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### **Tompkins v. Tompkins** **Using Alternative Sources to Resolve Conflicting Views of a Divorce**

Original sources of vital records acquired for a New Jersey family included a baptismal record which supplied the only known recording of birthdates for five children.<sup>1</sup> Could that record have an error in a birthdate? A mistake of one digit in a year written carelessly by the officiating minister would make a substantial impact in how descendants felt about one or the other parent of those children.

Disproving primary information in an original source, especially a record created at the time the event occurred, is difficult. But, if a piece of direct evidence does not fit circumstances leading to the disintegration of a family, then further research must uncover more information. New facts should either invalidate the birthdate causing the problem or locate additional evidence to confirm that it is correct.

#### **Suddenly, a Marriage Ends.**

On 9 February 1808 widower Jonathan Tompkins, age 29 years, married Jane S. Baker, age 18 years, in Morris County, New Jersey.<sup>2</sup> Jane Tompkins gave birth to six children between 1808 and 1817: an infant daughter died aged 23 days;<sup>3</sup> five other children were listed by name and date of birth when baptized.<sup>4</sup> On 4 November 1819 a

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<sup>1</sup> “U.S., Dutch Reformed Church Records in Selected States, 1639–1989, from the Archives of the Dutch Reformed Church in America, New Brunswick, New Jersey,” database with images, *Belleville Church Baptisms, Marriages, Dismissals, Members, 1793–1853* [hereinafter *Belleville Church Baptisms, Marriages, Dismissals, Members, 1793–1853*]; *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : viewed 31 March 2016), entry for five children of Jonathan Tompkins and Jane Baker, baptized 7 September 1817; image 62 of 106. [Note: image number is provided; these database pages are not yet indexed, and can only be browsed.]

<sup>2</sup> Morris County, New Jersey, Marriages, Book A: 221, Jonathan Tompkins and Jane S. Baker, 1808; New Jersey State Archives, Trenton.

<sup>3</sup> “Children of #1309 Jonathan Tomkins and Jane S. Baker ... #2797 Nancy Lindsley, b. Feb. 18, 1814, d. Mar. 13, 1814” (Robert A. Tompkins and Clare F. Tompkins, *The Tomkins-Tompkins Genealogy* [Los Angeles, CA: the authors, 1942], 196. Also *Find A Grave*, database with images ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com) : viewed 15 October 2016), memorial 7175888, Nancy Lindsley Tompkins, (1814–1814), Vail Memorial Cemetery (new name for Parsippany Presbyterian Churchyard), Parsippany, Morris County, New Jersey. [Note: Two untrustworthy but independent sources presented the same birth and death dates for this child, possibly by copying her gravestone inscription. This cemetery, owned by the Parsippany Presbyterian Church, is located on Route 46, a busy four-lane highway. The entrance is closed by a chained gate, with no grass verge, preventing visitors from parking close to the gate and walking into the old churchyard.]

<sup>4</sup> *Belleville Church Baptisms, Marriages, Dismissals, Members, 1793–1853*; baptismal entry for five children of Jonathan Tompkins and Jane Baker, 7 September 1817; image 62 of 106. [See note 1.]

decree of divorce was granted by an Act of the New Jersey General Assembly, ending the Tompkins marriage of eleven and one-half years:<sup>5</sup>

*An act to dissolve the marriage contract between Jonathan Tompkins and Jane his wife.*

Sec. 1. BE IT ENACTED, by the Council and General Assembly of this State, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, That the marriage contract between Jonathan Tompkins and Jane his wife, of the county of Morris, late of the county of Essex, be, and the same is hereby dissolved to all intents and purposes whatsoever, and the said Jonathan Tompkins and Jane his wife, are hereby declared to be set free from the matrimonial contract as fully as if they had never been joined in the bonds of matrimony. C. Passed November 4, 1819.

Although no statement identified a probable cause in the privately published act, the injured party was identified as the one who initiated legal action—the first name mentioned in the bill and the person who asked to be set free from the other. Jonathan Tompkins was the first-named individual, which implied that his wife, Jane, was the one at fault.<sup>6</sup>

#### **A Possible Problem in the Baptismal Record.**

One newspaper account states that the lawyer for Jonathan Tompkins presented his petition for divorce to the New Jersey General Assembly as early as 30 October 1818.<sup>7</sup> And yet the youngest Tompkins child in the list of baptisms was born 31 December 1818. Was it conceivable that this husband wished to divorce his second wife when she was pregnant with his child? The answer is that it would be unlikely, although that is exactly what the baptismal record indicates.

Listed first in the baptismal record of the five children, Lewis Baker Tompkins was probably born in 1808, not 1818, although no direct evidence was found to authenticate the earlier date. Overturning primary information of a child's birthdate provided by his parents requires a search for alternative sources of equal weight and validity. New evidence must either confirm the same birthdate for Lewis or support a birth earlier than 1818, the year Jonathan filed his divorce petition.

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<sup>5</sup> *Private and Temporary Acts: ACTS of the Forty-Fourth General Assembly of the State of New Jersey* (Trenton: Printed by Joseph Justice, 1820), 87. [Pamphlets of private and temporary acts of the NJ General Assembly are located at any designated repository of official New Jersey state documents.]

<sup>6</sup> John Hood, *Index of Colonial and State Laws of New Jersey between the Years 1663 and 1903 Inclusive* (Camden, N.J.: S. Chew & Sons Co, 1905), 298. [Located at the New Jersey State Library, Trenton, and Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries, New Brunswick, New Jersey.]

<sup>7</sup> "A Sketch of the Proceedings of the House of Assembly ... Friday, Oct. 30," *Centinel Of Freedom*, (Newark, New Jersey), 3 November 1818, p. 3, cols. 1-2; image copy, *GenealogyBank* (<http://www.genealogybank.com> : viewed 11 September 2016).

## A Brief Family Picture Prior to the Breakup.

Jonathan Tompkins was born 6 November 1778 in Morris County, New Jersey, to Revolutionary War veteran, Uzal Tompkins.<sup>8</sup> Jonathan's first wife died 7 April 1807,<sup>9</sup> leaving four infant children.<sup>10</sup> After a brief period of mourning, Jonathan sought another wife and mother for his children. He found her in Jane S. Baker, a daughter of Lewis Baker of Littleton, Morris County, New Jersey.<sup>11</sup> Within the next decade, Jane was responsible for ten children—four step-children and six of her own.

This family still resided in Morris County when an infant daughter of Jane and Jonathan died in March 1814.<sup>12</sup> At some point between March 1814 and December 1816, Jonathan moved his family to Belleville, Essex County, New Jersey, based on the following notices in local newspapers and entries in the Belleville Reformed Church records. On 25 January 1817 Jane Tompkins transferred her membership from the Parsippany Presbyterian Church in Morris County to the Dutch Reformed Church in Belleville.<sup>13</sup> After the birth of son George W. Tompkins in June 1817, Jane and Jonathan had all five children baptized on 7 September 1817 in this same church with birthdates of each child entered in the record.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Uzal Tompkins Family Bible Records, copied 3 July 1937 by Willard S. Muchmore; Genealogical Society of New Jersey, Collection of Bible and Family Records, #581; Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

<sup>9</sup> A photograph of her gravestone shows the inscription, "In Memory of Anna Tomkins, consort of Jonathan Tomkins, died April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1807, aged 25 years 4 months & 7 days." *Find A Grave*, database with images (<http://www.findagrave.com> : viewed 13 March 2016), memorial 6025002, Anna Tomkins (d. 1807), Vail Memorial Cemetery, Parsippany, Morris County, New Jersey; photograph by Rich H.

<sup>10</sup> Robert A. Tompkins, *The Tomkins-Tompkins Genealogy*, 196. Four children of Anna, first wife of Jonathan Tompkins, are listed by name, dates of birth and death, and spouse(s) without documentation. Other sources which support the data in *The Tomkins-Tompkins Genealogy* include: A son Isaac Harris Tompkins died 30 Aug. 1813, aged 6 (*Find A Grave*, database with images (<http://www.findagrave.com> : viewed 13 March 2016), memorial 7175886, Vail Memorial Cemetery, Morris County, New Jersey); Marriages for three daughters were entered in *Belleville Church Baptisms, Marriages, Dismissals, Members, 1793–1853*; image 73 of 106: James Hamilton and Sarah H. Tompkins (29 June 1823); image 74 of 106: Nathan F. Ward and Eliza Tompkins (9 Jan. 1825); Peter Van Dervoort and Susan Tompkins (6 Aug. 1825).

<sup>11</sup> A newspaper notice identified Jane's father: "Married. Jonathan Tompkins of Troy to Miss Jane Baker, daughter of Lewis Baker of Little Town [*Littleton*]," *Genius of Liberty*, (*Morristown, N.J.*), 25 February 1808, p. 3, col. 2; image copy, *GenealogyBank* (<http://www.genealogybank.com> : viewed 11 March 2016).

<sup>12</sup> Robert A. Tompkins, *The Tomkins-Tompkins Genealogy*, 196. Also, *Find A Grave*, memorial 7175888, Nancy Lindsley Tompkins (1814–1814). [See note 3.] No notice appeared in any surviving Morristown newspaper for the death of this child of Jonathan and Jane Tompkins.

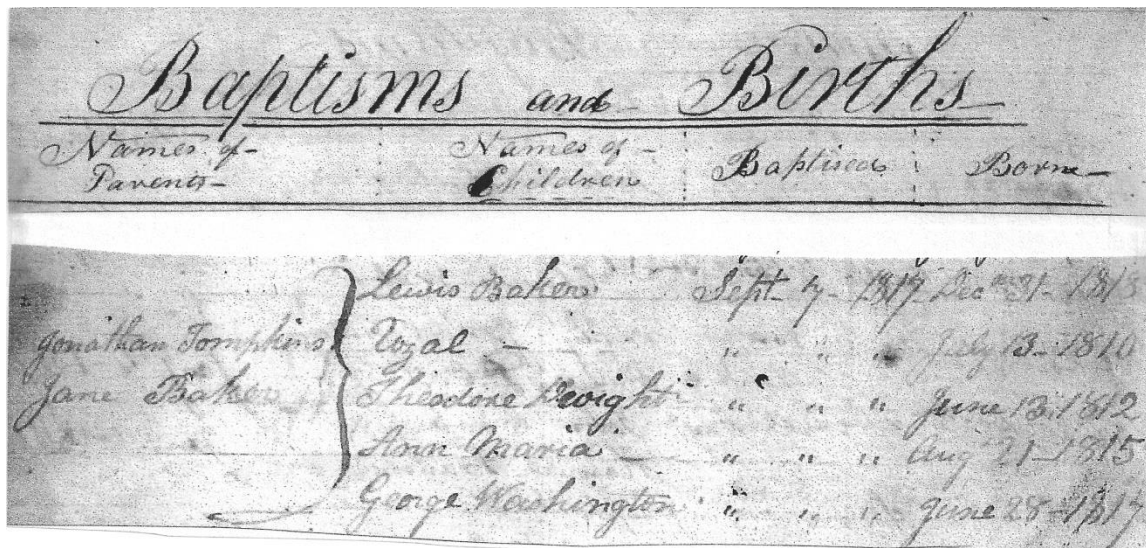
<sup>13</sup> *Belleville Church Baptisms, Marriages, Dismissals, Members, 1793–1853*, entry for Jane S. Tompkins, membership by certificate (1817); image 63 of 106.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*; entries for five children of Jonathan and Jane Tompkins (1817); image 62 of 106. [See note 1.]

The children were listed in this order:

Full Name of Child	Birthdate Written in the Register
Lewis Baker Tompkins	31 December 1818
Uzal Tompkins	13 July 1810
Theodore Dwight Tompkins	13 June 1812
Ann Maria Tompkins	21 March 1815
George Washington Tompkins	28 June 1817

All seemed well with this family when Jonathan was appointed chairman of the committee to plan Belleville Independence Day festivities on 4 July 1818.<sup>15</sup> Suddenly, entered 24 October 1818 in the same Belleville Reformed Church register, was a notice that the membership of “Jane Baker, wife of Jon<sup>a</sup> Tompkins,” was suspended.<sup>16</sup> The next week Jonathan began the legal process of divorce from his wife. If the published date of birth for his youngest child in the church register indicated that child was born two months later on 31 December 1818, the 1897 printed information should be compared against the original hand-written entry before other research was started.<sup>17</sup>



Five children of Jonathan Tompkins and Jane Baker, baptized 7 Sept. 1817 with birthdates entered. "U.S., Dutch Reformed Church Records in Selected States, 1639–1989, from the Archives of the Dutch Reformed Church in America, New Brunswick, New Jersey," database with images, *Belleville Church Baptisms, Marriages, Dismissals, Members, 1793–1853; Ancestry*, image 62 of 106.

<sup>15</sup> "Arrangements for the Ensuing Fourth of July," *Centinel Of Freedom*, (Newark, New Jersey), 23 June 1818, p. 3, cols. 2-3; image copy, *GenealogyBank* (<http://www.genealogybank.com> : viewed 11 March 2016).

<sup>16</sup> "Members Suspended, Jane Baker wife of Jon<sup>a</sup> Tompkins" (*Belleville Church Baptisms, Marriages, Dismissals, Members, 1793–1853*, entry for Jane Baker Tompkins, 1818; image copy 65 of 106).

<sup>17</sup> A transcription was published as "Register of Baptisms, Births, Marriages, Membership, in the Dutch Reformed Church at Second River, New Jersey," *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society, Series 3*, vol. 1 (1896):178-96; vol. 2 (1897):65-72, 131-44, 177-85; Tompkins' baptism data at vol. 2 (1897):140. For 110 years this publication provided the only access for researchers to the information in this register.

The Belleville Reformed Church Register became available in 2014 on *Ancestry* which displays a digital image of each page.<sup>18</sup> The date of birth the minister wrote for Lewis Baker Tompkins, the first Tompkins child listed, is clearly written in the illustration on the previous page as “Dec<sup>m</sup> 31-1818.” Therefore, “1818” was not a transcription error when the birthdate for Lewis Baker Tompkins was published in 1897.<sup>19</sup> Did the officiating minister accidentally write “1818” for the year of Lewis’ birth when it should have been “1808”? After locating additional sources and reviewing the information in each one, an accidental error is the only explanation that fits the circumstances of this family. Examining collected facts may explain why:

### **An Analysis of Relevant Facts.**

- Names of all five children were entered in the church register on 7 September 1817 in the minister’s handwriting. Lewis Baker Tompkins, whose name and date of birth was entered first, could not be baptized on that date if his birth occurred fifteen months later.
- Although Lewis was not located in any U.S. census of 1850 or 1860, a man named Lewis Tompkins appeared in 1870 in Dane County, Wisconsin, age 59, farm laborer, marital status of single, and born in New Jersey.<sup>20</sup> A man born in December 1808 would be age 61 in July 1870. Stating an age of 59 years, two years younger than his actual age, is not unusual for a person born the last day of 1808. But if born ten years later in December 1818, his true age would be only 51 in July 1870. Lewis Tompkins might subtract two years from his age to the 1870 census enumerator or to his employer, but it is doubtful that he would add eight years to his correct age and say he was age 59.
- A death notice printed in a Morristown, New Jersey, newspaper stated that Lewis B. Tompkins, “formerly of Littleton” (a village in Hanover Township, Morris County), died in Columbia County, Wisconsin, on 8 November 1872.<sup>21</sup> No age at death was given in the account. An official Wisconsin death record requested for

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<sup>18</sup> *Belleville Church Baptisms, Marriages, Dismissals, Members, 1793–1853*. [See note 1.]

<sup>19</sup> “Register of Baptisms, Births, Marriages, Membership, in the Dutch Reformed Church at Second River, New Jersey,” *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society*, 2 (1897): 140.

<sup>20</sup> 1870 U.S. census, Dane County, Wisconsin, population schedule, town of Vienna, Columbus post office, p. 11 (penned), p. 641-A (stamped), dwelling 80, family 86, Lewis Tompkins in household of Abram A. Boyce; image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : viewed 24 July 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 1709.

<sup>21</sup> “Died. Tompkins. At Wyocena, Columbia county, Wisconsin, Nov. 8th 1872, Lewis B. Tompkins, formerly of Littleton, N.J.” *The Jerseyman (Morristown, N.J.)*, 8 April 1873, p. 2, col. 9; image copy, only digitized on the library’s server, Free Public Library of Morristown and Morris Township, Morristown, N.J.

Lewis B. Tompkins states that he was born in New Jersey and died in the Wyocena poor house, Columbia County, Wisconsin, on 8 November 1872.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, he died at age 63 which would be his correct age if born 31 December 1808. Columbia County is adjacent to Dane County, Wisconsin. This death record is probably for the same Lewis Tompkins, aged 59 years, born New Jersey, and a farm laborer in Dane County. The date of death was the exact date stated in the death notice in a Morristown newspaper. Probably this record is for the same Lewis Baker Tompkins, born 63 years earlier to Jane and Jonathan Tompkins in Hanover Township, Morris County, New Jersey.

- Several consecutive weekly issues of a newspaper published in Newark, New Jersey, printed the following advertisement:<sup>23</sup>

NOTICE. Whereas my wife JANE hath left my bed and board without provocation; all persons are forbid harboring or trusting her on my account, as I will pay no debts of her contracting after this date. JONATHAN TOMKINS. Belleville, Sept. 11, 1818.

It is unlikely that Jane Tompkins would be expecting a child shortly after her husband announced to the world that she had left his “bed and board,” and that he would pay none of her debts contracted after 11 September 1818.

- It was customary at that time for a couple to name their first two sons for maternal and paternal grandfathers who in this family were Lewis Baker<sup>24</sup> and Uzal Tompkins, respectively.<sup>25</sup> The first two sons written in the baptismal list were named Lewis Baker Tompkins and Uzal Tompkins which fit this pattern. It would be an affront to Lewis Baker, the child’s maternal grandfather, if his daughter and son-in-law waited until the birth of their fourth son, eleven years after marriage, before honoring that child with his grandfather’s name.
- Lewis was the first name on the baptismal list of Tompkins children who appear to be ranked by the minister from oldest to youngest. In September 1817, Lewis Baker Tompkins, if thought to be born in 1808, was almost nine years of age. The digital image of the original page of the baptismal entry shows that his name and birth were not inserted later on that page of the church register as an

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<sup>22</sup> Certificate #01057, *Wisconsin Pre-1907 Deaths*, vol. 1, p. 3, Lewis B. Tompkins, 1872; photocopy of the microfilmed death certificate, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison.

<sup>23</sup> *Centinel of Freedom*, (Newark, N. J.), 15 Sept. 1818, p. 3, col. 3; repeated 22 Sept. 1818, p. 1, col. 3; image copies, *GenealogyBank* (<http://www.genealogybank.com>) : viewed 9 September 2016).

<sup>24</sup> Lewis Baker was identified previously as the father of Jane (*Genius of Liberty*, (Morristown, N.J.), 25 February 1808, p. 3, col. 2). [See note 11.]

<sup>25</sup> Uzal Tompkins was identified as the father of Jonathan (Uzal Tomkins, GSNJ Collection of Bible and Family Records #581). [See note 8.]

afterthought. He was alive in 1817, about to be baptized with his siblings, and listed by the minister as the oldest child of Jonathan and Jane Baker Tompkins.

- It is unlikely that a New Jersey legislative body would grant a divorce to a man whose wife was pregnant unless he could prove that the child was not his child. All five children baptized in 1817 were indicated by the minister to be the children of Jonathan Tompkins. Therefore, Jane Tompkins was not pregnant during the year-long divorce proceedings, and did not give birth to Lewis in 1818.
- Lewis' parents married on 9 February 1808.<sup>26</sup> Their first child could be born almost eleven months later on 31 December 1808. Their next child, Uzal, was born 13 July 1810, two and one-half years after marriage, a long period between marriage and birth of a first child, *if* Uzal was the first of their children. There is no record of an infant death in 1808 or 1809 for this couple.<sup>27</sup> The birth of Lewis Baker Tompkins on 31 December 1808 fits into the gap between a marriage date of 9 February 1808 and births of the other five children of Jonathan and Jane Tompkins.

The chart below represents an array of their birthdates. No other year before 1818 allows for the birth of a child on December 31 except the year 1808:

Date	1808	1808	1810	1812	1814	1815	1817
of Marriage	Feb 9						
Lewis Baker		Dec 31					
Uzal			July 13				
Theodore D.				Jun 13			
Nancy L.					Feb 18		
Ann Maria						Mar 21	
George W.							Jun 28

### A Continual Search for Alternative Sources.

*Ancestry* and *FamilySearch.org* were searched unsuccessfully for any Lewis Tompkins in 1850 and 1860 federal censuses using name variations, age ranges, and birth state of New Jersey. A search of records of the Parsippany Presbyterian Church in Morris County, where Jane Baker Tompkins was a member prior to 1817, showed that

<sup>26</sup> Morris County, New Jersey, Marriages, Book A: 221. [See note 2.]

<sup>27</sup> There is no gravestone for a Tompkins child born about 1808–1809 in the Vail Memorial Cemetery in Parsippany, New Jersey, as there is for the infant daughter who died in 1814. No death notice was found for a child of Jonathan Tompkins in any 1808 or 1809 issue of any extant Morristown, N.J. newspaper.

baptisms before 1834 were not recorded.<sup>28</sup> (An 1809 baptism date, if one was recorded in Parsippany, might indicate that Lewis' birth was nine or ten years earlier than 1818.) A search for a marriage for Lewis Tompkins was not found in New Jersey or any other state, although official marriage records for many states were not recorded before the mid-nineteenth century. Both his death record and 1870 census data reported his marital status as single, not widowed or divorced.

If the 1810 and 1820 federal censuses of New Jersey had survived,<sup>29</sup> there might be an indication of two males (Lewis and Uzal) under age 5 for the Jonathan Tompkins family in 1810, and two males of age 10 and under 16 in 1820. Neither Jonathan nor his son, Lewis Baker Tompkins, was found as head of household in any 1830 federal census index. There was a Lewis Tompkins, "of 30 and under 40," found as head of household in Hanover Township, Morris County.<sup>30</sup> But this man was not Lewis Baker Tompkins who would be only age 21 if born in December 1808, or age 11 if born in December 1818.

Jonathan Tompkins died before 1840,<sup>31</sup> but Lewis Tompkins was not found as head of household in any 1840 federal census index. He may be the "Lewis Tomkins" who was seeking a farm in January 1837, especially if he was born in 1808.<sup>32</sup> But if he was born in December 1818 he would be only 18 years of age, and probably without the resources to purchase a farm of 35 acres. There is an indexed name of "Lewis B. Tomkins" in the 1855 state census of New Jersey in Morris County, but the microfilm must be viewed at an LDS Family History Center.<sup>33</sup> In the New Jersey state census of 1855, however, adult ages were indicated as "20 to 60" and "over 60" only, which would not be helpful in determining the exact age of this Lewis B. Tompkins in 1855. A search of land ownership records in Morris County after 1840 for Lewis B. Tompkins would not

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<sup>28</sup> *Presbyterian Church, Parsippany, New Jersey, Church Records, 1745-1910*; 3 reels of FHL microfilmed records stored at Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries, New Brunswick, New Jersey, as call number D-16. [Additionally, FHL microfilm 888768 is viewable at an LDS family history center].

<sup>29</sup> Federal census data for all New Jersey counties from 1790 through 1820 were lost (Val D. Greenwood, *Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy, 3rd Edition* [Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2000], 243).

<sup>30</sup> 1830 U.S. census, Morris County, New Jersey, population schedule, Hanover Township, p. 16 (penned), line 17, for Lewis Tompkins; image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : viewed 20 September 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication M19, Roll 82.

<sup>31</sup> "Died. In this town on Friday last, Mr. Jonathan Tompkins ...," *The Jerseyman (Morristown, New Jersey)*, 25 July 1832, p. 3, col. 4; image copy, *GenealogyBank* (<http://www.genealogybank.com> : viewed 6 September 2016).

<sup>32</sup> An advertisement in a Morristown newspaper requested: "A Small Farm Wanted ... from 25 to 35 acres ... in this county... Lewis Tomkins," *The Jerseyman (Morristown, New Jersey)*, 1 February 1837, p. 3, col. 2; image copy, *GenealogyBank* (<http://www.genealogybank.com> : viewed 20 September 2016).

<sup>33</sup> New Jersey State Census, 1855, Morris County, New Jersey, for Lewis B. Tomkins of Chester, Mendham, Washington and Rockaway townships, image 387; database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org>); FHL microfilm 802,945 [not available for viewing online unless viewing at an LDS family history center].



prove his date of birth, but only verify his residence at the time a deed was signed.

### **Summation of the Research Problem.**

Although only two new sources support birth years of 1808 to 1809 for Lewis Tompkins, six excellent reasons exist for accepting a birthdate earlier than 1818 for him:

1. He was age 63 at his death on 9 November 1872 which indicates late 1808 or early 1809 as his year of birth.
2. The baptism date of 7 September 1817 was written next to this child's name and 31 December 1818 birthdate which was an impossible date combination.
3. As the first son, he was named for his maternal grandfather, Lewis Baker. The second son was named for his paternal grandfather, Uzal Tompkins. If he were the last of four sons, his name would not be Lewis Baker Tompkins.
4. He was born 11 months after the marriage of his parents, filling the gap before the next child was born in July 1810.
5. His mother left her husband and family on 11 September 1818. She would not have left her home as a woman in her sixth month of pregnancy.
6. No further research found evidence supporting an 1818 birth year for Lewis Baker Tompkins. His correct birthdate was *likely* 31 December 1808.

Without knowing Lewis' intended journey after leaving New Jersey, there could not be an exhaustive search for information about this man. Lewis Tompkins may have wandered through many states before reaching Wisconsin. There is no indication that he purchased land, or served in the military, or married, or had any other occupation other than farm laborer. As additional records are indexed and placed online, and as more newspapers are digitized, information about Lewis Baker Tompkins may surface for the years between 1819 and 1870. Until then, a few known facts, indirect evidence, and deductive reasoning are all that remain to corroborate his probable year of birth.

### **Conclusion Regarding Conflicting Views of the Tompkins' Divorce.**

As shown by an analysis of old and newly-found evidence, divorce proceedings were not instituted by an insensitive husband against his wife, previously thought to be an expectant mother. Rather, his decision to end their marriage was provoked by the actions of his wife, whose behavior also led to her suspension from the Belleville

Reformed Church.<sup>34</sup> A substitution of 1808 for the erroneous 1818 year of birth for the oldest Tompkins' child, allows the many descendants of this couple to sympathize with the husband, and not the wife. By deserting her home and family, Jane left no doubt that she was the one responsible for destroying the Tompkins' marriage.

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<sup>34</sup> *Belleville Church Baptisms, Marriages, Dismissals, Members, 1793–1853*, entry for Jane Baker Tompkins, 1818; image copy 65 of 106.