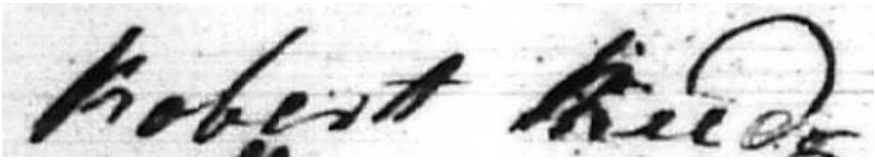
Robert & Helen Reed

of

Tennessee, Missouri, and Arkansas



by

Timothy Dean Hudson

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Early Life in North Carolina

Robert Reed was born between 1760 and 1770 in Orange County, North Carolina, the son of William Reed and Helen N. Watson [1]. Robert's grandfathers, Sheriff William Reed and James Watson, both served in multiple civic capacities in Orange County governmental affairs in the county's first quarter century. Sheriff William Reed operated a public house and tavern at his home in the county seat of Corbinton, later renamed Childsburg. He served as the Orange County Deputy Public Register (Register of Deeds), deputy clerk of court, standard keeper, justice of the peace, and Childsburg town trustee and director. Reed received a commission as the Orange County *"High Sheriff"* on 18 March 1759 and served in that role from early 1760 until his death in 1762 [2].

Robert Reed's maternal grandfather, James Watson, served as the Orange County Receiver of Import Duties, Justice of the Peace, Clerk of Court, Register of Deeds, town trustee and director of Corbinton and Childsburg (renamed in 1766), and Militia Captain during the French and Indian War. In conjunction of his civic duties, Watson became

involved in the War of the Regulation, writing Gov. William Tryon about the rioting of the Regulators at Hillsborough in 1770. James Watson wrote his will on 5 December 1776, making this bequest [3]:

> *Item: I give devise & bequeath the above mentioned Land on the head Branches of Ellibus Creek to my Grandsons, James Reed, Robert Reed, William Reed & Watson Reed, to them & their Heirs & assigns forever. Provided nevertheless that in case of the Death of my Son in Law William Reed, I allow my Daughter Helen Reed to have the free Use & Enjoyment of the above Land During her natural Life.*
>
> *Item: I give & bequeath to my Grandsons James Reed, Robert Reed, William Reed & Watson Reed all my Right, Title & property of a piece of Land on Ellibus Creek, containing four hundred acres (for which I have paid to Earl Granville's Office the money for entering & surveying) to them & their Heirs forever.*

During the Revolutionary War, a man named *"Robert Reed"* performed service in the North Carolina Militia from the Hillsborough District, a region that encompassed Orange County. This man also supplied corn for the Whigs in their struggle against the Loyalists. It appears that this was an older man than our Robert Reed, whose birth we think occurred in the latter 1760s. The Revolutionary War soldier is undoubtedly the uncle of our Robert, the son of William Reed Sr. and brother of our Robert's father, William Reed Jr. This older Robert Reed served as the Orange County jailer in the latter 1750s.

The surviving records of Orange County, North Carolina suggest that between 1766 and 1770, Robert's parents, William and Helen Reed, gradually prepared to emigrate. In August 1766, William Reed resigned as a road overseer and had the Orange County Court appoint him as his younger brother's guardian. Between 1768 and 1770, he made three transactions that appear to indicate his imminent departure from the region, although they all still gave his residence as Orange County. His last known record in Orange County occurred in July 1772, when he appeared before the Orange County Court to acknowledge his April 1770 land transaction [4].

We do not have clear documentation for precisely where William and Helen Reed moved after leaving Hillsborough, where both their families had lived since about 1750. However, it appears that about the time of Robert's birth, they moved to the western frontier of North Carolina.

At the same time that William Reed resigned as road commissioner in Orange County in mid-1766, a William Reed began the process to obtain a total of 1200 acres of land grants in western Mecklenburg County, the newest western frontier that bordered Cherokee county. While we cannot be certain that the man who obtained this land is our William Reed, husband of Helen Watson, this seems likely.

Effective 10 April 1769, the North Carolina General Assembly put the portion of Mecklenburg County that lay on the west side of the Catawba River into Tryon County [5]. The Tryon County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions organized and held its first session in April 1769. At that first session,

> *William Reed Came into Court & Took the Oaths By Law Appointed for the Qualification of Publick Officers Subscribed the Test took the Oath of a Sub Sheriff & Took his Place Accordingly.*

It is intriguing that Robert's father, William Reed Jr., had worked as a deputy sheriff in Orange County. More intriguing is that on July 27th, Thomas Clark appeared before the Court and, like Reed, took the oath as a *"Deputy Sheriff & Entered on the Duty of his office"* [6]. Thomas Clark had many associations with William Reed Sr. and Jr. between 1755 and 1770. Moreover, Clark had begun making preparations to emigrate from Orange County about the same time as William Reed, for on 3 May 1764, the Orange County Court appointed James England *"Overseer of the Road in the Room of Thomas Clarke."* Later in 1764, Clark later a land entry in Mecklenburg County [7].

Although this does not definitively prove that Robert's parents, William Reed Jr. and Helen Watson Reed, moved from Orange County to Tryon County in the latter 1760s, this appears to be the case. If so, Robert's birth could have

occurred while they still lived in Orange County, or after their arrival in Tryon. It appears that the Reeds remained in Tryon during the Revolutionary War, although the turmoil of that era left a dearth of documentary records.

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On the Western Frontier: The Southwest Territory

At some point during or in the aftermath of the Revolutionary War, William and Helen Reed settled their family just west of the North Carolina border in what in 1784 became Spencer County, State of Franklin. Although never technically a state, a group of residents formed a parallel government, and between 1784 and 1788, made a push for statehood. The movement failed, and Spencer County became known as Hawkins County, with the North Carolina reassuming control over granting lands until Tennessee achieved statehood. William and Helen Reed had settled their family in Spencer County by about 1784 or 1785, for on 1 November 1786, William Reed received a 100-acre land grant on Little Chucky Creek [1].

During the early historical period, the Native American group known as the Cherokee inhabited modern-day western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee. During the Revolutionary War, the Cherokees and other local Native American nations sided with the British and attacked white settlers who had encroached on their lands. As North Carolina began awarding land grants to Revolutionary veterans in what is now eastern Tennessee in the postwar years, white settlement increased significantly. The Cherokees naturally resented this intrusion into their lands, and the resulting clash of cultures resulted in additional violence between the Indians and whites.

On 11 July 1788, Hawkins County resident Thomas Hutchings wrote a letter to Gen. Joseph Martin about the recent violent conditions in the region:

> *Since your departure from hence, the Indians have continued to commit hostilities on our frontiers. On Saturday the 21st of June, killed one man and wounded one other on Little River. On Tuesday the 24th, killed three men at Evan's Ferry, on French Broad River, and wounded one. On Wednesday the 25th, at Mr. William Reed's, killed his son, wounded his daughter, and two men. On Monday the 29th, killed one man at Bunches Station; have likeise stole and carried off a number of horses. The war with the Cherokees have now become general, altho' in part unjustly brought on. We are of necessity obliged to defend ourselves against the cruelties of our inveterate enemy. Colonel Sevier, contrary to the Council of Officers in June, fell on Kiewkah on Hiawassa, and, is said, killed about 20 Indians...*

Hutchings described groups of other white men who attacked several Cherokee leaders meeting in a white settler's house under a flag of truce. The white settlers took a total of fourteen Cherokee scalps, leaving *"altogether a scene of cruelty"* [2].

The son of William Reed killed by the Indians could have been either James Reed or William Reed, both named in the will of their grandfather, James Watson. James appears to have been the eldest and William the third son of William and Helen. Both James and William disappear from the historical record after their grandfather named them in his will. It is possible that both brothers perished in 1788, with the Indians killing one outright and mortally wounding the other [3].

The region in which the Reeds lived was known as Hawkins County, North Carolina between about 1788 and 1790, but in May 1790, North Carolina ceded the counties beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Federal Government, who put them into the *"Territory South of the River Ohio,"* most commonly called the *"Southwest Territory"* [4].

On 3 November 1790, the territorial governor officially changed the name from Hawkins County, North Carolina to Hawkins County, *"territory of the United States of America south of the river Ohio."* On that date, he met at the courthouse with those holding commissions as justices of the peace for Hawkins County, North Carolina and appointed and commissioned them as Justices of the Peace for Hawkins County in the new territory. Those recommissioned included William Reed [5].

In June 1792, the territorial government created Knox County from portions of Greene and Hawkins Counties. The Reeds' land lay near the county line between Greene and Hawkins, and with the creation of Knox, their lands lay entirely within that county. On 16 July 1792, William Reed bought a 118-acre tract of land in Knox County on the Holston River [6].

Even though the region now lay outside their borders in the new Territory South of the River Ohio, North Carolina continued to formally issue grants of land in the region. In 1793, the North Carolina governor granted William Reed thousands of acres of land in both Greene and Hawkins Counties when surveyed. It is not clear if Reed obtained the grants based upon military service during the Revolutionary War or if he merely engaged in land speculation. At this time, no evidence has been located to indicate that William Reed performed any type of service to support the Whig (or Patriot) cause during the conflict [7].

The influx of Americans settlers into the ancestral lands of the Cherokee provoked full-scale war between the two groups during the Revolutionary War. Following military setbacks early in the war, internal conflict arose in Cherokee society regarding the best response to the influx of American settlers and their encroachment on Cherokee ancestry lands. While the majority of Cherokee advocated pursuing peaceful relations with the Americans, one militant faction refused any attempt at peace and instead, they moved westward down the Tennessee River and established new towns, distancing themselves from the Americans. Soon known as the Chickamauga, they showed an uncompromising enmity against Americans, leading to an almost constant state of war between about 1780 and 1794.

In 1792, raiding parties of Chickamauga Cherokee, Creek (Muscogee), and Shawnee began striking several districts in the Territory South of the River Ohio. The hostilities between the Native American forces and Americans involved multiple campaigns over a three-year period, with the Knox County region a primary target.

To protect settlements against Indian attacks, militia units formed in the various districts, including the Hamilton District that included Knox County. William and Helen Reed's sons, Robert and Watson, served in the Knox County Regiment of the Hamilton District Militia at most times of its activation between 1792 and 1795. A massive Cherokee force planned at attack on the region in September 1792, but the Americans learned of their approach and activated the militia. Robert and Watson enlisted on September 11th in Capt. John Menefee's Company, Knox County Regiment Militia, with Robert at the rank of sergeant and Watson as private. Since they lost the element of surprise, the Native American force headed westward to strike another district. The Knox County Militia deactivated after only five days, with Robert receiving militia pay of $1.00 and Watson, 50¢.

Both Cherokee and Creek warriors attacked isolated settlements in the Knox County region in the spring of 1793. Territorial Gov. William Blount activated the Knox County Regiment Militia on May 31st, and Watson Reed served in the company of mounted infantry under Capt. John Beaird. He served through June 14th, when the threat of attacks subsided. At 75¢ per day, Watson Reed's pay for his fifteen days service was $11.25 [8].

Continued hostilities during the summer of 1793 led to a second activation of militia units in Knox County on July 23rd. William Reed served as a sergeant in Capt. Samuel Flenniken's Company, Knox County Regiment, Hamilton District Militia. This unit was assigned to the service of the United States, *"on the frontiers of Washington District,"* the former name of the counties lying to the west of North Carolina's western border. Reed served through August 23rd, receiving pay of $6.20 for one month and one day's service. A year later, on 27 August 1794, Capt. Flenniken's Company was reactivated as a detachment of mounted infantry *"for the protection of the frontiers South of Ohio."* William Reed

also served as sergeant on this brief, six-day tour, with the unit discharged on September 1st. At $1.00 per day, William Reed received $6.00 for this service [9].

Given William Reed's rank as sergeant, and the lack of any record of the younger William Reed, the son of William and Helen Reed, after the December 1776 will of his grandfather, James Watson, it seems probable that the soldier in Capt. Flenniken's Company was Robert's father, William Reed, husband of Helen, even though he was at least in his early fifties by this time [10].

Additional Indian invasions in the fall of 1793 probably led Watson Reed to enlist in militia units in Jefferson and Greene Counties, both of which adjoined his home in Knox County. Watson's name appears as a private on Capt. Parmenas Taylor's Company, Jefferson County Militia, called into service on September 27th and discharged on October 27th [11]. He appears to have concurrently belonged to Capt. John Casey's Company, Green County Militia Regiment, with his service beginning on September 27th and expiring on December 3rd. His pay roll dated at Knoxville showed that he enlisted as a private but was promoted to drummer the following day. For his service of two months and six days, he was paid $8.80 [12].

Repeated threats of Cherokee attacks on white settlements in the Knox County region occurred during the year 1794, leading to numerous activations of militia units to protect the frontiers, including:

May 1794 – The Knox County Regiment was activated with others in the Hamilton District on May 11th. Robert Reed reported at his former rank of sergeant in Capt. John Menefee's Company, with the Regiment commanded by James White, United States Militia. Reed served through serving through May 23rd, receiving $13.00 for this tour. Robert Reed's younger brother, Watson, did not serve with him in Capt. Menefee's Company on this tour.

Jun 1794 – Several weeks after Robert Reed's discharge, the Cherokee again threatened the frontier, causing another activation of the Hamilton District Militia. Both Robert and Watson Reed served in Capt. John Beaird's Company, Knox County Regiment, again under James White, *"called into service by a special order."* They served from June 23rd through July 6th, Robert at the rank of corporal and Watson as a private. For their two weeks' service, Robert was paid $14.00 and Watson, $10.50.

Aug 1794 – A threat in early August led to a third activation of the Hamilton District Militia on August 9th, with both Robert and Watson Reed serving as privates in Capt. Nathaniel Evans' Company, Knox County Regiment, Hamilton District Militia under James White, *"for the protection of the frontiers South of Ohio."* They remained on duty until August 18, and the brothers both received pay of $7.50 for their ten days' service.

Oct 1794 – That fall, threatened attacks to the west of Knox County led to the fourth 1794 activation of the Hamilton District Militia on October 20th, with both Robert and Watson Reed serving in Capt. John Beaird's Company, Knox County Regiment, Hamilton District Militia, *"for the protection of the frontiers of Mero District, Territory South of Ohio."* The brothers both served through November 3rd, with Robert at the rank of sergeant and Watson as a private. For their fifteen days' service, Robert received pay of $15.00 and Watson, $11.25.

Dec 1794 – The threat of Cherokee and Creek attacks continued into the early winter, leading to another activation on December 11th, with Robert and Watson Reed serving again in Capt. John Beaird's Company, Knox County Regiment, this time in the Washington District Militia, *"for the protection of the frontiers Southwest of the Ohio Territory."* The brothers served as privates until discharged on December 31st, both receiving pay of $15.75 for their twenty-one days' service [13].

The 1792–1794 conflict in modern Tennessee between the Cherokees and white settlers was a part of the Northwest Indian War that concluded in August 1795 with the Treaty of Greenville. The end of the Northwest Indian War also brought an end to the hostilities in Tennessee.

William Reed obtained extensive land grants in Tennessee, including one grant of a 400-acre tract on Beaverdam, Creek in what was then Hawkins County, *"in the south part of the western District South of the Ohio River."* On 10 March 1791, for 40 pounds, William Reed sold this tract to Moses Poor. Robert Reed witnessed his father's transaction [14].

After they had left North Carolina for Tennessee, Robert and his brother, Watson, retained possession of the land their grandfather had left them in Orange County, North Carolina in his 1776 will. On 10 June 1794, Robert and Watson, as residents of Knox County, *"Teritory* [sic] *South of the River Ohio"* (later Tennessee), sold their 240 acres for 50 pounds [15]. We know that Native Americans killed at least one son of William and Helen Reed in June 1788, but this record indicates that by 1794, only Robert and Watson Reed survived.

By 1796, Watson Reed had married Huldeth, and they had two young daughters. Watson appears to have become ill by early 1796, and he wrote his will on March 7, leaving his property to his wife and daughters. Watson named Huldeth and brother, Robert, as his executors, while his parents, William and Helen N. Reed, witnessed the document [16]. Watson died by July 1796, when Robert and his parents appeared in court to file the will. The Court appointed Robert and Huldeth Reed as executors. Robert Reed had an inventory completed of his brother's estate and returned it to the Court the following October [17].

In the spring of 1797, the Knox County Court summoned Robert Reed to appear in court to serve as a juror on April 29. Reed and five others failed to appear. The Court ordered *"that for such their Contempt they be severally fined Twelve Dollars and fifty Cents."* On Saturday, August 5th, Robert Reed appeared in court and made affidavit explaining his absence, and the Court ordered the fine assessed him to be set aside. The following spring, the Sheriff issued a summons to Robert Reed to appear for jury duty at the court session held in April 1798. On Monday, April 9, Robert Reed appeared in court and was chosen to serve on the grand duty [18].

Soon after their arrival in what is now Tennessee in the 1780s, both Robert Reed and his father, William, began making applications for land grants in Hawkins County, later Knox County. Robert obtained three grants, but William Reed obtained grants for thousands of acres of land. It is unclear if Tennessee awarded him so many grants due to possible military service for the Whigs during the Revolutionary War, or if William engaged in land speculation.

Citizens living near Robert Reed found themselves isolated from the center of government, and in 1799, groups began petitioning the Tennessee General Assembly to divide Knox County in hopes of bringing a new county seat closer to their homes. On 15 July 1799, the fourth group of citizens signed this petition:

> *To the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee.*
> *We the subscribers living in Knox County below the mouth of Turkey Creek or north of Clinch petition that Knox County may be divided so as to leave the same a constitutional County and that a new County be formed so as to contain a part of the tract of country lying between the rivers Holston and Clinch next above South West Point and a part of that tract of country lying north of Clinch and we as in duty bound will ever pray.*

Robert Reed signed this petition along with fourteen other citizens [19]. The Tennessee General Assembly acted on these petitions, putting the region in which they lived into Roane County in 1801.

With the conclusion of the Cherokee Wars in 1795 and Tennessee's statehood in 1796, settlers began pouring into the new state. Two years later, about 1798 or 1799, Robert and the extended Reed family began investigating the possibility of moving to the new western frontier on the North American continent: Spain's Louisiana Colony. Robert's

father, William Reed, traveled west, across the Mississippi River to explore the area what is now southeastern Missouri. It seems likely that Robert and one or both of his brothers, Thomas or Joseph, accompanied their father. Apparently pleased with what the found in the country to the west of the Mississippi, the Reeds went to the village of New Bourbon to visit the commandant. Several years later, another man, William Murphy made affidavit, saying

> *…he was present when old William Reed obtained permission to settle himself, and friends, and connections, on vacant land, from Mr. De Luziere, late commandant of New Bourbon, in 1798 or 1799…*

The region in which William Reed had permission to settle soon became the Sainte Genevieve District, later Ste. Genevieve County, and then, in 1813, Washington County, which it remains today [20].

We do not know how long William Reed spent on his initial journey across the Mississippi River, but he took his seat as a justice on the Knox County Court on January 16–17 and 19, 1799 [21]. It is unclear if the Reeds' westward journey to Spanish Louisiana occurred in 1798 or after January 1799. On 18 January 1800, William's son, Thomas Reed, replaced him as a Knox County Justice of the Peace [22]. This possibly indicates that William Reed remained absent in Spanish Louisiana in January 1800. His initial journey across the Mississippi River could have occurred in either 1798, with him returning to Tennessee by January 1799, or he could have made the trip in 1799–1800.

In the fall of 1800, the extended family of William and Helen Watson Reed began making preparations to move across the Mississippi River into Sainte Genevieve District, Territory of Louisiana. On 2 October 1800, as a resident of Knox County, Tennessee, Robert Reed sold his 400-acre tract of land on the Clinch River for $500 [23]. Later that month, on October 31st, Robert witnessed his father's sale of a 200-acre tract of land on the south side of the Clinch River in the Black house Valley [24].

We know that Robert Reed's birth occurred between 1760 and 1770, probably in the latter portion of that decade [25]. We have no record that he married in the mid- or latter 1780s as he reached his early twenties. His only known wife had the same given name as his mother, *"Helen."* No known documentation proves Helen's maiden name, nor do we have any record of when or where their marriage occurred. The birth of their eldest known daughter, Nancy Ann Reed, occurred about 1799 in Knox (later Roane and Rhea) County, Tennessee, with of their other children born in what is now Missouri.

Thus, as the extended Reed family began to immigrate west of the Mississippi River in late 1800, Robert Reed's immediate family included his wife, Helen, and their infant daughter, Nancy [26].

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Westward to Another Frontier: The Louisiana Territory

About November or December 1800, Robert and Helen Reed, together with his parents and other relatives, moved across the Mississippi to the Bellevue Valley of what is now southeastern Missouri [1]. Although he soon established permanent residence there, Robert retained ownership of a 675-acre tract of land he had been granted in Tennessee for several more years. On 19 May 1808, as a resident of Sainte Genevieve District, Territory of Louisiana, he sold his Tennessee land for $400 [2].

Robert Reed and his relatives all soon obtained Spanish grants for land in the Louisiana Territory, but as the region changed from Spanish to French to American possession, it took years before they obtained a clear title to their new properties. Robert's land adjoined that of his brother, Thomas Reed, and on 15 September 1808, Robert Reed witnessed Thomas selling his property:

> *Know all men by these presents that I Thomas Reed of the Township of Belle View do by these presents assign over to William Sloan of the same place my right and claim to a certain tract of land on the Reed Creek and bounded by lands of Robert Reed, David Gallaher, and Edward Johnson...* [3].

While living in what is now southeastern Missouri, the Reeds experienced the devastating New Madrid Earthquakes that occurred on 16 December 1811. The following year on 18 June 1812, the United States declared war on Great Britain. As they lived on the remote western frontier, now officially designated as Missouri Territory [4], their location put the Reeds and other Americans there into peril. Other frontier territories had recently experienced extreme violence from Native American groups encouraged by British agents operating between Canada and the Gulf of Mexico.

Just a few months after the War of 1812 began, residents of the Bellevue Valley formed a militia company, with Robert Reed and William Reed, Robert's first cousin, as privates, and Thomas Reed, Robert's brother, as the company's ensign. The Reeds, together with their neighbors and close associates, David Gallaher and Ananias McCoy, all served in Capt. John Hughes' company from September 9th through the October 25th [5].

Missouri residents feared attacks and depredations from hostile Indians from the Illinois Territory, with the threats intensifying by early 1813. On March 1st, Gov. James Wilkinson ordered that Capt. Hughes' company muster for inspection at its local parade ground on Saturday, March 20th, and *"hold themselves thenceforth, in readiness to be called into actual service at a moments* [sic] *warning."* Gov. Wilkinson issued these orders to the soldiers:

> *That no citizen soldier may be ignorant of the manner in which the law requires him to be equipped, he is reminded, that it is his duty to provide himself with a good musket, with bayonet and belt, or a fusil,... & knapsack and pouch with a box therein, to contain not less than twenty four cartridges, or a good rifle, knapsack, powder horn and pouch with twenty balls, and a quarter of a pound of powder...this is an equipment prescribed by the laws of our county in times of tranquility and peace, surely in the moment of difficulty and danger no militia man will delay to make the preparation. The great body of the militia will do their duty: It is known that they will, they have given proofs of it - the work is their own - the defence* [sic] *of their own fields and firesides. They have the character too, of Americans to support, and the blessings of a mild system of government to preserve.*

No further record of the activities of Capt. John Hughes' company exists, and we have no details of any military activities of Robert Reed and his relatives after October 1812 [6].

Robert Reed's father, William, reportedly died about 1813 in what later became Washington County, Missouri. There is no record of when Robert's mother, Helen died. She may have lived long enough to move with her children to Hempstead County, Arkansas Territory. Some have claimed that Helen Watson Reed is the woman aged 90–100 years living in the 1830 household of William Reed in Hempstead County, Arkansas [7]. This this *could* be possible, it seems unlikely. Those making this claim assumed that this William Reed in 1830 Hempstead County is William Reed

Jr., the brother of Robert and son of William and Helen Reed. This is incorrect; there is no evidence that William and Helen's son by this name survived into the 1800s. In fact, he is only known from the 1776 will of Helen's father, James Watson. The William Reed living in 1830 Hempstead is the nephew of William and Helen Reed, the son of William's brother, Joseph, as documented by the testimony in the Missouri land claims.

Problems securing clear titles to their lands originally granted by the Spanish Government soon after the Reeds' arrival in Louisiana Territory may have prompted many of them to leave Missouri and move away. In 1818, Robert and Helen Reed still lived in Belleview Township, Washington County, Missouri Territory. On September 17th of that year, for $40, Robert Reed sold his *"...right title and interest to a tract of land lying and being in the said Township of Belleview"* on the west bank of Reed's Creek,

> *...including the improvement whereon Nathaniel Richardson now lives Calculated at Seven acres and one hundred and forty poles more or less.*

Reed's transaction was witnessed by Levin Ainsworth, the husband of his eldest daughter, Nancy, and Rachel Reed, who we cannot clearly identify [8].

Soon after selling his land in September 1818, Robert and Helen Reed and many of their relatives left the Belleview Valley and moved south, to Hempstead County, in what was then the southwestern corner of Missouri Territory next to Indian Territory. We do not know the precise date of their move, it probably occurred in 1818–1819, the same time their neighbor, Edward Johnson, moved from the Belleview Valley to Hempstead County. Johnson and Robert Reed owned land that adjoined that of Robert's brother, Thomas [9]. On 28 August 1818, Edward Johnson still resided in Belleview Township, Washington, Territory of Missouri, but by 20 September 1819, he had settled in Hempstead County, *"Missourie Territorie."* Hempstead County remained in Missouri Territory until 4 July 1819, when the United States put the area that now constitutes the State of Arkansas into Arkansas Territory [10]. In 1830, Edward Johnson Sr. lived four households away from Robert Reed [11].

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Southwest to a Final Frontier: Arkansas Territory

Soon after selling his land in the Ste. Genevieve District of Missouri Territory, Robert and Helen Reed joined their relatives in leaving southeastern Missouri. The group headed southwest, and settled in what soon became southwestern Arkansaw Territory, the region that later became Hempstead County. Their precise date of arrival in the remote district is unclear, but they had settled there by mid-1820. In August 1820, the Hempstead County Sheriff put Robert Reed on the grand jury for that term of court [1].

In the early 1820s, the United States Congress finalized the titles to lands settlers like the Reeds had claimed by right of settlement while Spain still owned the region. On 23 June 1825, as residents of Hempstead County, Robert and Helen Reed sold their 632-acre tract of land in Washington County, Missouri granted to them by official U.S. patent dated 29 March 1824. The grant was for 640 acres, but they had sold eight acres in 1818, prior to leaving Missouri [2].

Soon after their arrival in southwestern Arkansas, Robert and Helen Reed settled on and began cultivation of land there. By 1826, they had settled on lands that then lay in Hempstead County but fell into Howard County upon its 1873 creation. On 21 November 1826, Robert Reed traveled to Little Rock to the government land office, where he paid $200 for two 80-acre tracts of land there [3].

In 1830, Robert and Helen lived in Hempstead, with their household consisting of their two youngest daughters, Helen and Rachel, plus their nine slaves, one female aged 55–100, a male aged 36–55, a male and female both aged 24–36, a male and female aged 10–24, and one male and two female children under ten years of age [4]. Sometime between 1830 and 1836, Robert Reed bought a 160-acre tract of land near his previous holdings. On 14 March 1836, he divided the tract and sold 80-acre portions to his two sons, Watson and Robert Belleview Reed, for the incredible sum of $1000 each [5]. On 21 March 1836, just a few days after selling this land to his sons, Robert Reed traveled the short distance to the new land office in Washington, Arkansas. The government had recently opened the Washington, Arkansas Land Office, thereby eliminating the need for a long journey to Little Rock to purchase government land. Reed purchased a 40-acre tract of land that adjoined his existing holdings [6]. Several months later, on 8 June 1836, again for the large sum of $1000, Robert Reed sold Watson another 80-acre tract of land, this one that Robert had bought from the government in 1826 [7].

Robert and Helen Reed made their last known land transaction on 7 November 1839. For $1700, Robert and Helen Reed disposed of their 120-acre farm in Hempstead County. Given that he initially paid $120 for the land, he realized an enormous profit and must have made significant improvements to it [8].

In 1840, it appears that Robert and Helen lived with their son, Robert Belleview Reed, and his wife and three young daughters on their old farm in Hempstead County. Their daughter, Epsy D. Reed Patterson, and her family lived in the adjoining household, while their eldest married daughter, Nancy Ann Reed Ainsworth, and another relative, William Reed, lived nearby [9].

Robert Reed died in December 1843, presumably on the Hempstead County farm of his son, Robert B. Reed [10]. Helen Reed survived Robert by several years, with her attorney appearing before the Hempstead County Court in January 1845 to petition for her one-third dower in her husband's property as allocated to her by law [11]. The Court failed to assign her dower in 1845 and did not act until October 1848. It appears that Helen died by October 1849, when Robert Reed's estate was distributed among his children. Records show that she died in Union County, where most of her children had settled by the latter 1840s [12].

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Children of Robert and Helen Reed

The children of Robert Reed are proved by his estate records in Hempstead County, Arkansas [1]. It is not entirely clear that Helen was Robert's only wife and the mother of all of his children, as we can only document her as his wife between 1825 and 1849. As described earlier, several of his children named their own daughters *"Helen,"* but this does not necessarily prove anything.

The following list constitutes the children of Robert Reed who survived him:

1. **Nancy Ann Reed** (c1799–aft. 1860) was born in Knox County, Tennessee, shortly before Robert and Helen left for Louisiana Territory. She married before 17 September 1818 in Washington County, Missouri Territory to Levin Ainsworth (c1791–28 Jul 1858). Nancy and Levin Ainsworth moved with her father to Hempstead County, Arkansas and lived there until their deaths.
2. **Milinda Reed** (21 Dec 1801–18 May 1860) married about 1821 in Hempstead County, Arkansas Territory to Isaac Ogden (19 Aug 1797–28 Sep 1859), son of Rev. Benjamin Ogden (1765/1770–9 Dec 1837) and Susannah Moore (1770/1774–1850/1855). Milinda and Isaac Ogden settled on the Ogden family land southwest of modern El Dorado and lived there until the latter 1830s, when they moved a few miles south to the modern community of Caledonia. Milinda died of *"consumption"* several months after Isaac. They are buried in the Ogden Family Cemetery near El Dorado, Union County, Arkansas.
3. **Epsy D. Reed** (c1804–1841/1844) married about 1818–1819 to Robert Patterson (c1801–c1863), reportedly the son of David Patterson Jr. (c1775–c1814) and his wife, Rebecca (c1780–bef. 1820). Epsy left three children [2], and they moved with their father to Texas by 1850, living in Collin County in 1850 and 1860.
4. **Watson Reed** (14 Nov 1806–25 Feb 1890) married about 1827–1828 to Penelope Rebecca Black (4 Sep 1811–26 Jan 1886). They lived in Hempstead County in 1830, Union County in 1840 and 1850, in Claiborne Parish, Louisiana in 1860, in Madison County, Texas in 1870, and in Eastland County, Texas in 1880. Watson and Penelope Reed are buried in the Oakwood Cemetery, Cisco, Eastland County, Texas.
5. **Robert Bellevue Reed** (8 Apr 1809–1 Sep 1898) married about 1829, probably in Hempstead County, Arkansas Territory, to Martha Emma Mourning (c1810–aft. 1880). Robert and Martha Reed lived in Hempstead County in 1830 and 1840, in Union County in 1850, in Columbia County in 1860 and 1870, and in Hempstead County in 1880. Robert is buried in the Gum Springs Cemetery, Grant County, Arkansas, where he presumably died.
6. **Helen Reed** (1810/1815–aft. 1860) married between about 1830 and 1835, probably in Hempstead County, Arkansas Territory, to Martin Foster (1810/1820–Oct 1849/1860).
7. **Rachel Reed** (c1814–1860/1866) married on 21 November 1833 in Union County, Arkansas Territory to Charles Smith (c1814–aft. 1870). Rachel died in Brazos County, Texas, and it is not known what became of Charles.

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Notes

Early Life in North Carolina

1. 1830 Hempstead County AR Federal Census, p. 126, line #25: Robert Reed. 1840 Hempstead County AR Federal Census, p. 169, line #31: Robt. Reed. Both census records give Robert's birth year as between 1760 and 1770. Proof of his parents comes from the will of his maternal grandfather, referenced below.
2. Orange County NC Court Minutes Book 2 (1758–1762), p. 148 (March 1760).
3. Orange County NC Will Book A, pp. 202-203 (Will of James Watson, dated 5 December 1776, filed in court in August 1777).
4. Orange County NC Court Minutes Book 3 (1762–1766), pp. 454 (12 August 1766), 460 (13 August 1766). Orange County NC Deed Book 3 (1768–1787), pp. 196–197 (Thomas Canby to William Reed, 15 October 1768); Deed Book 2 (1769–1783), pp. 575–576 (William Reed to David Mitchel, 25 September 1769); Deed Book 3 (1768–1787), pp. 476–477 (William Reed to James Watson, 5 April 1770; acknowledged by William Reed before the July 1772 Orange County Court). All three records gave William Reed's residence as Orange County, North Carolina.
5. Clark, Walter, ed. *The State Records of North Carolina.* Vol. XXIII, Goldsboro, NC: Nash Brothers, 1904, pp. 769–772 (*"An Act for dividing the County of Mecklenburg"*).
6. Tryon County NC Court Minutes (1769–1774), pp. 1, 15 (April 1769), 16, 24 (July 1769).
7. Orange County NC Deed Book 1 (1755–1756), pp. 146–147 (William Reed to Thomas Clark, 4 November 1755); pp. 147–148 (Thomas Clark to Edward Dickie, 5 December 1755; witness: *"Willm Reed"*). Orange County NC Court Minutes Book 1 (1752–1758), p. 233 (June 1757). Orange County NC Court Minutes Book 2 (1758–1762), p. 75 (13 March 1759); Book 3 (1762–1766), pp. 57 (3 August 1763), 162 (3 May 1764). North Carolina Grant #70, file #450, entry #--, Thomas Clark, 214 acres in Mecklenburg County, issued 6 April 1765. North Carolina Grant Book 17, p. 161. Like the grants to William Reed, the grant to Thomas Clark was duplicated with a different file number and recorded a second time in the grant books, with the same grant number: North Carolina Grant #70, Thomas Clark, file #1178, entry #--, 214 acres in Mecklenburg County, issued 6 April 1765. North Carolina Grant Book 18, p. 146.

On the Western Frontier: The Southwest Territory

1. Greene County TN Deed Book 1 (1785–1793), pp. 28, 55–56 (State of North Carolina to William Reed, 1 November 1786). It is unclear why the identical grant was recorded twice in the county records.
2. Clark, Vol. XII (1907), pp. 695-696.
3. Orange County NC Will Book A, pp. 202–203 (will of James Watson, dated 4 December 1776, filed in court in August 1777).
4. Carter, Clarence Edwin, compiler and editor. *The Territorial Papers of the United States.* Vol. IV (*The Territory South of the River Ohio, 1790-1796.*), 1936, pp. 18–19.
5. Carter, pp. 436–437. The record spelled his name as *"William Read,"* but this is undoubtedly our William Reed, who served as a Justice of the Peace in Knox County after its creation in 1792.
6. Knox County TN Land Grants & Indentures, Vol. A-1, pp. 8-9 (James Anderson to William Reed, 16 July 1792).
7. Tennessee–North Carolina Land Grants Book 9 (1795), pp. 14 (300 acres), 30 (400 acres), 31 (640 acres), 32/35 (800 acres), 36 (640 acres), 37 (400 acres), 38 (640 acres), 39 (640 acres), 40 (640 acres), 62 (640 acres), 63 (400 acres), 91 (640 acres), 92 (640 acres), 99 (250 acres), and 178 (400 acres).
8. Compiled Military Service Records, Robert Reed (sergeant and private) and Watson Reed (private), Knox County Regiment, Hamilton District Militia, Territory South of the Ohio, 1792–1794.
9. Compiled Military Service Record, William Reed (sergeant), Flenniken's Company, Knox County Regiment, Hamilton District Militia, Territory South of the Ohio, 1792–1794.
10. Orange County NC Will Book A, pp. 202–203 (will of James Watson, dated 4 December 1776, filed in court in August 1777).
11. Compiled Military Service Record, Watson Reed (private), Taylor's Company, Doherty's Regiment of Militia, Territory South of the Ohio, 1793–1794.
12. Compiled Military Service Record, Watson Reed (private and drummer), Casey's Company, Christian's Regiment of Militia, Territory South of the Ohio, 1793. It seems unusual that Watson Reed could have served in two separate units, but the name of *"Watson Reed"* is an uncommon one, and both military files are undoubtedly for the same man. These two files contain only one or two entries, and the dates could be off somewhat.
13. Compiled Military Service Records, Robert Reed (sergeant and private) and Watson Reed (private), Knox County Regiment, Hamilton District Militia, Territory South of the Ohio, 1792–1794.
14. Hawkins County TN Deed Book 1 (1787–1801), p. 125 (William Reed to Moses Poor, 10 March 1791; witness: Robert Reed).
15. Orange County NC Deed Book 5, pp. 717–718 (Robert and Watson Reed to Benjamin Peeler, 10 June 1794).
16. Knox County TN Settlements & Administrators, Book O, p. 16 (Will of Watson Reed, dated 7 March 1796).

17. Knox County TN Settlements & Administrators, Vol. 1, pp. 47, 53 (Estate of Watson Reed).
18. Knox County TN County Court Minutes, Book 1 (1795–1799), pp. 231 (29 April 1797), 251 (5 August 1797), and 318 (9 April 1798).
19. Tennessee State Library and Archives, Microfilmed Legislative Petitions, 1799-1801, Reel 1, General Assembly Original Bills, Petitions, Reports, Etc., 1790–present (Record Group 60), 1799, 1st Session, Legislative Petition 12, "Petition regarding the division of Knox County."
20. United States Congressional Records. Records of the 24th Congress, 1st Session. American State Papers 035. Public Lands, Vol. 8. Publication No. 1340. *Final reports of the Board of Commissioners on Private Land Claims in Missouri, under the act of July 9, 1832. Communicated to the Senate, December 15, 1835,* p. 109. Murphy made this affidavit in testimony given on 3 December 1807 in the private land claim of William Reed Jr., who he identified as the nephew of the older William Reed.
21. Knox County TN County Court Minutes Book 1 (1795–1799), pp. 411, 414, 423.
22. Knox County TN County Court Minutes Book 2 (1799–1800), p. 114.
23. Knox County TN Land Grants & Indentures, Vol. G-1, pp. 131–132 (Robert Reed to John McWhorter, 2 October 1800; witness: Thomas Reed; security: William Reed). It is unclear why Robert's father, William, would have signed as security, if it were not as security for McWhorter's payment of $500 to Robert Reed.
24. Knox County TN Land Grants & Indentures, Vol. G-1, pp. 134–135 (William Reed to John Bomer, 31 October 1800; witness: Robert Reed).
25. 1830 Hempstead County AR Federal Census, p. 126, line #25: Robert Reed. 1840 Hempstead County AR Federal Census, p. 169, line #31: Robt. Reed.
26. This discussion here assumes that Helen, Robert Reed's wife between 1825 and his death in 1843, was the mother of all of his children. While perhaps probable, it is not clearly documented. The earliest-known record that gives the name of Robert Reed's wife is a deed made in 1825, in which Robert Reed and his wife, Helen, sell land in Missouri (Washington County MO Deed Book B, pp. 332–333). Several of their granddaughters carried the given name, *"Helen,"* including the eldest daughters of their daughter Epsy Reed Patterson, born about 1804, and their son, Watson, born in 1806.

Westward to Another Frontier: The Louisiana Territory

1. The statement that Robert and Helen Reed moved from Tennessee into Louisiana Territory follows the assumption that she was Robert's wife as of about 1798 and mother of all of his children. This is not documented, and it remains a possibility that Robert married another woman in Tennessee who gave birth to his eldest daughter, Nancy, born about 1799 before he left Tennessee.
2. Rhea County TN Deed Book ABCD, p. 42 (Robert Reed to Stephen Bishop and Alexander Ferguson, 19 May 1808).
3. Washington County MO Deed Book A, p. 517 (Thomas Reed to William Sloan, 15 September 1808; witnesses: Robt. My. Stevenson, Robt. Reed).
4. Effective 1 October 1804, the United States divided the Louisiana Purchase, designating the portion that lay south of the 33rd parallel (the modern Louisiana/Arkansas state line) as the Territory of Orleans. This region became the State of Louisiana on 30 April 1812. On 4 July 1805, the United States designated the remainder of the Louisiana Purchase, the area that lay north of the 33rd parallel, as Louisiana Territory. After the U.S. admitted Louisiana to the Union as a state, confusion led the United States to change the name of Louisiana Territory. Effective 4 June 1812, it became Missouri Territory.
5. Bounty Land Application Warrant #50-40-68880, Capt. John Hughes, Missouri Volunteers, Col. Alexander McNair (also #39926). This bounty land application, filed by Hughes on 28 September 1850, included a muster roll of Capt. Hughes' Company showing the Reeds' service in September and October 1812.
6. *"Missouri Gazette"* (St. Louis, MO), February 27 (p. 3, column 4) and March 6 (p. 3, columns 3–4), 1813.
7. 1830 Hempstead County NC Federal Census, p. 132, line #8: William Reed.
8. Washington County MO Deed Book A, pp. 277–279 (Robert Reed to A. W. Hudspeth, 17 September 1818; witnesses: Levin Ainsworth, Rachel Reed). Robert and Helen Reed's youngest known daughter was named Rachel Reed, but she was still a young girl of only four years in 1818. The identity of Rachel Reed who witnessed this document is unknown.
9. Washington County MO Deed Book A, p. 517 (Thomas Reed to William Sloan, 15 September 1808; witnesses: Robt. My. Stevenson, Robt. Reed).
10. Washington County MO Deed Book A, pp. 272–274 (Edward and Deborah Johnson to George Breckenridge, 28 August 1818); pp. 417–418 (Edward Johnson to James Johnson, 20 September 1819); pp. 427–428 (Edward Johnson to William Buford, 20 September 1819).
11. 1830 Hempstead County AR Federal Census, p. 126, line #20: *"Edward Johnson Senr.;"* line #25: Robert Reed.

Southwest to a Final Frontier: Arkansas Territory

1. Hempstead County AR Order Book (1819–1822), p. 41. In the August 1820 Term of court, *"The Sheriff returned into Court the following panal* [sic] *of grand jurors to the present Term of this Court to wit:…Robt. Reed."*
2. Washington County MO Deed Book B, pp. 332–333 (Robert & Helen Reed to Alexander and Moses Russell, 23 June 1825; witnesses: Wm. Russell, Robert Reed Jr.). The identity of Robert Reed Jr. who witnessed this transaction is not known. Their own son, Robert Belleview Reed, was born in April 1809, making him only sixteen at the time they made this transaction. He may have witnessed his parents' deed at that young age.
3. Little Rock, Arkansas Land Office Cash Entry #153, Robert Reed, $80 for the E½ of SE¼; Cash Entry #154, $80 for the W½ of SE¼, both in Section 35, Township 11 South, Range 27 West. Reed paid $1.25 per acre for his land, the rate set by Congress at that time.
4. 1830 Hempstead County AR Federal Census, p. 126, line #25: Robert Reed.
5. Little Rock, Arkansas Land Office Cash Entry #119 [6251], Allen Rains, 21 May 1830, SW¼, Section 26, Township 11 South, Range 27 West. Hempstead County AR Deed Book C, p. 159 (Robert Reed to Watson Reed, 14 March 1836; witnesses: John F. Griffin, Augustus Black); Deed Book C, pp. 159–160 (Robert Reed to Robert Belleview Reed, 14 March 1836; witnesses: John F. Griffin, Augustus Black). Robert Reed sold Watson Reed the W½ of SW¼, and he sold Robert Belleview Reed the E½ of SW¼, Section 26, Township 11 South, Range 27 West. There is no recorded deed showing Robert Reed purchasing this 160-acre tract from Allen Rains.
6. Washington, Arkansas Land Office Cash Entry #2033, Robert Reed, $40 for the NW¼ of SW¼ of Section 36, Township 11 South, Range 27 West.
7. Hempstead County AR Deed Book C, p. 158 (Robert Reed to Watson Reed, 8 June 1836; witnesses: Augustus Black, David Black). Reed sold his son the W½ of SE¼, Section 35, Township 11 South, Range 27 West.
8. Hempstead County AR Deed Book G, pp. 57–58 (Robert & Helen Reed to James Johnson, 7 November 1839). The Reeds sold Johnson the E½ of SE¼, Section 35, and the NW¼ of SW¼, Section 36, all in Township 11 South, Range 27 West. Reed had bought these tracts from the government in 1826 and 1836.
9. 1840 Hempstead County AR Federal Census, p. 169, line #21: Leven Aynsworth; line #27: William Reed; line #30: Robt. Patterson; line #31: Robt. Reed.
10. Hempstead County AR Letters, Sales, Bills, Inventories, & Appraisements Book G (1837–1845), pp. 396–398 (Estate of Robert Reed, 5 January 1844).
11. Hempstead County AR Probate Book B (1841–1846), p. 280 (Helen Reed petitions for dower in the estate of her deceased husband, Robert Reed, January 1845).
12. Hempstead County AR Probate Book C (1846–1850), pp. 160–161 (Dower of Helen Reed in estate of her husband, Robert Reed, October 1847); pp. 286–287 (Dower of Helen Reed in estate of her husband, Robert Reed, October 1848); pp. 415–417 (Final Distribution of Robert Reed estate among heirs, 13 October 1849); Probate Book E (1853–1858), p. 162 (Heirs of Epsy Patterson, October 1854). In October 1854, the guardian of Helen Reed's three grandchildren filed a charge of $20, *"amount expenses going to Union County to collect money from Helen Reed Estate."* This indicates that Helen probably died in Union County, where several of her children lived.

Children of Robert and Helen Reed

1. Hempstead County AR Letters, Sales, Bills, Inventories, & Appraisements Book G (1837–1845), pp. 396–398. Hempstead County AR Probate Book B (1841–1846), pp. 222, 241, 280, 326, 349, 407, 476, 482, 534; Probate Book C (1846–1850), pp. 19, 36–37, 97, 101, 154, 159–161, 181–183, 286–287, 318, 369, 405, 409, 415–417.
2. Hempstead County AR Probate Book D (1850–1853), pp. 27, 145, 206, 270, 318–319; Probate Book E (1853–1858), pp. 121, 162.

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