

LIVERMORE HERITAGE GUILD MONOGRAPH

# OLD FAMILY BIBLES



By Harry Briley

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“*Allan & Sarah Briley 1876 Family Bible*”)

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## Purpose

This documentary monograph gives partial public access to historical and/or two-century old editions of Bibles belonging to early Livermore ranchers. This reduces undue physical wear and tear of the historical objects within the Livermore Heritage Guild (LHG) collection in Livermore, California.

## Limited Flash Photography

The LHG limits exposure to the air and flash photography of these Biblical pages (especially the gold gilt images). The enclosed photographs, unless specified, were taken on 10/13/2017. If an image lacks sufficient clarity, a researcher may seek access to the source object to obtain a professional photograph of specific pages.

The Livermore Heritage Guild claims rights to each professional image to update this monograph with that superior image. The photographer will be credited.

## Arrangement of this Monograph

These Bibles (or “libraries-between-two-covers”) were part of the LHG collection in 2017 and represent the Clark, Crane, Fish/Millington, Maclean, Peck, and Black/Wagoner families. They are arranged in publication date order.

**PART 1** describes the varied content available for these custom bound Family Bibles in 1880’s America and how rural families obtained them from traveling salesmen.

**PART 2** describes each Bible (date, unique characteristics, historical significance). Sample pages display the face sheets of content found in these heirlooms. The archival museum number appears in the format of “LHG year.donor.item”

In **PART 3**, the Family Records found nestled between the Old and New Testaments are shown, followed by a transcription of each based upon the cursive hand-written entries.

## Acknowledgements

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Special thanks to Beryl Maclean for her Bible donations in 2013, material provided in 2018 for background data about three of the Bibles, and her data checking of the text.

Some source material came from:

- Michigan Historical Monograph: “*Allan & Sarah Briley 1876 Family Bible*”, ©2012, Harry Briley Living Trust
- **creationism.org** (Gustave Doré engravings)
- **Windmill Ministries** (Dealer in Antique Bibles in English and in Dutch)

## PART 1 - Family Bibles in Rural America

A ‘fully loaded’ Bible was an encyclopedic collection of books. That was the reason they were so heavy. Each ‘library-in-a-book’ or ‘combination Bible’ contained, at minimum:

- Protestant **Old Testament** using books from Hebrew Bible (the Tenach)
- Protestant **New Testament**
- covers in stamped leather, carved deep leather, gold gilt, and/or metal clasps
- From 1881 onward, changes to the King James Version (1611) by the Revised Version (newly released in 1881) appeared as footnotes or in parallel columns

The unique content for each of our combination Bibles appears later in this document but here is a list of but a few examples of optional books available to the Bible purchaser.

- Illustrations and Descriptions of **Ancient Money**
- **Apocrypha** (Fifteen Septuagint books omitted from Hebrew Tenach)
- **Bible Teachers Textbook**
- **Captivating Bible stories** for the Young
- **Cities and Towns**, et al by John Wilson
- **History of Religious Denominations** (in the late 1800’s)
- **Complete Concordance** Cruden’s or by John Brown 1868
- **Dictionary of Bible** by William Smith, 1860-65
  - With 500 Illustrations compared to abridged with ‘only’ 200 illustrations
- **Glossary**
- **History of the Books of the Bible** by William Smith, 1860-65
- **History of Jewish worship**
  - See also “Sketches of Jewish Social Life”, 1876 by Alfred Edersheim
- **History of the World** 98AD -1882 by William Brown
- **The Holy Land** by William Reyburn
- **Jerusalem**, et al by Thomas Davis
- **Jewish and Egyptian antiquities**
- **Manners and Customs**, et al by John Willamson
  - See also “Manners and Customs of the Bible”, 1874 by James Freeman
- **Natural History** (animals/plants) by A.F.Thompson
- **Life of Saint Paul** by Charles Farrar
- **Lives of Apostles and Evangelists**
- **Measures, Weights, and Coins** by Richard, Bishop of Peterborough
- **Parables of ... Jesus** by Joseph Haines
- **Proverbs of Solomon** by Edward Lewis
- **Psalter in Metre** (The Psalms adjusted for singing)
- **Scenes and Incidents of ... Jesus** by Arthur Hayes
- Bible Aids... **Social and private prayer**
- **Temples of Solomon and Herod** by Philip Lee
- **Translators, Reformers, Martyrs** by Joseph Jenkins



## Old Family Bibles

Optional Vital Statistic pages for the Family were selected from among:

- A gold-gilt **Presentation page** in the front
- A gold-gilt **Face Sheet** quoting Deuteronomy 6 and Leviticus (in Matthew 22)
- An ornate multi-color **Holy Matrimony Certificate**
- Several gold-gilt frill pages for **Family Vital Statistics**
- A gold-gilt sheet quoting **The Beatitudes** from Matthew 5 KJV
- A gold-gilt sheet quoting **The Lord's Prayer** from Matthew 6 KJV
- pages in back for **Family Photos**, four to a page

Illustrations as a stand-alone set or sometimes found throughout included:

- numerous **engravings** by Frenchman **Gustave Dore** (black and white images)
- **chromolithographs** (multi-color engravings and plates, some with gold gilt ink)
  - Example: **Tabernacle in the Wilderness**
- **Biblical scenery**
- **Historical Illustrations of Bible Text**
- **Hofmann Gallery** of New Testament Illustrations
- Multi-color **Maps** (in late 1800's) and **Charts**, sometimes as large fold-outs

## Purchase Method

Rural families ordered their heirloom Family Bible from a traveling Bible salesman in the late 1800's. Due to the highly customized nature of each individual order, these Bibles were not available from volume discount mail-order catalogs of the era.

Windmill Ministries explains (edited):

*The large family Bible of the 1880s was sold by salesmen who literally went 'door-to-door'. They carried a 'Bible Sampler': a book with examples of the covers, spines and some contents of the various styles and options for Bibles offered by a publisher. These Bibles varied from \$5 for the 'cheapest' to about \$15 or even \$18 for the most extensively 'loaded' Bibles. The quality and decorations of the covers would be more extensive as the price increased.*

*The Salesman Bible Sampler contained small notes with instructions and information to share with the customer and of course one or more pricelists. In the back cover, there would be the so-called subscription list, to write down the names and addresses of each customer plus their various chosen options.*

*Even though one finds names of different publishers, the vast majority of these Family Bibles were printed by A.J. Holman in Philadelphia.*

*The name of the publisher on the title page was often the local representative (or franchise) that sold the Bible. [Even so,] a Holman Family Bible can always be recognized by the 'Light of the World' trademark on a title page.*

<http://www.windmillministries.org/Antique-Salesman-Bible-Store.htm>

## Illustrations

Lithographic full-page artwork often occurred throughout the Bible. A blank full-page thin tissue “tipped-in” (glued near binding edge) protected the artwork. The 1881 Peck Bible has the fine etching work of Gustave Doré and other artists.

Windmill Ministries describe the proliferation of this artwork (edited):

*Traditional (Antique) Family Bibles of the second half of the 19th century are illustrated by many (hundreds to even thousands) of eye-catching and attractive engravings (on wood or steel). French artist Gustave Doré (1832-1883) was by far the best-known and most successful Bible illustrator of that period and his work appears in many of Family Bibles of those days.*

*Doré was born in Strasbourg and his commissions include works by Rabelais, Balzac, Milton, and Dante. In the mid 1880's Doré illustrated **English Bible (1866)** was a great success. In 1867, Doré held a major exhibition of his work in London, which led to the foundation of the Doré Gallery in New Bond Street.*

*He produced hundreds of quality Bible illustrations from a wide variety of biblical stories from both the Old Testament (including the Apocrypha) and the New Testament, used in Bibles of many languages in 19th Century Europe and later in the Americas. Most illustrations are identical in the various editions.*

*Many skillful artists produced such artwork for Biblical themes but without a doubt, Doré was the most renowned. His realistic style breathed new life into these real stories. Centuries of mosaics, frescos, and stone reliefs, with their precise iconography, along with wood block impressions (readers may recall the common halos) had caricaturized many Bible stories in the minds of believers.*

*However, Doré persons and places looked real. His work (and artistic license) was criticized in his own day, but these illustrations stood the test of time as good physical representations of important Biblical events.*

- <http://www.windmillministries.org/Gustave-Dore-Antique-Bibles.htm>

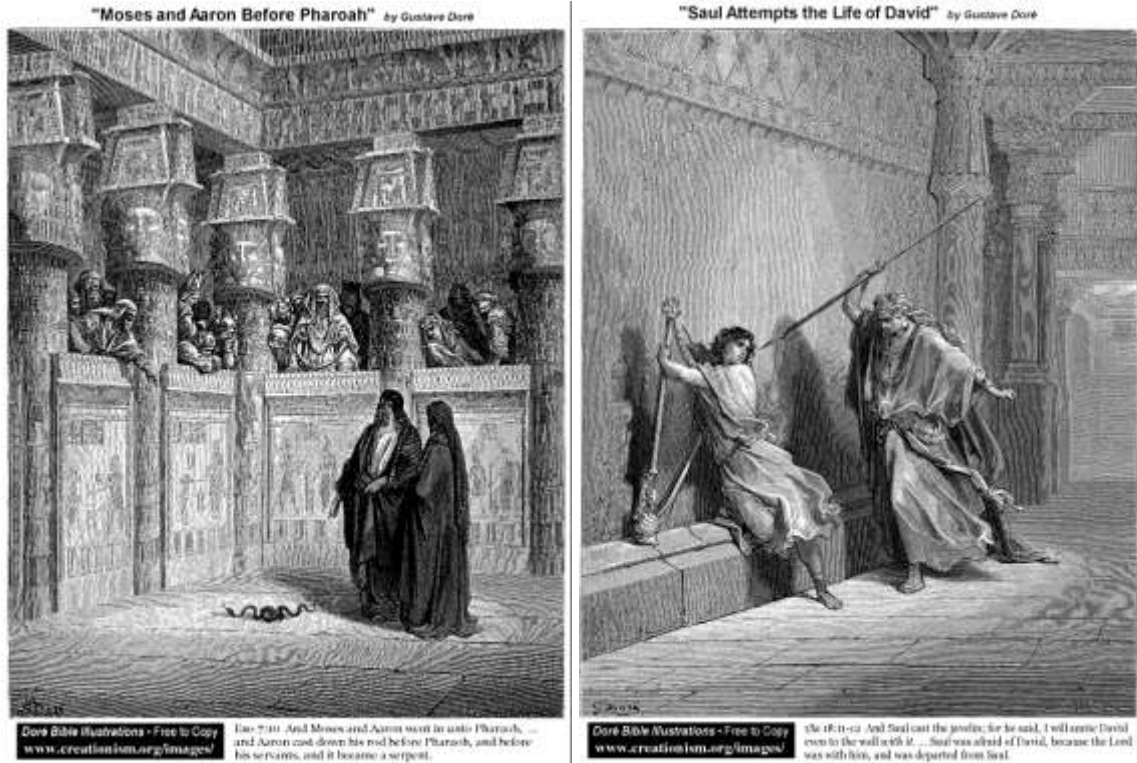


Figure 1 –Moses/Aaron with Pharaoh – Saul attacks David (Gustave Doré)



Figure 2 – Healing the Sick - Peter Denies Christ (Gustave Doré)