



ZEURIAH ROBINS PHILLIPS
BOYER

1804-1886



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Zeuriah Robins Phillips Boyer-- 1804-1886

Zeuriah Robins, daughter of Moses and Abigail Cook Robins, was born May 5, 1804, in Connecticut and died March 16, 1886, in Rock Island, Illinois.¹

She is buried in the Chippiannock Cemetery in Rock Island, Rock Island, IL. Zueriah moved to Missouri in 1816 with her parents and siblings from Pennsylvania. Moses was listed in the 1810 U.S. Census as living in Middlesex, Butler, PA, but he then appeared on the 1816 Tax List for St. Charles MO. Zeuriah grew to adulthood, thereafter, in the St. Charles area. Her father, Moses, died on September 23, 1818; she was only fourteen. Zeuriah went to court to choose John Thompson to be her guardian. Samuel and Abigail, her younger siblings, chose their mother as their guardian. Zeuriah's older siblings, Frederick and Thomas, chose Stephen Best.² Their mother, Abigail, died in 1829.³

On September 17, 1830, at age twenty-six years, Zeuriah married Charles Walter Phillips in St. Charles, a Justice of the Peace officiating.⁴ With the exception of Samuel who had died in 1826, Zeuriah's siblings were young adults capable of living independently by the time she married. Her husband, Walter, as he was known, was born July 16, 1808, in England. He was living in the St. Charles area by 1820 because Circuit Court Records reveal he had been in a land dispute with Nicholas Coons on Main Street in St. Charles.⁵ Later, in 1823, he was granted a liquor license.⁶ After their marriage, both Walter and Zeuriah were identified as members of the Presbyterian Church of St. Charles. He was received on January 9, 1833, and Zeuriah was baptized and received on March 31, 1833.

Sometime between 1833 and 1835 Walter and Zeuriah moved up the Mississippi River to Rock Island County, Illinois. Walter was listed as a Justice of the Peace who officiated at the wedding of John Dinster and Betsey Kennedy of the county on



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April 2, 1835, and then on May 4, 1835, for Henry D. Adams and Phebe Hathaway.⁷ On July 3, 1837, he wrote his will and died shortly afterwards on September 25, 1837. He was buried at Chippiannock Cemetery.⁸

Walter and Zeuriah had one child, a son, Nathan, born August 31, 1831, most likely in St. Charles, Missouri. He died at age five on December 2, 1836, probably in Rock Island. He also was buried at Chippiannock.⁹ Between 1830 and 1837, Zeuriah married, gave birth to a son, relocated to Rock Island, buried her son, and finally buried her husband.

She must have remained in Rock Island; no evidence showed that she returned to St. Charles to her siblings. Eventually she met John A. Boyer who had come to the area from Bedford, Pennsylvania. He was single with no children. John and Zeuriah married in Rock Island on November 7, 1841.¹⁰

John was born October 16, 1809 in Bedford. He arrived in Rock Island County about 1837 and settled in Stephenson. In the 1840 U.S. Census for Port Byron, Illinois, John appeared as single and between ages 20-30. He may have lived in Kentucky and Indiana before arriving in Illinois.¹¹ After John and Zeuriah married in 1841, the couple lived on their farm at the south end of what later became known in Rock Island as Thirteenth Street¹².

John and Zeuriah never had children. Nevertheless, they did serve as ‘parents’ over the years to several children. The 1850 U.S. Census showed that three children were living with John and Zeuriah—Welcome Robins, age 14; Mary Robins, age 12; Celia Robins, age 10. The three were children of Zeuriah’s brother and sister-in-law, Moses and Mary Best Robins. Moses died February 27, 1840, and Mary died in 1845. John and Zeuriah apparently assumed care for these children who were young and orphaned, acting as the children’s guardians. By the time of the 1860 U.S. Census, all three children have left the Boyer household. Mary had married William W. Dugan; Welcome remained single and was farming; Celia had married Grafton Stonebraker. John Boyer would complete his responsibility to Welcome when he (John), in 1868, served as the administrator in Rock Island of Welcome’s estate.¹³

By 1860, a new child had entered John and Zeuriah’s lives. The 1860 U.S. Census showed that Thomas Campbel (sic), age 18, lived with the couple and served as a farm laborer. A personal reflection of Mrs. W.C. Lukens described Zeuriah’s first encounter with Thomas:

“One day father came home and brought Mr. Campbell and five children with him. One of the children was our present Hon. Thomas Campbell (State Legislator, Rock Island). Mrs. Boyer came down to see us and she took Tom home with her. I remember it well. She was horseback and had Tommy ride behind her on the same horse and they kept him and adopted him and left him all their property when they died. Tom’s mother had died at St. Louis in child-birth—twins—they were immigrants from Ireland, coming via New Orleans.”¹⁴

A second story, a more complete rendition, exists on the Illinois Ancestors website. It reads:

“Thomas Campbell, one of the best known (sic) citizens of Rock Island County was born January 9, 1842, in Ballyhaskin Parrish, Ireland. His parents were John and Margaret (McQuaid) Campbell, and of their union four children were born: Mary now Mrs. Rutherford), Margaret (deceased), Robert and Thomas, the subject of this sketch.

The Campbells were originally from Scotland. About two centuries past the fore-bears (sic) of Thomas Campbell removed from Scotland and settled in the North of Ireland. February 11, 1850, when Thomas was eight years of age, his parents, with their children, left Ireland for America, embarking on the Elizabeth Augusta, a sailing vessel bound for New Orleans. The journey consumed seven weeks and three days. Upon arriving at New Orleans the family, having determined to come to Rock Island, took boat and proceeded up the Mississippi, but at St. Louis the illness and death of the mother compelled a temporary cessation of the journey. Mrs. Campbell was buried at St. Louis and the rest of the sorrowing family continued upon their way to Rock Island, which they reached May 3, 1850. On the first of May the following year, Thomas Campbell was taken to the home of John A. Boyer and wife. He attended the common schools of Rock Island, going three or four months in the winter, and spending the other months in farm work. He made his home with the Boyers until the death of that couple. Having no children of their own, they had made Thomas Campbell their heir, and they left to him considerable property, consisting chiefly of real estate. He continued to live in the old Boyer homestead until 1901, when he built a new house about two hundred feet south of the old one and moved into it. This is the only time that Mr. Campbell had moved since he came to Rock Island in his boyhood.”¹⁵

By 1870, John and Zeuriah were retired but had extensive holdings—real estate valued at \$42,000 (\$805,075 today) and personal belongings at \$25,000 (today \$489,998). Two children lived with them—Laura Duggan, age 12, and Minnie (Mary) Duggan, age 7. The two were daughters of Mary Z. Robbins, Zeuriah’s niece, and William W. Dugan. Mary had lived with John and Zeuriah in 1850, when she was a child, and after her parents’ death. Mary may have died in about 1867 while giving birth to daughter, Ida Jane; consequently, two of her children lived with the Boyers.

In 1880, John and Zeuriah remained retired. They had a female servant living in the household. Furthermore, Abigail McKnight, Zeuriah’s widowed sister and her son, Albert McKnight, were living with the Boyers. Abigail was retired; Albert taught school.

In addition to caring for family members and their children, Zeuriah and John were involved in the community of Rock Island. John focused on municipal activities. He was:

- A trustee for the municipal corporation
- A delegate to a state convention
- A constable
- A supervisor for Black Hawk Township
- President of the Old Settlers Society, composed of the pioneers of the county.

Together, John and Zeuriah supported the First Baptist Church of Rock Island. John was:

- An ordained deacon
- A trustee
- A member of most of the committees, often chairing those committees
- Church sexton
- Benefactor who paid off the church's debt on more than one occasion.
- Member of the Committee to Rent (pews) Slips

According to an entry for John and Zeuriah in a local history book:

“To John A. Boyer and his faithful wife, the First Baptist Church of Rock Island is largely indebted for its present fine property, its house of worship and parsonage, the tower of the church building being his gift, as was the parsonage a gift of his wife.”¹⁶

Zeuriah appeared to have had her own money. The following transactions over the years show the probable sources of this money:

- May 1818—Zeuriah received the ‘westerly half of the seventh lot’, northwardly lands of a New Madrid claim, owned by her late father, Moses Robbins.¹⁷
- May 1832—Zeuriah and Walter, along with Zeuriah’s siblings and their spouses, received each a 1/8 portion of the 115-acre tract owned by their late father, Moses Robbins.¹⁸
- May 1832—Zeuriah and Walter, along with Zeuriah’s siblings and their spouses, received each a 1/16 portion of the 200 arpens tract of land owned by their late father, Moses Robbins.¹⁹

- May 1832—Zeuriah and Walter, along with Zeuriah’s siblings and their spouses, partition a city lot in St. Charles, owned by Moses Robbins, their later father.²⁰
- August 1833—Walter Phillips purchased eighty-five acres of land formerly owned by Moses Robbins, who was deceased, and auctioned in August 1833.²¹
- September 1837—Walter Phillips’ will stipulated the following: “I do hereby devise and bequeath to my beloved wife all of my real and personal property of every description; except two lots in my undivided interest in the town of Port Byron (IL).²²
- May 1885—Zeuriah’s will provided for the distribution of two parcels of land to Thomas Campbell, his family, and his heirs and distributed approximately \$20,000 to various relatives of hers and her husband’s, and \$10,000 to the First Baptist Church of Rock Island. (This \$30,000 is equivalent today to \$794,100).²³

She had a history of benevolence towards the work of the First Baptist church and others. In 1869 she gave to what was to become the Second Baptist Church of Rock Island several city lots for a building site. Furthermore, she presented to First Church, on July 31, 1879, a newly constructed parsonage at a personal cost of \$2,250. She also was credited with erecting two obelisks at the Graveyard Slough, a.k.a. Black Walnut Cemetery, the first erected October 24, 1874, in memory of her mother and two brothers, Thaddeus Cook and Samuel H., and the second obelisk in memory of her brother, Moses Brintnal Robbins and sister-in-law, Mary Best Robbins.

Both John and Zeuriah succumbed to age. She died in Rock Island on March 16, 1886. John survived her, dying in Los Angeles on December 5, 1891. Both were buried in Chippiannock Cemetery.

¹ *Chippiannock Cemetery Records—Walter Phillips, John Boyer, Zeuriah Boyer, Nathan Phillips*. Rock Island County Illinois Genealogical Society, Rock Island, Rock Island, Illinois.

² *St. Charles County Record Book*, Volume 2, 1816-1829. Film #008196739, Images 410-412. Familysearch.org

³ Tombstone—Mary Best Robbins. Graveyard Slough Cemetery. Black Walnut, St. Charles, Missouri

⁴ Lois Stanley, George F. Wilson, Mary Helen Wilson. *Marriage Records of St. Charles County, Missouri 1805-1844*. Wichita Public Library, Wichita, Sedgwick, Kansas. R 929.377839 STA

⁵ Philips, Charles and Coons, Nichols. “Land Dispute on Main Street in St. Charles”. Circuit Court Records, Box 24, File 18, St. Charles County Historical Society, St. Charles, St. Charles, Missouri.

⁶ Phillips, Charles—Liquor License—"Charles Phillips Granted Liquor License". Circuit Court Records, Box 33, File 57, St. Charles County Historical Society, St. Charles, St. Charles, Missouri.

⁷ *Portrait and Biographical Album of Rock Island County, Illinois*. Chicago: Biographical Publishing Company, 1885, p. 741.

⁸ Tombstone—Charles Walter Phillips. Chippiannock Cemetery, Rock Island, Rock Island, Illinois.

⁹ Chippiannock Cemetery Records.

¹⁰ Illinois Statewide Marriage Index, 1763-1900.

¹¹ *Historic Rock Island County: History of the Settlement of Rock Island County from the Earliest Known Period to the Present Time*. Rock Island, IL: Kramer & Company, Publishers and Engravers, 1908, p. 47. Google Books

¹² *Historic Rock Island County: History of the Settlement of Rock Island County from the Earliest Known Period to the Present Time*.

¹³ Estate—Welcome A. Robins, April 21, 1868, Rock Island, Illinois. St Charles County Historical Society, St Charles, St Charles, Missouri.

¹⁴ Mrs. W.C. Lukens. "Reflections." Boyer Family File. Rock Island County IL Genealogical Society, Moline, Rock Island, IL.

¹⁵ Thomas Campbell. www.illinoisancestors.org

¹⁶ *Historic Rock Island County: History of the Settlement of Rock Island County from the Earliest Known Period to the Present Time*. P. 48.

¹⁷ Will-Moses B. Robbins. October 15, 1818. St. Charles, Missouri. St. Charles County Historical Society, St. Charles, St. Charles, Missouri.

¹⁸ Moses B. Robbins, et al. *Partition*. St. Charles Circuit Court, Administrative, May 1832. St. Charles County Historical Society, St. Charles, St. Charles, Missouri.

¹⁹ Moses Robbins' Heirs, Montgomery Perry, Guardian. Petition for 200 arpens. Filed 17th May 1832. St. Charles Circuit Court, Administrative, May 1832. St. Charles County Historical Society, St. Charles, St. Charles, Missouri.

²⁰ Moses Robbins' Heirs, Montgomery Perry, Guardian. Petition for 200 arpens. Filed 17th May 1832. St. Charles Circuit Court, Administrative, May 1832. St. Charles County Historical Society, St. Charles, St. Charles, Missouri.

²¹ Court Report No 1. Moses Robbins heirs. Approved. Filed 9th Sept 1833

²² Will—Walter Philips, July 3, 1837. Illinois, Wills and Probate Records, 1772-1999, Ancestry.com.

²³ Will—Zachariah (Zeuriah) R. Boyer. May 23, 1886, Rock Island, Illinois. Illinois, Wills and Probate Records, 1772-1999. Ancestry.com