this action on your part.

Surely, you and the many other members of your family, both living and dead, have often wondered just what did finally happen to the Thomas family and their descendants. At long last the family tradition of the Thomas family seems to have been solved!

You may be interested in knowing that Aranthus Thomas did not die in the Civil War. He survived his wounds and returned home to his wife and family.

It appears that he and his family did not leave the "Mormon" Church as was previously thought. Nearly all of his descendants are members today and are scattered all over the Western United States.

Enclosed are several archive sheets on the Thomas family which list among other genealogical data the names and addresses of the Thomas family members at the time the sheets were submitted. You may wish to correspond with the family and explain your connection to them.

If there should be any future correspondence necessary, please write to the Correspondence Department of the Genealogical Society.

Sincerely,

THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY



Frank Smith, Supervisor
Research Department

FS:ld enclosures

At this point I knew I had to either fish or cut bait, so two weeks later I wrote the following letter:

November 26, 1969

Mr. Daniel Darrow Thomas,
Pingree, Idaho

Dear Mr. Thomas,

It appears that you and I may be the final link in a curious quest which began over one hundred years ago, and that your family and mine may be tied together by a promise which has not been forgotten since the Civil War. I am sure that this sounds like an odd way to begin a letter to an apparent total stranger, nevertheless I would like to relate a story which has been handed down in my family for five generations. You may find it interesting.

During the Civil War Sgt. Ira T. Humiston of the 2nd Reg. Wisconsin Volunteer Cavalry (my Great Great Grandfather) came upon a dying man on the battlefield. He stopped to give the man what help he could, but the man was clearly dying. The two men were probably in the same troop, or at least were from the same area, because the man asked Sgt. Humiston to locate his wife when the war ended, to tell her what had happened to him, and to give her his bible.

Sgt. Humiston did go to find the wife but was unable to locate her. He then went on to his own home, and the bible which the dying man had given to him was preserved as a war relic. The bible has been passed down with the story and is now in my possession.

The volume in question is the Book of Mormon, 3rd Edition, published in 1840 by Robinson and Smith in Nauvoo, Ill. Written inside are the names of the soldier and his wife, Aranthus Thomas and Melissa Thomas, and the legend "Left Michigan August 5, 1845, Arrived Rockford, Illinois, August 15, 1845. Book bought of elder Savage, July 9, 1844, Michigan." Contained in the Book are two swatches of cloth and a lock of brown hair, which I assume were Melissa's.

Through the cooperation of the Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints I have learned that Aranthus Thomas lived in Green County, Wis. just prior to the Civil War, which would account for his association with my Great Great Grandfather. I have also learned that Melissa died during the war, which accounts for why she could not be located. I have also learned that Aranthus survived his wounds and eventually died in Iowa.

It appears that you are the Great Grandson of Aranthus Thomas, and that you are the head of that line of the Thomas family. If that is the case I imagine that you would like to have your ancestors Bible. I in turn feel an obligation to give the book to you. I say this with mixed emotions however, because I know nothing of your interest, or lack of it, in old things. Many people care nothing for old family relics and dispose of them. Therefore, I will

only give up the book if I can be assured that it will be preserved and treasured in your family as it has been in mine.

I hope that you find this letter interesting, and that I shall hear from you.

Sincerely,

Gary F. Breylinger

495 Jo-Al-Ca Ave.

Winter Park, Fla. 32789

Over the long Thanksgiving weekend we had been in Ormond Beach, Fla. for the annual AACA antique car show. We had stayed until the end as I had been Chief Judge that year, and we arrived home after dark on Sunday. We had no sooner walked in the door when the telephone rang, and Barbe answered. A man asked "Is this the Gary Breylinger residence?" Barbe responded in the affirmative, and the voice said "This is Daniel Thomas in Pingree, Idaho." Barbe passed the phone over and we talked for about an hour.

Dan related that he and Lois had been in the South Pacific visiting a son and had just returned. They made their way in though deep snow and darkness, and were so anxious to get settled that they didn't even stop for the mail. Later, while sitting comfortably in his chair in the warmth he felt a strange and sudden compulsion to go out and get the mail. Lois tried to dissuade him and wanted him to wait for morning. The feeling continued, so he got all dressed up and slogged out for the mail. When he got back and settled in, he found and opened my letter. "It was like a miracle!" he said to me.

The more we talked the more obvious it became that I had done the right thing and that the book would indeed be treasured by the Thomas family, perhaps even more that it had been in mine. I then suggested that I would mail Dan the Book.

"Oh no!" "Do you have a safe deposit box?" Dan said.

I replied that I did, whereupon he asked my to please put it in the box, saying that he would come to Winter Park when he could, to get it himself. Shortly after that cordial telephone conversation I received the following letter:

Pringee Idaho

Dec 2, 1969

Dear Mr. Greylinger,

It was a thrill to receive your letter and to talk with you briefly by telephone. I should like to tell you somewhat of my family. As you probably already know, I am the only son of William Henry Thomas, who was the son of Daniel D. Thomas, who was the son of Aranthus Thomas. I remember my grandfather who lived with us in my early childhood. He was a kindly, gentle man and died when I was six. My mother tells me he emigrated to Northern California during the gold rush days of the early 50's and settled at Scott Bar, a tiny placer mining town. It is a ghost town now but my father and his brother Warren and sisters, Minerva and Mable were born there and my grandmother who died at childhood is buried there as is my grandfather also. We have been able to learn little or nothing of the rest of the family. My grandfather never speaks of his father and family. My father became a miner by trade at an early age and was considered an outstanding and successful miner. At the age of 24 he came to Idaho (1907) to try his fortune at the newly discovered lead-silver deposits in the Mackay-Lost River area. There he became the

foreman and later Superintendent of ^(Martha Felstead) one of the mines and met and married my mother who had come from Blackfoot to work in the Kitchens which fed the miners. My mother was a Mormon girl from a pioneer Mormon family but my father never became a member of the Latter Day Saints faith.

My father and mother moved to the Coeur d'Alene area in Northern Idaho in 1908 for the rich silver discoveries there and became the Superintendent of the 'Clear Gut' mines. I was born at Kam, a tiny mining town there on January 14, 1909.

At this time the rich timber land in the St Joe region was thrown open for homesteading and my parents homesteaded 160 acres of rich White Pine timber and took up 140 acres for my Grandfather Daniel J. who came from California to live with us.

This was a veritable wilderness of Bears, Cougars, and all species of wild animals who live in this country zone. There were no roads and we traveled 25 miles by foot or horse to get to our claim.

My father spent the next 11 years as a lumberman, logging off the timber on both my grandfather's and our land. When I was six my father moved the

family to St. Marcus, Idaho where he built a new home and started me to school.

In 1920, when I was 12 my father moved us to Blackfoot, our parent home, to be near my mother's People, The Felsteads, for his health was failing. He bought the farm I live on today and died the following year. I am the eldest of five children: Mame, Helen, (who died in July 1966), Maxine and Eloise.

My mother 85 is still living. My sisters all live in this area.

My wife, Jane and I have six children as you have seen from the records. ⁽³⁵⁾Barbara (Baragon) lives in Las Vegas, Nevada, and is a Dance Instructor and has her own studio. She has three children, Jaume, (16), Troy (11) and Wendy (9).

Cornell ⁽³²⁾ lives in Salt Lake City, Utah - He has three children, Julia (4), Dana (4) and Matthew (3 months) He is a counselor at a Junior High School there and is working on his Doctorate at the University of Utah.

Gaylin W. ⁽³⁰⁾ is of Kansas City, Mo. He is working on his Ph.D. in Music and sings with the Kansas City Opera. He has 4 lovely children; Shelley Grace ⁽⁴⁾, Sandra ⁽⁴⁾, Trent ⁽²⁾ and Chit ⁽⁴⁾ ms.

Jolene (Nisson) ⁽²⁴⁾ lives in Idaho Falls. She has 2 children,
Jody⁽³⁾ and Shaun⁽¹⁾

it in mind, however, and hope we may be able
to accept your invitation in the near future.
Meanwhile, our invitation is always open to you and
your family to visit us in Idaho.

May the approaching Christmas season bring you
Peace and Happiness and may we hear from you
soon.

Sincerely

Dan Thomas

P.S. I am enclosing a small picture of my family
taken in 1968

50 years. We are
well past sixty and looking forward to the time
in the near future when we can travel a bit and
see the rest of our beautiful country.

I appreciate your kind invitation to come to
Florida and receive the Book first hand. At present
it is doubtful we can do so this winter. We will keep

Dan and I kept in touch over the next three years, and in February of 1973 Dan and Lois arrived in Winter Park and received the Book. It was a memorable moment for all concerned.

We continued to stay in touch and in 1989 Barbe and I visited Dan and June at the home place in Pingree.

Now, after 144 years, Dan's stepson, Gary Skoy, has continued the family association. Perhaps through his efforts more light will be shown on the mystery of exactly how the Book changed families during the 1860's. I have spent considerable time searching Wisconsin Civil War records looking for anything that would indicate that Aranthus Thomas served in the war, to no avail. At the age of 50 it is unlikely that he would have volunteered. Perhaps it could have been his son Daniel D. In 1861 he would have been the right age to serve. The only Daniel Thomas I have found in the Wisconsin units who survived in the war was from the Clinton area, about 40 miles from Mt. Pleasant, and was a Corporal in the 22nd Infantry. He served from Aug. 14, 1862 to June 12, 1865. The 22nd served mainly in Tennessee and Georgia, and I could not easily see where Daniel and Ira would have been near each other. Daniel's activities prior to 1868 in Calif, are unclear, and there seems to be no family history linking Aranthus and his family to the War. Further research may prove otherwise.

There is no question that oral histories can change and evolve with the telling over time. Nonetheless, I feel there has to be much truth in the story. I have compared the handwriting of the notation in the front of the Book to samples of Ira's hand and they match up. Melissa did indeed die and could not be found. Aranthus could have left Mt. Pleasant prior to Ira's return from the war. Daniel could have been the one to carry the Book, perhaps given to him by his parents as he left to help him through the rough and uncertain times ahead. Daniel could have gone directly to California upon his mustering out.

It is my hope that some member of Thomas family will be able to trace the travels of the Book as it passed from the Thomases to Ira T. Humiston, and will forward such information on to me or my descendants. In any case, I am pleased to tell this story, and even more pleased that the Book continues in safe hands.