THE LINE OF DESCENT OF

HANNAH PEEBLES AND JOHN WRIGHT

Virginia
North Carolina
South Carolina
Kentucky
Illinois
Kansas

written by

Mary Elizabeth Matthews
(Mrs. Wm. Clinton Olson)

for her children
Jon, Peter, and Elizabeth
while their father was employed at the
Library of Congress
Washington D.C.

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The Peebles Family

(1) David Peebles - Elspet Mackie
-c 1659 -

(2) William Peebles - Judeth _____
1635 - 1695 -

(3) William Peebles II - _____
1670- 1723? -

(4) Abraham Peebles - _____(Eppes)(Green)
1690-1782 -

(5) Lewis Peebles - _____
1731/5-1830/ 0

(6) John Peebles - Wilmouth Owen
1763-1849 -

(7) Hannah Peebles - Allen Wright
1793-1854 1789-1855

By Mary Matthews Olson

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(1) DAVID PEEBLES
? - 1659

According to the family historian, Mrs. Mauritz L. Anderson in her books The Peebles Family, the family was part of a group of refugees who left Flanders before 1115 because of civil and religious difficulties and disastrous sea floods. Their home became the area at the confluence of the Tweed and the Eddleston Rivers, the latter for centuries being called "Peeble's Water."

The family name originally was Pabell and variously spelled Pebyl, Pebly, Pebilli, etc. It began to be standardized to Peebles in the 1500 and 1600's and it meant "tent dweller".

Near the Firth of Forth where the Peebles lived, there were many raids by the native Scots and border disturbances with the English were commonplace. It was the custom to dig burrows or cellars under the dwellings in which the women and children could hide when raids occurred.

Astride the Tweed River, Peebles was celebrated in an old Scots poem "Peblis to the Play" ascribed to James I of Scotland. It is also the site of Scott's book St Ronan's Well. The ruins of a 13th century monastery in the town are those of the Cross Church which contained the relics of St. Nicholas of Peebles.

A royal burgh since the 14th Century, the town of Peebles was burnt down by the English in 1406 and again in 1649 when the town's Neidpath Castle was taken by Cromwell. A coat of arms was granted to an Alex Peebles in 1621 by Charles I, and he was made the Earl of Wemyss, Marquis of Queensbury, both of which titles are now extinct. It was at the Castle of Wemyss that Mary Queen of Scots first met Darnley.

Therefore there is solid reason to suppose that the Peebles - or at least some of them were Royalists. In 1649 over 300 adherents of Charles I were condemned to the block by Cromwell and escaped. It is thought that this is the reason David Peebles came to Virginia.

We know very little about his life in Scotland except that he married Elspet Mackie in Fife Scotland. There is no record in Virginia Colony of Elspet or any of her children with one exception. She may have died in Scotland or in the boat on the way over as did so many. It is unlikely that she ever arrived in Virginia as her headright land was not claimed by anyone.

Elspet and David's first child was a girl, Criston, baptized in 1634 at St. Andrew's Scotland. On July 7, of the following year, their son, William, was baptized in Kilconquhar. The next child of whom we know is Allison who was baptized July 7, 1641 in Balclavie; where this church was located is unknown. Margaret was next and her baptism took place September 18, 1642 in St. Monance. She was followed by John, April 9, 1644 again in Balclavie. Why the children were christened in different towns and across the Firth of Forth some distance away from the Peebles family home area we do not know. Perhaps the unsettled times played a role.

In 1650 on August 5, David Peebles had arrived in America and was given a grant of 833 acres of land on the south side of the James River and slightly inland. This included not only his own portion but also the headrights for 16 other people. In those days it took at least 6 months to obtain a patent for land which would put his arrival in late 1649 or earlier, as of course it was frequent that the claiming of headrights was put off for some time.

He was relatively wealthy to have paid the passages of 16 persons and from his subsequent standing in the community we know this to be the case.

In the Court Order Book of Charles City, Virginia (1655-1665) David Peebles appears as a Justice of the Court, a vestryman of Westover Parish and a Captain of the Militia. At this time vestrymen were elected by the people of the parish - an Open Vestry. After 1661 the Closed Vestry was established by law wherein the minister and the other vestrymen chose successors for vacancies. This was an important change as vestrymen controlled a great portion of colonial Virginia life. They set the budget for the parish, apportioned taxes and elected churchwardens who often served as tax collectors and they exercised control over the recording of land titles by the "processioning of the bounds of every person's land." They also supervised the counting of tobacco which served as the currency of the state.

What controls remained of local civilian life were in the hands of eight justices appointed by the governor, and David was one of these.

As for his military duties as Captain of the Militia, the area in his charge lay between Powell and Wards Creek on the south side of the James. After muster, the officers usually dined together so that it is likely that David Peebles would have dined now and then with Thomas Jefferson, the grand father of President Jefferson, who was also a Militia Captain for Henrico County as well as a fellow Justice. Jefferson was a friend of Byrd whose WEstover Plantation was just acacross the James from Peeble's land.

By 1655 David had married Elizabeth Bishopp who had arrived in the colony four years previously. Her father had come over in 1638 as a servant to Thomas Gray, but had prospered, becoming a landowner and later sending for his family to come over from England. He served in the House of Burgesses in 1641, 1652 and 1653. Mr. Bishopp, or Captain Bishopp, as he was also known, as a Burgess was paid 150 pounds of tobacco per day during sessions and given a servant and horse or a boat with rowers for his convenience. It is interesting that no former servant who had arrived after 1640 became a Member of the House of Burgesses which became much more aristocratic with the passage of time as the range of opportunity narrowed.

David and Elizabeth's children were Sarah and Christian. (David's first wife, Elspet, was named the Scottish variant of Elizabeth, and in his Scottish family there was a Criston, again a form of Christian.) Christian and her husband John Poythress will enter our story again later.

During this time David, as was the custom where hands

were in short supply, rented out portions of his land.

Money too was short and the credit system operated with the exchange of promissory notes based on land, cattle, servants or future crops. Given the high mortality rate of the signers, the hazards of tobacco transportation on the high seas, and the instability of the tobacco market, it is no wonder that this system led to complications and abuses.

A litigous lot, the early Virginians sued early and often. There are court records wherein money is owed to or by David Peebles and the following people: Theodorick Bland, Lt. Col. Walter Alston, Mrs. Sarah Rice Hoe, Morgan Jones, Rich Jones ("Minister") and William Ditty, whose High Peake plantation was put up as security against his debt to Peebles.

There was also a dispute with James Crews who continually demanded payments in court and finally engaged in physical action and then took his claim to the General Court of Virginia Colony. It is there recorded in December, 1656,

> "...for the Stabs and Blows mentioned...they were occasioned by Crewes unworthy and uncivil provocation for which Nothwithstanding, Peebles have given satisfaction and...not just proof appears on Crewe's part, whereas we humbly Conceive that the said Crewes ought to be made Example of for such foul Base and unworthy defamations against Capt. Peibles...by paying costs of Suit and a fine to Capt. Peebles..."

There was a considerable court case when Rice Hoe sued in behalf of Sarah Hoe's estate, but by this time William, David's son, had arrived from Scotland to help with his father's affairs.

In the summer of 1656 there was unrest and Indian trouble which Capt. David's militia helped subdue. He was perhaps injured at that time as he was not thereafter present as a Justice in court although the court had moved closer to his plantation.

His place was named Bon Accord, locally called Bonniecord. Few early Virginia patents contain plantation names unless they were river front lands, so it was unusual that his land down Powell's Creek from the river was named. The "City of Bon Accord" is Aberdeen and perhaps either Elspet Mackie (who carried a Highland name) came from here or it may have been the port from which David left Scotland.

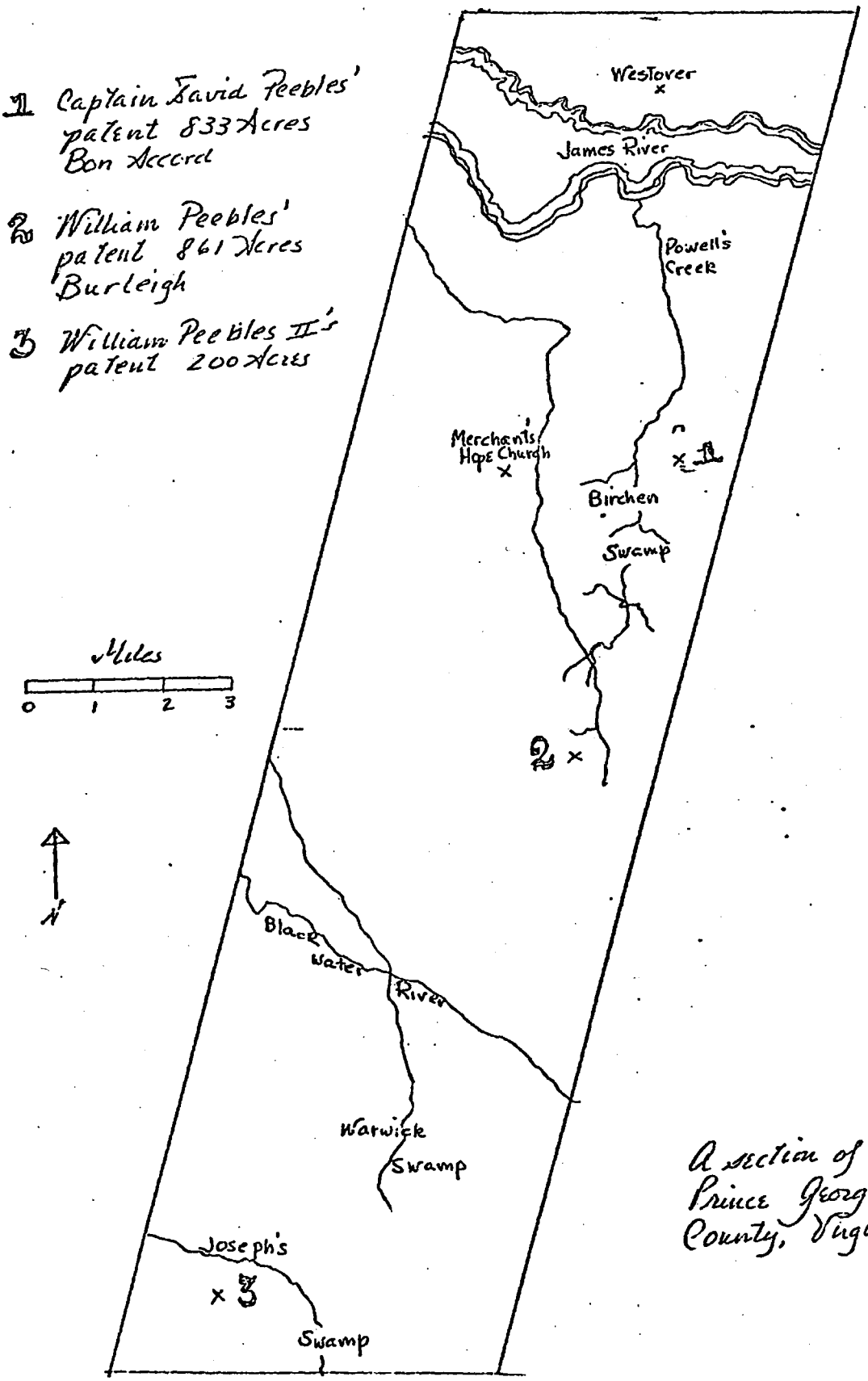
David lived inactively and perhaps invalided for two years more. "Mrs. Peibils" appears in records of his tobacco transactions, also in suits, two of which she lost. She was exempted from paying tax on "2 persons escaped", no doubt runaway indentured servants.

On September 1, 1659, the court ordered David's estate appraised for the orphans of Capt. David Peibils. Presumably these orphans were Sarah and Christian, either the children of David and Elizabeth or else adopted by David from a previous marriage of Elizabeth Bishopp Peebles. At the age of 24 David's Scottish son William certainly would not have been considered an orphan.

1. Captain David Peebles' patent 833 Acres Bon Accord

2. William Peebles' patent 861 Acres Burleigh

3. William Peebles II's patent 200 Acres



A section of Prince George's County, Virginia

(2) WILLIAM PEEBLES
1635-1695

William Peebles had been baptized in Kilconquhar, overlooking the Firth of Forth on July 7, 1635. Where he spent his childhood is not known, only that at some time before the end of his father's life, he joined him in Virginia. As far as we know he was the only one of his father's Scottish family to come to America.

Shortly after his father died in 1659 Bon Accord, the family plantation, was lost to William in a complicated court battle. It passed as a result into the Poythress family through John Poythress' marriage to Christian Peebles, William's half-sister. The boundaries, some of which still exist, of Bon Accord were cited as follows:

"Up Powell's Crk at the head thereof, west upon the Birchen Swamp, South and West upon the land of Mr. Rich Tye [part of this section is still called Old Town, formerly the site of an old Wyanoke Indian town], East upon the woods. NE upon land of James Ward, North upon the Reedy Swamp."

In her book, Mrs. Anderson somewhat tartly remarks, "Bon Accord has been claimed as the original seat of the Poythress family, but they have never found the patent and records do not uphold them."

William, unlike his father, took no prominent part in county activities but served as a jury member, appraised estates and went security for some people.

The times were difficult. The year 1667 was particularly disastrous. An April hailstorm destroyed the new tobacco. In June there was a Dutch raid followed by a forty-day rain. August saw a fierce hurricane and floods. In 1673 there was another Dutch raid and a terrible winter. Tobacco prices fell to a ha'penny a pound in 1677 due to the Navigation Acts. Although by 1683 ~~when~~ the price of tobacco had greatly increased, the small landholders were having other troubles competing with the large landholders.

In 1670 and 1673, William purchased two tracts of land. This land lay about five miles south of Bon Accord on the headwaters of the Birchen Swamp - 388 acres east and 73 acres lying across and to the west of the Swamp. It was here that Burleigh Plantation was situated.

Where he lived with his first wife, Judeth, before this purchase we don't know. Judeth was a ward of John Drayton, whose receipt for her "porcon" - portion or dowry - was recorded in court in 1662-63. Judeth was probably the mother of William II born in 1670.

By the time young William was five years old the Indians had become troublesome again. In 1675-76 an English fort was established upriver on the eastern shore of the Blackwater River. Heavy taxes were levied to pay for the forts and troops who manned them although this system of fortified defense was totally ineffective against the hit-and-run Indian raids.

This state of affairs paved the way for Nathaniel Bacon and the subsequent Bacon's Rebellion.

The "Southsiders" (those living south of the James)

were particularly apprehensive and vulnerable to attack, and they gathered together at Jordan's Point just below the mouth of the Appomatox very near Burleigh Plantation. Bacon came down to their meeting and here he was proclaimed leader for the civilian defensive efforts. Previously he had become a military spokesman for a group of neighbors including in their number, Capt. James Crews (presumably David Peeble's old enemy) and Byrd. Bacon succeeded in putting down the Indian threat which the fearful Governor Berkeley had refused to do. Bacon, however, went on from Indian fighting to challenging the government itself. Although routing Berkeley, he himself died and the rebellion collapsed. It was the last challenge of the yeomanry, and government became the province of the privileged in Virginia.

In defense of Berkeley and his wariness of the freedmen, "A Rabble Crue", it should be noted that everyone in the colony was required to keep a gun and with the increase of single freedmen who were often without the possibility of bettering themselves legally and were without a family or roots, the situation was potentially dangerous. The guns were supposed to be used in protection of the cattle against wolves and thieves, for hunting, for shooting Indians, for signalling and "at weddings and funerals". But there was no reason that the guns could not be used against the established order too and of this Berkeley and the landed gentry were fearful. A Virginian writing in 1691 observed, "There is no custom more generally to be observed among the Young Virginians than that they all Learn to keep and use a gun with a Marvelous dexterity as soon as they have strength to lift it..."

Meanwhile Judeth had died and a second wife whose name is not recorded had been married by William. They too had a child whose name was David.

Then once again a widower, William married a third time a woman named Elizabeth who was probably the Widow Busby. In assessing the date of this marriage there is a clue as in 1690, Wilmot, the orphan of James Munford, was bound to Elizabeth Peebles who was referred to as the "now wife of Wm Peebles", indicating that she had not long been so. They too had a son, Henry who was born before 1695, the year in which his father William died at home on his Burleigh Plantation in his 60th year.

(3) WILLIAM PEEBLES II
1670-1740

The second William Peebles was the first native American of the family, having been born in about 1670 in Prince Georges County, Virginia. He had grown up at Burleigh Plantation and here he lived the rest of his life as a small landholder.

Southside was the poorest section of the state where the soil was less good, Indians were more dangerous and a greater proportion of roaming rootless freedmen lived. The use of slaves was becoming an increasingly complicating factor in the lives of small farmers. By the time William was starting to farm on his own, there were over 6,000 slaves in the colony.

When he had been born, the population of Virginia was two to three times more than it had been just twenty years previously. This was due in part to increasingly healthier conditions. For instance now that the orchards planted earlier had grown to bearing age, cider and other fermented drinks were consumed instead of the water contaminated by high water tables and shallow wells. In addition as more women immigrated, there were more marriages and not only more births but correspondingly fewer infant deaths.

William himself reflected these changes. He married in his twenties and his first child, Abraham was born in the same year that his grandfather died, 1695. The young family continued to live at Burleigh, which William had inherited from his father. And here the rest of the children were born and reared: William III, Thomas, Hannah, John, Peter, Joseph and Sarah.

William had become a Quaker and his plantation gave the site and name to the first Quaker Meeting south of the James River. It was a subsidiary of Henrico County Monthly Meeting. To be a Quaker in those times was not only unpopular but also occasionally dangerous and the Friends were persecuted and reviled more often than not. Perhaps because of this, William lived a quiet life with very few records in the courts or elsewhere. He witnessed wills and deeds as reflected in Merchant's Hope Court, and witnessed marriages as inscribed in the Minutes of the Quaker Meeting. Even the journals of the traveling Quakers from the north only mention Burleigh briefly.

Somehow he managed to make a living and raise his eight children on his 150 acres. It must have been a welcome gift when he received some hogs and "yews" under the will of Jno. Green. Animals were a highly favored asset - even ewes which commonly did not thrive.

By 1727 he had put together enough money to patent 200 acres nearby on the south side of Joseph's Swamp. For this document and all others, William, the only male member of his family who could not sign his name, made his mark - a linked W-P. This period of colonial Virginia is known to have been the most difficult time in the history of the colony in which to become educated. Before the establishment of William and Mary College, only the wealthy could send children to Great Britain for an education or to afford the expense of a family tutor. With plantations separated by great distances and with

no roads to link them, each family was on its own when it came to the education of the young.

By 1738, he had given 100 acres of his Joseph's Swamp land to his son William, and this land is still in the family. The other 100 acres he sold when he was 70 years old.

He died sometime after this date, 1740 and this land deed is the last document found for the quiet Quaker.

(4) ABRAHAM PEEBLES
1690/5-1783+

As was his father, Abraham was born on Burleigh Plantation between 1690 and 1695. There were seven brothers and sisters to keep him company. They probably worked hard on the farm, attending Quaker Meeting and living a sober life. Quakers judged themselves very severely and lapses were dealt with by the entire community of Friends in those days. The first record which has been found of Abraham is his signing as a witness in January 1729 at the Quaker wedding of his sister Hannah. A more minute examination of the Minutes may reveal more information but at the moment this is about all we know.

It would be helpful to know when he married his first wife and what her name was. We do know that she was an Eppes. This was a very old Virginia family. Francis Eppes transported servants in 1635 and one of the very few duels of old Virginia was fought when Captain William Eppes killed Edward Stallings at Dancing Point. City Point, opposite the mouth of the Appomatox River was and is the home of the Eppes family. The 1704 Rent Rolls show that eight members of this family held a total of some 4,000 acres of land.

Sometime later Abraham married a woman named Green. The Rent Rolls reveal only two Greens in that part of Virginia, both of whom were small landholders.

Which of these two women was the mother of the first five children is therefore unknown. In any case, Abraham's first son was David. Thereafter at lengthy intervals there were Isham, Lewis and Henry.

Then sometime before 1752, Abraham married his third wife Keziah Carlile (?), who was the same age as his eldest son! Her name is spelled in two different forms: Esaia and Keziah and it is thought that the latter is correct. It is probable that she is the mother of Abraham's last son, Reuben, who was born in Prince Georges County as were the other five. His birth is recorded in the Bristol Parish Register so it would seem that Abraham had chosen to become an Anglican instead of a Quaker.

Shortly thereafter the 50 year old Abraham moved south to Brunswick County in North Carolina in the Tidewater area around Cape Fear. Here in 1746 he witnessed a deed with a John Green, perhaps a relative of his second wife.

In the next few years, Abraham was sued, witnessed deeds, appraised an estate and bought 100 acres on Three Creeks.

Life was considerably different in the Carolina tidewater region than in Virginia. There were many more slaves and most of these at this time were fresh from Africa and therefore "unseasoned". As a result they were rebellious and there was a greater fear of slave uprisings on the part of whites.

In 1752, Abraham and Keziah sold at least a part of their land. Sometime between then and the next 13 years they went to Craven County. This was still in the tidewater region but farther north at the mouth of the Neuse River inland from the Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout island barriers. These were years of exceptional growth in North Carolina; growth accompanied by internal disorder and mismanagement. Not a few of the people pouring in from the north after taking a look at the more southern sections, settled in both coastal and hill counties closer to Virginia. Except for the Cape Fear region, it was a raw pioneer area.

When he was past seventy in 1767, he patented 250 acres even though North Carolina was undergoing extremely turbulent conditions. His son, Reuben, also bought land at this time and place, as did his son Lewis.

North Carolina had a fairly large share of Loyalists at the outset of the Revolution and Abraham was included in their number. The last printed information we have of him is his listing in the "Reports on Loyalist Exiles from South Carolina, 1783" where it is indicated that both Abraham, by now about 90 years of age, and his youngest son Reuben had moved to Georgia or Alabama with other Loyalists. Once again war had divided a family.

(5) LEWIS PEEBLES of Kershaw
1731/35-1830+

All of Abraham Peebles sons were rather grandly known by their land holdings. It was "David and William of Pitt", "Isham of Beaufort", "Henry of Lancaster" and "Lewis of Kershaw", all the place names being counties in one or the other of the Carolinas. And if the brothers were as assiduous and successful in the acquisition of land as Lewis of Kershaw, these "titles" do not seem too ridiculous!

Lewis was first married, probably in North Carolina. For this wife we have no information whatsoever except that she produced a son at three year intervals starting with John in 1763. He was probably born on his father's land next to that of grandfather Abraham's in Craven County, North Carolina. Thereafter came David, Lewis II, and Sampson in the year when Lewis bought some land on Goodman's Creek off the PeeDee River back in the hill country of South Carolina. He also purchased another 100 acres in nearby Lancaster County near the Broad River.

By 1761 the last of the Indian uprisings had been put down and the hill country was opened up to a great inpouring of settlers.

Manners were rustic. Most settlers engaged in foot and horse racing, cockfighting, house raisings, corn shuckings, shooting matches and the like, all accompanied by the consumption of great quantities of liquor. Some of the leading pioneers attempted to emulate the more civilized seaboard customs but they gained few adherents. Books and learning however were generally revered and while there were many lawyers there were very few doctors. Despite the efforts of the ministers, settlers in the South CArolina back country were notorious for free thinking and loose living.

A letter written by a traveler of the period noted that the inhabitants of the interior were bold and intrepid in the art of war although hospitable to strangers, dirty, impertinent and vain! Usually eschewing slavery, the settlers lived as ranchers and farmers and in word and deed were rugged individualists.

Settlers on the frontier were often the prey of ruffians, horse and cattle thieves. By 1764 a voluntary vigilante system had grown up to take care of this long-standing problem; these were called the Regulators. The Regulators were finally defeated by the government at the cost of near civil war, but with one good result in that this led to the formation of circuit courts the same year that Lewis moved into the area. Previously the only legal recourse had been in courts situated in the far-away tidewater region.

Farming in the interior was generally inefficient as at first there always fresh land available to move to. The pattern was usually subsistence farming for the first 5 to 10 years and then diversification allowing for cash crops. The crops were transported to the rivers and thence to the coast for sale. Therefore river front land was premium.

When the Revolution started, Lewis, unlike his father,

sided with the American troops and furnished many supplies to the Continental Army. He was paid for these over the next eight years sometimes in the form of land grants.

In 1786 and 1787, Lewis received a total of 625 acres of land on Scape Creek in the counties around the Broad River. This land was in the form of grants for aid in the Revolution. In the 1790 census he is shown both in Claremont and in Chester Counties, but since the listings are identical it is thought that it was simply an erroneous double entry of land on or near the boundary of both counties.

During the next 25 years he bought and sold hundreds of acres of land.

One parcel in 1796 was countersigned by Lewis' second wife, Elizabeth, who merely made her mark indicating that she was illiterate. It was estimated that in this part of the world at least half the women and a third of the men could not write their own names.

By 1814, his eyesight must have been failing as from this time on Lewis also signed documents with a mark.

He eventually moved to Henry Alabama where he spent his last years. The D.A.R. puts the date of his death in 1840, although the family history lists it as having occured in 1830. "Lewis of Kershaw" lived to the incredible age of between 95 and 109 years, depending on how one figures it! That alone should give him the right to any title he wanted.

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(6) JOHN PEEBLES
1763-1849

The eldest of seven sons, John Peebles spent his childhood in the South Carolina back country where his father was a large landowner. He however was probably born in North Carolina along the tidewater in Craven County near New Bern.

It was in Kershaw County that he married Wilmouth Owens in 1785. They lived here for twenty years, accumulating considerable property and here their children were born. Abraham was the first, followed by Sarah, Mary, William and Hannah in 1793. Bird followed and then Jesse, John L, and Ann Elizabeth (Betsy). At about this time, Wilmouth died and John was left with a brood of nine children to raise.

It probably wasn't long afterwards that he married Martha Johnsey. A frontier family required a woman's help and this was a recognized fact of life; people there with families rarely remained widows or widowers for long. While the hill country of South Carolina was by now not really the frontier, the family did shortly go to a much more rigorous country when they went to Kentucky in the years before 1810.

In moving to a raw land the choice of a piece of land had to be taken with an eye to the availability of water as nearby streams meant that fewer road had to be built. Timber for building and fuel had to be at hand and of course the quality of the soil was paramount.

In the true frontier the first "house" was often a temporary shelter which was an open-faced lean-to with one side open to the fire and which sometimes had to suffice for as long as a year as labor was needed to ready the land for crops by tree-girdling and cutting.

Next came a log cabin which was done by a cabin-raising unless it was too isolated. The settler usually did the cutting and hauling of the timber to the site and his neighbors then helped him erect the walls and the rafters. The owner put on a roof after the building was up and this was of thatch or whatever else was available. It was usually small - 16 or 20 feet by 10 feet was normal. The windows then were fit in, a door hung and the fireplace made.

Furniture was simple. Chairs were usually slabs resting on three legs or blocks of wood. The table was a slab, often attached to the wall with two legs which hung down, so that it could be swung up out of the way. The mattress of the bed was stuffed with pine, chaff or dried moss. By the window where the light was best; the spinning wheel and loom were placed. The fireplace of course served as the stove with a large flat stone at the base, and a mud-plastered chimney rising above, festooned with firearms, knives and carved powder horns. Tableware of wooden spoons, bowls and noggins either went on a shelf or were hung on wall pegs. Candles tended to be made out of the plentiful bear grease. There weren't many pots, but usually there would be a cooking iron (a bulbous pot with a top flare to hold the lid in place) a spider (a frying pan with three legs) and a deeper Dutch oven whose lid had upturned edges in order to hold the coals in place which were heaped on top for baking.

The favored weapon was a 30 or 45 calibre Kentucky rifle.

Bigger muskets made too loud and therefore too dangerous a report.

A man needed a rifle, a knife and an ax while a woman had to have cooking pots and a knife. If need be, everything else could be made on the spot. Dishes were of wood; gourds were important for "soup, soap and sap" and gourd seeds were a cherished possession.

Before the first crop was in, food was the most pressing problem and a hunter's skill was important.

Always the first crop was corn which could be ground for meal, fed to livestock and was easily stored and transported. It was the basic grain and from it was made corn dodger (baked meal, water and salt), corn pone (the same plus milk and yeast), johnnycake or hoecake (meal and shortening baked in a flat cake), mush (meal, water and salt boiled with the addition of anything else at hand - milk, honey water or gravy) and hominy.

Until the first crop was harvested, game was augmented with nuts, paw-paws, wild fruits, herbs, roots and honey. Interestingly, although bees are not native to the United States, they always swarmed in advance of the frontier and were thus waiting for the settler!

Salt was important but expensive enough to hoard carefully for a bushel of salt was reckoned at the same price as a good cow and calf! A cow was bought as soon as possible for the variety it introduced into the diet. Orchards were put in early even though the produce was far- distant; chickens and the garden patch were quicker to show results. As for other animals, pigs were turned out to forage for themselves although as they became wild they were hard to catch and grew tough and lean. Although the wool would have been welcome sheep were toomuch to take on at first as they had to be both penned and fed.

In clearing the land, help was needed when it was time to fell and burn the previously girdled trees, and log rollings were social and political occasions as well. In this and other large-scale labors, the help of neighbors was essential and mutually given. Just about the worst thing which could happen in frontier life was to be branded "not true" because then one was outlawed; stealing was handled in the same way.

But for every-day labor, hired help was scarce and too expensive and the neighbors were as busy as oneself, so the family was the only reliable source of labor.

Women's chores were as many and arduous as those of the men. Especially at first cash was apt to be rare and so most of the cloth had to be spun and woven. Wool was so scarce that it was usually combined with linen to make a scratchy but tough linsey woolsey. When absolutely necessary, fabric could be made from nettle fiber added to buffalo hair or wool.

In addition to making cloth, the women cooked, churned, milked the cows, hoed corn, chopped wood, carried water, made candles, took charge of the vegetable patch, tended the sick and bore children!

Courting began in the early teens and a woman was scorned if she was unmarried by the advanced age of 20. In the early Tennessee and Kentucky frontier, women were often married by 14 to 16 years of age.

Being surrounded by constant danger and the loneliness of isolated cabin life, religion became exceedingly important. Perhaps because they gave the greatest sense of personal participation, the Methodists and Baptists were unusually strong. The circuit riders or traveling preachers made their rounds in all kinds of weather. There was a Kentucky saying that, "There is nothing out today but crows and Methodist preachers!" And of course there were camp meetings which were religious and social events of enormous interest which often turned to hysteria and sometimes even violence as frustrations surfaced and strong drink flowed.

Their sports also reflected the life around the frontiersmen. There was shooting, wrestling, tracking, jumping, bird and game calling and tomahawk throwing.

Every woman had her own family remedies which in the absence of other medical resources were all-important. Malaria prevailed from Illinois south and there was very little help for this. Typhoid was called brain or nervous fever and its cause quite unknown. Although a scourge of pioneer life, smallpox was seldom vaccinated against as it was considered such a dangerous step. There was always pnuemonia, TB, blood poisoning and lockjaw, with rhuematism very common from the exposure to the weather. The homemade remedies of "yarb and root" were passed on from one person to the other. Of one thing however the frontier was generally free- hypochondria; there just was no time for it!

But knowing all these problems, still a group of neighbors from South Carolina decided to migrate to Kentucky together. They each painted their names on the white canvas of the wagon covers and there was a saying as people saw them, "The Wright Blisset Peebles have passed through!"

John and Martha Peebles had their first child, Cynthia, in Hart County Kentucky in 1808. From this point on the roll call of children becomes highly confused since record keeping held low priority in early Kentucky. Certainly there were five other children: Rebecca, Lucinda, Lavina, Charles and Camilla and there may also have been Stewart. There may even have been a third wife! So, depending on whose list you read, John had either two wives and thirteen children, or three wives and sixteen offspring. I suppose with those numbers, a few more or less wouldn't matter much.

The last Kentucky census in which John Peebles appears is the 1830 count in Hart County. He had owned land in North and South Carolina and Kentucky, and now the restless old man took off for the hopefully greener pastures of Illinois.

He and much of the family along with some of the same neighbors who had come originally from the South, started north. The place they decided on was Macoupin County in the rich and fertile prairies close to St. Louis, Missouri. Apparently in his 82nd year he was ill or maybe just plain tired, because he decided to file for a pension and retire from planting and tending his crops and shoeing horses at his

trade as a smithy.

His pension was awarded to him for his service in the Revolutionary War. When he was 18 years old he had gone off to fight under Generals Sumter and Marion in the South Carolina dragoons. This was a volunteer group formed under the brilliant leadership of Francis Marion, who knew how to get his militia to fight effectively, a trait unfortunately not universally shared by his fellow officers. I have not read the Pension application of John Peebles which would tell much more detail of what and where and when he fought. But this description of Marion's guerilla force gives a picture of his tactics:

> "Making the greatest possible use of the mobility of his little force, he never camped two nights in the same spot. He marched under the cover of darkness from one friendly woods or swamp to another, setting off at sunset, making camp at dawn, and resting his men in the daytime with sentinels constantly on the alert. Upon him depended almost solely the success of the provincial army of South Carolina."

The men seldom had enough to eat, their clothing was more rags than anything else, and they were fighting to defend their homes. A glance at the map will show that the great battles of 1780 and 1781 fought in the South - Camden, Waxhaws, Kings Mountain, Deep River, Guilford were for the most part in the home counties where the Peebles owned land. While his father Lewis was furnishing supplies to troops in the year of the seige of Charleston, John Peebles was preparing to do some of the fighting.

After John received his pension, he retired to his farm seven miles from Carlinville, Illinois where he died in 1846 when he was 86. His wife died in 1878 when she was also very old. They are both buried in a country cemetery near Chesterfield, Illinois.

Cast of Characters

1st generation: Lewis Wright
- born:
- died:
- married:
- children: John Wright October 25 1761 Hanover

2nd generation: John Wright
- born: October 25, 1761 Hanover County, Virginia
- died: 1839 Hart County, Kentucky
- married: Phoebe ———
  - born 1754
  - died 1826 Hart Co. Kentucky
- children:
  - Vincent Wright c1787 North or South
  - Allen Wright Nov 22 1789 Chester Co, S
  - Carter Wright c1791 Chester Co,
  - John Wright II c1793 Chester Co,
  - Nicy Wright c1795 Chester Co,
  - Elizabeth Wright c1797 Chester Co,
  - Sarah Wright c1799 Chester Co,
  - Anice Wright c1801 Chester Co,

3rd generation: Allen Wright
- born Nov 22, 1789 Chester County South Carolina
- died Dec 17, 1855 Hart County Kentucky
- married Hannah Peebles
  - born June 30 1793 Chester County Sc
  - died Sept 12 1854 Hart County Ke
- children
  - John Wright Oct 24 1811 Hart Co K
  - Elizabeth Wright July 15 1813 Hart Co
  - Sarah Wright Aug 9 1815 Hart Co.
  - Carter Wright June 9 1817 Hart Co K
  - Lewis Wright Dec 14 1819 Hart Co.
  - Preston Wright June 8 1822 Hart Co.
  - Blatchley Wood Wright July 31 1824
  - Phoebe B. Wright Mar 2 1827 Hart Co
  - William Wright Dec 29 1829 Hart Co
  - Robert A. Wright Feb 26 1832 Hart Co
  - David Wright April 29 1835 Hart Co

4th generation: John Wright
- born October 24, 1811 Hart Co, Kentucky
- died before 1891
- married Lucinda Walden
  - born Dec 19 1833 Pulaski County
  - died 1891 Bourbon County Ka
- children
  - William Allen Wright 1835 Hart
  - Preston Lee Wright 1849 Hart
  - Mary Jane Wright Nov 22 1834 Hart.
  - Elijah Wright Hart.
  - Charles L. Wright c1843 Hart
  - Sarah Elizabeth Wright 1844 Hart.

4th generation John Wright (continued)

children: John Lewis
Martha Ellen
Alice

4th generation: Blatchley Wood Wright
born August 31 1824 Hart County Kentucky
died February 26 1909 Bronson Kansas
married Elizabeth Jane Hodges
born c 1830 Kentucky
died April 12, 1870 Springhill Ka
children Elijah Allen Wright 1850 Hart Co
Hannah Wright c 1854 Hart Co
John Lewis Wright Apr 27 1849 Ha
Mary Ann Wright c 1858 Macoupi
George B. Wright c 1860 Macoupi
Susan Wright July 18 1865 Macoup
married Susah Hodges
born 1844 Hart County Kentuc
died Bourbon County Kan
children Jarvis Orin 1873 Bourbon County K
Edward B 1875 Bourbon County K
Carter July 27 1878 Bourbon Co K

5th generation: Mary Ann Wright - daughter of John Wright (4)
born November 22 1834 Hart County Kentucky
died June 13, 1908 Bourbon County Kansas
married Jonathon Columbus Wilson
born November 22 1830 Uptonville
died November 12 1826 Bronson K
children Laura Ann Wilson Apr 14 1856 Ma
James Madison Wilson Macou
Sarah Elizabeth Wilson Feb 4 1860 Mac
Mary Lucinda Wilson Nov 7 1865 Mac
George Taylor Wilson May 5 1862 Mac
William Edward Wilson Oct 14 1876 Bou

6th generation Laura Ann Wilson - daughter of Mary Ann Wright Wilson (5
born April 14, 1856 Macoupin County Illinois
died October 21, 1947 Wichita Kansas
married
John Lewis Wright - son of Blatchley Wood Wright (4)
born April 27 1847 Hart County Kentucky
died March 19 1893 Bourbon County Kansas
children Maggie Belle Wright 1875 Bour
Charles Oscar Wright April 22 187 Bour
Eva May Wright May 6 1879 Bourbon
William Walter Wright Sept 4 1881 Bourb
Frank Lee Wright Mar 16 1884 Bourb
Mattie Zelma Wright Sept 22 1892 Bou

Wright Family

7th generation — Hattie Zelma Wright
born: September 22 1892 Bourbon County Kansas
died: February 2 1962 Bethesda Maryland
married Walter Leo Matthews
born January 3 1891 Ford County
died July 29 1956 Wichita Ka
children Mary Elizabeth Matthews Oct 19 1923

8th generation — Mary Elizabeth Matthews
married William Clinton Olson
children Jon Eric Olson
Peter Murray Olson
Elizabeth Ann Olson

9th generation

THE WRIGHT FAMILY

(1) Lewis (?) Wright - _____

(2) John Wright - Phoebe _____
1761-1839 1754 -1826

(3) Allen Wright - Hannah Peebles
1789-1855 1793-1854

(4) John Wright - Lucinda Walden
1811-c1891 1810-1891

(5) Mary Ann Wright - Jonathon Wilson
1834-1908 1830-1926

(6) Laura Ann Wilson - John Lewis Wright
1856-1947 1849-1893

(4) Blatchley Wood Wright - Jane Hodges
1824-1909 c1830-1870

(5) John Lewis Wright - Laura Ann Wilson (6)

(7) Mattie Zelma Wright - Walter Leo Matthews
1892-1962 1891-1956

At the beginning of the Civil War, all the Colonial records of Hanover County were removed from the courthouse there and taken to the State Court House in Richmond, Virginia for safe keeping. During the War, Richmond was burnt and all the records preserved there were lost.

(1) Lewis (?) Wright

(2) John Wright
1761-1839

On October 25, 1761, John Wright was born in Hanover County Virginia. In a petition for a pension written many years later he offered as proof of this date the records written in the family Bible by his father. Unfortunately he omitted his father's given name. From some unknown source, Mrs. Loretta Stitt, a great-granddaughter of Blatchley Wright gives the father's name as Lewis. We know of no names for brothers or sisters and since the Wrights were such a numerous clan in the South, the untangling of which family was which is virtually impossible without more specific data.

So, aside from the raw facts of where and when he was born, our story skips to the period of the Revolutionary War.

John Wright volunteered for duty in the Revolution at the town of Hillsborough, the county seat of Caswell County, North Carolina to which the family had moved in about 1773. I assume that it was a family move because John was too young to have gone alone and also because most moves were made by sizeable family groups.

After a given campaign he would be discharged and almost immediately would re-enlist. This happened three times and he frankly states in his petition that it was much safer to be serving in the army than to be caught at home by the enemy. This was in the time and place of the Tory "Ban" Tarleton's depradations against both civilians, captured enemy and their property, and savage and vicious they were.

The notorious battle of the Waxhaws had taken place in May of 1780 when Tarleton had massacred a small army attempting to surrender after which the phrase "Tarleton's Quarter" was made the motto for the rebels whenever they too engaged in excessive killing, particularly of prisoners.

Tarleton was equally ruthless however with civilians and their property, so that the surrounding countryside was stripped of food and the populace lived in terror. This was the neighborhood where the Peebles lived and where the Wrights are found after the war.

In August of this year, John Wright found himself in the army of Sumter on the shores of Fishing Creek where the soldiers had stopped to bathe in the stream and forage for food. Unfortunately this is also where Tarleton caught them all and where he slaughtered and dispersed over half. John luckily escaped this encounter.

A second enlistment was short and uneventful, but the third tour made up for that. He joined the army of the South in Hillsboro, North Carolina which had been designated the gathering point for the dispersed soldiery after the defeat at Camden.

A writer commented about the Revolution in the South that it "was truly a Hydra. Where one head was lopped off, two, albeit smaller ones, seemed to appear in its place. That was what the British could never quite grasp - the extraordinary ability of the rebel army to rise like a phoenix from the ashes of defeat, to reconstitute itself almost before the smoke of battle had drifted away. In that strange tenacity - that remarkable gift for organization and reorganization, apparently without end - lay the inevitable defeat of the British. Without central authority, determined and energetic individuals simply created new units out of the bits and pieces of old ones and returned to the battle."

John Wright in his petition declared that he was present at "Deep River" but I can find no battle of this title nor site and I think he may have meant "Broad River" where the rebels staged an incredible victory. Here the river swept around two sides of a meadow where cattle were brought to be penned in winter; although the battle was later known as Cowpens, the river played a decisive part in the strategy.

He was also in the battle of Guilford Court House where the inglorious and unaccountable panic of about 1,000 North Carolina militia, who broke and ran after the first volley of shots and before a single man was wounded, meant the difference between a serious defeat for the Americans and what should have been a crushing victory.

In this respect, "Light Horse" Harry Lee, who deployed militiamen as well as Francis Marion, commented that the over-the-mountain men were a tough breed. Armed with their long rifles they were "a hardy race of men...stout, active, patient under privation and brave. Irregular in their movements, and unaccustomed to restraint, they delighted in the fury of action, but pined under the servitude and inactivity of camp." In general the militia and the irregulars performed with remarkable courage and tenacity in situations where they were, in effect, released from the constraints of conventional military operations. It was the simplest possible military excercise which made the most of their talents of marksmanship, mobility and individual initiative. When these were ignored and the militia were forced into disciplined and massed engagements they fell apart.

John also went on down to the abortive seige of Ninety-Six, South Carolina and whether he participated in the battle of Hobkirk's Hill or not he does not say. In both of these engagements, the militia stood their ground and somewhat redeemed their pride from the disastrous rout of Guilford Court House.

After the war he lived in Caswell County, North Carolina where he married Phoebe. The date of this marriage and the dates of most of his childrens' births are not known. Fortunately a land deed is recorded for a few days before his 26th birthday when he sold 181 acres for 150 pounds so we can be sure of his certain whereabouts. The selling of the land was preliminary to his moving his wife and possibly his eldest son, Vincent, down to the region of so many of his wartime activies - Chester County, South Carolina.

Two years later on November 22, 1789, his second son Allen was born.

In the 1790 Heads of Families census he is listed as having in his household two men over 16 years of age, three boys under 16, a female of unspecified age plus eight slaves. This is not really very conclusive in determining the members of his family, as a "household" included hired help, other relatives, and in fact just anyone who happened to be living there at the time of the census.

By this time there was a very large slave population in the south and as a current writer observed, 'a man with enough capital for land and eight to ten slaves could have a "hansom, gentile and sure subsistence." Only about 30% of the Piedmont farmers at this time owned slaves so we can assume that he was relatively prosperous. In 1795 a prime hand cost about 300 dollars, a substantial sum for the times.

As in the case of his neighbor, Lewis Peebles, John Wright is also listed identically in the Camden District of Claremont County and of Chester County as well. Another John Wright is also listed, whose family comprised only a man and a woman. This could be a brother or his father, as do not know his father's name since no documentation was given by Mrs. Stitt for her citation of the name of Lewis Wright.

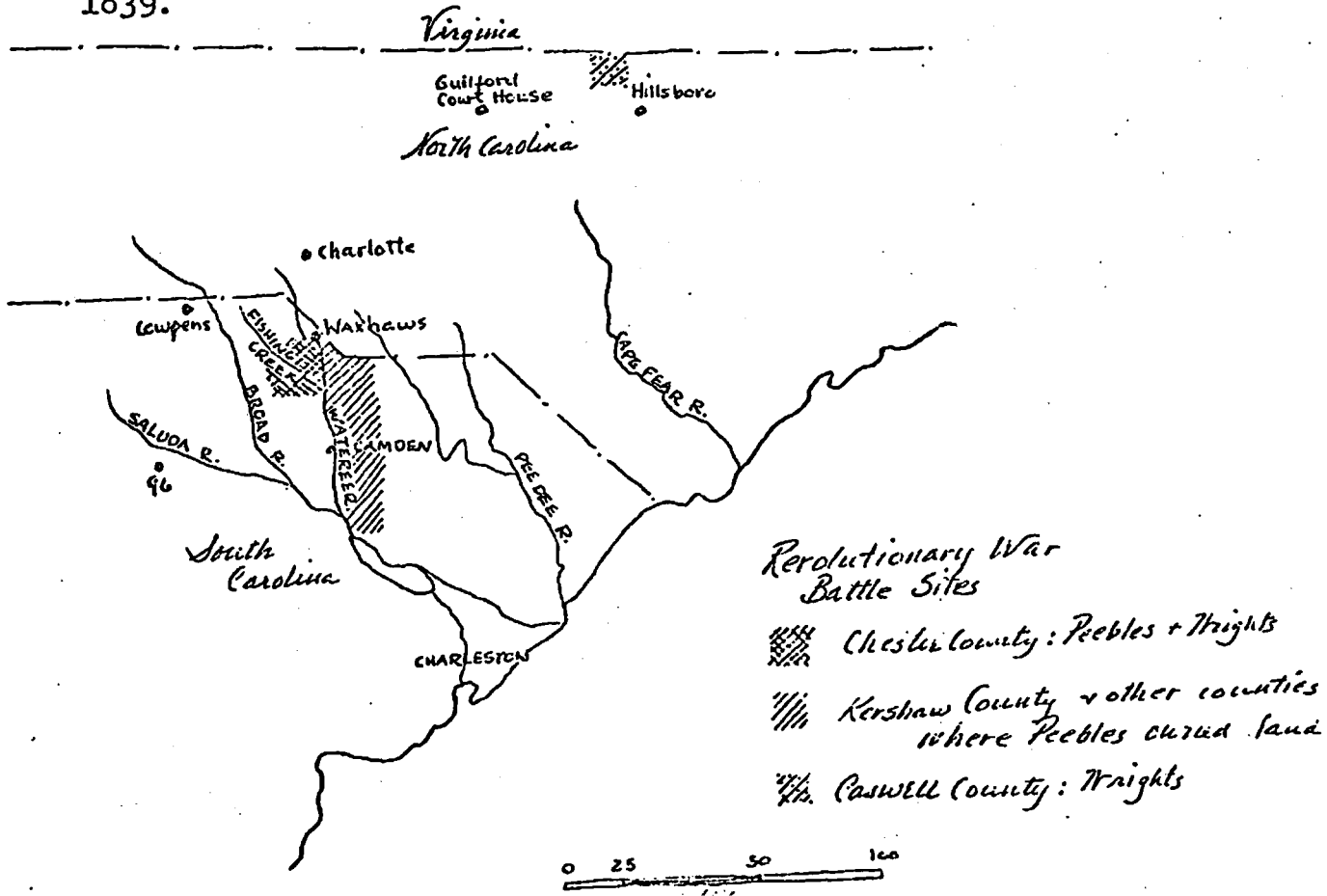
Just to point up the problems of tracing Wrights in the South, just over the Catawba River in adjoining Lancaster County there are also two other John Wrights!

Mrs. Stitt gives the names of John's and Phoebe's other children as follows: Carter, John, Nicy, Elizabeth, Sarah and Anice (Alice?). These children were all born and spent their early years in South Carolina.

After about twenty years in the Chester County area, John Wright, along with his neighbors, the Peebles and the Blissets started on the long journey to Kentucky. Family wisdom holds that this journey was made in 1805, but I feel sure that it must have been started at least two years later. We know that John Peebles was in South Carolina in 1806 when he sold his last land there. Also in his Revolutionary War pension application, John Wright states that he saw Colonel Moore in Carthage, Tennessee on his way to Kentucky, and Colonel Moore arrived in Carthage to found a newspaper there in 1808. This meeting incidentally ascertains that the group traveled from the Carolinas on the Natchez Trace which cut across Tennessee just to the north of Carthage. Furthermore, Hannah Peebles and Allen Wright were married "on the way to Kentucky" and although frontier marriages were made early, it seems quite unlikely that Hannah would have been married so early as 1805 or 1806. She was fifteen years old in June of 1808 and Allen was 19. That they were all there in 1808 we do know as John Peebles and Martha Johnsey's daughter was born in Hart County in February and John Wright witnessed a deed in October of that year. A further study of land deeds in the Hart/Hardin regions might clear this up.

At the moment the only documents we have for John Wright's life in Kentucky are the above deed witnessed for Richard Attaberry, a family connected by marriage both with the Wrights and the Peebles, and his pension application.

Phoebe, seven years older than John, died at the age of 72 in Hart County, having born eight children. John was granted his pension and died six years later there in 1839.



(3) Allen Wright
1789-1855

Why did they move? The upland land wore out quickly and perhaps the twenty years during which the Wrights and Peebles had lived there was sufficient to make the land less productive. They were not against slavery at this time so that was not a reason to leave. It may have simply been the lure of the frontier. Thirty year before, Lord Dunmore had said,

> I have learnt from experience that Americans...do and will remove as their avidity and restlessness incite them. They acquire no attachment to Place:...but forever imagine the Lands further off are Still better than those upon which they are already Settled.

In addition the new Harrison Act had just been passed which allowed settlers to pay a minimum of two dollars an acre paid in four annual installments. Later on this was reduced and after 1820 a homesteader paid only $1.25 per acre. Even so most of the moves were made in boom times because cash or credit was needed to buy even cheap public domain lands, for the supplies of the trip and to buy food until a crop was grown and sold.

For whatever the reason by 1808 there were quite a number of the family living in Hart and Hardin Counties, and it was here that John, Allen and Hannah's first child was born on October 2 , 1811 just a day after his grandfather John Wright's birthday.

Elizabeth, Sarah (called Sally), Carter and Lewis arrived thereafter at two year intervals followed by Preston, Blatchley on August 31, 1824, Phoebe, William, Robert and David: eleven children in all.

Because so little research has been possible on the Kentucky life of the family and because all of the Bibles and most of the letters were lost or scattered subsequently, we know very little of the actual happenings of the family. But we do have a precious set of Daguerrotypes of a number of Allen's children taken about the time of the Civil War when they had a reunion in Illinois. So at least as middle-aged people, we do know what seven of them looked like. No one seems to be either very affluent or very poor either. One cannot get much of an impression of personality because a Daguerrotype required the sitter to stay immobile for quite a time. Nearly everyone thus pictured has a somewhat frozen and glassy stare as a result!

The issue of slavery split the family as it did so many of those in the border states. Quoting from a great-granddaughter of (4) Preston Wright, she says, "There was such a family disturbance, due to the Civil War, that the separation was never healed. Great-grandfather freed his slaves and came to Illinois when it was tall prairie grass, I've always been told. His father (Allen (3)) never forgave him, for his wealth was in slaves and he felt this was a betrayal on the part of his son. They never saw each other again."

Some of Allen's children did stay on in Kentucky but the others left for Illinois before the War.

It was fortunate that neither Allen, who died in 1855, nor Hannah who had died a year earlier, lived to experience the Civil War. Although Kentucky voted to come in on the side of the Union after the state was invaded by Confederate troops,

the section where the family lived was adjacent to the Green River, below which sentiments were strongly Confederate.

(4) Blatchley Wood Wright
182 -1909

Allen's seventh son was named for a minister who was an admired and close friend, Blatchley Wood. So, mixed in amongst the generations of Carters and Johns and Lewises, comes Blatchley, who obviously did not cherish the name as none of his children nor his nephews were so named!

His story is almost as unusual as his name. He was married when he was about 24 to Elizabeth Jane Hodges. The following year when she was 19 she bore her first child, John Lewis. There probably were some babies who died as there are some fairly large gaps in the progression of the arrivals of the children: Elijah, Hannah, Mary Ann, George, and Susan. Shortly after Hannah's arrival, Blatchley had taken his family from Kentucky to Illinois along with his brothers, Preston and John and possibly some of the others as well. Southern to the core, a spirit which lastedfor another generation or two, they were nevertheless at odds with slavery and left that institution before the Civil War.

For fifteen years, Blatchley was a farmer in the rich Illinois prairie land, but once again the brothers decided to move on and they started out for Kansas. By 1870 they had reached Springhill in Johnson County and here Jane Hodges, along with her brother, James Hodges, caught small pox and died. James had been married to a niece of Blatchley's, Sarah Wright Hodges. Sarah was a daughter of Blatchley's brother, John. She too was left with a young family. Her sons were Charles, Edward Lee and John and the eldest had been born when Sarah was only about 15 years of age.

Combining their nine children, Sarah and Blatchley decided to continue on the journey and Sarah moved into her uncle's house and became his housekeeper. Although marriages between first cousins were fairly common, that of uncle and niece decidedly was not. Nonetheless Sarah, then only 28 years old, and Blatchley at 48 did marry in 1872. As Aunt Nanny wryly remarked, "It was not generally known in Kansas that she was his niece!"

Within the next few years, Sarah and Blatchley had two sons of their own and their household was a large and lively one. "Sally" was a devoted stepmother and her stepchildren loved her and always spoke of her with deep affection. The household was a musical one and was remembered as being a very gay and happy place.

But on October 8 of 1875, Sarah's and Blatchley's youngest son died. Five days later, their other son also died. By November 10, all three of Sarah's sons by her first husband, had also sickened and died. Instead of a bright and thriving family of eleven children, they had been reduced to six within a month!

In 1878 Sally's last child was born, a sickly young boy named Carter, who was never very well and who never married.

I don't know when Sally died, but Blatchley lived on until he was 85 years old, dying in Bronson Kansas where he is buried in the little country cemetary there.

(4) John Wright
1811-1891

Going back a bit we shall look at Blatchley's older brother, John Wright.

He was one of the Wright brothers who journeyed to Illinois from Kentucky. The prairie land was rich but there were problems especially if it was virgin prairie. The roots of the grass were very thick and deep and unless properly treated at the right season, the grass would re-sprout and choke out a planted crop. In Illinois the estimated cost to break the sod was one to three times the cost of the land itself. Five to ten yokes of oxen were required to pull a sod plow which had to cut very deeply with a special cutting blade. Then the turf had to be given about a year to rot. In the second year it was cross-plowed and after that expensive fencing was needed in order to keep out animals.

Before John had moved to Illinois he married Lucinda Walden in 1833. Lucinda had been born in the eastern part of the state in Pulaski County. I have not been able to trace Lucinda Walden's parentage, but Walden was a name famous in the region as belonging to one of the earliest of the great Kentucky Long Hunters. They were so named because their hunting journeys were of such long duration and they were amongst the first white men on the Kentucky frontier. It will be difficult to find out much about John and Lucinda's life in Kentucky as the courthouse in Munfordville burned down in 1928 and with it went the local records. In Lucinda's obituary it states that, "A goodly portion of her life was frontier. From Kentucky to Illinois and from Illinois to Kansas..." I suppose that John and she came with the others to Kansas in 1870, but it may have been that they stayed in McCoupin County and that she came on to be with her children after John's death. That he preceded her in this is known from her obituary. Probably a visit to the Bronson cemetery would clear up several of these unknowns.

What we do know is that they had nine children: William Allen, Preston Lee, and Mary Ann born in 1834. Elijah was born next and he died in 1862 in the Civil War a year before his brother, Charles. Sarah Elizabeth was next (Blatchley's future wife) and then came John Lewis, followed by Martha Allen and Alice who died as a baby.

I have a poignant letter written by Charles I Wright, a Union soldier, written to his brother-in-law Jonathon Wilson in December 1862 from Trenton, Tennessee:

Dear brother

I seat my self to rite to you to let you know that I am well at preasant and all of the boys except Will Holt he is a litle sick I have not heard from him for two or three days I am in good helth I weigh 194 pounds Well Jony I received your letter dated the 7 yesterday I was glad to here from you you said you was at mothers I wish I was thare today I think I could enjoy my self very well I fell very sad and lonsome sinse my der brother dealth but I think sertain he has gone to a beter world than this he would

sing when he was awake he sung oh dont be dis Couraged for geses is your friend and he sung I have some friends in glory I hope some time to see --- oh if yhad all been thare to see him I would [have] liked it much beter he had the ersiplus in the face it swelled his eyse shut so he was blind about six hours befor he died he had his rite mind all the time he called me to his bed told me to be relgious he said thare was nothing like dear old mother to talck to him and he knew my voice he had me to ciss him he wanted us to sing all the time if popy has note rote tell him to rite you said you wanted me to get a furlo and come home I cant get a furlo but I dont want any untill I can stay for it would be fresh trouble for me to leave home I will stop for this time rite soon som more

good by
C I W

This was written just three months after he and Elijah had enlisted and by February Charles had died at the age of 19 in Corinth, Mississippi.

Except for the two boys who died in the Civil War and the last two surviving children, of whom I know nothing, all the others of John and Lucinda's children moved to Illinois in 1854.

The pictures of the two of them are somewhat similar - they are both stern-looking, lean and tough. And I expect those were the qualities which they needed a lot of!

--

(5) Mary Ann Wright (1834-1908)

Since I know so much more about Mary Ann's husband than about her, most of this section will revolve around Jonathon Columbus Wilson and the children born to him and Mary Ann.

The recipient of the Civil War letter from Charles Wright was Jonathon Wilson. He was born in Uptonville, Kentucky on November 22, 1830. His father was T.B. Wilson, whose whose brother William had married Sarah Wright, one of Allen and Hannah Wright's daughters, so the Wilsons were one of the local allied families in Kentucky and may also have been one of the group which came from the South with the Peebles and the Wrights.

In 1854 Mary Ann Wright married Jonathon; she was four years younger than h e to the day. They were married in Kentucky just before the journey of the various families to Illinois, a journey which was made in a wagon drawn by oxen. Although a farmer, Jonathon was also a teacher back in Kentucky and for this task he was paid ten to fifteen dollars a month.

In Illinois, he farmed too and it was here in April of 1856 that their eldest child Laura Ann was born. Their next child was a son, James Madison; Sarah Elizabeth (Lizzie) was born next followed by George Taylor and Mary Lucinda (Molly). They moved somewhat in advance of the rest of the family it is thought in about 1869 to Johnston County, Kansas, the ill-fated area where Jane and James Hodges died of small pox. With the rest of the family they left there to settle three counties south in Bourbon County. Here they also had a farm and in 1875 they buried their young son, George, who died in the same month as the five children of Sarah Hodges Wright! The following October, George's loss was replaced by the birth of their last child, William Edward.

The families settled on farms near one another. There was no railroad at that time and no town of Bronson. The name, Wilsonville, was applied to the post office which was in Jonathon's home and for which he acted as a postmaster. He became the treasurer of the township as well. Later on he gave up farming to associate himself with the Wright/Ireland Mercantile Company in Bronson. This was the grand name of the town's general store.

The Wilson's life was typical of the time and area - hard work, homemade fun, family on all sides and a deep religious committment. Their church, the Methodist Episcopal Church South, was the rock on which their lives were built.

I knew Great-grandmother Wilson only from pictures of course, but they show a woman with the remnants of real beauty, a fineness and beauty of feature on which is stamped both strength and suffering. Unlike most of the Wrights, she seems to have been slim and dark-haired. In the family, she was always spoken of as a person of gentleness and dignity and sweetness.

In 1908, Mary Ann died. As the local newspaper recounted, "A very sad and sudden death occurred in our City Saturday

morning when Grandma Wilson was called away...a blood vessel was burst in her brain and death ensued almost immediately." In this small town where everyone knew one another well and where many of the people were related, elderly and beloved people were usually referred to by the whole town as "Grandma Wilson" or "Sister Jennings" or Uncle Johnnie".

Jonathon was very lonely after Mary Ann's death; they had been married fifty-five years. Sometimes "he would sit on the front porch and sing what those who knew him best called his 'lonely' song." He loved children about him and they loved him in turn. He lived for many years with his daughter, Laura Ann, in her little white house in Bronson.

I can just barely remember Great-grandfather Wilson as a tall man of once-great physical strength who had a long white beard, pink skin and blue eyes. He once held me on his lap and as I cuddled into his arms he sang "Froggie Would A'Courtin' Go". It must have been almost my earliest memory as he died, at the age of 94, in November 1926 when I was only three.

In the Bronson "Pilot" there was a small sketch of him when he died:

> Uncle Johnnie lived an interesting and useful life. He had many characteristics which young people today might well admire and emulate. He was always vitally interested in world affairs and actively engaged in community undertakings as was indicated by his great interest in reading...He not only believed in but practiced honesty, thrift, patience and clean living. He had no use for the liar; he saved religiously; he was tolerant of others in all activities, including politics and religion; and he, as much as anyone the writer knows, actually practiced the maxim, 'If you haven't anything good to say of a person, say nothing.' He was not given to demonstration. He did not 'make over' anyone, even the members of his own family, yet his friends and relatives knew that he cared for them...

Of their children, Aunt Lizzie took after her mother physically - slender and fine-featured and was a lovely old woman whom I saw occasionally at family gatherings.

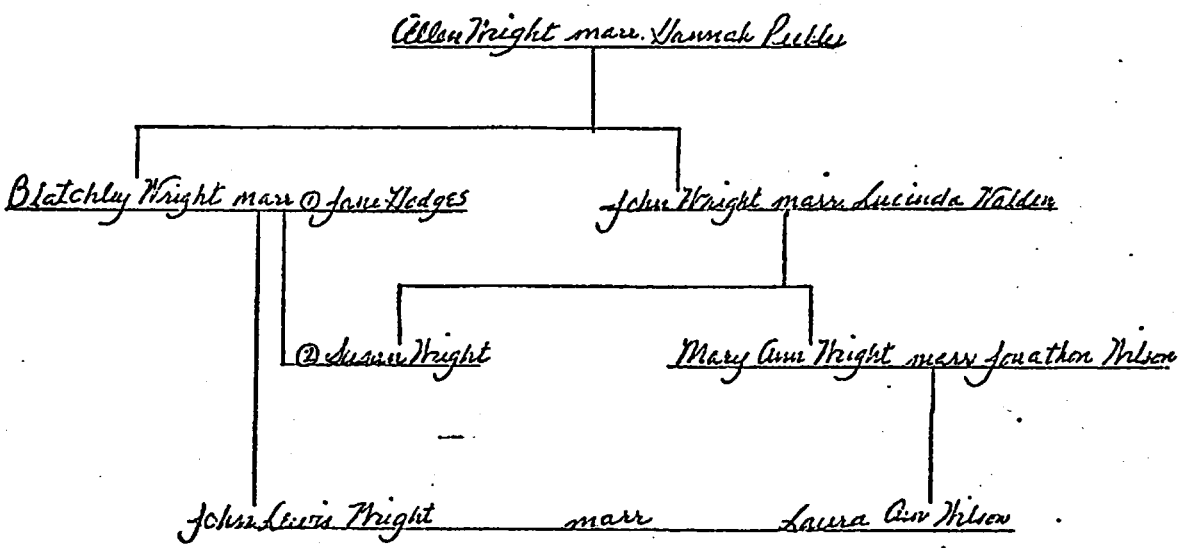
Aunt Molly had the apple cheeks and twinkle of the Wrights. I liked her and her huge booming-voiced husband Uncle Issac Carl very much. I once spent a happy week with them in Parsons, Kansas in their small home there near Uncle Isaac's grocery store. She was a jolly, tidy woman - ample and kind. When we were married, she gave us a handsome quilt which she had made herself.

Uncle Ed was a quiet whimsical man whose wife, Aunt Lou was an affectionate, Juno-esque woman of irrepressible bounce and energy.

(5) John Lewis Wright
1849-1893

Although John Lewis Wright was born in Hart County Kentucky he came with his father and brothers, among whom was Blatchley, to Macoupin County Illinois when he was only six years old. Here he spent the next 16 years of his life helping out on his father's farm. In about 1870 he came with others in the family to Kansas. After the harvest in 1974 on October 15, he married his cousin, Laura Ann Wilson, the daughter of his Aunt Mary Ann and Jonathon Wilson.

At this point perhaps a small diagram would be useful showing the complicated relationships of the family!



My Uncle Frank Wright at a speech at a Wright-Peebles family reunion in Illinois once "cleared it up" with the following explanation:

"My great-grandfather (Allen) is my great-great-grandfather.
My great-grandfather (John) is my great-grandfather's (Allen) son.
My great grandfather (Allen) is my great-grandfather's (John) father.
My father (John Lewis) is also my third cousin.
My great-aunt (Sarah Wright) was my 2nd cousin and later became my grandmother (wife of Blatchley)."

Not that everything is clear, let's go back to John Lewis and Laura Ann. They lived on their farm a few miles outside of what became the small town of Bronson Kansas in Bourbon County, and in addition to the usual farm crops, John Lewis also raised cattle. Here their family of six children were born. After Maggie's birth in 1875, there came at two year intervals Oscar, Eva May, Walter and Frank.

When Frank was eight years old, the last baby arrived. This was Zelma who was born on September 22, 1892. From the start, as the baby of the family she was loved and looked over by everyone. A tiny thing, she was not well and for a long time was very thin and delicate.

And into this happy, busy family, tragedy came. John Lewis at the age of 44 was gored by one of his steers in the barn of his farm and died.

Now came the trials and testing of Laura Ann, left with a farm to administer with the help of her children. Maggie was only 18 at this time, Eva was 14, the boys were 16, 12 and 9 and Zelma was only 6 months old.

Everyone turned to do what was necessary to survive and to keep the family together. Everyone worked and worked and worked. Laura became tougher and sterner with every passing day. Not only was it difficult to run a farm with the children as hands, two of them were not well. Maggie, the eldest, whose sweetness and gentleness became a family legend, died two years following her father's death. Zelma, the last-born was so frail that she could not go to school until she was about nine years old. These added burdens were grave ones for Laura.

Laura moved from the farm to Bronson in 1903 after the eldest children started to marry and establish their own homes and lives.

Oscar, her eldest son, married Julia King and became a merchant. He was a partner with his grandfather, Jonathon Wilson and his brother-in-law, Will Ireland. The Wright-Ireland general store was an important institution in town in the early part of the century. Oscar prospered and built a comfortable and commodious house in town across Clay Street from the little house into which his mother had moved. He saw that Laura had what she needed although she was so proud that he could never do as much for her as he wanted to. She insisted on being charged for her groceries like everyone else, for example. But if he was often thwarted in material gifts to her, he managed to be a great strength in other ways. He was always at hand; he came to see her at least once a day.

He had need of her sustenance and strength too as his young wife, soon after the birth of their daughter, Maurine, became stricken with arthritis. She was an invalid confined to her chair and bed for much of her adult life.

My memories of Uncle Oscar and his world are gentle and glowing. His house was a comfortable square white house with a wrap-around porch on two sides, and set in a large yard with big trees at the side and a fine kitchen garden behind the side lawn. Mrs. Anna Dismang, a pleasant ample woman was the family's housekeeper for many years both before and after Julia died in 1931.

Aunt Julia was tenderly cared for and in return was cheerful, alert and kind. Both Uncle Oscar's and her faces radiated happy, chuckly smiles. She suffered much pain but I at least never heard her refer to it. She had a marvelously

kind face with eyes delightfully crinkled with amusement. She was always exquisitely dressed and wore special embroidered satin slippers. Confined to her chair for 12 years, she was up to date on everything as the visitors came in and out of her home.

Uncle Oscar was a heavy-set man, bald and with a pink complexion. He dressed well but soberly, always wearing high, stiff, Calvin Coolidge collars.

The store was my special delight. Due to my status as the niece of the owner, I roamed and poked into everything At the main - and almost the only - crossroads of the town there was a large brick building on the corner with windows flanking the front door. Inside, the floor was wooden but the ceiling was covered with miraculously intricate pressed tin.

In the front of the store was the clothing section, shoes to the right (with a fine ladder which slid back and forth on ceiling rails so that the clerks could climb up and winkle out a shoe box from the highest shelves), cloth, ribbon and thread in the J&P Coats multi-drawered chests on the left. Stairs near the middle of the store on the left hand side led up to a kind of balcony where the ladies' clothing was discreetly displayed, as I recall. Opposite the stairs down on the main floor was a side door to the street. In front were dull things like men's overalls and bandanna handkerchiefs and in the rear part were the groceries. There were barrels of pickles, apples, prunes, apricots, peanuts, crackers and dried beans. There were also cats langourously and sleekly patrolling. In the middle of this section was the cast-iron stove with isinglass windows in the door part. It had a shiny fender around it and wooden chairs so that people could sit and talk and warm up while their orders were being filled or their wives were visiting a friend, or there was news to impart or learn. Back of all this was the hardware and feed.

In 1899, twenty-year-old Eva married a neighbor, William M. Ireland. Uncle Will who was in partnership with Oscar and Jonathon Wilson, worked of course in the Wright-Ireland store. It was in Bronson that they started their family of six children. Later, they moved to Ottawa Kansas where Uncle Will had the best of all imaginable jobs; he was a candy salesman!

Their household was gay and humorous and full of livliness where in retrospect it seemed to me that everyone was always laughing and joking.

Aunt Eva was a plump, motherly, jolly lady who was universally loved. Uncle Will, tall, balding and delightful was everyone's friend. He always wore bow ties and around home a gray or brown cardigan sweater, and small oval gold-rimmed spectacles. He loved jokes - both to play and to tell For a little girl like me, Uncle Will was sheer delight; he always had candy to give her and he called her a special name, "Mary Jane Sorghum", which made her feel important and loved. Aunt E va was a superb cook and her house was redolent with the smell of all good things. She wore her hair in a taffy-colored bun on the tip-top of her head and her plump face had the right kind of laughing creases. Her capacity for love and comfort was endless.

We often went there for Christmas, unless we went to Maurine's (Uncle Oscar's daughter). Since this was the occasion for a great family gathering we went to the place most convenient for the greatest number. Those Christmases were the delight of my life. An only child, I literally adored my gay and handsome cousins and the family life they represented. For many years I was the youngest of the lot and they lavished attention on me to my heart's content.

These wonderful cousins were: Romola, the serene, elder sister who died when she was 34, "Pat" (Harold) who inherited his parents' knack for people and love and laughter, Thelma, feminine and lovely and very special to me - only partly because we shared the same middle name, "Gene" (Emmett), handsome and generous and the source of wily jokes at Christmas, and quick, sandy-haired Harry.

Another of grandma Laura Wright's children was William Walter Wright. Uncle Walter was very quiet and had a sweet smile which slowly and wondrously glowed as it grew. He never had a lot to say but one always liked to be with him. I used to like just to be alongside when he did something - feeding the chickens, shucking the dried corn off the cob in his big rough capable hands, or skipping beside him as we walked to town. Surprisingly he was quite artistic. I have a sample of his Spencerian script which is elegant and delicate and graceful. I don't really have too many memories of Aunt Mabel until later on in her life when she used to come east to visit her daughter Leota. After Leota, there was Lucille and then Dorwin, and these cousins I have seen more of in other places than in Bronson or at family gatherings.

The youngest of Laura and John Lewis' sons was Frank Lee Wright, who was the only one to finish college. He went out to Bucklin Kansas where he was the principal of a high school and there he met his wife, Nancy Boosenbark from Missouri. Later on they went to Boston where he earned his PhD from Harvard. He then went to Washington University in Saint Louis where he taught until his retirement. Although most of the time we saw Uncle Frank's family in Kansas, mother, daddy and I did once go to St. Louis where we had a wonderful, incredibly sultry week with Uncle Frank showing us the sights of the big city. One summer I also went along with them to vacation for a week or two in Colorado. It was very exciting and I loved the idea of having three big "brothers" even if only temporarily. The boys: Homer, Frank and Evan fascinated me but I was very timid around them and was half scared of them even though they couldn't have been nicer to me. Much later, Aunt Nannie and I carried on quite a correspondence about family history and her insights as an outside Insider were incisive.

My memories of grandmother Wright start when I was a very young girl in about 1927. Sometimes I went there with mother and daddy to family celebrations for the 4th, Thanksgiving, grandma's birthday or Labor Day. Other times I went by myself for a week with her.

I loved her little house, a tiny, square, four-room cottage. There was always a particular smell - slightly mouldy (it was built about a foot above the ground with no basement), somewhat sweetish, and often overlaid with the delicious smells of her kitchen.

In the little living room was a daybed with a very old indigo and white woven wool coverlet spread on it and next to it was a capacious ochre-painted bent-wood rocking chair. (That was the chair in which great-grandfather Wilson sang to me) There was of course, a cast-iron stove placed on a square piece of metal. Over the daybed was one of those grotesque and frightening Victorian lithographs of a great stag, battling horrendous waves, the whites of his eyes gleaming. On the other side of the room was a fanciful dark oak Victorian desk and glassed-in bookcase, full of curlicues and as useless and ugly a piece of carpentry as can be imagined. There was also a modern side chair which had been given to grandma by one of her children.

The Good Bedroom was alongside. Here there was just enough space for a large chest of drawers, a small curtained closet, and a bed with a shiny green bedspread. In this house of exquisite hand-made quilts that awful rayon bedspread had pride of place.

Behind the sitting room was the heart of the house and the largest room - the kitchen. In one corner was a big cast iron black cooking stove which used coal for fuel. In winter this furnished heat for the kitchen - unfortunately the same thing prevailed in summer! On Saturday night, pots of water were heated here for baths, taken in a tub placed on the kitchen floor. In another corner was grandma's treadle Singer sewing machine. Above the machine hung a felt sunflower pincushion and beside it on the wall was a Wright-Ireland calendar and a farmer's almanac. On the other wall of the corner was a small shelf on which was a golden oak clock, the "Daily Devotions" from which grandma read every morning, and next to it was the crank telephone. Each house had a distinctive ring composed of so many "shorts" and so many "longs". Everyone knew everyone else's rings and would often listen in on the calls. At times this became a problem - not only because it would have been nice to have one's conversation private, but also because as each phone cut in on the line, the voices at the other end became fainter. Opposite the door to the sitting room was a "pie safe" which was a big double-door cupboard with pierced tin panels on the doors and painted a rather harsh cerulean blue. In front of this was a large round oak dinner table. The other corner had a dry sink with a towel and a small mirror above. On the floor to the side was a bucket of water from the cistern and hanging above it on a nail was the dipper.

Nearby was a door which led to the pantry with the cooky jar. The cooky jar held grandma's sugar cookies - thin , light and delicate rounds with sugar sprinkled atop and (at least when I was in residence) raisen faces.

When one walked out the kitchen door it was on to a slanting wooden back porch extending the length of the house. Off to the right led a few stone steps to the spring house where in in the damp, gloomy cool , the butter and other perishables stayed fresh. Nearby was the cistern and the red iron hand pump which after energetic working would bring up a bucket of cool water.

In the side yard at the end of the porch was grandma's yard and flower garden and a few large old trees, one of which had a swing under it. Grandma was a good gardener and her flowers were the old-fashioned varieties: zinnias, marigolds, pinks, backelor buttons, butter-and-eggs, and my favorite, portulaca. Stretching along the back of the yard was the clothesline propped up in its long expanse by a notched pole. I can remember clothes boiling on the stove to the required whiteness but I cannot recall a washing machine. Then behind the clothesline and the spring house, extending all the way over to the side street was grandma's vegetable patch. Sweet corn grew there and tomatoes and all sorts of other good things.

From the back porch over to the side street was a very narrow diagonal path which I remember particularly as it was of heavily ribbed concrete and made a lovely noise as one dragged a stick along it. At the corner of this walk, the sidewalk leading along the side street, was a little shed where coal, kindling and old newspapers and the like were stored. To get to grandma's privy - always called the outhouse - one walked along the sidewalk to the back of the lot where there was a small and smelly cubicle which I disliked not only for the smell but also because it was the happy home of numerous daddy-long-legs spiders. Beside the holes in the wooden bench there was a nail on which hung an old Sears Roebuck catalogue which was handy reading and which doubled as toilet paper. There was also a covered bucket of powdered white lime which one was expected to sprinkle down in the hole when finished.

So, this was her house and garden; this was the setting in which grandma lived. It was important only because it belonged to grandma, the person around which the whole family revolved.

When I knew her she was a little lady about five feet tall and plump as a dumpling. Her face was kindly and wise and a stranger to bitterness or malice or envy. The sternness so pervasive in the early memory of her children had faded and I remember her as a moral and upright person who was a gentle and laughing grandma. Her eyes almost hidden with plump cheeks when she laughed were bright blue and her long waist-length hair remained brown with only a small bit of gray in it until her death at 91. A picture taken of her just before her wedding shows long curls in the fashion popular just before the Civil War, but as soon as she was married she "put her hair up" as was proper for a married woman. She wore it in a bun on top of her head and held in place with tortoise shell hair pins and side combs.

Like the rest of her, her clothes were very conservative. In the summer she might wear a white dress of a tiny sprigged batiste with the sleeves cut short to mid-way between elbow and wrist. In winter, her dresses were dark, fairly long and if trimmed, had perhaps a bit of "nice" white lace at the collar. She had two or three brooches; all small and modest. Toward the end of her life she did wear a wristwatch, but otherwise her only jewelry was her plain gold wedding band.

To help her see to do her sewing, she wore small gold oval spectacles firmly planted on her nose. With these she could see to do the most minute and delicate stitches which I have ever seen in quilting, hemming and mending. The only "fine" work she did was tatting, which appeared on baby dresses and pillow cases and handkerchiefs which grandma produced without fail for the family. However her mending and her darning could have been framed for perfection and fineness. The same was true of my mother, and since they both taught me how to darn socks, I cannot do otherwise than practically re-weave a hole as they did.

Quilting sessions were sometimes held in grandma's parlor with church ladies clustered around the large rectangular quilting frame which nearly engulged the small room. It was a matter of quiet pride with her that her stitches were tinier and more perfectly even than anyone else's. And it was true. If one examined a "church" quilt, one could always find her section for its tiny, pin-prick stitches.

Cheery and hard-working, she accomplished a great deal and kept healthy in the process. She'd put on her sunbonnet and pull a pair of old silk stockings (with the feet cut out) over her arms to protect her skin from the sun, and out she'd go to work in her garden or to catch a chicken and wring its neck (how I hated that part!) or to hang out the washing.

Her cooking! Apple, gooseberry, peach pies; chocolate, white and burnt sugar cakes; all kinds of corn and tomato relish, bowls full of string beans (carefully unstrung) and other vegetables from her garden, wilted lettuce (hot sugared vinegar and water poured on top and drained) and pickled beets, clove-studded peaches and crab apples, mounds of the whitest mashed potatoes (mashed by hand and beaten for an eternity to make them white and fluffy), feathery tall bisquits and of course and always fried chicken light-brown and crisp. Sometimes we had chicken and dumplings. Or noodles which she would roll out, cut and then dry by hanging them over the backs of the kitchen chairs protected by a layer of newspaper. In summer there were big luscious watermelons served in long wedges which some of us liked to eat out on the back porch without plate and fork, spitting the seeds out onto the grass.

When there were family gatherings, the women mostly visited in the kitchen as they prepared the food and then washed and dried enormous numbers of dishes. Meanwhile the men talked together in the steamy Kansas afternoon out under the trees, stretched out for a nap or played a game of horseshoes at Uncle Oscar's. A final late afternoon snack of pie and ice tea and the families would gather to go home.

A cousin, Charles Stitt once wrote me, "...her home was always open to me anytime during the day or night, the door always unlocked so I could come in at any time and go to bed. I can never forget her nice feather mattress she had made herself. As far as I know she never spoke an unkind word to anyone, and everyone considered her as his true friend."

In winter I always slept with her. The bedroom was icy so I would leap into bed as fast as I could to snuggle down in the feather mattress and be covered with a big, fat "feather bed" - an eiderdown. She would take down her hair

and braid it into two long braids, put on her long voluminous white cotton nightgown and her baby bonnet-like night cap tied under her chin, and then removing her glasses and winding the clock, she would kneel down beside her bed to pray.

On Sundays she dressed in her best clothes carrying her good purse with some coins for the offering and her well-worn Bible and Sunday School book for the walk to church. Sunday School was at 9.00 and church at 11:00.

The little church was a white frame building on the corner across from Uncle Walter's house. It had a plain square chopped-off steeple. Inside there were ranks of golden oak benches, a Spartan altar and places for the choir to sit. Behind the main body of the church were two small rooms for the Sunday School classes. In the evening she returned for services and on Wednesday nights she went to prayer meetings which besides long prayers consisted of lots and lots of good Methodist hymns.

To keep up with her scattered family, she wrote letters on small linen-weave note paper in her crabbed but legible script. She always used a small black fountain pen which had a gold ring at the top.

In her youth and middle age she was the town nurse despite her incredibly busy life. Many people in Bronson owed their lives and health to the dedication of "Sister Wright". Naturally enough one of her great friends in town was Dr. Cummings who lived on Clay Street not far from Uncle Walter and near to town. I always went to visit the Cummings with grandma when I visited her. The great attraction here was their exotic pet parrot who could say, "Hello" and "Polly wants a cracker" in the most miraculous way. Another frequent visitor to her house was Lawrence Moore, the editor of the Bronson "Pilot" and the town's leading intellectual. He was a kind, soft-spoken man of great energy and dedication.

If we were there on Memorial Day, we would gather arm loads of the best flowers and keeping them fresh in old scrubbed-out vegetable cans carry them to the cemetary to put on the graves of our relatives.

Sometimes we would drive out to the farm of Uncle Ed and Aunt Lou Wilson, grandma's brother and his wife.

Much later in her life, grandma finally gave up her cherished little house and came to live with us. Independent as ever she arranged to sell her modest possessions at auction. To our dismay, we heard about it after it was done. And now someone else possesses the cookie jar, the pale mint-green milk glass tumbler out of which I always had my milk, the old tin pie safe, the golden oak clock and the ochre rocking chair. She did bring with her, her small rocking chair and her cherry bed and dresser and some of her quilts, which I now have as prized possessions.

She fell and broke her hip when she was very old. The hip mended but it triggered off other problems and her mind began to go. We had to have a practical nurse with her at all times as she would slip out of the house and wander about in her nightgown and robe. But occasionally th e old tart grasp would return and one day she surprised us all

by saying to her rather uninformed nurse, "That was Winston Churchill of course. Everyone knows that!" She was never in pain, and she slipped easily and quietly into death in 1947 in her bedroom, surrounded by love in our home in Wichita.

PEEBLES Family

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