

WARD BRIGGS HERITAGE HUB

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Benjamin Bennett Briggs, M.D.

B: June 27, 1827 in Bristol, New York

D: February 15, 1893 in La Crescenta, Los Angeles, California

Parents

- Thomas Briggs (1790-1863)
- Abigail Gregg (1795-1837)

Siblings

- Louisa Maria Briggs (1815-1895)
- Alinda Briggs (1816-1880)
- Daniel Gregg Briggs (1818-1911)
- Abiel Briggs (1820-1878)
- Silas Briggs (1822-1892)
- George Gregg Briggs (1824-1885)
- Maria Antoinette Briggs (1830-1903)
- John Gregg Briggs (1831-1877)
- Joseph Warren Briggs (1833-1887)

Spouse & Children

- Abby Crane (1824-1862) married October 28, 1852
 - Irene Crane Briggs (1853-1932)
- Caroline Adelia Crane (1826-1916) married May 25, 1870
 - Caroline Briggs (1871-1873)

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Benjamin Bennett Briggs, M.D., was a man of remarkable adaptability and determination. Born into a large family in Bristol, Ontario, New York, on June 27, 1827, Benjamin was the seventh of ten children. His upbringing in a farming household in Sharon, Ohio, instilled in him a deep connection to the land—a passion for farming and horticulture that would stay with him throughout his life.

Benjamin's life took an adventurous turn when, in 1849, he joined the throngs of men headed westward during the California Gold Rush. As a forty-niner, his journey to California was typical of the time, marked by the excitement and peril that defined the era. However, Benjamin's story diverged when he became the victim of an

accidental shooting—a traumatic event that left him with a bullet lodged in his body for most of the remainder of his life. This injury profoundly impacted his decisions and the course of his future.

After returning to Ohio, Benjamin married Abby Crane on October 28, 1852. Together, they welcomed their daughter, Irene, in 1853. Life in Ohio was comfortable, yet Benjamin's pioneering spirit remained unquenched. More than a decade after his first expedition to California, he convinced Abby to leave behind their established life for the unknown challenges and opportunities of the West. The family settled in California, where Abby quickly fell in love with their new home, writing to her sister about her hope that it would be their "forever home." Tragically, Abby's life was cut short, and she passed away just months after their arrival.

Grief-stricken, Benjamin sought solace in the rugged lifestyle of a miner, but soon realized that his true calling lay elsewhere. At age 37, he embarked on a new chapter, choosing to study medicine—a decision that led him to practice in Crawfordsville, Indiana. It was here that he married his widowed sister-in-law, Caroline Crane, in 1870. The couple had a daughter, Caroline, who sadly died in childhood.

Despite a promising career in medicine, Benjamin's health was compromised by the lingering effects of the 1849 gunshot wound. The search for a better climate led him back to California, where he would make his most lasting contributions.

In California, Benjamin acquired and subdivided a large tract of land that boasted a climate he believed would be beneficial to his health. He named this land "Crescenta," and it would later become the community known as La Crescenta. Ever the innovator, Benjamin designed and built what was likely the first home in California constructed with German cement. His residence, known as "The Terrace," became a testament to his love for nature, with its grounds planted with exotic plants and trees, reflecting his early connection to farming.

Benjamin Bennett Briggs is remembered not only as a physician but also as a pioneer, innovator, and visionary. His contributions to the community of La Crescenta endure, a lasting reminder of his resilience, creativity, and forward-thinking spirit. His life journey—from a farm boy in Ohio to a respected doctor and community founder in California—serves as an inspiring narrative of perseverance and adaptability.



1847 Military Service



1849 Diary



1849 Diary Transcription and More



Who Shot Benjamin Bennett Briggs?
by Trudy Ward Lindaman, 2023



1850-1860



1863 Unionville



1865-1869 Medical Studies



1870-1880 Physician in Crawfordville, IN



1880-1893 La Crescenta, Briggs Terrace



1893-02-23 Death



Letters