

SARAH CATHERINE HOOKER

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Written by Tim Gosselin

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NOTE: Tim Gosselin is married to Iris Irvine, 2nd great granddaughter to Sarah Catherine Hooker. Iris is my (Rod Ashford) 3rd cousin.

For some years now various members of the Irvine clan (and related individuals) have held fast to the belief that Irvine heritage includes the d.n.a. of the American Indian as passed down to the modern age family by Sarah Catherine Hooker Sullivan (1850-1924). This has been largely supported by simple family tradition as well as by a book written by Marguerite Overholser entitled "On the Oregon Trail with the Ira Hooker Family-1848" (ISBN-13: 978-0832305191) which book relates the "Sarah Story" the way it is generally accepted today by the family.

Following the story line of the book the Hooker family is traveling west to Oregon via the Oregon Trail. Along the way, the son of Ira Allen Hooker, Permenus Petronius Hooker, newly married, comes upon an abandoned camp site in or near Ash Hollow, western Nebraska (today this is a Nebraska State Park) and there, finds an abandoned Indian child. The child was supposedly a little blue-eyed girl who would have been about six months of age at the time. The assumption of the story line is that due to her blue eyes the child was not considered a full blood Indian by tribal members and resultant was that the mother of the child was forced by her people to abandon the child (or did so of her own volition).

Permenus gathers the child and takes her to his newly married wife, Charlotte Jane (nee Kinkead, in camp nearby) and together they determine to keep the child and to raise her as their own. So goes the story and to this day many family members familiar with the story have proudly acknowledged their American Indian heritage as a result.

Please keep in mind as we proceed, that I have nothing to gain by refuting the reality of this story. I do not know Ms. Overholser nor have I ever met or otherwise communicated with her. I have no knowledge of where she has come by her data or how this story line was developed, or, why. Additionally, it has been enjoyable over the years to believe that I am married to a woman who has actual American Indian heritage. As most members of the family share similar feelings this story has remained intact as accepted factual family heritage.

The following however has now been determined by review of available historical records:

The Hooker family went west to Oregon in 1848 from Peters Creek, Kansas, near St Joseph, Missouri. Their party embarked from Peters Creek on May 5th, 1848 in a train of approximately 24 wagons known as "The Purvine Company". The group arrived at Oregon City, Oregon on October 1st, 1848. Each of the Hooker family members is listed by name in the actual records of the Oregon Trail which can be found at <http://www.oregonpioneers.com/1848.htm>. Available records, including available diaries, contain no mention of finding a young American Indian girl along the trail but perhaps may not include such information in any case. The record however, does put the Hooker family with its known members, each by name, on the trail with the Purvine Group (the Purvine Company having merged with the Walker Company while on the trail) and into Oregon during the 1848 summer travel season and prior to the winter of 1848/49. Assuming the Overholser book to be correct and factual history, at the time of arrival of the Hookers in Oregon, the young Indian child (now named Sarah Catherine) should have been approaching one year of age.

The next available historical record is the Oregon Territorial Census taken in October of 1850 (two years after the arrival of the Hookers in Oregon). There, in Polk County in Oregon Territory, we find one "Nemas" and one "Jane" Hooker (husband and wife) who have a child named Sarah C. Hooker. I should also note that the ages of Nemas and Jane perfectly match the ages which Sarah's parents (Permenus and Charlotte Jane) would be, based on their actual recorded dates of birth. The census also shows appropriate matching birth locations for those same parents.

Regarding the differing “given” names of Sarah’s parents as listed in the census: We Americans have a remarkable way of informally shortening the “call name” of individuals with uncomfortable to pronounce, or multi-syllable given names. Amanda becomes Mandy. Richard becomes Dick. Madeleine becomes Maddie. Timothy becomes Tim, Anthony becomes Tony, etc. (you get the picture). It’s an easy reach to call a person named Permenus, “Nemas” especially if he’s your husband or a close relative or acquaintance. With respect to “Jane” (as listed) the wife of Permenus’ formal birth name was Charlotte Jane so also it isn’t a reach to think that he and family members referred to her simply as “Jane”. The census (record on file) goes on to state that Sarah C Hooker is (October 1850 at the time of the census) “**3/12**” or, 3 months of age. If Sarah had been found as a new-born along the Oregon Trail in 1848 she would actually be approaching 3 years of age by the time of the 1850 census. Why would her parents not list her actual known age in this census? Following, there was a census after this census every ten years for the remainder of the life of Sarah. Each and all census are available* (copies on file) and I have reviewed each of them. (*Only the 1890 U.S. census is missing as it was lost, nearly in total, in a fire in later years). Sarah lists her age at the time of each following census based on her actual birth being in 1850, without exception. In the 1900 census there is a place to enter both the month and year of birth of each listed individual. Here, Sarah, at the age of 50 years, entered “May, 1850”. At each of these advancing census, who would better know the age and date of birth of Sarah than Sarah herself? Why would she not report it accurately as she knew it to be?

Lastly, a close family member has had two d.n.a. tests completed for determination of personal ethnicity as related to family history. One was done by *23andMe*, and the other, by *Ancestry.com*. Each of these screenings is able to accurately reveal d.n.a. of less than 1% of each ethnicity of any individual. In each case, heredity of less than 1% was measureable and was actually revealed for certain ethnicities in both of these tests. In the case of American Indian heritage both tests revealed 0%. If Sarah Catherine was 50% American Indian these tests should have revealed d.n.a. totaling 1.5% American Indian heritage in each test. It simply wasn’t there. Sarah Catherine did not have detectable Indian ethnicity in her d.n.a. or it would still be detectable in her descendants today.

More recently, our niece and cousin, Ms. Christina Brennan Blenk, daughter of Christine K. Irvine Stein (daughter of Edward H. Irvine) has completed d.n.a. testing with *Ancestry.com*. Her d.n.a. results indicate that she is the 4th cousin, twice removed, of one Alice Lockridge, 2nd great granddaughter of Albinus Allen Hooker, brother of Permenus Petronius Hooker, the father of Sarah Catherine Hooker. Assuming Sarah Catherine to have been the rumored abandoned Indian child, there would be no d.n.a. link between Christina and Alice. This link, as discovered and published on *Ancestry.com*, is scientific proof that Sarah is the biological daughter of Permenus. If it were not so this d.n.a. link from Christina to Alice Lockridge could not exist. It passes through Sarah Catherine to Permenus to Ira A. to Albinus, etc. Unless Sarah Catherine is the biological daughter of Permenus, there is no d.n.a. link from Christina to Alice.

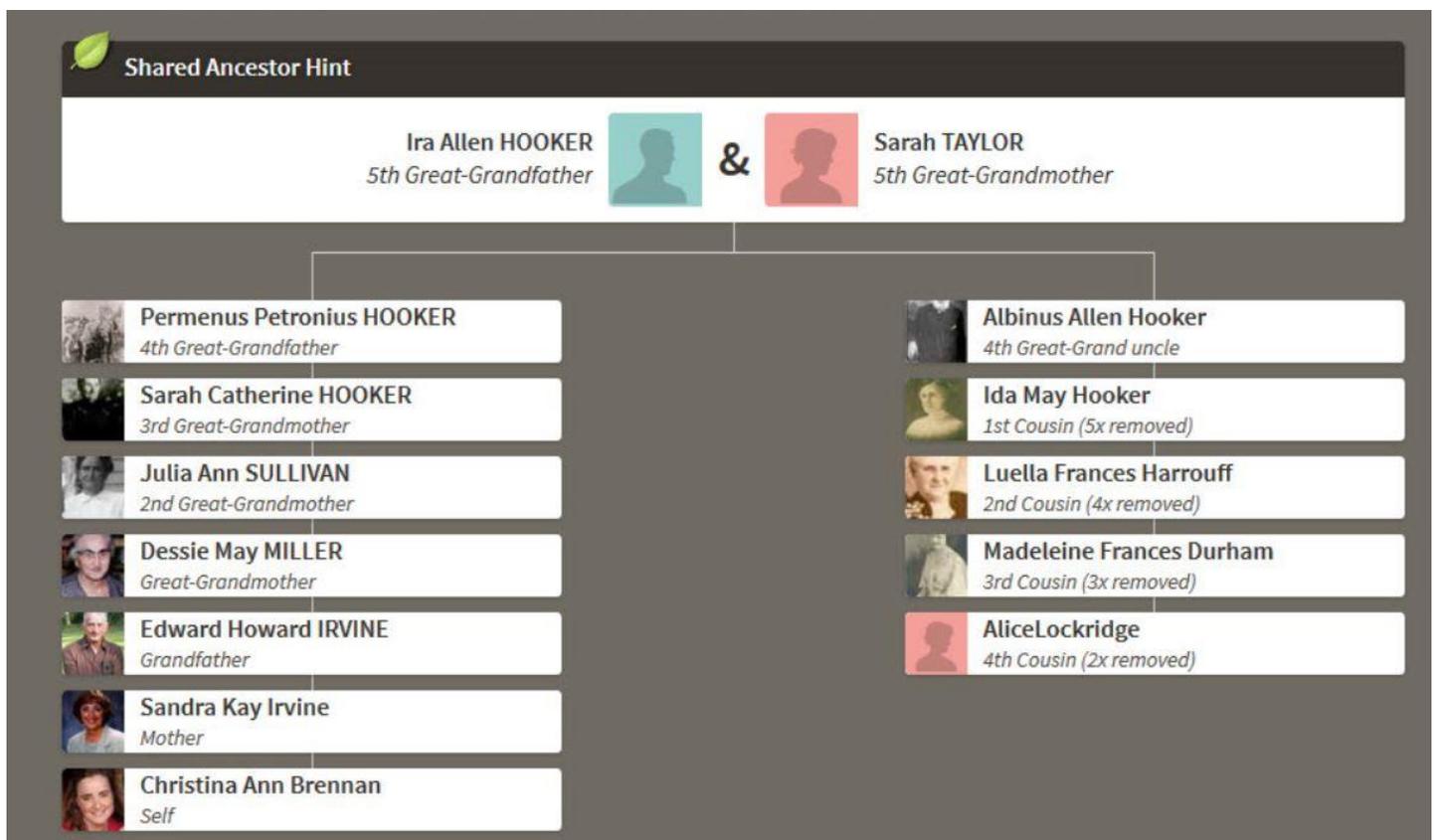
Also recently, Mr. Rod Ashford, 2nd great grandson of Sarah Catherine Hooker, had *Ancestry.com* d.n.a. testing to aid in his study of his heritage and the determination of his family history. His d.n.a. should have revealed an American Indian heritage, via blood markers, of just over 3% assuming that Sarah was ½ American Indian. In fact, his d.n.a. result indicated zero American Indian heritage.

The only conclusion to be reached as a result of the preponderance of **all** of the above is that Sarah Catherine was, in fact, the natural born daughter of Permenus P. and Charlotte Jane Hooker, conceived and born of these parents within the boundaries of the Oregon Territory after the arrival there of the Hookers from Missouri in 1848. Sarah Catherine was not an adopted, or otherwise acquired, unrelated child of American Indian ethnic ancestry. This truth now links the Irvine family biologically to the world of Hooker family history prior to and beyond Sarah Catherine.

It is certainly possible that an Indian child was found abandoned at Ash Hollow in 1848 and that this child was taken in by a family traveling in the Purvine wagon group that summer. The family, however, was likely not the Hooker family and the child certainly was not Sarah Catherine Hooker.

Additional and confusing birth date data for Sarah can also be found recorded on her death certificate. Julia Ann Sullivan Miller (Sarah's daughter and first born) was the individual providing this information at the time of Sarah's death, as noted on the death certificate. Where Julia came by the information provided, whether she was simply in error or had an unknown agenda, cannot be determined today. Other substantial recorded information (actual historical records) simply does not support the birth date information for Sarah which Julia provided at the time of Sarah's death. She is shown to be born in Oregon Territory five years before the well documented trip of the Hookers to Oregon. This date does not fit either the available records to the contrary OR, the American Indian heritage story line.

Each of our endeavors into the study of genealogy or family history is simply a search for the truth; for the individual true heritage of each of us. When we labor to recover information regarding our own personal family history it's done only because we want to know the truth. The above facts have led me to believe and accept that Sarah's natural parents are, in fact, well known to us. They were not an Indian maiden and a nameless fur trapper or similar unknown individual of European ethnicity. Substantial available documentation now tells us who her parents were and who they were not. This information makes no allowance for truth in the American Indian narrative.



*Results of Hooker d.n.a. testing posted on Ancestry.com.
The relational comparison is between our own Christina and Alice Lockridge, descendant of Albinus Hooker.
If Sarah was not the natural born daughter of Permenus, this d.n.a. link would not exist.
This is scientific proof of the biological blood bond of Sarah to her father Permenus.*

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