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1903

Historical Sketch
OF
Samuel and Margaret Black,
John and Elizabeth Oliver
and Their Families

BY J. G. BLACK
Worster, Ohio



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History of the Black Family

BY J. G. BLACK

Samuel Black was born about the year 1785. His home was near Tobermore, Londonderry County, Ireland. This town was located about 20 miles southeast of the city of Londonderry, and about ten miles north of Cookstown. The only members of the family, so far as I am aware, were Samuel, John and Sarah. They were brought up on a farm and were typical Scotch Irish.

When a young man, grandfather went over to Scotland, where he for a time engaged in work. On his return home he learned that his brother John was engaged to Miss Margaret Black, a young lady of the neighborhood. Though of the same name they were not relatives. When grandfather learned of John's matrimonial prospects, he said to him—"You do not need a wife; I want Margaret myself." Forthwith he courted and married her. They were married about 1814, and at the time of their wedding she was about 18 and he was about 29.

However, John was not wholly discouraged; he courted Betty Milligan and made all necessary plans to sail to America. Betty's folks did not approve of the prospective match. But when the time to sail drew near, John and Betty quietly slipped off to the parsonage, were married and then away to the harbor whence they took ship. On landing they found their way to Baltimore where they lived and prospered for many long years. Most of their descendants still live near Baltimore.

Grandfather's sister Sarah married a Mr. Wilson, and they settled near New York City. They had one child, Mary Ann, who married Dr. Wood. Their home was at Jamaica, Long Island, where I visited them once in September, 1876. They had two daughters and one son. The latter was studying medicine when I was on my visit.

Some of grandfather's relatives settled at Peach Bottom, a few miles north of Baltimore, but I do not know just what the relation was. I have heard the Blacks of Baltimore speak of them, but I never met any of them.

Grandmother Black had a brother Robert who had twelve sons, and who came to America and settled in Kentucky. I have never known in which part of the state. When father was a young man he was walking across the field one day when some surveyors from Kentucky were in the neighborhood. One of them saw him and remarked, "I'll bet that man's name is Black; he walks just like the Blacks in Kentucky." Grandmother had an uncle whose name was Wilkinson. He was a favorite with her and this explains how brother Davy got his middle name—Wilkinson. When grandmother was married, this uncle made her a wedding present of a *linen* bedtick which he had woven. It was blue and white

in narrow stripes. Grandmother used this tick for about 50 years. A small remnant of it grandmother gave me more than 50 years ago. Miss Emma Woodway stitched the border of it. It is now 110 years since it came into grandmother's hands, then a blooming bride.

As a boy in my teens I used to take great pleasure in hearing grandfather tell of the way he cut the peat for fuel. They used a long narrow spade, the blocks were cut from the bog in pieces 18 inches long and 4 or 5 inches square. These were laid out on the ground in the sun for a time, and when partially dried they were "rickled" up in piles and when more thoroughly dried were hauled home and stacked up near the door of the cottage, ready for winter use. When burning, this fuel makes a "loud smell" but it is all the Irish peasants can afford. Each tenant has the right to cut the necessary fuel from the bog. In grandfather's time the oats were cut with a sickle. When the crop was in shock the tenant must go to his lord's dwelling and take off his hat and inform his lordship that the oat crop is in shock. The lord sends his man out to put his mark on all the shocks that form his share. Then the tenant may haul his own share to his home and flail it out and winnow it. From this grain he makes his "porritch." It is supplemented by his potato crop. The hard work, the very small returns, and the limited chance for young people to gain anything beyond a meager subsistence made a great many of the Irish seriously to face the question of going to America.

So it was that grandfather took ship in Londonderry in June, 1828. The family then consisted of grandfather, grandmother, John, David, William and Jane. They engaged passage for Philadelphia. The vessel on which they embarked was a "condemned" but they did not know it at the time. The first night after leaving port a hard storm came on. The captain drove all passengers below and nailed down the hatch. All on board thought they were going to the bottom. But the old vessel weathered the storm and at the end of seven weeks the passengers were put ashore several miles below Philadelphia. The captain of the vessel was afraid to come into port for he was liable to arrest for sailing a condemned vessel. In those days crossing the Atlantic was not a picnic. None of the modern conveniences and comforts were to be had. There was less care in those days bestowed on passengers than is now given to cattle that are shipped.

Through all those seven weeks at sea, grandmother was seasick and scarcely able to lift up her head. The memory of that voyage was always a sorry nightmare to her.

On reaching the American shore they were all hungry. They found a new article of food. They had never seen roasting ears or Indian corn. At first sight they thought the ears were made up of a series of layers of grains that extended all the way to the center. To their great surprise they found a big stick running through each ear.

The family soon found their way to Baltimore, 100 miles southwest of their landing place. How they made the journey

I do not know. There were no railroads then. Landing in Baltimore, grandfather soon found his brother John who had been there some years. He was a professional weaver. Of course he and Betty were glad to see the newcomers. It did not take grandfather long to find work. In 1827 the Maryland legislature granted the Charter of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad. In 1828 the work of building was begun. Charles Carroll of Carrollton, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and last survivor, laid the corner-stone at the age of 90 years. At first this road was run by horsepower. In 1830 the first locomotive was put on the track. It ran from Baltimore to Ellicotts Mills, 15 miles west. Grandfather lived for some time at Ellicotts Mills and helped to build this railroad.

But soon the western fever affected grandfather, and in 1830 he moved his family to Wheeling. Here he found work, and the older boys, John and David, were employed in a cotton mill in that new city. For two years they made this their home. While here grandfather became acquainted with a Mr. Robert McConn who had a brother, Thomas McConn, then living in Guernsey County, Ohio. He told grandfather that there was an 80 acres cornering his brother's farm that had not yet been entered.

In February, 1831, grandfather walked from Wheeling to Zanesville by the National Pike and entered this *eighth section*. He then made his way to the new farm, engaged Mr. Thomas McConn to clear and plant a half acre in potatoes, dig and bury them in the fall, and build a cabin. On his way back to Wheeling, grandfather met a man on his way to Zanesville to enter this same piece of land. In February, 1832, there was a great flood in the Ohio. I have often heard father speak of it as one of his memories of Wheeling. In early March of that same year grandfather engaged a teamster to take his family and household goods out to the new farm forty miles west from Wheeling. They followed the National road to a point three miles west of Old Washington, then called Beymerstown, at which point they must take to the woods, as open roads were scarce in those days. Before starting through the woods they sent word to Mr. John Eagleton who was living on Endley's run. He took his team and helped to haul the wagon through the woods to the farm, one and a half miles from the National road. When at last they came to the southeast corner of the new farm, grandfather said, "Boys, this is our farm; what do you think of it?" John answered, "I don't think much of it." Now their long journey is ended. Almost four years have passed since they said good-bye to Old Ireland. In those years they have travelled 2,500 miles. The home they have been looking for is at hand. Here they were to prove themselves and hew out a new home in an unbroken wilderness. They were glad to find a permanent resting place. I am very sure grandmother thanked the Lord for the promised land to which she had been looking with longing heart all these years.

I heard my mother tell that she—then a girl of ten—remembered hearing the day of their arrival that a new family had come

into the neighborhood. How little did she then think that one of the new arrivals was to be her future husband.

On reaching the new farm the family found the log cabin, but as there was no chimney in it, they temporarily occupied a log house used for school purposes which was located 100 rods northwest of their own new cabin. Very soon after entering this old school house, a neighbor woman, Mrs. Bratton, came in, bringing a loaf of "salt risin" bread which grandmother sliced and gave to the hungry children. They had been used to yeast bread. When William smelled it he said, "Pooh, it stinks. I won't eat it." So grandfather took a sack and went to look for the potato pit. He soon returned with a sackful. Grandmother told me when she boiled them they burst open and were dry and mealy; the best potatoes she ever ate.

At once all hands were busy fitting up the new cabin, and clearing the ground for the spring crop. A chimney was built and a floor laid, probably of puncheons, and a door hung, and it was ready to welcome the new arrivals. How glad they were to have a house and farm they could call their own home. Now the primeval forest which covered the farm must be cut away and burned and the soil made ready for growing corn, wheat, oats, flax and potatoes. How long until they were able to buy a team and cow, I do not know; but no doubt they soon discovered these were necessary for a growing family on a new farm.

Bread and meat may be the staff of life, but not the only necessities. It was impossible to run a farm even in those primitive times without money. To get this necessary medium of exchange was no easy matter in those days. In the 30's the whole country was going through a very serious financial struggle, and money was hard to get. Grandfather and David put in many weeks each year breaking limestone to be used to keep the National Pike in good surface, for there was an immense traffic over this great thoroughfare. By hard work and careful economy the family were soon in circumstances of comparative comfort as such things were then considered. The young folks had very limited school privileges in those days. A few weeks in the winter under very primitive conditions, with teachers of very limited preparation, made up the school year. The course of study included the three R's: namely, Readin', 'Ritin' and 'Rithmetic. The chief training the young people received in those early days came through the liberal use of the ax, mattock, plow and hoe. The result was a vigorous and self-reliant generation.

I have heard my father say that he, when yet a boy, went back once on a visit to Wheeling. He started from home in the early morning, and entered Wheeling just as the sun was going down. A pretty good day's march.

Not many years had passed when it became evident that the original log cabin was no longer large enough to accommodate the family that was increasing in number and growing in stature. As timber was plentiful, a new and larger log house was erected about one hundred yards north of the old cabin and much nearer the

spring which supplied the family with water. This spring bubbled up at the bottom of a steep sided ravine that ran across the whole farm from west to east and drained into Saltfork.

When the new house was ready for use, the old cabin was put to a new use. A similar log structure was placed about 25 feet to the east of it and a continuous roof covered both buildings and the space between, which was called the "barn floor." The west end of the barn was used as a stable with a hay loft over it, and the east end was a storage room for hay and grain. For many years the barn floor was the place where the wheat and oats were flailed or tramped out and winnowed by the fanning mill, for the days of the threshing machine had not yet come.

Not long after the first clearing came the planting of an orchard and soon the family had apples, peaches and pears. Of course the family soon became acquainted with the neighbors. The McConns were the nearest and were soon on friendly terms. One day David and John were visiting at the McConns and received a pup which they took home with great pleasure.

A few days after, the McConn boys came over to visit the Blacks. On their return home their father said to them, "Well, boys, what name did they give to the pup we gave them?" The boys replied, "They named it 'Foryou.'" "What! You say they named the dog for me?" "No," said the boys, "They named it 'Foryou.'" Then the father saw the joke. The boys at least enjoyed it.

How busily the family were occupied with their daily duties may be seen in the following incident. One day grandmother went over on an errand to the Brattons, a half mile to the west. Mrs. Bratton thought grandmother was not aware that it was the Sabbath. She walked out some distance with her as she was starting home and incidentally dropped the remark that it was the Sabbath. Grandmother was horrified and hurried home to inform the family who were very busy at work. Of course all were greatly surprised and at once ceased their labors for the next 24 hours.

Although all the land of the immediate neighborhood had been entered and most of it occupied by the owners, yet but a small part of it was cleared and under cultivation. The removal of the dense forest meant a slow and strenuous labor that is hard for the present generation to fully appreciate.

When grandfather came to the woods in 1832, the deer, red and grey fox and ravens were still here. Whether the last bear and wolf had gone I do not know, but they had not retreated very far. Nor was it long since the Indians had forsaken their old trails. For quite a good many years after the Blacks came, it was not an uncommon thing to find the horns of the deer in the woods. Wolf-den, a deep gorge on father's first farm, was the last home of the wolves in that neighborhood.

Through all the years since landing in America all the family had been kept very busy and they were prospering, but they were not without their sorrows. They buried two children in Baltimore, two in Wheeling and two in Old Washington. One of this last

group was a little girl named Sarah Ann. As she was playing in the yard, one of the horses ran across the yard, jumped over the child and kicked her on the head. Of their 13 children, 7 lived to mature years. The large fatality among the children was probably due to the very strenuous life demanded of mothers in these early days, and the necessary lack of the care that children need in their early months. The following are the names of the children that reached maturity in the order of age: John, David, William, Jane, Margaret, Samuel and James, the last three born in Ohio. When the family had spent several years in the second house, all agreed that a new hewed log house larger in every way would be more fitting and comfortable. I do not know the year in which this third house was built. It was located a few feet to the north of the second, and was a much more roomy and commodious building. The first floor was divided by a board partition into two rooms, a bed room and a living room. At the middle of the north side was a capacious outside chimney whose base was stone and upper part of brick. In the northeast corner of the living room a closed-in stairway led up to the roomy second story which was sometimes used as a bedroom. In the fireplace hung a strong iron crane and at the west side of the fireplace about five feet above the floor was fastened to the wall a good coffee mill which I many a time saw grandmother use when she was getting a meal. In the west side of the house was the front door. On either side of it was a window, one in the living room and the other in the bedroom. The front door was approached by a substantial puncheon porch without a roof. Along the east side of the house was a roomy porch under roof and boarded in at the north end. At the south end the floor of the porch was 7 or 8 feet above the ground. About the year 1857 or 1858 grandfather engaged Uncle James Oliver to put up a series of posts to which was attached a strong wire on which a tin bucket with pulleys ran down to the spring by gravity and was drawn back by a strong cord on a pulley. This mechanism saved many a trip to the spring.

After the family moved into this third house the old house was used for years for a loom house and smoke house. When a boy I used to see Aunt Margaret at her weaving in this old house.

Down by the spring stood a commodious spring-house. As the water flowed away from the spring it ran through the spring-house trough in which the milk crocks were set and kept cool. A group of trees grew about the spring house and in summer it was a very shady, cool place. Here the churning and washing were done in the warm weather. Once when a heavy thunderstorm was passing grandmother sent Uncle Sam down to take the crocks out of the trough to prevent their being flooded. While uncle was in the spring house a bolt of lightning struck a tree a few yards away. When grandmother heard the crash she hurried down to see what had happened. She found Sam standing in the spring-house door pale with fright and almost "scared stiff."

About the year 1851 grandfather and father made a visit to Baltimore. They went by stage coach to Cumberland, Maryland,

along the National pike and the rest of the way by the B. & O. railroad. On their return they left the stage coach about Nelson's or Grandfather Oliver's and walked home. It was about midnight or after it, and father stepped along at a good pace. Grandfather after trying in vain to keep up finally called out, "What the thunder are you walking so fast for?" I can recall seeing father the next morning after his return. He brought back with him a few potatoes called "Pinkeyes" which he cultivated for years.

Not long after this trip grandfather met with a serious accident that lamed him for life. As he was on his way to church not far from the Hyde place his horse scared and threw him. The fall broke his hip. This accident occurred about the year 1852. By using a cane he could get about the house and yard but was not able for work that called for activity on foot. He could chop the wood when hauled to the yard, and in summer he cut peaches and pared apples for drying, and in winter he did the family knitting.

When the family had labored on the new home for ten years the four older members, who were born in Ireland, had attained their growth, and began to think of the very important matter of making homes of their own. I do not know in what year Uncle John was married, but it was about '43 or '44. He married Martha Stewart, and their first home was on the forty acres lying west of the McConn farm and south of the Foy place. How long they spent on that farm I do not know, but they next moved to near Kimbolton where William was practising medicine. About the year '57 they moved to Wisconsin where he lived several years. I do not know where David first met Miss Elizabeth Oliver. But he courted her for some time, and they were married January 2, 1845. The family knew when David had spent the evening at Olivers by the red mud on his shoes. On one of these occasions David thought to mislead the family. So on his return home late at night he left the main road at Wolfden and passed westward and approached his home from the west. John struck his trail next morning in the snow and followed it around until he found it led back to Olivers. Notwithstanding all the strenuous hard work demanded of them it is evident the young people in those early days had their fun and enjoyment in life as they went along. It is a sorry time when the young people cannot have their share of the fun and frolic that make for them the spice of life. David had already bought 80 acres lying along the west side of his father's farm. On this farm he built a log house into which they moved in the fall of 1845.

I do not know in what year William was married but it was about 1850. His first wife was Susan Frame. She lived but a few years, leaving one son, John F. Black. The Doctor married again about 1855. His second wife was Miss Maria Luccock of Kimbolton.

Aunt Jane was married to John Oliver, mother's brother, March 6, 1849. They made their home, while he lived, on grandfather Oliver's farm located a mile north of the stone bridge on

the National pike, 3 miles east of Cambridge. About the year 1856 uncle John Oliver died, leaving three children. Soon after his death aunt Jane and her three children moved into the vacant house on father's first farm. Here she lived a year or two until after grandfather Oliver's death.

In the spring of 1853 my father moved his family to a newly purchased farm of 130 acres located on Endley's run, one mile south of his first farm. At this time the family consisted of William, John, Margaret Ann, David Wilkinson and Elizabeth Isabel. Though we moved in early March the roads were dry and the weather fine.

In November of 1854 aunt Margaret was married to James Stewart, oldest son of James Stewart, a cousin of mother's. I well remember the evening of their wedding, as I heard the tooting of horns by the crowd of young men who were not invited to the wedding. They gathered about the house and made a most hideous racket, ringing bells, firing guns and blowing horns. Grandfather had gone out and stood quietly in the corner of the chimney. He always carried a good strong hickory cane. When the merry makers came close to his hiding place, grandfather made vigorous use of his cane. He laid it heavily on the shoulders of a big Irishman named Hugh Dyer. The women of the family came out with hot water that made the crowd keep a respectful distance. The young married couple made their home for several years on one of his father's farms. I can recall being at their home once when a boy and aunt Margaret had fried eggs for dinner. Years after they bought the farm adjoining them on the south and made it their home for a long time. As a school teacher I boarded with them one term.

About the year 1858 uncle Sam went to California with cousin John Blair. The latter had been in California for two or three years and was back on a visit and Sam returned with him to seek his fortune in the far west. He spent nearly all the rest of his life in various parts of the wild west. He was unfortunate; in fact, soon after getting to California, while mining, he met with an accident that resulted in a broken leg. I believe he was once back to Ohio, but I was not at home and so never saw him after he first left home. The last I heard of him he had made a visit to Tekama, Nebraska, where uncle John Black had settled many years before. As far as I can learn fortune did not smile on uncle Sam's efforts and he became discouraged and at last laid him down in an unknown grave. Uncle Sam's going left uncle Jimmy at home to run the farm and look after the old folks. About the year '61 he married Lucinda English and they made their home with the old folks for nearly three years. In the fall of '63 uncle Jimmy went out to Montana to seek his fortune in the gold mines of that region. It became my duty to spend part of the winter of '63-'64 at grandfather's to take care of the stock, do chores and go to school at Independence.

In the summer of 1867 grandfather was taken seriously sick and in a few weeks died at about 83 years of age. The first 43

years of his life were spent in Ireland, and the last 35 years on the farm in Ohio which he had wrested from the wilderness. Except for his lameness he had always been in rugged health. All his teeth were sound and firm and his natural senses alert. He had come to America that he might make a better home for himself and family than he could hope for in Ireland. He sought a more hopeful outlook for his children. He lived to realize his hopes; his had been a life of strenuous toil. He had walked in the fear of God and died in the faith. The old family Bible was kept near the fireside.

After grandfather's death the old home was broken up, and grandmother went to live with aunt Margaret Stewart. She took with her uncle Jimmy's son, John S. Black. Aunt Lucinda took her younger child, Maggie, and went west. I do not know what became of her. Her daughter married and lived at Tekama, Nebraska, where uncle John had settled when he moved from Wisconsin. Grandmother lived to about 90 years of age and died at Cambridge about the year 1883. I had not seen much of her in the last ten years of her life as I was not at home much of that time. Her's had been a long life of hard toil and earnest effort in the interest of her family. She had an abiding and firm faith in God and she always loved to hear His Word. To have endured the physical strain and nervous tension of all those many long years is good evidence of an unusually strong constitution. She spent her strength in the interest of others.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF JOHN OLIVER

BY J. G. BLACK

Grandfather Oliver's name was John and his father bore the same name. The home of this family was Tulnaloobe, County Fermanagh, Ireland, about 40 miles south of Londonderry. His father was twice married and Grandfather was the second child of his second wife. Her maiden name was Isabella Cummings, and she died 18 months after Grandfather's birth. He was born about the year 1786 and while a minor he sailed from Londonderry on the second day of June, 1806, on the ship Jason, then under command of Captain Oliver Blunt. I heard my mother say that while on his sea-voyage Grandfather was in constant fear of being captured and pressed into the British service by English ships, as this was a common practice of the English navy at that time.

After landing at Philadelphia he found his way to Tuscarawas County, Ohio. Little is known of his history for the first ten years after landing in America. These years were chiefly spent near Uhrichsville, Tuscarawas County, Ohio. Within these years he took two important steps. He met and married Elizabeth Caruthers and purchased a farm of 170 acres. This farm was located in Guernsey County, Ohio, 5 miles east of Cambridge. On this farm he and his wife settled in 1816. A few years before, the Zane Trail had been cut through the farm. This road was then called "The Old Wheeling Road." By the side of this road Grandfather built his first log cabin. He bought this farm in 1809 and paid \$300.00 for it. Soon after coming to it he sold 30 acres off the east end for \$300. The original tract was made up of two hundred-acre lots of military land that had originally been entered by a lieutenant of the Revolutionary War, and on his death was sold by his widow. The patent which is now in possession of his grandson, Sam Oliver, was signed by President Andrew Jackson.

When Grandfather settled on this farm, all about it was wilderness. He built a strong log pen near the house and in this kept his livestock at night to protect them from the bears and wolves. His first dwelling stood on the east side of the road and on the top of a hill that was part of the divide between Endley's Run on the west and another run to the east. The door of this house faced the northeast, the chimney southeast and a window looked out toward the southwest. The side of the house toward the road was occupied by the beds. This building was used as a dwelling for about 40 years. Grandfather occupied it for more than 25 years. Here most of his family were born and grew up; and some of the older girls were married under its roof, which implies that some courting had been done there. I heard my mother say that the Indians sometimes stopped over night in this cabin as they were on their journeys. She said they showed dislike for light-colored hair by spitting at the children whose hair was light.

About the year 1828 the Government built the National Pike thru Guernsey County. This road ran thru the southeast corner of Grandfather's farm. Of course this new highway took nearly all the traffic from the old Zane road. So in the early forties Grandfather built a large two-story hewed log house at the side of the pike. Here my mother was married in 1845 and here Aunt Mary kept house for Grandfather as long as he lived. Grandmother Oliver had died more than 20 years before her husband, whose death was in 1858.

About nine years after Grandfather came to Guernsey County he took out his naturalization papers. He was then nearly 40 years of age. These papers were issued by the proper authorities in Cambridge, Ohio. They are now in the possession of one of his grandsons, Mr. Joseph W. Oliver, son of James Oliver, of Byesville, Ohio.

My earliest recollection of Grandfather Oliver was about the year 1850 when I was a lad three or four years of age. Father had to haul a load of wheat from Washington to Zanesville. He took me with him to get the load. As we were passing Grandfather's place we stopped a few minutes and Grandfather came out to the wagon and put his hand down into the straw where I was sitting and made me believe he was about to take me out. Evidently he was not much of a hand to visit; for I have no recollection of ever seeing him in our home, tho I recall seeing him a few times in his own house.

One day about the year 1830 Grandmother Oliver went two miles west to visit her daughter, Mrs. James Blair. My mother, then a little girl of seven or eight years, was with her. As she was on her way home she felt the pangs of childbirth coming on. She told mother to hurry home to inform grandfather. A neighbor, Mrs. Hill, was with her. Before Grandfather got to the scene the child was born.

My earliest memory of the cabin which Grandfather first built was in the year 1853, shortly after we had moved down to the farm on Endley's Run. Uncle Nixon Oliver then lived in it and farmed for Grandfather. At the same time he was helping father to clear off the forest from his new farm.

As children we sometimes visited our cousins in this old cabin. About the year 1855 Uncle Nixon moved his family to Sam Blair's farm a mile and a half north-west. A tenant by the name of Boley moved into the old cabin and lived there for a year or two. Very soon after Grandfather's death the farm was sold. It was divided by a line east and west into two equal parts. Uncle Nixon bought the north half and Aunt Jane spent her remaining days on her part. After the division of the farm Aunt Mary lived in a hewed log house on Uncle Nixon's farm. In the early '60's Aunt Mary was taken ill with a severe attack of blood poisoning that took her life in a few days. About the year 1867 Uncle Nixon sold his part of the farm to Aunt Jane and moved his family to Indian Camp in the northwest part of Guernsey county, where he had bought a farm. In this community he spent his remaining days,

and I believe some of his family are still in the same neighborhood. Uncle Nixon had married twice. To his first wife he had six children, Elizabeth, John, Sarah, Isaac, Mary Jane and Margaret Ann. Of these only Mary Jane is living at this time. John, the older son, died in a rebel prison during the Civil War. The children of the second wife I have not known since they have grown up.

Grandfather's oldest daughter married Aaron Decker and for several years they lived near Martinsburg, Knox County, Ohio. About the year 1850 father and mother took their family out and made them a visit. It was about the year 1857 that Uncle Aaron moved his family to Edgar County, Illinois, where he tarried for about three years. Then they all moved to near Fort Scott, Kansas. There the family anchored. Uncle wanted to move again but Aunt Deborah said "No" and she stayed. I have not seen any of their descendants since they left Ohio.

Grandfather's second daughter, Belle, married James Blair when she was about 14 years of age. They had four children: John, James, Nixon and Elizabeth. The boys all settled near Fort Scott, Kansas, and Elizabeth married Samuel Bratton and her family grew up about Cambridge. I have not seen any of them since they were children.

Grandfather's son James married Sarah Jane Woods. He bought the farm grandfather owned on the Run three miles east of Cambridge, Ohio. They had eight or nine children but quite a number of them died in their early years. Aunt Sarah Jane is yet living with a daughter in Byesville, Ohio, and is now somewhat over 90 years of age. Uncle James died 20 or more years ago.

Grandfather's youngest son, Henry, studied dentistry and lived in Canton. He died over 50 years ago and his wife and family moved to Martins Ferry where their daughter Josephine still makes her home. The oldest boy, John, died at Aunt Mary Oliver's when a lad. The second son, Will, died in Bellaire.

Grandfather Oliver's sister, Margaret Oliver, married James Stewart, who was born in 1770 and his wife in 1777. To them were born eleven children. Of these, John, the eldest, was born August 29, 1803, and came to America in 1818. He landed at Quebec, went to Pittsburgh, then to Jefferson County, Ohio, and then to Muskingum County where he settled and spent the rest of his life. He married Mary Blair. They had five children that grew to maturity.

James Stewart's and Margaret Oliver's second child was called James. He came to America and settled on a farm on the Run three miles east of Cambridge, Ohio. He married Eliza Blair and they had eight children, five sons and three daughters. This James Stewart was the fourth teacher to whom I went to school. He taught our school three or four terms. Fourteen years after I first went to school to him, his two younger children, Elizabeth and Henry, sat under my teaching at the Slaughter Hill School, three miles northeast of Cambridge, Ohio.

Grandfather Oliver's sister Nancy married John Clendenning.

They settled in Indiana about 1800. In 1820 Nancy died of milk-sickness and her husband was killed by lightning in 1840. He had taken shelter under a tree during a thunder storm and lightning struck the tree, killing him. They had six daughters and two sons, whose names were John and Charles. This family was among the very early Methodists of Indiana. They were a thrifty, well-to-do family.

Grandfather's brother, Nixon Oliver, a bachelor, lived in Indiana and accumulated some wealth. I recall that my mother received a share of his estate after his death. He was the youngest son by the first wife.

William Oliver was Grandfather Oliver's full brother and the oldest son of the second wife. He came to America but I don't know where he settled or anything of his after history.

In 1844 Grandfather Oliver had serious thoughts of going to Ireland to visit his relatives who still remained at the old home. The papers necessary for his identity were made out, written by his son-in-law, James Blair, and attested by Isaac McCollum who was then justice of the peace in Center township, Guernsey County, Ohio. (See original copy.) For some reason he failed to make this contemplated visit and the papers came into my hands thru my mother who received them, I suppose, from Aunt Mary. I think that one thing that Grandfather had in mind in this intended visit was that some income was due him on account of a life lease that had been drawn up when he was but a child. The paper above referred to explains.

The original owner of Grandfather Oliver's farm did not settle on it and after some years 30 acres were sold off the west end to pay the tax which was due but had been neglected. This 30 acre lot was a part of the second farm which my father bought from Probate Judge Zadak Davis in the year 1852.

I suppose Grandfather never made any effort to recover this part as he probably felt he had all the land he could take care of.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF DAVID BLACK AND FAMILY

BY J. G. BLACK

David Black, the second son of Samuel and Margaret Black was born September, 1818, and was a lad of ten years when the family came to America. He worked with his father on the home farm and at breaking stone on the National Road until after he was 21. Many a week did he spend on the stone pile. The contracts which he took were sometimes in West Virginia and sometimes along the pike between Wheeling and Zanesville. By this work he earned enough money to pay for the first farm he owned. This was an 80 acre tract that lay on the west side of his father's farm. This farm had been entered and was still owned by a man in Kentucky whose name was Hays. When father bought this land about 1843 there had been no improvements made. It was all unbroken forest. In the winter and early spring of 1844 he cleared and planted in corn the field that was at the middle of the east line.

On the second of January, 1845, he married Miss Elizabeth Oliver. The wedding occurred in the second house built by her father near the east side of the pike. The officiating minister was Reverend Wallace, who at that time lived at Cambridge, Ohio. The day after the wedding the young couple rode on the little gray mare, called Nell, up to grandfather's to the "Infair" or reception. On the next day they started on horseback to Muskingum county on their wedding trip. On their return they made their headquarters at Grandfather Oliver's for the spring and summer; both were busy making necessary preparations for going to housekeeping in the fall. Father was clearing the land and making his first log house, and mother was busy getting ready the articles needful in a new home. In the early fall of 1845, they moved into the new house ready to meet all the duties and responsibilities necessary to making a good home. In October a new boy came to stay with them. They named him William for an uncle. The household equipment sufficient in those early days would be considered rather scant in modern times. Father and mother did not have a clock for some years after they began housekeeping. They told the time of night by the stars and the noon hour by the shadow of the porch post on the floor. Their first clock was bought from a Yankee peddler and was made in Connecticut. From my early boyhood I can recall seeing father wind the clock the last thing before retiring at night. It stood on the mantel over the fireplace and ticked off the seconds for many long years.

In a very new country pasture fields are not likely to be abundant. So during the summer of 1846, mother had to walk about half a mile to the field where the cow was in pasture. William

was then able to crawl about the floor. To keep him away from the fire while she was out to milk the cow, mother tied a towel about his waist and fastened him to the bed post. In a few short years fields of wheat, corn and grass had replaced the forest and the whole country was completely changed. In place of the gloomy forest, there had sprung up fields of waving grain and blooming orchards. On the 6th of May, 1847, a second boy came to the household. One week after his arrival, mother was up and cooked the dinner for the persons who helped father that day to plant his corn. Not much time lost in those days from the regular routine work.

This new arrival they named John, in honor of grandfather Oliver. In those days the farmer produced enough corn, oats and hay to feed his own stock. For ready money he must sell wheat. The nearest market was at New Comerstown, 25 miles northwest, and at Zanesville, 30 miles west on the National Pike. Wheat sold at 62½ cents per bushel, and it took two days to deliver 25 bushels at either of these markets. Making money by farming was not a very rapid process in those days. But by hard work and close economy, each year added a small sum to the surplus. I can recall seeing father come home one evening from one of his trips to New Comerstown. A black dog had followed him and proved to be a worthless cur. So one morning about daylight father asked me if I wished to go with him to hunt squirrels that were taking up the young corn. The dog followed us, but proved to be of no use as a hunter. So father put a bullet into his head and rolled him down into a ravine. I stood behind father as he aimed his rifle at the dog. I thought he held the gun to a shoulder and in a horizontal position. I puzzled a long time over the course pursued by the bullet. Evidently my observation was not correct.

In my early days the loud report of a gun filled me with great fear; but later I enjoyed it. The house in which we lived stood on the top of the dividing ridge between Saltfork on the north, and Leatherwood Creek to the south. The latter was about 3 miles away, and the former two miles. The log stable was about a hundred feet east of the house, and at the north side of it was a log corncrib and the space between was the wagon-shed, all under the same roof. About one hundred feet west of the house was the spring that supplied water for the house and the stock. Hard by was the spring house where the milk and butter were kept in the summer. Just below the spring-house was the watering trough where the horses and cattle went to slake their thirst. A few rods west of the spring was a substantial pigpen of logs, the east end of which was under roof. A group of oak trees stood about the spring house, making it a cool shady place where the children had their playground. One of the memories of that spring still clings to me. When three or four years of age, I got down on hands and knees to drink and tumbled in head first. How I got out I do not know. A few yards southeast of the house stood the smoke-house, with a shed projecting toward the house. In this building were kept the family meat and salt. One

day our cousin, Elizabeth Blair, went into the smoke-house to get meat for dinner. William hooked the door and then began to bombard it with stones. An interview with mother soon after led him to think it was not so funny after all. I recall one morning mother went into the smoke-house and found a 'possum had taken up his residence there. He was knocked on the head and thrown out—my first memory of the marsupial family. One day when the meat was smoking the children thought there was not enough fire, so we went to the stable and gathered quite a pile of straw and hay. We soon had quite a bonfire and the grease was dripping from the meat. Fortunately mother discovered the situation in time to prevent a conflagration. I have forgotten the remedy she used to prevent a recurrence. A few yards to the southwest of the house stood a black oak about 50 feet high. My earliest experience in throwing stones was in trying to throw over the top of that tree. A few yards west of the smoke-house was the ash-hopper. This supplied the lye necessary in making the family soap. Once I climbed to the top of this hopper—about five feet—and noticed a bumble-bee alight and crawl into a hole near the bottom. Of course I was curious to know somewhat about that bee. So I began to climb down. My clothes caught on the edge of the hopper and left me suspended so I could kick the bottom where the bees were located. Of course they all came out to see the cause of the racket. How they did sting me. My outcry soon brought father to the rescue. He snatched me from the hopper and rushed me into the house where mother drove the bees from their hot pursuit.

A few feet north of the house was a rail fence which separated the yard from the garden. At the northwest corner of this garden was a dead white oak. One day when there was a thunderstorm passing over, the lightning struck this tree and a piece of it broke the window on the north side of the house. The sudden crash scared us children so that we ran screaming to mother. Some time after I remember, father cut down the tree and used it for firewood. A few rods east of the stable stood another dead tree which was cut for wood. Just as it was falling the family bulldog rushed at it, and was caught and instantly killed. He was a savage and tenacious brute. Once when mother tried to drive some cattle from the yard, this dog gave chase and father had to follow him a half mile before he could call him off.

Just south of the house and stable lay the orchard, consisting of apples, peaches and cherries. Father set out the trees very soon after buying the farm, for they were bearing fruit plentifully before we moved from the place. There were Seek-no-further, Russet, Queen Early, Northern Spy, Pippin, Harvests, Redstreak, Vandover and Bellflower. Once when the sheep were pasturing in the orchard we found two horny fellows had been fighting and got their horns locked around a peach tree. The next morning they were standing peacefully on opposite sides of the tree. The quarrel had been settled. I recall seeing father shear his sheep one day, and

turn them out in the woodlot west of the house. That night the dogs found them and killed and wounded more than half the flock. The dogs had come more than a mile from their home. They were traced to their owners and killed.

When William was about five years of age he was taken down to grandfather Oliver's and started to the Old Center School. This gave the little fellow a mile and a half to walk each morning and evening. In two weeks he was taken with some form of epidemic, and was brought home and so ended his first school experience. The next year William and I were started to school at the Old Center Meeting House a mile northwest of our home. The first day mother took us as far as Blackburns, our neighbors to the north, and we went with their children to the school.

I was but four years of age and shy and should have been at home. Our first teacher at this school was Oliver Ferguson and the second was Mr. Thrasher. The school equipment was of the most primitive kind. I have no recollection of reciting in that school though I probably named the letters as the teacher pointed to each and gave me its name. My first recollection of the fire-cracker goes back to this old school room. One of the big girls placed the cracker near me as I sat near the stove. When it exploded I was badly frightened.

The third term of school which William and I attended was taught by William McConn. The school was held in an old log house which had formerly been the McConn home and stood on the hill west of Wolfden. Here gathered the young folks from the Pattersons, Hills, McConns, Blacks, Blackburns and Warrens. I recall one evening when I came home from school mother gave me a pair of mittens which she had just finished. The next day I wore them to school and put them in my hat. In the evening when I took up my hat the mittens were gone. Some other boy wanted them and I went with cold fingers. Mr. William McConn, our teacher, was later a minister and was preaching in the west. On the death of his mother he came back to Ohio to attend her funeral. The train on which he was traveling had a collision near Newark, Ohio, and he was killed. He was brought home and buried with his mother. Little did I dream at that time that I should one day be teacher to Mr. McConn's brother's granddaughter, Miss Louise McConn of Shadyside, Ohio.

This first farm which father owned was the family home for seven and a half years. By that time there were five children in the family, William, John, Margaret Ann, David Wilkinson and Elizabeth Isabel.

About the year 1851 in March, father had a severe attack of lung fever. I have a distinct memory of seeing the doctor bleed him. John Blair, our cousin, held the vessel into which the blood flowed. It was probably the following year that all the children had the scarlet fever. Davy was very dangerously ill for some days and he was partially deaf for years as a result of the fever.

In early March of 1853 father moved his family to the new farm recently purchased which was located on Endley's Run one

mile south of his first farm. The morning we moved William and I went with the first load and helped to drive the cattle and sheep. When we arrived at the farm Aunt Mary Oliver, mother's youngest sister, was there to receive us and to put the household things in order as they arrived. Mother had to look after the packing and loading of household goods and at the same time care for the baby that was seriously ill with pneumonia. When evening came and bed time approached, Margaret Ann asked mother when we were going back home. The new home was a hewed log one story house which had an old tumble-down chimney at the west end and a door in the south side, a window in the east end next the road and a second window in the north side. This last window was made into a doorway and the old chimney replaced by a good stone structure and a covered porch put along the south side. In this humble home the family lived seven and a half years and in the meantime, Mary Jane, Samuel, Sarah Rebecca, Martha Evaline, James Nixon, and Oliver were added to our number. James Nixon lived but three months. His was the first death in the family.

A few rods north of the house was a small stream which we called the "first run" and a little farther a second stream which we named the "far run". Both these emptied into a third stream which we called the "big run". This last stream was a source of great pleasure to us boys for here we found a swimming hole and a place to fish.

When father bought this second farm or "lower place" as we called it, it had been in the hands of renters for some years and as a result was not in good condition. The border of the big run was a thicket of wild plums, briars, elders and willows. A considerable part of what had once been cleared had been allowed to revert to nature again. One condition required of the renters was to make 200 rails per year and build them into fence. They made the rails and laid them up on the old fence rows. Uncle Nixon Oliver and Old Benny Simpson, a colored neighbor, put in a good many days helping to get the farm into shape for the plow. There were no idle hands about the place. When the writer was six years of age he was given a hoe and put into the cornfield with orders to "get busy and stay on the job." I stayed but did not work full time. The corn field that year was a ridge and the rows ran across the ridge. While father was on one side and I on the other I sat down until I heard the chains on Old Nell rattle. Then I jumped and speeded along the row just as though I had been busy every minute. Before William had reached his teens he could take the team and plow up to the "Upper place" and put in the whole day turning over the sod or harrowing in the crop. Nearly every year there was new ground to be put in order for the plow. Early spring meant building new fence or repairing old. Then came the planting of the spring crop. This was followed by cultivation of corn and sheep shearing. Then more corn. Then harvest, threshing, corn-cutting, fall-seeding, and corn husking. So the seasons went by filled with some form of useful work. When November came on we were ready to enter the winter school.

Usually we had a new teacher each term. Some of these were up-to-date and some were never meant to be teachers. Reading, Spelling, Geography and Arithmetic were the branches that made up the daily schedule. The way to learn a language is to write our own thoughts in that language. And yet we were never required to write a sentence. It was like learning to swim without water. None of our teachers taught us to address a letter for the mail, or write a business note.

After a few years the building of a granary became a necessity. A carpenter, James Dugan, was put on the job. When it was ready for the roof I punched the shingles and carried them up the ladder and Dugan nailed them in place. When the spring of 1860 came father thought the time had come to build a new house that would better fit the size of the growing family. For some time previous he had been gradually gathering lumber with this purpose in view. So Mr. William Cook, a professional carpenter, was put on the job. He began his work in April and finished the job by November. It was a substantial frame building of one story, 40 x 28 feet, four rooms, a hall and a porch on first floor and two rooms upstairs. This was a great improvement over the old home that had sheltered us through seven winters. We moved into the new house Thanksgiving time and were glad to make the change. Within five years from the time we moved into the new quarters two new members were added to the already large family. These were Eliza and James Ferguson, and two were taken from our number; these were Margaret Ann and James Ferguson. The little boy was taken suddenly, either by croup or by a grain of corn lodging in his windpipe. The Doctor was not able to decide.

How incessantly father and mother labored in the interest of their family. Mother spun the wool and flax and wove hundreds of yards of cloth from which she made our clothing until we were nearly grown. How many an evening did she spend knitting our socks and stockings. As many as eight or nine of us at school at one time. It took a good big basket to carry sufficient lunch for such a crowd. A covered spring wagon carried nine of us to church each Sabbath day. Our pew was well filled.

Soon after the new house was occupied the old house was removed and a barn put in its place as the old log stable had gone somewhat to decay. Into this barn there was stored each summer sufficient hay to feed the horses and cows through the winter. In the old house we had always used wood, but in the new coal became the standard fuel. This saved some of us a good amount of chopping. The introduction of mowing machine and reapers led to the hanging of the scythe, sickle and cradle up on the granary loft. In due time the older members of the family began to hear the call of duty that led them to labor elsewhere. William kept to the business of farming, the writer went to college, Davy went west and engaged for years in teaching. The older girls married and made homes for new families. And so the old home began to decrease in number. In the fall of 1886 Eliza, the last of the

children at home, was married, leaving father and mother with an empty house after 41 years of housekeeping.

After a year or two in her own home, Eliza and her husband came back to the old home to help care for the old folks and manage the farm. But the arrangement was of short duration. To mother's and father's great sorrow, Eliza was taken from them in 1891, leaving a little boy to mother's care. In their grief and disappointment they were comforted and supported by an abiding faith in the infinite wisdom of a loving Father, who had sustained them hitherto.

In 1895, January 2nd, the family and near relatives gathered at the old home to celebrate the Golden Wedding. Two or three of those who had been at the wedding were present. About twenty grandchildren were there. How many changes those fifty years had made! In 1897 the family met again at the old home to stand around the bedside of our mother as she quietly closed her life and entered into the rest to which she had been looking and waiting for some months. For 52 years she had given her time and strength unsparingly to make a home for her family. Through these years of strenuous toil, close fellowship with God had been the secret of her daily strength. When the call came she was glad to enter into the rest prepared for her.

Soon after mother's death the old home was sold and father went to William's to spend his remaining days. His had been a life of hard work. In my last conversation with him he said, "The end can't come too soon for me." In February, 1903, that time came and he was glad to enter his rest after a journey of more than eighty-four years. His remains were laid beside mother's in the Old Washington Cemetery. The funeral service was conducted by Doctor Weir of the Cambridge Church in which father had for years been an elder, and in which mother had in early life confessed Christ.

Father and mother lived at a time and under conditions that demanded sterling character and strenuous effort in order to make the kind of home that measured up to their ideal. We, their children and grandchildren, cannot fully estimate the self sacrifice and patience which entered into their daily life in order that we might be ready and worthy to take their place when their work was done.

Each morning and evening the family was gathered in the sitting room, a short portion of scripture read and a prayer offered. East Sabbath morning the family was conveyed to church and took part in the public worship. In due time every member of the family confessed Christ and by a consistent life proved the confession sincere. The prayers of our parents were answered and their soul's desires were satisfied and gladly they entered into the rest God has prepared for his people.

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