

Elijah Comstock (1808-1875)

By Jerry Long, Owensboro, Ky., 1990

31 August 1990

Mrs. Mary Jane McArthur
P.O. Box 20 E
Morley, MO 63767

Dear Mrs. McArthur:

Have been looking over the information you gave me and have the following comments & questions:

- On your ancestor chart you have that Napoleon Bonapart Comstock was born 24 August 1820 but in the three articles on the Comstock family it is written that he was born 22 August 1820. Is August 24 on his monument?
- The birth & death of Sarah E. Comstock is recorded in the 1852-1861 Breckinridge County, KY vital statistics. It is recorded that Sarah E. was born in Breckinridge County on 7 June 1852 to Napoleon B. Comstock & Eliza W. Newman; and Sarah E. Comstock, age 8, daughter of N. B. Comstock, died in Breckinridge County on 6 March 1861 of dropsy of the heart.
- According to the 1880 & 1900 censuses John Williams Comstock was born in Arkansas in 1856. I wonder if N. B. Comstock at the time was in Crawford County, Ark., where some of his half-brothers resided.
- I wonder where Ephraim (1794-1847) would have been at the time of the 1830 & 1840 censuses, and his widow, Nancy, in 1850? I plan to check for them in the Kentucky & Tennessee census indexes.
- Elijah Comstock (1808-1875), a brother of Ephraim, resided here in Owensboro, moving here about 1827. He has a monument in the Elmwood Cemetery, in Owensboro.

Enclosed I have typed up what I have on the families, who settled in your area, that I told you about. These families were all interrelated through the Midkiff family and left Ohio County, Ky. shortly after 1900 and moved to the Sikeston - Canalou area of Missouri. They were relatives of my grandmother, Rebecca Midkiff Pate. If you could find any of them in any of the listings of the cemeteries which you have access to or in the local marriages, it would be a great help. Please do not spend a great deal of work on this. I would appreciate anything that you can find at your convenience.

I am going to check for Ephraim Comstock in the tax lists of Breckinridge County, KY, I wonder if he may not have returned there (in one of the Comstock articles you let me copy it said he returned to KY & died on 20 December 1847). I will let you know what I find.

It was great meeting you. Thanks for sharing info on the Comstock family and am looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,
Jerry Long
1701 Alexander Avenue
Owensboro, KY 42301

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19 November 1990

Mary J. McArthur
P.O. Box 205
Morley, MD 63767

Dear Mrs. McArthur:

Thank you for the information you sent on my Midkiff relatives in the Sikeston area. It was a tremendous help.

Enclosed is an obituary from the Owensboro Examiner, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 24 Dec 1875, p.1, for Elijah Comstock, a brother of your ancestor, Ephraim Comstock. He has a monument in the Elmwood Cemetery, here in Owensboro. On his monument it is recorded: Elija Comstock born 4 March 1809 in Breckinridge County, KY, & died 5 December 1875; his wife, Susan, born 17 September 1817 & died 19 April 1894. His two marriages were recorded in Daviess County, KY: to Sabina Holmes 3 May 1832 & to Susan Bowlds 31 March 1850. The Daviess County census records list him as being a cabinet maker and in the Daviess County order books his name frequently appears as being a coffin maker. Also enclosed is a biography. of Henry Tompkins Comstock (1820-1870), for whom the Comstock Lode at Virginia City, Nevada was named, and who was also a distant cousin of the Breckinridge County, KY Comstocks.

I checked the Breckinridge County, KY tax records down to 1849 for Comstock. Ephraim Comstock (1794-1847) last appeared there in the 1820 tax list; he was then assessed on 2 tracts of land on the I Beechfork, 100 & 200 acres, & 2 blacks. Unfortunately the lists of 1840-1848 were missing and I thus could not determine if Ephraim Comstock, in his last years, returned to Breckinridge County. Ephraim was not listed in the 1830 or 1840 census indexes for the states of Kentucky & Tennessee. In 1840 only one Comstock was listed in the Tennessee index.: C. M. Comstock in Bedford County (p.71). In the 1850 Tennessee index no Comstocks were listed; I wonder where was the family of Ephraim Comstock? Napoleon B. Comstock was first listed in the Breckinridge County tax records in 1849; he possibly had appeared in the 1841-1848 lists

there, which are now missing; in 1849 he was taxed on 2 horses valued at \$60.00. In the Breckinridge County tax lists of 1821-1829, 1831, 1833-1835 & 1837-1839 no Comstocks were listed; the other years not listed have no extant books.

Lavinia, daughter of William Comstock & Winny Ann Hardin, was born 29 August 1810 Breckinridge County, KY, died 23 December 1837, and married William Spickernagle on 31 December 1827 in Breckinridge County, KY. According to C. B. Comstock's Some Descendants of Samuel Comstock of Providence, R.I., who died about 1660 (1905., the Knickerbocker Press, New York), p.162), Lavinia & William Spickernagle had five children: Horace, born 21 March 1829; William, born 16 January 1831; John, b. 12 October 1833, residence Owensboro, KY; Laura, b. 21 October 1835; & Lavinia, b. 22 December 1837. She may have died in the state of Tennessee, her son John Spickernagle in the 1870 & 1880 censuses of Daviess County, KY was listed as having been born in Tenn. In the 1850 Daviess County, KY census John Spickernagle, age 16, born Term., was listed in the home of Elijah & Susan Bowlds Comstock. On 13 November 1860 Laura A. Spickernagle married Richard Q. Newport in Owensboro, KY at the residence of Elijah Comstock; she was not listed in the 1850-60-70-80 censuses of Daviess County, KY. In the 1870 & 1880 Daviess County censuses the only Spickernagle listed was John.

Would you please check the Sikeston - New Madrid area cemeteries for a couple of more names: Elisha J. (or may appear as Richard or Dick) Allen, born April 1855 KY, died after 1913, & wife, Sallie or Sarah Coppage Allen, born March 1860 KY, died after 1913. Is there any microfilm of any old newspapers for the Sikeston - New Madrid, MO area. If there is could you tell me where they are at and if it is possible to get copies made from the microfilm. One article I would like to locate is about the arrest of Richard Allen at New Madrid, MO circa 15 July 1913 or a few days before this date; he was then arrested for a murder that had taken place in Kentucky 26 years earlier. If you have any old phone books of Sikeston that you plan to dispose of could you possibly save it for me? I would like to contact some of my Midkiff cousins in that area.

Again thanks for all of your help. If there are any records you would like me to check here please let me know. When I get a little more time I will organize & check my notes on the family of Edward Pate & Mary Crawford, and type up a family group sheet and send you a copy. Have a happy holidays. Bye for now.

Yours truly,
Jerry Long
1701 Alexander Ave.
Owensboro, KY 42303

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1850 Daviess County, KY census, District 1:

#119	Comstock, Elijah	42	m	Cabinet Maker, R.E.	\$900	KY
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Susan	30	f	(married within year)	KY
Spickernagle, John	16	m	Cabinet Maker	TN
Scarborough, George	43	m	Teacher, R.E. \$11400	Conn.
Thompson, Sarah C.	20	f	R.E. \$7600	KY
Catherine	14	f	R.E. \$7000	KY

1860 Daviess County, KY census, town of Owensboro:

#897	Comstock, Elijah	52	m	Cabinet Maker	KY
	Susan	42	f		KY
	Mills, Hueline	19	f		KY
	Hutchison, William	35	m	Grocer	KY

1859-1860 Kentucky State Gazetteer and Business Directory, section on Owensboro, p.280:

Comstock, Elijah, manufacturer of furniture, Second [Street]

1870 Daviess County, KY census, 1st ward of Owensboro, pp. 263 & 271:

#75	Comstock, Elijah	62	m	Undertaker	KY
	Susan	53	f		KY
	Hagan, Martha D.	26	f	Dressmaker	KY
#219	Spickernagle, John	36	m	Journeyman carpenter	TN
	Sallie C.	24	f		MS
	Susan L.	3	f		KY
	Lillie S.	1	f		KY

Wiggins & Weavers's Ohio River Directory: Owensboro, Kentucky 1871-1872:

p.342 - Comstock, Elijah, undertaker, a Second, near locust, house St. Elizabeth, near Second.

p.349 - Spickernagle, John, coffin manufacturer, shop& house Third & Mulberry.

Kentucky State Gazetteer and Business Directories for 1876-77 & 1879-80:

Spickernagle, John, undertaker

1880 Daviess County, KY census, Owensboro, p.22:

#186	Spiennagile, John	46			TN-TN-TN
	Caladeria	34	wife		MS-MS-MS
	Sue	11	daughter		KY-TN-MS
	William	9	son		KY-TN-MS
	Crumstock, Sara	62	boarder		KY-MD-MD

[the latter should be Susan Bowlds, widow of Elijah Comstock]

1900 Daviess County, KY census:

no Comstock or Spickernagle listed

Owensboro Examiner, Owensboro, KY, Friday, 24 Dec 1875, p.1

In Memoriam.

Elijah Comstock, after a life of honest toil, and upright association with his fellow-men, has been gathered to the Father; and it is becoming those who

knew his valuable qualities of head and heart, to drop, with tearful sympathy for the bereaved wife, and in grateful remembrance of his worth; a tribute at his tomb. He was born in Breckenridge county, Ky., on March 4th, 1808, and died in this city on Dec. 5th 1875. He came to Owensboro in 1827 and was shortly afterward married to Miss Sabina Holmes (a sister of Col. James M. Holmes) by whom he had one child, daughter. He then moved to Memphis, Tenn. But soon returned, and continued to reside here until his death. Losing his wife he afterward married Miss Susannah Bowlds, with whom he has lived in happiness to the last. It is not possible to couch in precise terms an estimate of our friend. He had great decision of character, was firm in his convictions of right; affected nothing, made no pretensions beyond what was manifest in his ordinary life, but to the last adhered to his theory of true life, which was to act justly toward his fellows, and provide honestly for those dependent upon him. He was a good neighbor, kind, generous, hospitable; an interesting genial companion, and in all things a reliable citizen. He possessed a strong, vigorous, and cultivated mind, and had informed himself so well on topics of general interest to the edification and refreshment of any one interested in the subject which engaged him. Friend, neighbor, associate, farewell – rest in peace. O



Gravestone of Elijah Comstock
Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, KY