

**Individual Narrative of Joel⁸ Leverich [413]
Son of James⁷ Leverich [208] and Sarah Hatfield
Husband of Matilda Farrell**

Joel Leverich was born circa 1801 in Cortlandt Township, Westchester County, New York.^{1,2}

Circa 1808, Joel Leverich's grandfather Benjamin Leverich, Joel's father James, several of James' siblings, and their families moved westward and settled in the future Guernsey County, Ohio.³ Circa 1817, James Leverich, his father Benjamin, and his brother Nathaniel moved further northwest to what would become Galion, Ohio (then Sandusky Township, Richland County; now Polk Township, Crawford County). Joel Leverich would then have been about 16 years old and it is assumed that he joined this party in the move to Galion.^{4,5,6}

James Leverich is recorded in the 1820 U.S. Census of Sandusky Township, Richland Co, Ohio. The census tallies include 2 free white males under age 10 (sons Charles and James Jr.); 2 free white males ages 10 to 15 (sons Ira and John); 2 free white males age 16 to 25 (sons **Joel** and William); 1 free white male age 26 to 44 (James Leverich Sr., actually age 47); 2 free white females under age 10 (daughters Susan and Julia); and 1 free white female over the age of 45 (wife Sarah, actually age 41). Also tallied were three persons engaged in agriculture (James Sr and sons **Joel** and William).⁷

Joel Leverich enlisted in the U.S. Army 30 May 1820 and was assigned to Company B, 3rd Infantry. According to the enlistment record, Joel enlisted at New York City and was present at Camp Smith 31 December 1820 to 28 February 1821. The record indicates that Joel was a cooper, age 22, and had been born in Cortlandt, Westchester County, New York. No discharge date or other disposition was recorded. There was a notation "30 April 1821 on command at bockalow". The meaning of this notation is unknown. No other information regarding Joel's apparently brief military service has been found.⁸

Joel Leverich married Matilda Farrell 4 July 1822 in Richland County, Ohio, according to Matilda's 1891 obituary.^{9,10} Matilda Farrell was born 1 July 1799 in the State of Virginia. The identity of Matilda's parents is unknown.¹¹



Matilda Farrell, wife of Joel Leverich

In 1829 Martha Ferril granted 27 acres of land in Richland County, Ohio to Joel Leverich. The land was identified as the southeast quarter, section 31, Township 20, Range 20. Martha's relationship to Matilda, wife of Joel, is unknown.¹²

Joel Leverich was recorded in the 1830 U. S. Census of White Pigeon, St. Joseph County, Michigan Territory. The census tallies included 1 free white male age under 5 (son Chauncey); 2 free white males age 5 to 9 (sons Sylvester and Volney); 1 free white male age 20-29 (Joel); 1 free white female age under 5 (daughter Martha Maria); 1 free white female age 20-29 (Matilda).¹³

Circa 1832 James Leverich (father of Joel) and some of his children removed to Lagrange County, Indiana. James purchased 115.5 acres of land in Lagrange County. This county is immediately adjacent to the south of St. Joseph County, Michigan.¹⁴ Joel Leverich was likely part of this group since he was the defendant in several court suits in the Lagrange County Circuit Court. In the May term 1833 the State of Indiana pressed charges against Joel Leverich for Assault and Battery. Joel pled guilty and was fined \$1.00. In the November Term 1833 Ira Leverich sued Joel Leverich to collect a debt of \$315.00. Joel pled guilty and committed to settling the debt. In the March Term 1835 the State of Indiana pressed charges against Joel Leverich for Assault and Battery. Joel pled not guilty and the court accepted his plea and discharged him. Also in the March Term 1835 the State of Indiana indicted Joel for riot. The prosecutor declined to pursue the case, and Joel was directed to go hence without delay.¹⁵

Joel Leverich was recorded in the 1840 U. S. Census of Linn County, Iowa Territory. The census tallies included 1 free white male age under 5 (son David); 2 free white males age 5 to 9 (sons Volney, Voltaire); 1 free white male age 10 to 14 (son Chauncey); 1 free white male age 30 to 39 (Joel); 1 free white female age 10 to 14 (daughter Martha Maria); 1 free white female age 30 to 39 (Matilda).¹⁶

Joel Leverich was well known in the community. Everybody knew him and everybody dreaded him, especially when he was under the influence of liquor, which was often the case. Even his best friends then felt it to be prudent to give him a wide berth, not knowing what instant he would take it into his head to knock them down. Whiskey seemed to make a demon of him, and to attempt to reason with him while under its influence would have been as futile as to try to reason with a cyclone. His poor wife, a most patient and estimable Christian woman, would sometimes hide away from him for days, lest in his fits of uncontrolled and uncontrollable passion he might take her life. And yet "Old Joe," as he was popularly called, had a good deal of influence in the community. He was a strong partisan politician and whoever arrayed himself against him, was sure to have a hard battle to fight, and in the end would very likely meet with defeat.¹⁷

Joel Leverich chose to be the leader of a gang which preyed on society. He was beyond question the head center of the band of freebooters and counterfeiters in that region. He never stole horses or made bogus money but his willing tools looked up to him as their guide and protector. He is described as a man of commanding presence who could so impress those with whom he came in contact that a piece of bad money would be taken from him without question. He controlled elections in Linn County. As Joel Leverich went so went Linn.¹⁸

On 31 May 1847 court was opened for the first time in Benton County, Iowa. The first case of entry was the State of Iowa vs. Joel Leverich, for passing counterfeit money, which appears to have been transferred from Linn County on a change of venue. The case was continued to the next term. The court met again on 24 April 1848. The indictment against Joel Leverich for passing counterfeit money, continued from the last term, was quashed. The other indictment against Leverich, for having implements for counterfeiting in his possession, was tried, but the jury brought in a verdict of "not guilty". Joel Leverich, although a member of a gang of outlaws infesting the country at that time, was one of the shrewdest of the tribe, and could never be caught. He always "got off" as in this instance.

Towards the close of his life his stomach became so inflamed and diseased by his intemperate habits that he was compelled to desist from his cups, sometimes for weeks together. But the fatal spell was upon him, and he continued to have his periodical sprees to the end of his life. In his last illness Dr. Ely was called in to attend him. His brother James, who was keeping a saloon at that time, was anxious to know the result of the doctor's examination. The doctor frankly told him that Joel's sickness was the result of his long life of dissipation, and that his stomach was eaten up by ulcers. James could scarcely believe that the use of alcohol could produce such direful effects, and if convinced of the fact, said he would cease to sell the poisonous stuff any longer. After the death of Mr. Leverich, James requested a post-mortem examination, and Dr. Ely showed him the stomach in the precise condition that he had before described it. And so, true to his word, James closed out his business and engaged in something less harmful to his fellow-men.¹⁹

Joel Leverich died circa 1848 in Linn County, Iowa. Joel was buried at Shiloh Cemetery in Hiawatha, Linn County, Iowa. In the Shiloh Cemetery there stands a stone for Joel Leverich which also has the names of Manerva and Voltaire on the sides. All dates are gone likely the victims of the elements. It is an odd shaped stone, about 2 1/2 feet high with sort of an overhang at the top that probably shielded the names from erosion.^{20,21,22}



Matilda Leverich, age 50, was recorded in the 1850 U. S. Census of Linn County, Iowa. The town in Linn County was not recorded. Matilda's household included her children Volney, age 18; Hume, age 17; and Frances, age 10.²³ Matilda Leverich, widow of Joel Leverich, was granted guardianship of her minor children Hume Leverich and Frances Leverich on 25 February 1854 by the Linn County, Iowa District Court.²⁴ A petition filed 25 February 1854 by Matilda Leverich said that Hume Leverich and Frances Leverich, together with Volney Leverich were now part owners of the following described tract of land to wit: Southeast quarter of the Southeast quarter of Section 4 Township 83 North of Range 7 West; also the West half of the Northeast quarter of the Southeast quarter of Section 4 same township and range in the county of Linn. Each owned an undivided third and Volney was about to sell his interest in the land and a partition could not be made without depreciation of the value of same and that the interest of said Hume and Frances could not be sold without the permission of the Court. In the April term of Court 1854 Matilda received authority to sell the land and sold the same for the sum of \$400. This instrument was signed and acknowledged by Matilda Leverich on 4 April 1854.²⁵

Matilda Leverich, age 61 tailoress, was recorded in the 1860 U.S. Census of Center Point, Linn County, Iowa. Matilda's household included her daughter Frances, age 20, and her grandson (son of Chauncey Leverich) Sylvester, age 9.²⁶ Matilda Leverich was recorded in the 1870 and 1880 U.S. Census, as well as the 1885 Iowa State Census, of Center Point, Linn County, Iowa. Matilda was living alone, age 70 in 1870, age 80 in 1880, age 87 (sic) in 1885. The 1880 Census recorded that Matilda was living on Main Street.^{27,28,29}

Matilda (Farrell) Leverich died 27 February 1891 in Center Point, Linn County, Iowa at the age of 91 years, 7 months, and 26 days. Matilda was buried at Center Point Cemetery.^{30,31}



Joel Leverich and Matilda Farrell had eight children, six of whom survived to adulthood. Matilda's obituary states that she had nine children, but no record of a ninth child has been found.³²

- i. Sylvester Leverich was born circa 1823 in Ohio, probably Richland County. The 1850 and 1860 U.S. Census gives his birth year as circa 1823. The 1870 and 1880 U.S. Census gives his birth year as circa 1832. Sylvester was unmarried in 1880 and earlier. Syvester died after 1880. A specific date and place of death is unknown. Sylvester was recorded in the 1850 U.S. Census of Ramsey County, Minnesota Territory; 1860 Amador County, California; 1870 Lander County, Nevada; 1880 Carson City, Ormsby County, Nevada. Sylvester served time in the Nevada State Prison 18 October 1873 to 30 January 1878. He had been convicted of shooting Jack Grant due to a disagreement over a card game.^{33,34,35,36,37,38}
- ii. Chauncey Leverich was born circa 1825 in Richland County, Ohio. Chauncey married first Marilla Usher 20 March 1845 in Linn County, Iowa. Marilla died circa 1853-1854. Chauncey married second Hannah Elizabeth Tiffit circa 1854-1855 in Austin, Mower County, Minnesota. Chauncey was a founder of Austin having built the first house in the town. Chauncey died in August 1856 in Austin. Chauncey had opened a saloon and he was murdered by two intoxicated gentlemen whom he had asked to leave the saloon. Chauncey was buried in a corner of the lot on which his house stood. His remains were later moved to the Oakdale Cemetery in Austin. Chauncey, age 25, was recorded in the 1850 U. S. Census of Fayette County, Iowa.^{39,40,41,42,43}
- iii. Martha Maria (Moriah) Leverich was born 25 July 1827 in Richland County, Ohio. Martha married Ira P. Aldrich 12 June 1849 in Linn County, Iowa. Martha died 16 March 1919 in Spencer, Clay County, Nebraska. Martha was buried at Coleridge Cemetery in Coleridge, Cedar County, Nebraska. Martha was recorded in the 1850 and 1860 U.S. Census of Linn County, Iowa; 1870 and 1880 Dixon County, Nebraska; 1900 and 1910 Thurston County, Nebraska.^{44,45,46,47,48,49,50,51,52,53}

- iv. Volney Leverich was born circa 1832 in Lagrange County, Indiana. Volney married Elizabeth Griffin 23 April 1854 in Linn County, Iowa. Volney was recorded in the 1850 U. S. Census and 1856 Iowa State Census of Linn County, Iowa. In 1861 Volney's wife filed for divorce. In 1866 Volney wrote from Helena, Montana to his brother David Hume Leverich. On 9 June 1878 Volney was determined to be insane in Eureka, Eureka County, Nevada and was committed to the Woodbridge Asylum in Stockton, San Joaquin Co, California. A month and a half later Volney was apparently free, writing to the judge in Eureka, Nevada from an address in San Francisco, California. In 1891 the Center Point Courier Journal reported that "V. Leverich of Marion was in town last Saturday to attend the funeral of Grandma Leverich". A specific date and place of death for Volney had not been found.^{54,55,56,57,58,59,60}
- v. David Hume Leverich was born 3 September 1838 (his obituary says 1837) in Linn County, Iowa (where the family was living) or Mosco, Cedar County, Iowa (obituary). David served in the Union Army as a private during the Civil War, F Company 1st Cavalry Colorado Volunteers. While in the army David also played in the regimental band. David married Emeline M. Beeman 4 December 1864 in Denver, Denver County, Colorado. David died 9 April 1910 in Leoti, Wichita County, Kansas. David was buried at the Beulah Cemetery in Leoti. David was recorded in the 1850 U.S. Census and the 1856 Iowa State Census of Linn County Iowa; 1870 U.S. Census of Jasper County, Missouri; 1880 U.S. Census of Cherokee County, Kansas; 1900 U.S. Census and 1905 Kansas State Census of Wichita County, Kansas.^{61,62,63,64,65,66,67,68,69,70}
- vi. Frances "Fannie" W. Leverich was born 31 August 1840, probably in Linn County, Iowa. Frances married Henry Clifford Ferguson 12 December 1870 in Boone County, Iowa. Frances died 29 September 1928 in Houston, Harris County, Texas. Frances was buried at the Forest Park Lawndale Cemetery in Houston. Frances was recorded in the 1850 and 1860 U.S. Census of Linn County, Iowa; 1880 St. Louis, Missouri; 1900 and 1910 Linn County, Iowa; 1920 Houston.^{71,72,73,74,75,76,77,78,79}
- vii. Voltaire Leverich died as an infant or as a child. The dates of birth and death are not available. Voltaire was buried with his father Joel Leverich at the Shiloh Cemetery in Hiawatha, Linn County, Iowa.^{80,81}
- viii. Minerva Leverich's circumstances were the same as her brother Voltaire. In the Shiloh Cemetery there stands a stone for Joel Leverich which also has the names of Manerva and Voltaire on the sides. All dates are gone likely the victims of the elements.⁸²

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