

James B. Albritton
of
Pactolus, Pitt County, North Carolina,
Son of Samuel, Grandson of James, Great-grandson of Peter,
& Great-great-grandson of James Albritton Sr.

by Timothy Dean Hudson

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Contents

I. James B. Albritton & Penelope Moore2

II. Children of James B. Albritton & Penelope Moore.....6

 1. [Edmond M. Albritton](#) [Epps, Epsy] (c1835–26 Nov 1881)

 2. [Josiah D. Albritton](#) (15 Oct 1836–8 Aug 1862)

III. Notes.....7

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James B. Albritton & Penelope Moore

James B. Albritton was born on 20 November 1814, with his date of birth recorded in the family Bible of his younger brother, Rev. Benjamin Bell Albritton [1]. Samuel Albritton wrote his will when his only two sons, James and Benjamin, were still young teenagers, leaving his primary 300-acre plantation to them. This included the 250-acre tract originally purchased by the boys' grandfather, James Albritton, in April 1784. Following Samuel Albritton's death in 1831, James and Benjamin's portion of their father's plantation remained undivided through 1839, by the time both had reached their mid-20s, married, and fathered young children. On 8 February 1839, a court document described 150 acres of it as [2]:

...parte [sic] of the lands whereon Samuel Albritton Lived and died on and it being the undivided share that Benj^a B. Albritton was in title [entitled] to by the will of his father...and the undivided piece or parcel of lands descended by Will to James B. Albritton & Benj^a B. Albritton and is at this time undivided...

As a young man, James B. Albritton married to Penelope Moore [Penny] (1811/1813–1880/1884), the daughter of Matthias Moore Jr. (1770/1780–1820/1830) and his wife, Elizabeth (c1776–1866) [3]. Their families had known one another for several generations, as Penny's grandfather, Matthias Moore Sr., had settled on Grindle Creek by the 1760s near James' great-granduncle, James Albritton Jr. [4]. In October 1796, the elder Matthias Moore purchased a 300-acre tract of land from Henry Cason that adjoined the Grindle Creek plantation of James' grandfather, James Albritton, son of Peter [5], and the elder Moore gave the tract to Penny's father in 1799 [6].

From the limited available evidence, James B. Albritton and Penelope Moore married about 1833 or 1834, probably in Pitt County, North Carolina [7]. We have no evidence that James B. Albritton acquired land in his own name, but presumably, he and Penny farmed his father and grandfather's old plantation, or a portion of her father's, until James' premature death.

James B. Albritton died on 16 April 1840, with his date of death carefully recorded in the family Bible of his brother, Rev. Benjamin Bell Albritton [8]. He died less than two months before the official 1840 Census Day on June 1, 1840, and that document creates confusion regarding his family structure. It appears that the 1840 Federal Census enumerator listed Penny and her three young sons in the household of her older brother, Wedigan Moore, along with Penny and Wedigan's younger siblings, Edmond and Elizabeth, their widowed mother, Elizabeth, and Wedigan's young wife. In 1840, Wedigan's household adjoined that of Clifton James, the same household that adjoined both Wedigan and Elizabeth Moore and Penny Albritton in 1850 [9].

It appears that the 1840 household of James B. Albritton's family was enumerated under the name of "*Matthew Albritton*" on another page of this document. No known man by this name lived in Pitt County during this era, and the household matches the three young sons, a woman of Penny's age, and a male of James' age, had he still been alive in June 1840. Technically, James should not have been enumerated since he died prior to census day. His eldest known son, "*Edmond M. Albritton*," was supposedly named "*Edmond Matthew Albritton*," and this may have caused confusion with the given name of the man who had been the head of household until his death in April 1840 [10].

Regardless of whether the 1840 Pitt County household enumerated under the name of "*Matthew Albritton*" was indeed the same as that of James B. Albritton's, it has created confusion in published works on the Albritton family. At least one work used this census record to definitively state that Samuel and Tabitha Albritton had a son, Matthew, born about 1805. However, all documentary evidence indicates that James B. Albritton was their eldest son [11].

James and Benjamin had not made a formal division of their father's plantation when they each came of age. In fact, the tract remained undivided when Benjamin sold his portion of the property to his father-in-law, Robert Hatton, in April 1838 [12], and when Hatton sold Benjamin's interest to Howell Albritton in February 1839 [13]. By 8 February 1842, Howell, a first cousin of Samuel Albritton, had obtained full title to Samuel's old 300-acre plantation [14]. Thus, either James B. Albritton sold his interest in his father's plantation to Howell prior to his death in April 1840, or shortly afterwards, Penny Moore Albritton sold her sons' interest in the property [15].

Penny Moore Albritton remained a widow for the next four decades, caring for her widowed mother, raising her two sons, and providing for her grandchildren. At his death, Penny's father, Matthias Moore Jr., had left a large estate, with his plantation adjoining that of Samuel Albritton's. Penny moved in with her widowed mother and brothers, Wedigan and Edmond Moore, and raised her sons on her family's plantation that adjoined that of Samuel Albritton. In 1850, Penny's mother owned real estate valued at \$1500 [16] and a total of twenty-three slaves, thirteen males and ten females [17]. In her will written on 19 December 1850, Elizabeth Moore left

...unto my daughter Penelopy Albritton all of my interest in the negroes that I fell heir to from the death of my daughter Elizabeth Moore, during her life time or widowhood. Then I give said interest to my two grandsons Edmund Albritton and Josiah Albritton and if one dyes [sic] without a lawful heir my will is that the other should heir his part. I also give to my daughter Penelopy Albritton one Bed and furniture to her and her heirs forever.

As it turned out, Elizabeth survived until the age about 90, dying in 1866, after the end of chattel slavery in the United States [18].

On 26 July 1855, Penny Moore Albritton purchased a 150-acre tract of her family's plantation from her older brother, Wedigan Moore, for \$520 [19]. The land she purchased constituted part of the 600-acre 1783 patent to Henry Cason, half of which became the Samuel Albritton plantation and the other half originally purchased in 1796 by her grandfather, Matthias Moore Sr. and given to Penny's father in 1799. Wedigan Moore died on 5 November 1857 at the age of about forty-eight, and Penny and her sons purchased property at his estate sale held on 6 January 1858. Penny bought twelve "New Bags" for \$3.00, "2 Sows & ten Pigs" for \$15.00, and one "½ Bushel Meashure" for \$1.05. Penny also hired one slave belonging to her brother's estate for the next year, a "Girl" named "Mahaly." Although her age was not given, Penelope paid only 10¢ to rent her, so presumably she was an elderly woman that had possibly belonged to their parents. For the year 1859, Penelope paid \$6.00 to hire Mahaly, while she paid \$75 to hire Noah, another slave belonging to her brother's estate. Penny did not hire any of the slaves belonging to her brother's estate after that year, but for the 1866 growing season, she did rent a portion of his land for \$40 [20].

In 1860, Penny owned real estate valued at \$700, with her personal estate of nine slaves valued at \$8000, including two adult females and seven males, all of whom lived in two houses on her farm. She and her elderly mother lived with the family of her eldest son, Edmond M. Albritton [21].

Like many married men, Penny's sons remained on their farms throughout 1861, the first year of the War, but both volunteered for military service in the Confederate Army in 1862. The younger one, Josiah, died in August 1862, but Edmond survived the conflict. Penny lived with him and his family for the rest of her life, working the land that had now been in their family for nearly a century [22].

In contrast to their affluence during the antebellum era, Penelope Moore Albritton and her family directly experienced the economic hardships affecting many Southern agriculturalists during Reconstruction as a result of the devaluation of property, poor harvests, and the extremely low price of cotton throughout the postwar era. While in 1860, Penny's household owned a combined real estate valued at \$5400 and a personal estate, mostly of slaves, valued at \$8300, in 1870, her real estate was valued at \$900 and personal estate at only \$200 [23].

After an especially poor harvest in 1873, Penny and Edmond Albritton did not have sufficient funds to pay for supplies to enable them to purchase supplies for their family before the next year's harvest. By 16 February 1874, Penny Moore Albritton had become indebted for \$704.87:

Whereas the said Penelope Albritton being engaged in the cultivation of the Soil and being without the necessary means to cultivate her crops, J. V. Perkins and J. J. Rollins partners aforesaid, have agreed to furnish goods and supplies to the said Penelope Albritton to an amount not to exceed Five Hundred Dollars to enable her to cultivate and harvest her Crops for the year 1874.

To indemnify Perkins and Rollins, Penelope agreed to a lien on all her crops grown that year and to mortgage her 150-acre farm [24].

On 25 March 1875, for “*the love and affection I have*” for her son and daughter-in-law, Penelope Albritton gave her 150-acre farm to her son, Edmond M. Albritton, and daughter-in-law, Mary E. James Albritton, and then to their children. Penny stated that she had

...given granted sold and confirmed...unto the parties of the second part during their natural lives a certain piece or parcel of land...containing by estimation one hundred & fifty acres...reserving however my life Estate in the said land, then to them the said E. M. Albritton and Mary Albritton during their natural lives and no longer and after their natural lives the said land to descend to the children of the said Mary Albritton...

Penny Albritton appeared before the Probate Judge on 18 March 1876 and acknowledged this deed of gift [25].

Penelope Moore Albritton lived with her son and his family in 1880, but she had died by 7 November 1884. Given that Penny’s son, Edmond, died in November 1881, she may have outlived him [26].

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Children of James B. Albritton & Penelope Moore

The 1840 federal census listings discussed early imply that James B. and Penny Albritton had three young sons born during their five or six years of marriage, one of whom presumably died between 1840 and 1850. The very first entry in the family Bible of James' brother, Benjamin B. Albritton, was titled "*Ages of James B. Albritton Children*," but the only entry was

Josiah D. Albritton was Bornd the 15th day October 1836

It is unclear why there are no entries for James' other sons, but some Bible entries may have become illegible [27].

The will of Penny's mother, Elizabeth Moore, proves their relationship, and Elizabeth also identifies Edmond and Josiah as Elizabeth's grandsons [28]. The 1850 federal census shows them all living in one household that adjoined that of Penny's brother, Wedigan Moore [29].

The documented children of James B. and Penelope Moore Albritton include:

1. [Edmond M. Albritton](#) [Epps, Epsy] (c1835–26 Nov 1881) married about 1856, probably in Pitt County, North Carolina, to his cousin, Mary E. James (c1836–1893), daughter of Clifton James (c1801–Nov 1849) and Lydia A. Moore (1800/1810–1840/1842).
2. [Josiah D. Albritton](#) (15 Oct 1836–8 Aug 1862) married about 1859 or 1860, probably in Pitt County, North Carolina, to Penelope Ann Harrington [Penny] (Jun 1840–9 Jun 1914), daughter of Isaac Harrington (1790/1800–1840/1845) and Elizabeth Tucker (c1808–1864).

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Notes

1. [Benjamin B. Albritton Family Bible](#) (Pitt County Genealogical Quarterly, Vol. V, No. 2, May 1998, pp. 19–20). James' birthdate was recorded among the births of Samuel Albritton's children on p. 2:

Ages of Samuel Albrittons ch_

James B. Albritton was Bornd November 20 day 1814

2. Pitt County NC Deed Book II, p. 293 (Robert Hatton to Howell Albritton, 8 February 1839); Deed Book KK, p. 38 (Howell Albritton to John S. Daniel, 8 February 1842). [James Albritton's 1784 Purchase on Grindle Creek](#). The 1839 deed described the 150 acres owned by Benjamin B. Albritton, part of the "undivided" part of the lands left in Samuel Albritton's will to James B. and Benjamin B. Albritton. The fact that this included the 250 acres purchased in 1784 by Samuel's father, James Albritton, is documented in the article regarding James Albritton's 1784 purchase. By February 1842, Howell Albritton had acquired 300-acre tract

...known as the Lands whereon Samuel Albritton lived and died on and that Tabbitha [sic] Albritton have a life estate in a part of it given to her in the Last Will and Testament of the said Samuel Albritton decd.

3. Pitt County NC Deed Book KK, p. 45 (Thomas and Loucina Albritton to Wedigan and Edmond Moore, 7 February 1842). In this transaction, Thomas and Loucina Albritton sold their interest in property left by Matthias Moore, deceased, in his will to his youngest four children, Wedigan, Edmond, Penny, and Elizabeth Moore. An older child of Matthias Moore, Loucina Moore Albritton had acquired an interest in that property following the death of her younger sister, Elizabeth Moore. The deed included a transcription from the will of Matthias Moore, Jr.

Lastly I lend to my beloved wife Elizabeth Moore during her natural life all my land and all the balance of my negroes that I have not Willed away and all my stock of all kinds and two head of horses and all my Household and Kitchen furniture to the use of supporting and schooling my four youngest children then at my wifes death I leave the above named property that I lent to my wife to be equally divided between my four youngest children to wit, Wedigan Moore, Penny Moore, Edmond Moore and Elizabeth Moore which property I give to them and their Heirs forever."

Although many claim that Matthias Moore, Jr. married Elizabeth Little, there is no known documented evidence of Elizabeth's middle name.

4. Pitt County NC Deed Book B, pp. 396–397 (John Moyer to John Jones, May 1763; witnesses: George Moyer, "Matthias Moor").
5. Pitt County NC Deed Book N, pp. 397–398 (Henry Cason to Matthias Moore, Sen^r, 18 October 1796; witnesses: Jesse Moore, Matthias Moore, "Juner"). The land description indicated that it adjoined the land of James Albritton (son of Peter) and of "James Albritton Sen^r," the brother of Peter Albritton Sr. and the man modern researchers refer to as "James Albritton Jr."
6. Pitt County NC Deed Book O, pp. 247–248 (Matthias Moore Sen^r to Matthias Moore Jun^r, 29 January 1799).
7. 1850 Pitt County NC Federal Census, Parkers District, p. 60a, Dwelling #971, line #17: Elizabeth Moore (aged 74); #18: Penelope Albritton (age 39); #19: Edmond Albritton (age 15); #20: Josiah Albritton (aged 13). As Edmond Albritton, born about 1835, is the eldest known son of James B. Albritton, this suggests that James and Penelope married about 1833 or 1834.
8. [Benjamin B. Albritton Family Bible](#) (Pitt County Genealogical Quarterly, Vol. V, No. 2, May 1998, pp. 19–20). James' date of death was recorded among the other deaths on p. 4:

Ages of Samuel Albrittons ch_

James B. Albritton Departed this Life April 16 day 1840

9. 1840 Pitt County NC Federal Census, p. 374, line #7: Clifton James; #8: Wedigan Moore. 1850 Pitt County NC Federal Census, Parkers District, p. 60a, Dwelling #969: Marina James (age 40); #970: Wedigan Moore (age 41); #971, line #17: Elizabeth Moore (age 74); #18: Penelope Albritton (age 39); #19: Edmond Albritton (age 15); #20: Josiah Albritton (age 13). 1850 Pitt County NC Federal Census, Mortality Schedule, p. 523a, line #14: Clifton James (died Nov 1849, age 48). Marina James is the widow of Clifton James; see Pitt County NC Deed Book MM, p. 391 (Pitt County Commissioners award Marina James, widow of Clifton James, decd., her "dower & thirds" in his lands, 13 February 1850).
10. 1840 Pitt County NC Federal Census, p. 399, line #11: Matthew Albritton. The middle name of Edmond M. Albritton is undocumented, but some descendants claim it was "Matthew."
11. Albritton, Bobby G. [Albrittons of the Second Millennium](#), Revised ed. Alpharetta, GA: Balbritt, 2004, pp. 124, 271–272, 555–556. Mr. Bobby G. Albritton has blatantly wrong data on the sons of Samuel Albritton, including listing one son as Matthew Albritton, born about 1805. This contradicts the Benjamin B. Albritton Family Bible, which only lists two sons of Samuel and Tabitha (James B. and Benjamin B. Albritton), and the 1810–1830 Pitt County Federal Censuses, which show them with no son born until James B. Albritton in 1814. Moreover, the children he lists for Penny Moore Albritton are incorrect, as this information conflicts with all known documentation. His data on this family should be disregarded.

12. Pitt County NC Deed Book HH, p. 481 (Benjamin B. Albritton to Robert Hatton, 28 April 1838). Albritton sold to Robert Hatton, his father-in-law, *"all right title and interest in an undivided moiety or piece of Land...descended to me by the death of my Father Samuel Albritton decd..."*
13. Pitt County NC Deed Book II, p. 293 (Robert Hatton to Howell Albritton, 8 February 1839).
14. Pitt County NC Deed Book KK, p. 38 (Howell Albritton to John S. Daniel, 8 February 1842).
15. No recorded Pitt County deed shows Howell Albritton acquiring the half-interest that James B. Albritton had in his father's planation.
16. 1850 Pitt County NC Federal Census, Parkers District, p. 60a, Dwelling #970: Wedigan Moore (age 41); #971, line #17: Elizabeth Moore (age 74); #18: Penelope Albritton (age 39); #19: Edmond Albritton (age 15); #20: Josiah Albritton (age 13).
17. 1850 Pitt County NC Federal Census, Slave Schedule, Parkers District, p. 525, column 1, line #42: Elizabeth Moore. The census enumerator listed Elizabeth Moore as the owner of female slaves aged 65, 45, 26, 25, 22, 20, 15, 5, 3, and six months, and male slaves aged 37, 17, 12, 10, 8, 7, 7, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3, and 2.
18. Pitt County NC Will Book 1, p. 157 (Will of Elizabeth Moore, written 19 December 1850, filed in court in May 1866).
19. Pitt County NC Deed Book PP, pp. 116–117 (Wedigan Moore to Penelope Albritton, 26 July 1855; witness: Edmond Moore). The property Wedigan Moore sold his sister lay on the 1783 Henry Cason patent line and bordered the ditch and property line of John S. Daniels, who had acquired the old Samuel Albritton plantation in 1842. In other words, Penelope was purchasing from her brother land that their grandfather, Wedigan Moore Sr., had purchased from Henry Cason in 1796, and then sold to their father, Wedigan Moore Jr., in 1799.
20. Pitt County NC Estate Files, Wedigan Moore, 1858, Images #54–58, 61–66, 69, 80.
21. 1860 Pitt County NC Federal Census, P.O. Greenville, p. 31b/63, Dwelling #523, line #17: Penelope Albriton (age 50, *"Farming"*); #18: M. E. Albriton (age 25, *"Farmer"*); #22: Elizabeth Moore (age 83). 1860 Pitt County NC Federal Census, Slave Schedule, p. 521a/31, column 1, line #19: Penelope Albritton. In 1860, Penelope Albritton owned male slaves aged 46, 20, 18, 16, 12, 11, and 7, and females aged 56 and 37.
22. 1870 Pitt County NC Federal Census, Pactolus Township, P.O. Pactolus, N.C., p. 188b/31, Dwelling #228, line #28: Edmond Albritton (age 35, *"Farmer"*); #36: Penelopy Albritton (age 60, *"Domestic S'vt."*). 1880 Pitt County NC Federal Census, Pactolus Township, ED #129, p. 422a/18, Dwelling #176, line #27: E. M. Albritton (age 45, *"Farmer"*); #28: Mary E. Albritton (age 44, wife); #29: Penny Albritton (age 67, mother).
23. See the 1860 and 1870 Pitt County NC Federal Censuses referenced above.
24. Pitt County NC Deed Book XX, p. 322 (Penelope Albritton mortgage to J. V. Perkins and J. J. Rollins, 16 February 1874; witness: E. M. Albritton).
25. Pitt County NC Deed Book D3, pp. 474–475 (Penelope Albritton to E. M. and Mary Albritton and their children, 25 March 1875).
26. Pitt County NC Deed Book H4, pp. 551–552 (Mary E. Albritton to James A. Albritton, 7 November 1884). Mary E. Albritton sells to her brother, *"all her right title and interest in and to a certain piece or parcel of land, being one ninth part"* of the 150-acre tract of land *"formerly owned by Penelope Albritton decd."*
27. [Benjamin B. Albritton Family Bible](#) (Pitt County Genealogical Quarterly, Vol. V, No. 2, May 1998, pp. 19–20).
28. [Pitt County NC Will Book 1 \(1858–1866\), p. 157](#) (Will of Elizabeth Moore, written 19 December 1850, filed in court in May 1866). In her will, Elizabeth Moore, widow of Matthias Moore Jr., identified Penelope Albritton as her daughter, Edmond and Josiah Albritton as her grandsons, and Wedigan Moore as her son.
29. [1850 Pitt County NC Federal Census, Parkers District, p. 60a](#):
 - Dwelling #970: line #12: Wedigan Moore (age 41)
 - Dwelling #971: line #17: Elizabeth Moore (age 74)
 - line #18: Penelope Albritton (age 39)
 - line #19: Edmond Albritton (age 15)
 - line #20: Josiah Albritton (age 13)

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