They came together from many different places, some by their own design and some by the design of others. Through many fiery trials and numerous failures, they struggled and endured to provide a better life for themselves and their offspring. In the process, they helped to forge a nation.

AN AMERICAN FAMILY BIBLE

by Miller Jones

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An American Family Bible

Miller Jones
# Table of Contents

## The Old Testament

**Beginnings (1585-1660)**

- Chapter 1: Before Time, the Land .............................................. 1
- Chapter 2: Before Time, the Principal People ............................... 3
- Chapter 3: 1585-1603, The Old World and the New ...................... 4
- Chapter 4: 1607-1608, Tsenacomoco or Virginia .......................... 9
- Chapter 5: 1620-1621, Plymouth .............................................. 15
- Chapter 6: 1621-1622, War against the English .......................... 24
- Chapter 7: 1628-1640, The Genesis of Slavery ............................ 26
- Chapter 8: 1629-1653, A Huguenot in Virginia ............................ 29
- Chapter 9: 1632-1660, Puritans and Quakers .............................. 32
- Chapter 10: 1635-1655, From Cambridge to Ipswich and Long Island ................................................................. 36
- Chapter 11: 1635-1657, The New Haven Puritans ........................ 37
- Chapter 12: 1638-1660, The spiritual journey of a man and his family ................................................................. 45

## Journeys (1661-1765)

- Chapter 1: 1661-1675, A Bristol merchant and his son ................ 49
- Chapter 2: 1661-1683, Free liberty of conscience ........................ 51
- Chapter 3: 1677, The Quaker colony of West Jersey .................... 55
- Chapter 4: 1682, Blessed be the name of the Lord ........................ 59
- Chapter 5: 1693, Kidnapped from Scotland ............................... 63
- Chapter 6: 1687-1697, Struck by lightning ................................ 67
- Chapter 7: 1698-1712, The Welsh Quakers ............................... 69
- Chapter 8: 1702-1714, The Irish Quakers ................................. 73
- Chapter 9: 1710-1717, A Maryland inn ...................................... 76
Chapter 10: 1719-1740, The widow and the watchmaker .......... 78
Chapter 11: 1740-1755, A foot in both worlds ....................... 80
Chapter 12: 1742-1748, Marrying out of meeting...................... 81
Chapter 13: 1746-1754, A Quaker abolitionist .......................... 83
Chapter 14: 1750-1765, Delaware to North Carolina ............... 86
Chapter 15: 1759-1763, Williamsburg .................................... 89

Freedom (1765-1781) ................................................................ 93
Chapter 1: 1765-1771, The Regulators of North Carolina .......... 93
Chapter 2: 1770-1776, Presbyterian Patriots ............................. 99
Chapter 3: 1775-1776, Delaware and Long Island .................... 102
Chapter 4: October - November 1776, Retreat and the Battle of White Plains ...................................................... 110
Chapter 5: September-November 1777, Brandywine and Germantown ................................................................. 113
Chapter 6: Winter 1777-1778, Valley Forge ............................... 120
Chapter 7: June 1778, The Battle of Monmouth ........................ 123
Chapter 8: 1778, Callaway, Boone and the Shawnee ............... 127
Chapter 9: June - December 1779, Stono Ferry and Savannah ................................................................. 135
Chapter 10: March-May 1780, The Siege of Charleston and imprisonment ................................................................. 139
Chapter 11: September-October 1780, King’s Mountain .......... 144
Chapter 12: January 1781, A child at Cowpens ....................... 148
Chapter 13: July 1781, Fighting Tories in North Carolina and peace ................................................................. 150

Wanderings (1785-1825) .............................................................. 153
Chapter 1: 1785, The Cumberland Gap ........................................ 153
Chapter 2: 1788, Lookout Mountain ........................................... 156
Chapter 3: 1785-1792, An American inventor goes to London ................................................................. 158
Chapter 4: 1795-1803, An awakening in the Wilderness .......... 162
Chapter 5: 1800-1803, From Northwest Territory to Ohio .... 165
Chapter 6: 1801-1805, John Marshall and judicial review .......... 168
Chapter 7: 1806, Friends, horses and a duel .......................... 172
Chapter 8: 1807-1811, Giles County in Tennessee............... 175
Chapter 9: 1807-1819, The settlement of Alabama ............. 177
Chapter 10: 1814-1815, The War of 1812 in Alabama
    and Georgia ....................................................................... 180
Chapter 11: 1813, A mad dog’s bite ..................................... 183
Chapter 12: 1810-1820, Lemley Mountain ............................ 185
Chapter 13: 1821-1825, Pestilence and orphans .................. 187

Dwellings (1826-1860) .............................................................. 191
Chapter 1: 1826, A cabin in the Ohio woods .................. 191
Chapter 2: 1827, The Georgia land lottery ........................ 194
Chapter 3: 1829-1844, The long road to Texas ................... 196
Chapter 4: 1834-1835, The death of a slave .................... 200
Chapter 5: 1830-1839, A trail of many tears .................... 205
Chapter 6: 1837-1841, The Seminole War ....................... 211
Chapter 7: 1841-1844, A feme sole .................................. 220
Chapter 8: 1846-1847, The Mexican War .......................... 223
Chapter 9: 1852, Epidemic .............................................. 230
Chapter 10: 1850-1854, An Ohio inn ................................. 233
Chapter 11: 1855, Blue Water Creek ............................... 237
Chapter 12: 1858-1860, The Department of Oregon ........... 241

Voices (1860-1865) ............................................................... 247
Chapter 1: 1860-1861, St. Louis ........................................ 247
Chapter 2: 1861, Kentucky ............................................. 255
Chapter 3: 1861, The 30th Georgia Infantry ..................... 256
Chapter 4: 1862, Fort Henry and Fort Donelson ............. 258
Chapter 5: 1862, Seven Pines and Mechanicsville .......... 264
Chapter 6: 1863, The Battle of Chancellorsville ......................... 267
Chapter 7: 1863, The Battle of Chickamauga .......................... 272
Chapter 8: 1864, Calhoun, Georgia & Rock Island, Illinois ....... 277
Chapter 9: 1864, Kennesaw Mountain ..................................... 281
Chapter 10: 1864, Sugar Creek ................................................... 283
Chapter 11: 1865, She met him on his way home .................... 286
Chapter 12: 1865, The 18th Ohio Infantry ................................. 288

The New Testament

Gleanings (1865-1895) ............................................................... 293

Chapter 1: 1865-1870, When they didn’t come home ............. 293
Chapter 2: 1865-1870, Randolph County after the war .......... 297
Chapter 3: 1867-1875, Prosperity and progress in the North .... 299
Chapter 4: 1874-1884, Death haunts us ................................. 301
Chapter 5: 1876-1880, The Elk River to Rogersville .......... 303
Chapter 6: 1876-1881, Marriage and loss ................................. 306
Chapter 7: 1885, A terrible accident ......................................... 309
Chapter 8: 1886, An argument turns deadly ........................... 313
Chapter 9: 1885-1895, Brindlee Mountain .............................. 316

Enemies (1896-1928) ................................................................. 321

Chapter 1: 1896-1901, The Ketchum Gang ......................... 321
Chapter 2: 1898-1904, The poorhouse ................................. 325
Chapter 3: 1899, Visiting and travel ................................. 328
Chapter 4: 1902-1904, Mending a broken heart ................. 331
Chapter 5: 1904, A lynching at the courthouse ................. 334
Chapter 6: 1904-1911, The Republicans in control .......... 337
Chapter 7: 1906, Morality and religion ................................. 341
Chapter 8: 1911, Child labor and cotton mills ................. 344
Chapter 9: 1914, Childbirth............................................................. 346
Chapter 10: 1915, An Oklahoma gunfight ................................. 347
Chapter 11: 1918-1920, World War I .......................................... 351
Chapter 12: 1924, Old memories............................................... 359
Chapter 13: 1925, Tuberculosis and the train ride home.......... 361
Chapter 14: 1925, Football and mental health ........................... 363
Chapter 15: 1925-1928, Prohibition in Kentucky ................. 365

Want (1929-1941) ........................................................................... 369
Chapter 1: 1929-1930, Lockjaw .................................................. 369
Chapter 2: 1931-1932, The things hunger will make you do........ 371
Chapter 3: 1933, Betrayal .............................................................. 376
Chapter 4: 1930-1934, A divorced, single mother ................. 379
Chapter 5: 1934-1940, Hard work and privation .................... 383
Chapter 6: 1935-1938, A miracle and the CCC ....................... 387
Chapter 7: 1937-1939, Murder ............................................... 391
Chapter 8: 1933-1940, The WPA and tuberculosis again ....... 397
Chapter 9: 1939-1940, Archaeology, the TVA and the WPA... 401
Chapter 10: 1938-1941, Restlessness ................................. 402

War (1941-1945) .......................................................................... 409
Chapter 1: 1941, Pearl Harbor .................................................. 409
Chapter 2: 1942, Rationing and a baby ................................. 410
Chapter 3: 1942-1943, Orphans ............................................ 413
Chapter 4: 1943-1944, Training a soldier ............................ 415
Chapter 5: 1943-1944, Training Seabees ............................... 419
Chapter 6: 1944, Hawaii and the Palau Islands ..................... 425
Chapter 7: July-November 1944, Life aboard the
USS PC -1187 ................................................................................. 427
Chapter 8: 1944-1945, New Guinea ..................................... 429
Chapter 9: 1945, Manila, the Philippines ............................... 432
Chapter 10: 1945, The Northern Apennines Campaign .......... 433
Chapter 11: 1945, The Po Valley Campaign .......................... 437
Chapter 12: 1945, A Marine, a dog and Hell ....................... 440
Chapter 13: 1945, Victory and the end of the war ................. 443

**Fullness (1945-1963)** ............................................................... 447

Chapter 1: 1945, Starting over .................................................. 447
Chapter 2: 1946, Neighbors ...................................................... 450
Chapter 3: 1946-1947, Heartaches, challenges and trials ....... 453
Chapter 4: 1948, An election surprise ................................. 459
Chapter 5: 1949, A dirty little hillbilly ................................. 460
Chapter 6: 1950-1951, Declining health ............................... 462
Chapter 7: 1950-1953, The Korean War ............................... 466
Chapter 8: 1954-1959, Professional and personal success ...... 473
Chapter 9: 1958-1959, The breaking point ......................... 475
Chapter 10: 1960-1961, A teen pregnancy and an election .... 477
Chapter 11: 1962-1963, Despair and hope ............................ 480

**Boundless (1964-1987)** ........................................................ 487

Chapter 1: 1964-1967, Hope and death ............................... 487
Chapter 2: 1968, Extended family ........................................... 492
Chapter 4: 1973, Gainful employment, a visit and a fire ....... 502
Chapter 5: 1974, A resignation and a serial killer .................. 506
Chapter 6: 1975-1978, The spirit of ’76 ................................. 510
Chapter 7: 1979-1981, Expanding horizons ......................... 512
Chapter 8: 1981, A ride with the devil and finding a job ....... 519
Chapter 9: 1982-1984, Alabama beckons ............................ 522
Chapter 10: 1985-1987, An end and a beginning .................. 529
Beginnings (1585-1660)

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1)*

Chapter 1: Before Time, the Land

They told this story around our campfires before the pale-skinned ones came:

2 The great waters covered the surface of the earth. As our brothers and sisters looked out over the waters from their home above, they longed for more room to move around in and live. “I wonder what is below all of that water,” the Great Horned Owl said. “I will go and see,” Water Beetle volunteered.

3 Then he dove down into the water, but Water Beetle could not see anything at first. He tried again and dove even deeper into the water. This time, he scraped along the muddy bottom. “I will carry some of this mud on my back to show the others,” he thought. So, he scooped up some of the mud onto his back and headed for the surface.

4 When he reached the surface, the mud began to fall off of his back and spread out around him. As the mud grew beneath him, it began to dry just enough for him to stand on top of it without sinking. Before long, Water Beetle was standing in the middle of a great island floating on the waters.

5 “Hurry!” Owl shouted to the Eagle. “Take these cords and attach them to the corners of the island and secure them to the sky, so that it doesn’t slip back below the waters!” So, the eagle took the cords in its beak and did as the owl had instructed; but she only tied them with a single knot, because she resented the owl telling her what to do. “Those cords will come loose one day, and the island will sink back below the waters,” Owl warned.
6 The other animals were so happy, however, that they ignored Owl’s warning. At first, they sent Dove down to see if there was any place firm enough to support them, but she returned without finding any place to rest. Crow swooped down over the surface of the island next, but he also could not find any place to land. “I will go,” the Great Buzzard volunteered.

7 So Buzzard flew over the entire surface of the earth, from one end of the island to the other. Now he flew very low to the ground so that he could study the land in detail. In fact, he flew so low that his great wings struck the soft ground in several places and caused valleys and mountains to form on the surface of the island. The wind that his wings created also helped to dry the ground further and make it more stable.

8 “That’s enough!” the other animals shouted. They were afraid that Buzzard would fill up the whole surface of the island with valleys and mountains. Then buzzard landed atop one of the mountains and waited for the other animals to come down to the earth.

9 Nevertheless, when the other animals arrived on the earth, they were dismayed at how dark everything was. “We need some light to see what we are doing,” Bear said. “Yes, some light would be nice,” said the trees as they poked along the ground with their toes.

10 So the conjurers set the sun in the sky; but they placed it too low, and it scorched the Crawfish and made him red. Then they moved it a handbreadth higher in the sky, but the sun was still too hot. Thus, the conjurers continued to move the sun up one handbreadth at a time until it stood seven handbreadths in the sky. “That is just right,” said Rabbit. Thereafter, the sun stayed on that course and sank into the west each evening and reappeared again in the east the following morning.

11 Then the Great Spirit told the animals that they must stay awake for seven nights. On the first night, most of the animals and trees
were able to stay awake. Nevertheless, on each of the succeeding nights more of the animals and trees succumbed to sleep. By the seventh night, only Owl, Panther, Raccoon, Cedar, Pine, Spruce and a few others managed to remain awake. Thus, as a consequence of their having endured the test, the Great Spirit gave those animals the ability to see in the dark and allowed those trees to keep their hair during the winter.

12 After that, a woman fell through a hole in the sky and landed on the earth. Later still, her brother left the land above and joined her on the earth. At first, he scolded her for leaving their home beyond the sky. “There are no other people here!” he shouted.

13 Then he took one of the trout that he had just caught in the stream and struck his sister with the fish. Seven days later, she had a baby; and she continued to have a baby every seventh day for many years thereafter.

14 The Great Spirit, however, saw that the earth would soon be filled with people. As a consequence, he intervened and told the woman that she would only be allowed to have one child each year. Her very next child was the mother of our people.

**Chapter 2: Before Time, the Principal People**

No one remembers the first time our people saw these mountains and rivers, but we know that it was many years ago. They came from the direction of the setting sun, and they walked a great distance to get here. One thing we know for certain, however, we were here before the pale-skinned ones.

2 Each one of our people belonged to one of seven clans. The Long Hairs were the peaceful ones. Many of the people from the Blue Clan were gifted in caring for children. Most of our leading warriors came from the Wolf Clan. Likewise, much of our cultivation and gathering was done by the Wild Potato Clan. Our runners and
They came together from many different places, some by their own design and some by the design of others. Through many fiery trials and numerous failures, they struggled and endured to provide a better life for themselves and their offspring. In the process, they helped to forge a nation.

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