

Curtis family history:

Copies from scattered notes found among personal papers of Miss Lottie Relander, by Geraldine Relander in 1949. Notes made about 1900.

Atlas of Hendricks Co. Indiana. To which is added various general maps, History Statistics, Illustrations. J.H. Deers and Co. publishers, Lakeside building, Corner of Clark and Adams Streets, Chicago, 1878

Peter Curtis--Settled in Vanville (Indiana) in 1840; born in Garrard Co. Ky. Feb. 18, 1808; son of Peter, born in Virginia, 1763; served in Revolution five years, died May, 1835, and Susan Sanders, born in Guilford Court House, N.C. 1776 died October 1859 Married Dec. 25 ~~1825~~ 1827 to Sarah R Kurkindall, born in Garrard Co. Ky Sept. 18, 1811; children--Joseph L. born Nov. 10, 1826, died Jan. 3, 1851; Rachael (Mrs. D.D. Brush* and Almeda (Mrs. C.B. King) twins, Oct. 12, 1830; Jonathan P., June 6, 1834, died Nov. 12, 1873; Mrs. Elvina Stapp, Sept 8, 1836; Henry L. Oct. 6, 1838; Robert L. Feb. 25, 1841; died Sept. 8, 1836; ~~Henry L. Oct. 6, 1838~~ in Memphis, Tenn. in the government service, Jan. 27, 1863; Jeremiah D, Aug. 15, 1846; William W. May 27, 1848; Mrs. Mary Relander, Dec. 21, 1849. Every son was in the U.S. service during the rebellion.

War Record of Curtis Brothers.

Robert M. Curtis, enlisted in Co. A, 7th Neb. (Indiana) for three mos reenlisted in Co. X, h, 7th Reg for three years and went out again for 1 year or during remainder of the war in 148 Indiana Reg. as captain of Co. C.

Ambrose (Lockie) was in 4th Iowa Reg. died in service, Memphis, Tenn.

Jeremiah D (Dec) was in Co. A, 53rd Reg of Indiana, enlisted or enrolled on the 24th day of Feb. 1864 for 3 years or during the war. Was discharged July 21, 1865.

Henry L was with Jeremiah in Co. A, 53rd Ind.

William (Peeley) enlisted as a six months volunteer and then reenlisted.

Lottie Relander's notes: (My grandfather) emigrated to Ind. soon after his marriage. He drove through from Garrard Co. Ky to Crawfordsville Ind in a wagon bringing his young wife and little son, Joe.

My great-great grandfather Curtis was living in Va in the early 1700's How long the family had been in America I do not know. My great grandfather ~~and~~ Peter Curtis was born in Va the year 1763 Of his parents, boyhood and youth nothing has ~~been~~ come down to us. Peter, his son, my grandfather, doubtless could have told something of his father's boyhood but I as a child did not ask or think to ask ...

I do know from my grandfather that he served for five years in the Revolutionary War, that he was twice married his second wife my great grandmother was Susan Sanders of Guilford Court House, N.C. Her people were wealthy planters and were much opposed to her

marriage at the early age of 15 years, to Peter Curtis. Indeed I think it was a runaway match and that they emigrated to Ky soon after their marriage, and the change from a home in which negroes attended her every want to one of the rough Ky pioneer in which all the work must be done by her own hands must have subjected my great grandmother to many hardships and from what I have heard I think my great grandfather was an irascible, peppery old gentleman, none too kind to his own household. A large family grew up around them. My grandfather, Peter, was born Feb. 14, 1808.

The Curtis were as a rule a large, well built people. Most of them were light complexioned and inclined to corpulency in old age. My grandfather ~~was~~ as an old man was quite handsome and I have heard my grandmother say that at the time of their marriage he was one of the handsomest young men in Garrard Co. Ky.

My grandmother Curtis was the daughter of Richard Kirkendall, a Pa. Dutchman who emigrated to Ky from Pa when he was a young man. Here he married Betsy Reed who was born in Ky of Irish parents. Her mother Betsy Reed, lived to a great old age. My grandmother often spoke of her. She made her home with my grand~~parents~~ mother's father and mother living in a separate house in their yard. It seems that my great grandfather Kirkendall was a well-to-do farmer and had many of the comforts of life. His family consisted of four sons, John, Jake, Joe and James; daughters, Lizzie, Sarah, my grandmother, Rachel and Almedia. The sons were older than the daughters. The younger two daughters, R. and A, were several years younger than the older two, L. and S. Lizzie and Sarah being near the same age were constant companions. My grandmother married first. Lizzie married a short time after to Reuben Ross, the son of a well-to-do neighbor.

After a few years both sisters and their families decided to leave Ky. Mr. Ross held slaves and as he could not take them to free territory he moved to Mo and settled near the Platte River. The family held some communication with my grandfather's family until the breaking out of the Civil War, when the friendship for, and my grandfather's hostility to, the South broke off all correspondence which ~~has~~ never since been resumed.

My great Aunt Lizzie Ross died very suddenly a few years before the Civil War. She had assisted a negro woman with the family washing in the morning and had eaten a hearty dinner but died suddenly of heart disease in the afternoon.

After their father's second marriage, my grandmother's sister, Almedia made her home with Lizzie in Mo. where she later married a young planter, Moss by name. Rachel came to my grandmother at Crawfordville where she died in a few years, later unmarried. My grandmother's brother, Jacob, was a regular Baptist preacher and lived in Montgomery Co. Ind. He sympathized with the south in their struggle. Another brother, Joseph, lived in Ohio. My grandfather's own people, even those who remained in Ky. were anti-slavery as was also my grandmother's father who died during the Civil War.

At the time of my grandmother's marriage at 16, her wardrobe contained twenty dresses, three silk ones, two chintzes, and two calicoes. The others were flannels, linens and cottons of her own weaving.

..My grandparents were married in Tenn. They were a runaway couple Crossing the Ky line into Tenn they were married in the parlor of a tavern. My grandmother wore black silk. I have heard her say that the lady who assisted her to dress told her it was unlucky to be married in black.

My grandmother's married life was certainly for many years one of hardships. On comin to Ind. they spent the first winter in a small log house near Crawfordsville (Ind.) Here my grandmother and her little boy, Joe, were alone for a greater part of the time. Grandfather was working at his trade of a blacksmith in Crawfordsville. His winter her twin daughters, Rachel and Almedia, named for her younger sisters, were born.

The family removed in the spring to town. Here they lived for several years and other children, Johnthan (Sp.) (Colonel), Ambrose Whitlock, commonly called Lockie; Dora Luvria, Henry Lane, (named for Henry S. Lane, afterwards U.S. Sen. and Gov. of Indiana who was at that time living at my grandparents.

During their first years in Crawfordsville they prospered and accumulated quite a large property. My grandfather was a blacksmith at this time, doing a large business, employing three or four journeymen, but they met with reverses and lost much of their property. After this change in their circumstances they removed to Danville where they continued to reside the remainder of their lives.

My grandfather seems to have been successful in accumulating property up to a certain amount after which he lost the great part of what he had gotten together. This happened at three different times during his lifetime. They became prosperous after a few years residence in Hendricks County owning and residing on a well improved farm just in the outskirts of the town, but through losses occasioned by speculation in hogs the farm was given up and the family moved into town. There were now other children, Robert McGoun (Bob), Jeremiah Depew (D.C) William (Peeley), and Mary Elizabeth (Mollie) my mother.

During the next few years the family experienced some very hard times. My grandfather resumed his work in the blacksmith shop. My grandmother not only did all the housework, washing, ironing, sewing for their large family but wove hundreds of yds of carpets and jeans. She worked almost day and night, also did much dyeing for a woollen factory. She lost the sight of one eye. While they were yet on the farm their eldest son, Joseph, a fine young man, sickened of typhoid fever and died. This death was a great affliction to his parents, and it was for many a day they continued to grieve for him.

Almedia, one of their twin daughters, was married to George King from near Crawfordsville. Ind. A great wedding dinner was given the next day an infare dinner at Mr. King's parents in Montgomery Co. Mr. and Mrs. King resided on a farm in Montgomery Co. for several years and then immigrated to Iowa, settling near Panora where they still reside. They are the parents of nine children, all of whom are married and live in Iowa. Mrs. King made two visits to her parents going by way of Astoria of Panama and New York City, thence to Indiana.

A few years before the Civil War they were selected by the Co. commissioners to take charge of the County farm and care for the inmates of the co. home. Before going to the co. farm their eldest daughter a beautiful girl, became the wife of David Brush, a man of some means but a widower and somewhat older than herself. They lived for a few years in Montazuma in Western Ind. and during the early days of the gold excitement in Cal. emigrated to that state. They made their home at Cloverdale, Cal. where two children were born, Charles and Anna. Mr. Brush became a lawyer and real estate agent, also proprietor of vineyards.

If such could be the case my grandmother was even busier here than she had been before in her busy life and perhaps it is well that such was the case for the terrible Civil War began; all of her sons entered the army--the youngest Will was but 15 years old when he enlisted in the closing years of the war. Her mind was occupied largely with her duties and she had less time to grieve over her absent sons. Many are the incidents of sorrow and grief that I have heard her relate of those terrible days.

One son Lockie, who was well educated, had joined his sister, Mrs. King in Iowa when the war broke out and was engaged in teaching. He enlisted in an Iowa regiment and was mainly in the S. West at the siege of Vicksburg. He wrote regularly to his mother. He died of heart trouble in the hospital at Memphis, Tenn. His body was brought home during the war and buried with military honors.

(letter excepted)
Camp in rear of Vicksburg, May 8, 1863

Dear Mother: I take the present opportunity to inform you of my good health. Fighting is in a manner ceased here. For the past week there has not been any but sharp shooting and cannonading. We have been busy for some time past digging rifle pits. We had to dig of nights. We worked last night in 150 yards of their rifle pits. We were working on the plan that the French took Sebastopol. (page missing) I will show you. He came up to me says he I am Cap Ripe Davis of the 24th Miss. Says this is the 4th Iowa. Says he good god, I thought it was my own men. He said I cut a lock of hair from over his left ear. 's I have nothing of importance to write I will close. Hoping these lines will find you in good health I remain your son, Lock.

Camp Big Black Miss
Sept. 13, 1863

Dear mother: It is with pleasure that I embrace the pleasant opportunity to inform you of my good health. It has been some time since I received a letter from you. There is a great deal of sickness here at present. There is only one hospital and twenty for duty in our regt. We have to go on guard every other day. General Osterhaus has command of our division, he is the right kind of a man for us. We had a Division Drill yesterday in the big field. There has been some heavy sweating done out here you had better believe. I have not year from Ben or Dock since they left Vicksburg. Write and tell me where they are. I got a pass for 3 days to go to Vicksburg to see them but they were gone. Write and tell me if you have heard from Rachel and what part of California she is in. Hoping this may find all of you well I remain your son, Lock Curtis.

Henry was with Grant in the West the greater part of the time; Doc drove a mule team in Sherman's march to the sea; Colonel was in the East; Will went out as a six month's volunteer and marched and starved in Ky. for a while, he reenlisted and was sent East.

Robert was Captain of a Co and later a lieutenant colonel. He was a very successful soldier and liked Army life. He was shot three times and seriously wounded in the Battle of the Wilderness. He was carried off the burning battle field by some of his own men and nursed back to life health by two ladies in a private home in Washington. He reentered the army when he recovered sufficiently.

With so many sons enlisted and scattered in different commands, every item of war news was looked for eagerly. My grandfather would ride his horse into town, the county farm was almost two miles out, and became so terribly wrought up over news from the front he would walk home leaving his horse at the rack.

My grandmother possessed enough of the old time superstition to make her somewhat of a believer in dreams, forewarnings and tokens. She

had a premonition of her son Lockie's death, hearing him call her name quite distinctly three times on a day which she learned later was the day of his death. Her father was quite superstitious. He observed the old custom of telling the bees of a death in the family by rapping on the hive and repeating-----is dead.

During the war Luvira was married without her parents knowledge and consent to James Stapp of Indianapolis. At the time he was a shoemaker at work in Danville, having been discharged on account of poor health from the army. He became the mother of twelve children and lived in much poverty and unhappiness until recent years when they succeeded in having a pension granted to him in securing a small home. Of her 12 children three died in infancy and five sons died after reaching manhood.

After the war closed and the soldiers returned Doc and Will both married and settled down. Doc had a family of one son and nine daughters. He was killed in a fall from a stage while driving over the mts. His widow and unmarried daughters reside in Ukiah, Calif. Two daughters are married, the eldest to Ensign Hal Standley U.S.A. (Later Rear adm. Chief of Naval Operations, Ambassador to Moscow etc.) who rendered good service in the Philippines during the Spanish American War (he was a marine, only Marine to go up through ranks into Navy and become an Admiral and Rear Admiral) In 1925 when I--Click Melander was in Calif., he was Commander of Pacific Coast Fleet). Had son, Curtis Standley, who was executive officer of a battleship then. Lost track)

The next daughter, Nellie, was married to Mr. Johnson, an electrician. (later GE at Oakland)

Will Married a Cal. lady. They have no children. He died of heart disease near Redlands, Calif.

Robert married Alice Miller, daughter of Joseph Miller of Danville. He was for a while an officer in the Michigan City Prison, later employed in the prison of Leavenworth, Kan. and finally took up residence in Topeka where he has resided for many years. He has a son and a daughter. The daughter was born when the son was 21 years old.

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Col. was married after h s return from the army and w hile residing in Parke Co. had some difficulty with aman by whom he was afterwards shot.

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