

PART 3 -- POSTERITY

CHAPTER VII

MARTHA C. AND GEORGE HARRIS

MARTHA C., born Jan. 22, 1821. After the death of her father she with her younger brother, George, remained at the homestead and took the best of care of her mother till the latter's death. On Feb. 24, 1855, she married William Stackhouse, born in Bucks county, Pa., in 1813. The wife had been given about 170 acres off the west part of the original James Harris farm, including the homestead buildings; here the couple spent most of their lives. In addition to farming the husband devoted much of his time to bee keeping, having at times over 100 swarms. He died in 1903.

They had no offspring of their own but some of the older children of her brothers James and Isaiah lived with them part of the time after the death of their mothers; her brothers and sisters and their families were always cordially welcomed back at the old homestead by "Aunt Martha." Some years after her husband's death Martha had to give up the homestead to her husband's creditors and went to live in Clarksville, well cared for till her death by some of her nieces and nephews, organized for that purpose by Mary N. Wilkerson. She lived to be over 90 years of age and though almost blind towards the last she retained her mind and memory till she passed away, Sept. 26, 1911.

In August, 1867, the couple adopted two children from the Cincinnati Children's Home: Anna Regar, born Oct. 4, 1857, and Joseph, her brother, born Feb. 9, 1861. They raised these as their own, giving them every care. Anna married Thomas Wellman; they had one child, Cora, who married Edward Coran; no children. Anna lives in Clarksville. Joseph married Elizabeth Cozart, Feb., 1882. After some years of farming Joseph became a glass blower and lived many years in Indiana. They now live in Clarksville, and have the following posterity: 1 William C., 1883. 2 Edward Mar., 1885. 3 Oliver, Feb., 1887 (Dead). 4 Lillian G., Dec., 1890. 5 Clarion, Oct., 1892. 6 Forest, Sept., 1894. 7 Orville, Aug., 1897. 9 Charles, Sept., 1902. 10 Beatrice, Aug., 1912. Orville and Beatrice died in infancy.

George, born Feb. 12, 1826. He never married and lived with his sister Martha. He was given about 140 acres on the eastern part of the original tract. George developed a literary turn of mind, wrote for several papers, and also worked with Edward Welles of Wilkes Barre, Pa., in securing data of the James Harris descendants for a "Family Tree"

Mr. Welles was arranging. He always helped entertain his visiting nieces and nephews at the homestead and liked to visit with the families of his brothers and sisters, especially those at Springhill, where he was gladly welcomed. He was drowned Feb. 16, 1891. He was returning at night from Clarksville, where he often spent the evening, and evidently fell into the deep mill race along the edge of which his path led. As he was very corpulent and unwieldy he could not climb the steep bank and probably perished mostly from cold and exposure. He was buried in the graveyard early laid out by his father on the part owned by George at his death. This was first used as a burial place about 1810-11, and for others than the Harris family, as no provision had yet been made for that purpose in the community.

SPRINGHILL AND ITS EARLY SETTLERS—THE WILKERSON FAMILY

As all three of the married sons of James Harris, Sr., settled on farms at Springhill given them by their father, and two of these reared large families there a brief sketch of it is in place. And as all three of these families intermarried with the Wilkerson descendants and some others of the Harris posterity are connected or related to them, a short, general outline of that family will be interesting.

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Springhill itself is a low table land of somewhat peculiar formation, three miles northwest of Clarksville, Ohio. It is about a mile across, roughly circular in outline but with the boundary very broken and irregular by projecting areas and wide ravines. The plateau proper is about 1100 feet above sea level. It is 80-100 feet higher than what was once a swamp surrounding it except for a strip on the west. In general there is a very gradual incline upward of a mile or more from the low area, and then a rather sharp ascent for the last 50 or 60 feet. The "Hill" or plateau part is due to that area of the Clinton limestone formation being far harder than that surrounding it, and so much more resistant to the millions of years of erosion that wore away that rock on all sides of it.

The soil on the "Hill" or plateau part and on the steeper slopes, is a reddish brown, and very fertile; it was formed from the decomposition of the Clinton limestone, and the red color is due to the abundance of iron in that formation. The soil and subsoil together form a layer from 3 to 10 feet deep; beneath this is a very hard layer of the Clinton limestone from 3 to 6 feet or more thick. Beneath this hard layer are soft, spongy rock layers, sometimes in loose, regular formation, as if laid up by hand, making fine dens for snakes when exposed to the surface at the steep slopes by erosion of water. Beneath these soft rock layers is the

Richmond Clay, which in a few places is streaked with purple or red due to compounds of manganese or iron. The clay layer varies mostly from 4 to 16 feet or more in thickness.

The section (first called "The Ridge") got its name from the springs, 35-40 in number, most of them "never failing," that gush forth around the base of the "hill," from the upper surface of the clay layer, and usually at or near the bottom of the steeper slopes. These springs are formed in the following manner: All over the level, upper portion of the Hill are low areas or basins. The rain water collects in these, sometimes 3 or 4 feet deep after a heavy rain, but will disappear over night almost, percolating down through the soil, subsoil, and rock layers, all of which form a kind of gigantic sponge for it, till it reaches the layer of Richmond Clay, which forms the reservoir for the springs. The water is very fine and sweet, and from most of the springs very cold. From their manner of formation the springs could not withstand too long a lack of rainfall, but none of the "never failing" springs ever went dry till the drought of 1934. Farmers of the surrounding country depend upon these springs in dry times.

The low area, from 2 to 3 miles wide, surrounding the Hill, was a swamp in early days, except a little on the west. It was drained and now forms a belt of among the richest land in the state, black, and in places several feet deep, producing great crops of grain year after year. When the Lebanon and Wilmington Road was laid out it crossed the center of the Springhill plateau, directly from west to east. Owing to this and the early swamp conditions the first farm buildings were erected along that road, the farms extending back each way from it, into the swamps.

Early Land Owners. Nearly 2,000 acres on the west and southwest were purchased by James Wilkerson. Next to this on the east, extending north from the Lebanon-Wilmington Road, James Harris, Sr., owned 1,400 acres. East of this tract Paul Vandervoort obtained over 1,000 acres. South of this Joshua Hadley owned several hundred acres, while west of this John Barclay had about 800 acres, extending westward to the James Wilkerson land. North of the Wilkerson-Harris tracts, John Hadley owned several hundred acres, and nearly as much southeast of the Barclay and Wilkerson lands. Andrew Branstrator owned several hundred acres east of the Joshua Hadley land and a part of this was included in Springhill School District. The John Hadley lands descended to Maria, his daughter, who married James Linton, and then on to her heirs. The tracts were long known as the "Linton Land."

Springhill Community covered an area nearly four miles square, just about embracing the lands mentioned. The woods were mostly cleared and the swamps drained by the

descendants of the early owners named, with the help of their “tenants;” for every farm had one or more log cabin tenant houses, occupied by families which helped clear the land, made rails, cut wood, dug ditches, and in the “growing season” helped cultivate and harvest the crops. When the lands were cleared and drained, and improved farm machinery developed, these tenants were no longer needed; even the sites of these early tenant houses are seldom observable, but a well usually marks the place.

The first schoolhouse was built, by donated labor, on the east-west road, in the lower land; later a better building was erected on the high ground over half a mile west, at the junction of the road leading to Clarksville. Like most early schools that at Springhill had a very large enrollment, 60 or more during the “winter term;” often many of the pupils attending that term were young men and women. In general there was a teacher for the “fall” term, another for the “winter,” and a third for the “spring term,” three months each.

As the early settlers were mostly people of about the same age, and all had large families, Springhill School became a great center, socially as well as educationally. In 1868 a new and larger building replaced the old; the writer’s oldest sister, Mary N., taught the first school in the new structure, beginning in October, owing to delay in completing the building.

But the day of large families was passing and the enrollment gradually decreased; this was due not only to smaller families but to the disappearance, one by one, of the tenant houses, as their occupants were no longer needed. The period from 1850 to 1885 marked the beginning and the end of the large enrollment. Besides the school itself, singing schools, debating societies, spelling schools, various community meetings, Sunday School “revivals,” and once in while a “Lantern Show,” or a political gathering, all helped make the schoolhouse a community center. And from this center the young people went forth to take part in the battle of life, better prepared than they knew at the time.

The Wilkerson Family. James Wilkerson, the original settler, was borne in Orange County, Va., in 1758, and married Margaret Moore of the same county. They emigrated first to near Lexington, Ky., where James had relatives. In 1805 they located east of Ft. Ancient, O., where James obtained about 1,000 acres of land. This he bequeathed by will to three of his daughters: Margaret, who married a Deakin, the father of James, who married Susan Harris; to one who married George Longstreth, and to a third, who married Jason Darrow. A fourth daughter married Andrew Branstrator, who owned land east of

Springhill. A fifth married Paul Vandervoort, who had the land just east of the James Harris tract.

About 1812 James purchased well towards 2,000 acres of land, the southern and western part of Springhill. This he gave to his 3 sons as follows: 1 William, 460 acres, the homestead part on the east. 2 James, about 400 acres lying west of this. 3 John, over 600 acres lying west and north of that given James.

The Wilkerson Descendants. *First*, William had one son, I Charles N., who married Martha Goode, of near Xenia, Ohio. They had seven sons and one daughter: 1 Burrell, became a noted lawyer at Sedalia, Mo. 2 William, served as a captain all through the Civil War, then lived in Missouri, and Kansas. 3 George Henry, married Mary N. Harris. 4 Martha, married E. T. M. (Mac) Williams, second wife. 5 Thomas S., married Anna Austin; lived at old homestead, dying about 1896. No children. 6 Samuel J. (named after the brothers, Samuel and James Harris, neighbors), lived at Springfield. 7 Charles Pogue, acquired several hundred acres land near Osborne, O. 8 Edward, lived with his brother William many years. Never married.

II Ann, who became the second wife of William Settlemyers. They had one son, Bayless, who married Melissa Wilkerson.

Second, James, who first married a widow named McDaniels. Children: I William, went to California. II Margaret, became second wife of Jonathan Sherwood, near Oregonia. Children: I Charles, still living, 2 Anna, now dead; married a Charles Warwick. 3 Maurice, living at Harveyburg, O. 4 Thomas, died a young man.

III Sarah Ann, married Isaiah Harris: IV Harriet, married a man named Moore, Jamestown, O. V Betsey Ann, married Samuel Flack, Olive Branch. Four children. VII Jehu, married Mary ? Four children. VII Andrew, died a young man. VIII John, lived in the west. IX Mary, married Amos Warwick. Four children: 1 Perry A., 2 Horace, 3 Granville, 4 Roland. X Joseph. Married twice, no children, went west but returned to Ohio, where he died. These ten children, the "first set," fell heirs to a part of the "Christy Estate," the share of each being about \$20,000.

James married second, Mahala Macdonald. Children, "Second Set," XI Sarah Ellen, married John Oyler, XII Martha, married Charles A. Harris. XIII Bishop, married Lydia Jobe. XIV Thomas Newton, married Angeline Harris, XV Harley, married Susan Smith.

Third, John. Children: I Sarah, married James Harris. II Elizabeth, married Dr. Hugh M. Baugh. Children, 1 John, 2 Mary. III James H., married Sarah Ann Van Shouck.

Children: 1 Lucius, 2 Melissa, 3 Horace B., 4 Amanda, Twins, 5 Walter S., and 6 Grafton, 7 Ella, 8 Anna. James H. and his wife lived to be about 90, but except Lucius, Melissa, and Walter, their children died at maturity of tuberculosis. IV John, married ? Connor. He lived in Missouri where he raised a large family. One son, Marion, returned to Ohio and married Eliza Wysong. Another son was the father of James H. Wilkerson, who became noted in Chicago as a Judge. V a son, name unknown, drowned, young. VI William, lived in Missouri. VII Marion, became a physician at Bloomington, Ohio. VIII Lina, married Perry G. Mills, second wife. Three children: I Flory, 2 Charles, 3 Pina. IX Francis M., m ? Kincaid. No children. Lived at old homestead.