

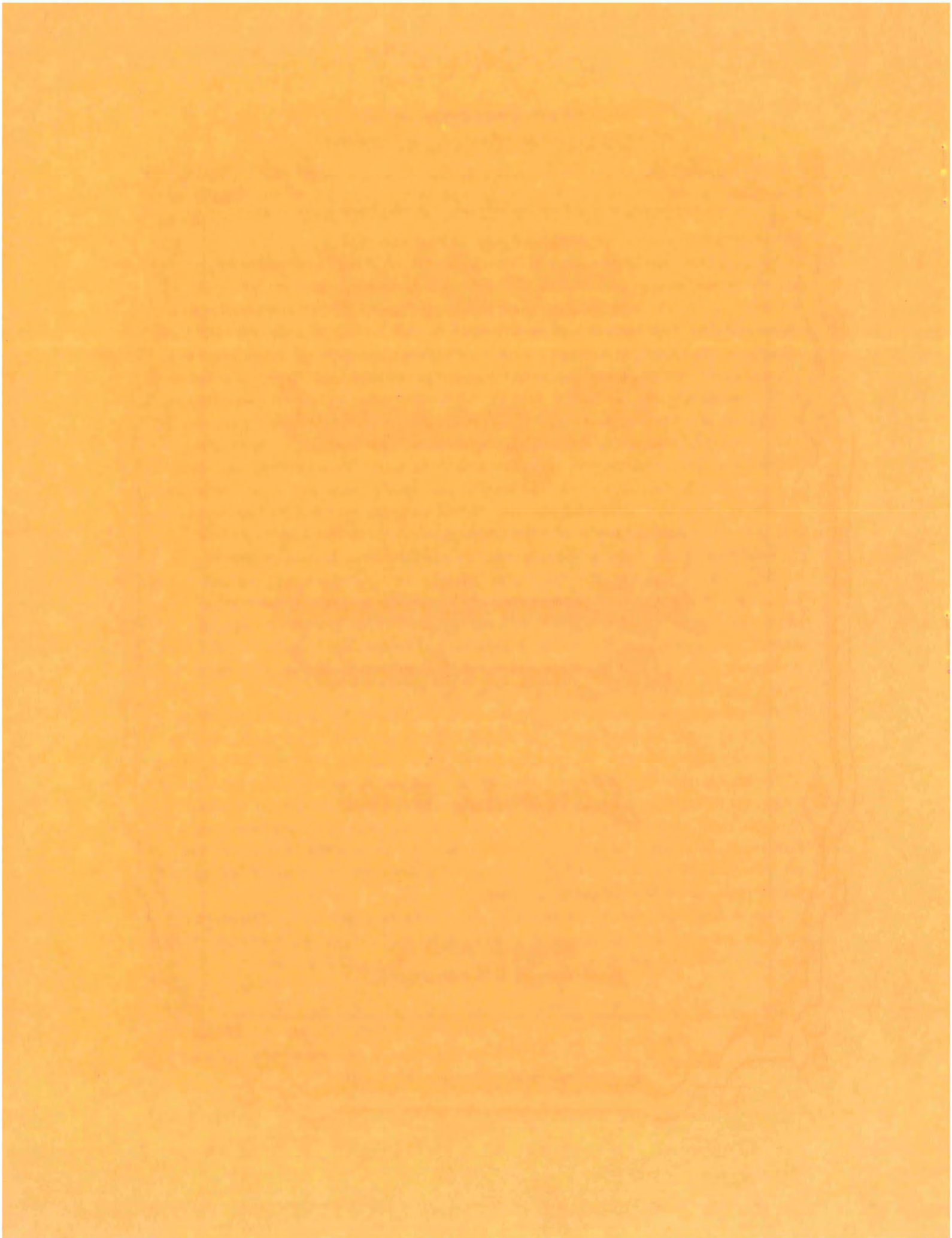


*Bethel
Pageant*

*Jefferson Township
 sesquicentennial*

June 21, 2003

*Narrations written by
June Campbell Grossman-Welch*



Preface

This booklet contains Narrations presented at the Jefferson Township Sesquicentennial Celebration held on Saturday, June 21, 2003. The Bethel Pageant was held at 1:30 p.m. at the Bethel Church on Bethel Ridge Road about three miles south of the Village of Eldersville.

Scripts were written using factual data taken from local histories, family genealogies, graveyard inscriptions, censuses, obituaries, and interviews with elders of the community who were familiar with families represented. The personalities included in this pageant were chosen very carefully, there being a large number of honest, respected, hard working individuals who were buried here from which to choose. Criteria used in this selection were: a) burial was in the Bethel Graveyard, b) were representative of a family that lived in the area in the early days of settlement, c) in their lifetime were a credit to Jefferson Township, d) enough data and human interest stories were available to make this writing possible.

Persons chosen to portray these "Personalities from the Past" were also carefully selected. Where possible, direct descendants of the personality, or some knowledgeable individual with close ties to the family or the homestead of the family were invited to participate. Because of the nature of the pageant, the following criteria were given great weight in the selection of the cast: a) possession of the ability to appear before an audience and carry out a performance without rehearsal; b) displayal consistently of a positive relationship to the township; c) inherently endowed with a selfless, dependable nature which would enable them to make the sacrifices necessary to participate.

The prompt, positive response from the cast has been overwhelming. In every instance, a great many personal difficulties had to be overcome to make this appearance. As can be noted from data on the next page, many of these participants traveled very great distances, sometimes with great financial sacrifice in order to participate. There is no way that a mere "Thank You" can suffice to express appreciation for their outstanding contribution to this historical affair. It is to be hoped that the personal satisfaction of taking part in this pageant will partially, at least, be some small reward for the effort extended.

The Sesquicentennial Committee wishes to express its gratitude, not only to the pageant participants, but also to the listening audience. Thank you for the effort put forth to be a part of this historical celebration.

**June Campbell Grossman - Welch
Pageant Director & Author of Narrations**

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George Sutherland

My name was George Sutherland. My father, John, was born about 1750 in Sutherlandshire, Scotland. When he was about twenty years old, in the early 1770s, there was a terrible siege of bad crops in Scotland and the government imported meal to feed the starving people. Tenant farmers could not pay their debts and life was very difficult. My father and his brother, Thomas, decided to try their luck in the New World, so they set sail in 1772. Thomas settled in New Jersey upon their arrival, but my father, John, made his home in Prince Georges County, Maryland, near Bladensburg. In May of 1775, he enlisted in Captain John Woods' Company of Col. Simpson's Regiment of Militia of Prince Georges County because Lord Dunsmore was plundering the inhabitants on the Bay Frontier of Maryland. He served six months in this capacity. When the Revolutionary War got well underway, he enlisted again and served three years, taking part in many important battles, including the Battle of Brandywine. After his term was up, he continued to live in Maryland until 1783, at which time he went to Strabane and then Chartiers Townships in Pennsylvania. By 1794, he was in Cross Creek in the part which later became the southern tip of Jefferson Township. It was here that I was born on the 29th of April in 1795.

My mother was Susanna Norris, daughter of Jacob Norris, who came from Maryland to Chartiers Township in 1773. He died there in 1799. I am not sure when my parents got married. People in those days spoke little about personal matters. I suppose it was because life was so difficult they tried to forget the hardships. What I DO know is that my older brother, John William, was born in the early 1780s before they left Maryland, and my brother, Vachel, was born in 1793, just two years before my birth. Two more siblings followed me, namely, my sister, Christiana, who later married David Pogue, and my baby brother, Alexander. If I had older siblings, they must have been grown before my parents came to this area and I have no recollection of them.

Alexander married Harriet, the daughter of Samuel Leeper, who was an early Jefferson Township settler. Eventually, all three of these brothers crossed the Ohio River to make new homes for themselves. But I was close to my parents and remained near home. I married Margaret Magee and we had two sons and three daughters by 1839 when I became quite ill. I knew something was very wrong and so I quickly made my will before I passed away at the age of 44. Margaret was three months pregnant at the time and our eldest child was but 12 years old. Life was very hard for her, but my aged father moved in with her to help with the farm, and together they somehow managed. But my father was well into his nineties and the day after New Years in 1842, he also left earth.

My life was relatively short but it was a good life. I was never too far from home, but I loved this area and have no regrets. The little cabin where Margaret and I raised our family stood not far from what is known today as the Reese property on Bethel Ridge Extension, very near the Brooke County Line. My father's home had stood near where Turney School was built in the early 1900s. My eldest son, John Walker Sutherland, lived out his life there, having built a large frame house to accommodate his very large family.



My other son, William Magee Sutherland, moved west after losing two little ones to the plague of 1863. Our four daughters all married and raised families so that my heirs today are quite numerous. But the important thing is that nearly all of them did their level best to walk the straight and narrow. If you who are here to day, share a blood line with me, I hope you know that you can be justly proud of the name of Sutherland. It was brought here over 230 years ago by my father, John Sutherland, as his tombstone in old Cross Creek Cemetery refers to him : a brave old soldier of the Revolution.



John Walker Sutherland, eldest son of George, with first wife, Eleanor Virtue and with second wife, Cynthia Hanlin.

William Steen

My name was William Steen. I was born in the cold of February in the year 1801 on my father's Pleasant Hills tract of land in what is today known as Scott Hollow Road, Jefferson Township. I was my parents' ninth child and was born in the loft above the springhouse where the family lived at the time.



You can imagine how crowded it was with all eight of the older children still at home between the ages of three and seventeen. But still, that little loft was a big improvement over the dark, damp, fort built of field stones with no windows where they had lived in Brooke County before coming to Eldersville. Five of my older siblings had been born in that fort which had holes in the sides for shooting at the Indians when they would attack.

My father, James Steen, had been born in Ireland and had later served in the army the entire length of the Revolutionary War after coming to America. He was with General Washington when he crossed the Delaware. He married my mother, Margaret Reynolds, somewhere near Philadelphia, and their first three children were born there. They then crossed the mountains to Brooke County, Virginia, with two horses – my mother on one horse with the baby on her lap and the two older children in make-shift saddle bags, one on each side of her saddle, and on a second horse, led by my father, were all of their earthly possessions. My father walked the entire distance, carrying his rifle and ax. Many times he had to protect his family from wild beasts, and their only food was what he was able to secure through hunting.

From the time they left Philadelphia until about 1800 when they moved to Scott Hollow Road, my mother lived in constant fear. When I was about 3 years old, the last of my siblings was born. And intermingled with all of the hardships of life in those days, my sister, Margaret, died as a young woman, making the first break in the family circle. But somehow, the rest of us survived and went on with our lives.

In the mid 1820s, I met and married Frances Richardson. I brought my bride to the little springhouse loft where we lived with the rest of my family. By this time, some of my older siblings had married and moved out, but life was still totally without privacy. Shortly after 1830, when my parents were both dead, I built a house just a short distance from the springhouse. By 1835, I was able to move my wife and four children into this new home. For the first time ever, we had space in which to move and time to ourselves. We thought we were in heaven.

Log end of old Steen house



Built by William Steen

But in 1836 and 37, an epidemic of scarlet fever swept through the countryside. As a result, we lost our two oldest daughters, aged 5 and 9, to this dread disease. What I did not know was, that the hole in my heart at the loss of our first two babies, was only the beginning of sorrows. Twenty-four years later, in 1861, another plague struck home. On the 27th of July, my beloved wife died at the age of 59. And the very next day, our oldest son, Reynolds, followed her to the grave at the age of 31. I thought it was the end of the world.

With my wife and three eldest children dead, I was left with my son, William, and three daughters, Kit, Susanna, and Elizabeth. I tried to focus all of my thoughts on making their lives better than my own had been. Finally things began to look up. All three girls married and seemed very happy. I was fond of my sons-in-law and proud that my daughters had chosen so wisely. They were bright, likeable young men with promising futures, each of them having come from good families of the area. But a higher power must have had other plans.

Elizabeth, who had married Byron Sanders, died some time after the birth of her daughter, Annie. And Kit, who had married Campbell Hunter, died at the birth of her son. Susanna, who married John Franklin Scott, gave me six grandchildren, five of whom reached adulthood. Four of those five were teachers in the local schools, Elza being principal for years of the Eldersville Normal School, and one of the great historians of his time. His older brother was a civil engineer and surveyor. But none of Susanna's children left heirs. And when my son, William, married, his only child was a daughter. Thus from my seven children, I had but Elizabeth's daughter, Annie, and William's daughter, Etta, to carry the Steen bloodline. And of course, these two children being girls, there was none in the next generation to carry the Steen name.

But from my standpoint of perspective, here on the other side, I would say to you who pass by my grave here at Bethel today: "Think carefully!" Life usually does not fulfill ALL of our dreams. But as a wise man once said: "A man will be just about as happy as he makes up his mind to be".

Margaret Ann Metz Klein

My name was Margaret Ann Metz Klein. I was born in 1800 in the days when this land in Jefferson Township was very sparsely populated. When I was about 19 years old, I married John Freidrick Klein, an immigrant form Marburg, Germany, who had landed at the port of Philadelphia on the fourth of November in 1816.

John was 22 years of age when he came to this country and had been trained in Germany to be a butcher.

A few years after our marriage and after we had become the parents of about five children, John took us to what is today the very southernmost tip of Jefferson Township in Washington County. There, on the bottomland, near the stream of Cross Creek, he built a log house where the rest of our ten children were born and raised. This house was on the site of an old log cabin which, as early as 1811, had been used as a subscription school for children of the area whose parents could afford to help pay a teacher.



The site of this old schoolhouse, which is no longer standing, is believed by old timers of the area to be the location of the John Frederick Klein Log House.

Only three of our children were girls. Our eldest daughter, Louisa Susanna, married George Veasy and had a child who was born in 1860. But the following year, George died at the age of 41, leaving Louisa a widow with an infant son. She brought her baby back home and lived with us until she could cope with this great loss.

As our seven little boys came along, we set a precedent in naming them. We named each one John, after his father. Of course we gave them each a different middle name by which they were called. Thus we ended up with: John Christopher, John Adam, John Heinrich, John Rinehart, John Frederick, John Wilhelm, and John Alexander. I jokingly told the neighbors it was merely a matter of convenience.

When they were growing up and working on the farm with their father, at dinner time, I simply went to the door and called, "John! Dinner is ready". And everyone dropped his hoe and came to eat.

Our older sons were trained to be stone masons. Our second son, Adam, was a very good mason. He married Eliza Perrine, a grand daughter of Peter Perrine who was a Revolutionary soldier and is buried here at Bethel. They had three children, but Adam died in 1851 at the age of 24. Eliza took her little ones and moved back with her parents to the big house which is still standing today in Cedar Grove. Her son, Isaac Perrine Klein, later became one of Wellsburg, West Virginia's outstanding citizens. He was a self educated man and worked as an agent for the railroad. My son, Rinehart, who married Nancy Richardson from Eldersville, was a railroad man.

Wilhelm, our sixth son, married Harriett Stewart. Their greatest sorrow in life was that they had no children. But it was William, as we called him, and Harriett who cared for us in our old age. He built the house on the hilltop near Penobscot which was always known as the Klein house of Jefferson Township, and moved us in with them to better care for us.



William Klein House near Penobscot

William served in the Union Army during the Civil War, as did Rinehart. Some of our other sons also served. We were worried to death about all of them, but they came back home safe and sound.

In the heart of springtime in 1870, John died at the age of 76. We buried him here at Bethel which was always home to us. I lived fourteen more years, but they were lonely ones. Life is never the same after ones mate is gone. But I was grateful for the fifty years we had together and for the children we were given.

Although the Klein name is gone from Jefferson Township, our descendants are many. They are a credit to their ancestor forefather, John Freidrick Klein – a lone immigrant boy from Germany, who decided back in 1816 to seek a better life in a strange and far off land.

Hugh Patterson

My name was Hugh Patterson. I was born in 1807 in a two-story log house on my father's farm just off what is known today as Cole School Road in Jefferson Township. My parents were James and Sarah Givens Patterson. My father, James, and his brother, John, along with three sisters, came to America from Ireland. For some time, they lived near Philadelphia where the brothers worked at flailing wheat for 33 1/3 cents per day. Later, they moved here and purchased from Richard Wells a farm which in later years was known as the Patterson place.



My father's brother, John, also lived in the log house, at least for a time. In fact, they never lived very far apart. Both were active in the establishment and perpetuation of this Bethel Methodist Church all of their lives. And when my father died at the age of 92, his brother died two months later at the age of 87.

I was the sixth of my parents' seven children. I never married, but remained on the home farm, caring for my elderly parents until their deaths at advanced ages. At one point during these years, I built a new frame dwelling which stands today. The old log house stood for at least 150 years but began to deteriorate. A later owner eventually was forced to take it down.

Shortly after the death of my father, I moved to Eldersville, where, in company with William Wilson, I carried on a thriving mercantile business. This operation was conducted in the building which later residents knew as "Gourley and Boles Store". In 1867, I sold the business to my nephews, John and Henry C. Cooper.

I was very fortunate in life. I was a well built man, nearly six feet in height, and was held in the highest regard by those who knew me. I served as a school director and as treasurer of the Jefferson Township School Board. I was an anti-slavery

advocate and a staunch Methodist by faith. I was petitioned by my neighbors to become Justice of the Peace and County Commissioner, both of which I declined. Beginning in 1842, I served a number of terms as Post Master at Eldersville and for many years was class leader of the church.

During my 15 year engagement in the store business, I built the large house on the hilltop behind the store.



Hugh Patterson Home in Eldersville

It is generally known today as the George Cunningham house or the Bane home. As years went by, I purchased other pieces of property in the village, and people said I was a well-to-do gentleman. They did not seem to realize it was all the result of a lifetime of hard work and thrift.

When my father was still living, I was suddenly afflicted with a great burden. My sister, Elizabeth, who had married Erasmus Cooper, died leaving four little boys. We Pattersons united to raise these children, farming them out among members of the family. It was to two of these boys when they grew up, John and Henry Cooper, that I sold my entire operation in Eldersville in May of 1867. They formed a partnership, and the Cooper brothers became one of the best known business operating firms in the western part of Washington County. The store was well filled with various articles needed in a farming community and their patrons were scattered throughout the entire county as well as in neighboring West Virginia.

Most Eldersville residents of today have never heard the names of Hugh Patterson or Henry Cooper. To many, even Gourley and Boles Store, which grew out of the Patterson and Cooper businesses, only exists on old postcards lying face down in the attic dust. Like most things earthly, the business, the building that housed it, the faithful patrons, and the hard work and planning which made it a success, have all passed away. But once upon a time, over 200 years ago, a man named James Patterson had a dream of a better life. He came to Jefferson Township off Cole School Road before 1800 to live in a small log house of his very own with the hope of making his dreams come true. He was my father. And he came to stay.

Davis Buxton

My name was Davis Buxton. I was born the 28th of April in 1810, the son of Jacob Buxton, Jr. and his second wife, Elizabeth Davis. My father had been married before to Mary Sparks, by whom he had six children. He was 34 years old when he married my mother who was but 19 years of age. My mother gave birth to 14 children, including a set of twins – of which I was one. My twin sister, Avis, died shortly after birth.

My grandfather, Jacob Buxton, Sr., was an early settler in Cross Creek Township. My grandmother, Hannah Young Buxton, was well known in the area because of her expertise in healing. She was known far and wide as “The Herb Lady”. At one point in time, she was able to prescribe an herbal remedy for an early congressman who had been to many well-known physicians of the nation, but without success. He suffered terribly and they feared for his life. But Grandma knew exactly what to do. The man was so thrilled with the results, that he spread the news of her medical knowledge wherever he went. Although travel back then was very difficult, it is amazing how many people came to her for healing.

My father, Jacob, Jr., operated a grist mill and sawmill on the stream of Cross Creek just northwest of present-day Avella. The mill was so close to the state line that the mill race was in Virginia.



Site of the Buxton Mill on Cross Creek

One day in 1836, my mother was helping him at the mill where he was pulling sacks of grain up to the top floor of the mill, which was quite high above the ground floor. As he worked, somehow he became entangled in the ropes and fell to the ground from that top floor and lay dead at my mother's feet. The fall had broken his neck. My mother never got over this tragedy. The mill was later sold to a nearby family and was thereafter known as the Maguire Mill.

In the meantime, in 1832, I had married Hannah Criss of the Hanlin Station Criss family. We were a farming couple in the southwestern corner of Jefferson Township. We worked hard and, as was often true in those days, we had many sorrows in our 49 years of married life.

In the year 1837, a terrible epidemic swept through the entire area, taking the lives of people in what seemed to be an indiscriminate pattern. The tombstones in the graveyards of Bethel, Eldersville, Cross Creek, and even across the line in Brooke County, will testify to the terrible toll this disease took in the community. Most were children. Among these were two of our own who died just three months apart at the ages of 1 and 3 years. The following year, just before Christmas, our little Emaline, just a year old, went to join her two little sisters. But our troubles were not quite over because 13 years later our baby Lewis died as a two-year old. Their four little graves are near ours here in the old graveyard at Bethel Church.

Although we never forgot their little faces, we concentrated on raising our remaining 3 sons and 4 daughters. My beloved Hannah died in 1881 at the age of 68. It was almost nine years later that I followed her to the great beyond.

Fifteen years after my death, there were 7 families bearing the name of Buxton in southwestern Jefferson Township. Today, there are none. But here at Bethel, on these weather-beaten gravestones, the name of Buxton still exists. These faded inscriptions are but a silent reminder of a long ago, bygone day.



Grinding Stones from the Buxton Mill on Cross Creek, Brooke Co., WV

Tamar Miller Melvin

My name was Tamar Miller Melvin. I was born in 1774 and at the age of 21, on the last day of the year 1795, I married Samuel Melvin in Cecil County, Maryland. Samuel had been born in Ireland in 1772, and was brought to America by his parents as a small child. His brother, William Melvin, had also made the long ocean voyage as a mere youngster with their parents.

After Samuel and I married, we remained in Maryland until 1803, when we crossed the mountains with our four small children. I have purposely put that terrible ordeal out of my mind, so I cannot, in all honesty, tell you about it. I am sure you can visualize such a journey with four children under the age of six, one of them a newborn. The territory through which we passed was infested with wild beasts and snakes and the road itself was merely a rutted, foot path, knee deep with mud. After what seemed like an eternity, we arrived at what is today Bethel Ridge Road in Jefferson Township. There, we were taken in by the most compassionate, caring people God ever created – the family of Abraham Barbour, and his wife, Jane Moore Barbour. By 1810, our children totaled 7 while the Barbours had 4 or 5. This made their small log cabin a little crowded. But by that time, another little log house had been built and at least we had a place of our own.

Samuel was a cooper by trade and he had built a small shop out of logs in which to ply his trade so that we might be able to survive. Of course, our dream was to own land of our own, and eventually we did this. We bought land on what became known as Irish Ridge. Our log house there was about as crude as any place you can imagine, but we were happy and there it was that our last two children were born.



When my baby, Lydia, was five years of age, I felt that after spending the last 24 years of my life bearing and raising children, I could perhaps now enjoy a little time to myself. But the Great Being must have had other plans. In that year of 1821, a disease of epidemic proportion struck the neighborhood. I became very ill and on October 13th, I passed to another world. Our eldest son, John, who had also come down with this same illness, died before the close of that same day, at the age of 22. Samuel brought us to Bethel Church and had a coffin made that would hold both of our bodies. Thus, we are buried in the same grave, here on this sacred hilltop.

Samuel was totally devastated at this double loss. But three years later, when his little namesake, Samuel, Jr., died at the age of twelve, it was just too much for him. He seemed to lose the will to live. In March of 1826, barely past the age of fifty, Samuel came here to join us.

Although this sounds like a very sad tale, all was not lost. My remaining children, for the most part, lived out their lives in peace and harmony. And down the line of my descendants, the Melvin tenacity prevailed. Despite obstacles and sorrows which befall all families, they pulled themselves up by their boot straps and went on with living. Many of them were excellent singers, orators, and teachers in their time on earth. And their wonderful Irish sense of humor made life worth living. I believe it was a lucky day for me, that thirty-first of December in 1795, when I stood beside young Samuel Melvin and said "I do".

*William Melvin Log Home
Irish Ridge
Jefferson Township*



Jacob Boles

My name was Jacob Boles. I was born the eighteenth of December in 1804 on the old Boles homestead near Eldersville, known today as Orchard Hills. My father was Cornelius Boles, an Irish immigrant who became one of the first blacksmiths in Jefferson Township. My mother was Nancy Buxton.

When my mother was just a little girl, the family was coming down the Ohio River bound for Kentucky when their boat capsized near Georgetown and they lost all of their possessions. But her father was a resourceful person and eventually patented the land on which I was born. When my parents married, he gave them this property and it became the Boles Homestead.

I was the fifth of their twelve children, and their second son. My father, Cornelius Boles, died when he was 53 years old, just 3 days after my mother had given birth to her twelfth child. I was 17 years old at the time.

As a young man, I married Rachel Cunningham, daughter of another Irish immigrant, John Cunningham. We lived first near my mother on the old Boles homestead, and then moved on the hill above what is now the Kidds Mill area of Jefferson Township. This became our home for the rest of our lives and it was here that we raised our family.

Our first little girl died at the age of two. Our hearts were broken as we took her body to the graveyard at Bethel Church where we were members. But our next two little girls grew up and married well, living happy lives for the most part. Their biggest sorrow was when Susanna's only son, Francis Melvin, was killed on the railroad near Hanlin, leaving a wife and six little ones.

Our last four children were sons. John, the eldest, established a Boles Homestead of his own near the old McCarrell farm below Bethel Ridge. Three of his children were well known in the Eldersville area. His son, John, helped operate the Boles Store on the corner in Eldersville for many years.



Our second son, James, never left the farm. He married but had no children. Our 3rd son, Francis, died at the age of 19 – a loss very hard for us to bear. And our baby, Parkinson Boles, moved just across the state line behind our farm to the old Murchland property where he lived out his life.

Having had seven children, Rachel and I thought the Boles name in the township would be secure for generations to come. But it was not to be.

When nearly the age of 90, on October 23 in 1893, I died on my farm. What I did not know was that my only great grandson with the Boles name who stayed in the area, Clarence Boles, had but one child – a daughter. So the Boles name is gone from Jefferson Township where once it was so prevalent. And at the death of my son, James, high above Kidds Mill my beautiful farm was sold to the Lloyd and Jackson families who later sold it for strip mining.

Today it is impossible even to find the spot where we lived for 60 years.

You who look at my headstone here at Bethel today will forget my name and life story in a few days. But if you will, please remember this one thing: nothing earthly lasts.



**On the left is Jacob's son, Parkinson Boles & Wife.
On the right is Jacob's grandson, John Boles & Wife.**

Alexander Lawther

My name was Alexander Lawther. I was born the 13th of July in 1808, in Brooke County, VA, on the farm of my grandmother's brother, Robert Murchland. My parents, James and Jeannette Shaw Lawther, had been married in County Antrim, Ireland, in 1790, and set sail for America on their wedding day. My mother was 17 years old at the time and never saw her parents or family again.

My grandfather, Alexander Lawther, was one of the many Murchlands who came to America on the same ship with my parents. He bought a farm in what is now Jefferson Township, Washington County, Pennsylvania, and built a log cabin where he, my grandmother, and some of their children lived out their lives. My parents, being newlyweds, lived for a few years in Brooke County, VA, on the farm of my Great Uncle Robert Murchland. My oldest sister was born in Wells Fort in June of 1791 during an Indian raid. Life was not easy.

After the deaths of my Lawther grandparents, my father decided to move to the log cabin in Jefferson Township with his unmarried siblings who must have been very alone in this new world after their parents died. But it certainly wasn't lonely after we moved in that little log cabin with our whole family. By 1810, there were 13 of us living in that tiny house. But we lived through it and learned to care for each other.

Just two days before Christmas in 1821, tragedy struck. My father died at the age of 51, leaving my mother with five children still at home – among them, my baby brother aged six and my eleven year old sister Catherine, who had been born mentally retarded. The next twenty years were not easy ones.

By 1844, I had fallen in love with a neighbor girl, Nancy Smith, and married her. I immediately set about to build a new house.

*Alexander Lawther Homestead
near State Line & Kidds Mill Rds.
Jefferson Township*



By 1850, Nancy and I and our first three children were living in the new dwelling while my mother, youngest brother, and two unmarried sisters continued to live in the old log cabin. By 1860, my youngest brother struck out on his own, and my mother had died. My sister, Jane, still cared for Catherine as they continued to live in that first little home, but before 1870, Nancy and I moved them in with us and the log cabin was abandoned forever.

In 1863, when a dread disease passed through the country, we lost our little Alexander. And in 1870, our beautiful daughter, Mary Jane, died at the age of 22. Life was never the same again. By 1877, both of my sisters were gone and the following year, I joined them in the great beyond. Our son, John, and daughter, Nancy, soon married, leaving only Robert at home with my wife for company. In 1893, in her eightieth year, my beloved Nancy died, and the old Lawther homestead became a ghost house.

Neither of our sons had ever shown any inclination at farming or preserving the old home property. So the house sat vacant after Nancy's death until a man named Joseph Burris and his wife moved in as sharecroppers. Here, several of their children were born, and although they did not purchase the place, it became the Burris home for a number of years. Their daughter, Mary, was born in that old house of mine at about the turn of the century, and when she grew up and married James McFarland, in 1923 they bought the old Lawther homestead and made it theirs. In that house I had built and loved so much, their three daughters were born and raised. It became a place of love and life again with new faces and new names. But after more than 213 years since my grandfather made it his own, it is still often referred to by the old timers of Jefferson Township as the old Lawther Homestead. After the coal strippers did their thing, neither the house nor the land is there. Only in a faded photograph, and in the memories of the Burris descendants does the old house, with the rambling roses out by the old fence, still stand.

*Alexander Lawthers Homestead
State Line Road
Jefferson Township*



Nancy Miller Elliott

My name was Nancy Miller Elliott. I was born in 1764, in County Donegal, Ireland. In 1792, with a number of our acquaintances and relatives, we set sail for America and what we hoped would be a better life. Among these who came with us were my brother, George Miller, my half-brother, Hugh Miller, and my two sisters, Betsy and Peggy Miller.

Three years later, by 1795, my brother, George Miller, had bought land in what is now Jefferson Township. This property today is known as Bancroft Farm.



**George Miller Log House
On Bancroft Farm**

My husband, John Elliott, and I along with our growing family, settled on what is now known as Bethel Ridge, not far from my brother, George. A few years later, Stephen Perrine built a stone house not far from where we lived. These properties later became known as the Anton Resnik and Frank Pastor farms.

Although my Miller family were of the Presbyterian faith, my husband, John Elliott, was instrumental in the building of the first Methodist Episcopal Church which stood toward the lower side of the graveyard, just a little west of this present brick building. Two of our sons were very active in that church, George being a class leader, and John, a lay speaker. George was also one of the first undertakers of the area and an excellent coffin maker. Our children married into the families of the Bethel area and lived their early lives not far from our home.

Life in those days was not easy and I died in my early sixties and was buried here in the cemetery near the church. Just two weeks later, our beautiful daughter, Nancy, died at the age of 20 and was buried beside me. Four days after her passing, Rebecca, just nineteen years old also died. She was the young wife of my son, George. Epidemics of disease were not uncommon in those days and often went through an area, striking young and old with their deadly venom. Only John's strong faith kept him going during those dark days of 1828.

John lived seven years after that awful siege of grief. But as John Scott, a neighbor boy of ours who later became a Methodist minister, once wrote about my husband, "He was a small man –a devoted and enthusiastic Christian, consistent in life – an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile."

Some years after the death of his bride, my son, George, remarried – this time, to Tamar Melvin, daughter of dear friends of ours. They had a wonderful family. But in 1836, when an epidemic of huge proportions struck the area, their little Clarke Elliott died at the age of two and was followed the next year by Samuel, aged 5. Life for them was never the same again.

Our son, John, Jr., was also blessed with children. His daughter, Hannah, married Peter Perrine and Sarah wed Robert Stewart – both from very good families of Jefferson Township. But in 1850, tragedy struck this family also. Their little 2 year old Mary died suddenly and soon after, little John Elliott the Third, died at age seven.

Not long after this last episode of death and grief, George and John took their wives and families and moved to Davis County, Iowa, - perhaps to try to relieve the pain in their hearts from the loss of their children. Some of their older daughters had already married into families of the Bethel area and of course, they remained here with their husbands. Some of their descendants are still in the greater Bethel area today. But the name, Elliott, left Jefferson Township when our sons left for that new home in the West. About the only place the Elliott name can be found today is right here on these tombstones of ours in the old graveyard on Bethel Ridge. Isn't it strange, as we view things from the perspective of a long period of time, that this place of our final repose is thousands of miles from where we were born in old Ireland. Yet it is not more than a stone's throw from where John and I settled down to live our lives, over 200 years ago from this present time of 2003!



Old Bethel Graveyard, showing the white frame church built in 1878. Elliott graves on lower left side. Note old church foundation in forefront.

John H. Murchland

My name was John H. Murchland, and I was the second of my parents' ten children. My father, Robert Murchland, had been born in Killyleigh, County Down, Ireland, and had come to America at eight years of age with his parents, six siblings, and a large number of other Murchland relatives, including his eighty year old grandmother. After a journey of seven weeks on the ocean, they arrived in Baltimore, Maryland, where they rested three months. My Great Uncle Robert Murchland had already been in this country for 18 years, and had sent for the whole family to come. He brought a large train of pack horses and took them across the Allegheny Mountains to his home in what was to become Brooke County, Virginia.

You must remember that it had been 18 years since Robert had seen his mother, and I have heard so many tales of that wonderful reunion when she first laid eyes on him in that eventful year of 1790. But the long ocean voyage must have taken its toll, for I believe that her grave was the first in the little plot of land on Great Uncle Robert's farm that he set aside as a burial ground. He, himself, lived less than seven years after he achieved his goal of bringing the Murchlands to America. He died on St. Patrick's Day in 1797 and his will was the first to be registered in the newly formed Brooke County, Virginia. In that will, he bequeathed half of his property to my father, Robert, and half to my father's brother, James. It was on my father's half of that original Murchland land that I was born on the 26th day of May in the year 1815.

In March of 1842, at the age 27, I married Sarah Jane Dever from across the state line in Pennsylvania. We lived our lives out just across that state line in Jefferson Township on a farm near my cousin, Alexander Lawther, which was not too far from Kidds Mill. The house we lived in was a large, two-story affair made of small field stones.

*John H. Murchland Stone House
North of Kidds Mill-near brooke Co line
Jefferson Township*



In that house, Sarah and I became the parents of 7 daughters and 2 sons. It was there that Sarah died in 1862 at the age of 42. And there it was that I lost my two littlest daughters at the ages of 2 and 11 in the years that followed Sarah's passing. I buried them beside her, here on the hilltop at Bethel Church. I raised the rest of them to adulthood with the help of the older ones.

Our first born, Robert, helped a lot after his mother's death, but he had somewhat of a wanderlust about him. And eventually, when the others began to make lives of their own, he moved to Iowa where he raised his children. For me, it was like a death in the family when he left. My other son, John H., Jr., stayed close to home all of his life. His daughter, Lillian Murchland, became a prominent teacher in the Jefferson Township Schools, and served a number of years as an assistant instructor at the Eldersville Normal School. John's son, Floyd, never married. So that was the end of the Murchland name from my line in the area.

Two of my daughters did not marry, but the other three did. Lydia married her first cousin, George Chalmers Miller, but she died at the age of 24. Her little daughter, Jessie, died at the age of 8 on Bancroft Farm as a result of tuberculosis. Thus, I lived to bury three of my daughters. Believe me, it is a loss from which one does not recover. My oldest daughter, Caroline, married John Cooper from Eldersville. They had six daughters, and two grandsons: Lorin Brown from McDonald, and Sam Campbell from Avella. But neither of these had children. So my line through Caroline came to an end. My last daughter, Martha Ann, married W.S. Moore from West Middletown. Two of her daughters, Artie and Monty, never married. Some of you will remember that in the terrible tornado of 1944 which passed through Independence Township, Monty was blown out the upstairs window of their home and killed. The home was totally demolished in that storm.



Remains of the Moore home after the Tornado

Martha's only son was killed as a child in an accident with a horse. So except for the three daughters of her daughter, Lydia, my entire blood line came to an end after the deaths of my grandchildren. The only exception was the son of my Robert who went to Iowa. And I did not live to see if his son, John, ever had a child.

Being the parents of nine children does not guarantee a line of descendants. But since I have crossed to this other land, I am aware that it really does not matter anyway. The only thing that matters in the end is what kind of a person we were when we were here.

David Davis

My name was David Davis. I was born in 1772, the son of David Davis, Sr. and was raised in what is today the southwestern corner of Jefferson Township. In 1786, a relative of my father, Cornelius Davis, applied for a patent on 234 acres of wilderness. Even though it was covered with virgin timber, he was wise enough to see that someday it could become a gently rolling tract of arable land, well watered and wooded. He named it "Big Spring" in gratitude for its plentiful reservoirs of clear spring water which never ran dry.

The 1800 United States Census records show that as a young man in my twenties, I lived on that farm with my wife, Elizabeth, and one small son and one small daughter. Twenty years later, our family had grown to 6 sons and 3 daughters. Although we had to work very hard and had no conveniences, life was basically good.

But life can take some unexpected twists. After my fiftieth birthday, not long before Christmas in 1822, I passed from earth to a better world. Elizabeth was left alone with our nine children, several of whom were still quite small. Of course, she had the farm and some of the boys were big enough to make a living from it. But the house was a log dwelling with absolutely nothing to make life easy, and now her helpmate was gone.

My wife and children took my body to the new graveyard at Bethel Church which stood not far from our home. Mine was one of the first burials there.

Somehow, with the help of the children, Elizabeth survived to raise the little ones to adulthood. One of our sons, Elijah, built an addition to the old log house. When he married, he moved his bride to the old farm and continued to live at Big Spring to help ease the burdens on his mother.



The picture on the left shows the area believed to be the side yard of where the first Davis log cabin stood. On the right, are some of the foundation stones of what is believed to be the house that Elijah, David's eldest son, built. After Charles Scott bought the property, he constructed another section adjacent to Elijah's house, and eventually removed the old part which Elijah had built.

In 1837, Elizabeth felt that the children were sufficiently grown that they could now fend for themselves. Many had married already and the farm work was far too much for Elizabeth. She knew that her neighbor, Charles Scott, was a good man and perhaps would be interested in buying our farm. His father had died and he had left their farm divided between his two sons. When she approached Charles, he was very interested and together his family came up with the money. My family left the area and Charles Scott and his wife, Margaret Cassidy Scott, moved to Big Spring. Here it was that the rest of their children - ten sons and two daughters- were born and raised. It was not long until the farm was known as the old Scott property. And as my old neighbors passed away, the name of David Davis was soon forgotten.



Above is a rear view of the house, still standing, but vacant, on the David Davis property. The left part of this house was built by Charles Scott, with the far right addition added by the Baker family who owned it in the early 1900s. It was on the extreme left of this house, but attached to it, that Elijah Davis built when his family was young, before his mother sold the land to the Scotts.

One would have thought that with six sons to carry the Davis name, it would still have survived these 225 years since I was born. Yet, even if you are a resident of Jefferson Township, unless you are very familiar with the old patent map, you do not recognize the name at all. But here, on the hilltop near old Bethel Church, stands a mute reminder that I WAS once here. It is simply a faded, scarcely legible gravestone bearing only this curt inscription: " David Davis. Died December 8, 1822, in his fifty-first year."

Annie Perrine Cole

My name was Annie Perrine Cole. I was born just two days after Christmas in the year 1800. My father, Stephen Perrine, was a soldier in the Revolutionary War. He was a French Huguenaut and had been born in New Jersey. In 1793, he married my mother, Annie Mary Wortman, and they came to what is now Jefferson Township. Here he purchased a large acreage on what you know today as Bethel Ridge. It was later divided into three farms which today are owned by Larry & Carol Carter, Frank DeCook, and Nick and Catherine Bertovich. It was about the center of this property where my father built a stone house which is still standing today. It was there that most of us ten children were born and raised.



Stephen Perrine Stone House

I had four brothers, but the Perrine name, from my father's blood line, did not extend beyond the lives of these, his four sons. When my brother, William, was 28 years old, he and my brother, David, began to drive a drove of hogs to market in Baltimore, Maryland. Shortly after they began the journey, William became ill and told David to continue with their plans and as soon as he recovered, he would catch up with him. This was quite possible since on a usual such trip, a distance of only 4 or 5 miles could be made in a day. David went on toward the east with the hogs, looking each day for William to overtake him. When he arrived in Baltimore, and William had still not appeared, he became terribly alarmed. After the sale, he hurried as fast as he could on the return trip back home. Just as he came over the hilltop near our home, he met a neighbor who gave him the sad news. William had become very, very sick and although everything was done that my parents knew to do, William had died. I think that David never did really get over that tragic event.

This death was the second loss of a son for my parents, my eldest brother, Peter, having died at the age of fifteen. David and Stephen were now the only hope for my father to have a male heir bearing the Perrine name in the next generation. But David never married. He later built the house known today as the Nick Bertovich home, and there, he lived out his life alone, except for the wonderful brotherly relationship he always had with my only remaining brother, Stephen.

Stephen's wife died at the birth of their son. But this son was taken at the early age of 15, and is buried here in the Bethel graveyard. It was the end of the Perrine name from my father's line.

My five sisters together, gave my parents five grandchildren, but of course their surname was not Perrine. But in 1825, I married my next door neighbor, Samuel Cole.



Samuel Cole Homestead

Samuel had been married to my first cousin, Amy Perrine, and they were the parents of 6 children. When Amy died, I married Samuel and stepped in to help raise his children. Little did I dream that Samuel and I would have 10 children of our own.

My six daughters married and gave me grandchildren whose descendants bear such names as Donovan, Kearns, Swarthout, and McClusky. But of my four sons, Samuel and David did not marry and Stephen, although he married, gave me no grandchildren. Only my son, William, gave me a grandson bearing the name of Cole. But when this little William married, he produced only daughters, so the Cole name from our 10 children disappeared. This did not trouble me, however.

I had lived a good life for nearly 90 years although I had rarely been off the farm where I was born and later, the farm where Samuel took me as a bride. During my long life, I saw many changes. I remembered my husband's mother saying that in her early days, she had seen as many as 24 Indians crossing the old Cole farm at one time, and she had given them food and shelter. I lived to see my grandchildren and great-grandchildren begin lives of their own. Thus it was that on August the fifth in the year 1890, I left this world for a better one. My children laid my body to rest here in the Bethel graveyard which my Perrine family had given many years before to the Methodists of the area as a burial ground. The cycle is complete. I rest in peace.

Charles Scott

My name was Charles Scott. I was born in 1812 in County Donegal, Ireland, and came with my three little sisters and parents to America in 1819. We came in a sailing ship in what proved to be a long, frightening journey. My grandparents accompanied us also. We located in what was to become Jefferson Township, Washington County, because my grandmother's brothers, Robert and Charles Scott, had already preceded us there.

The farm, on which we settled, is today owned by the Hoberak family, and the old springhouse near which our cabin stood, is still standing.



John Scott Springhouse on Winfield Cunningham farm

**South of Bethel Church
on Bethel Church Road**

My little brother, John Scott, was born the year after we arrived in America. This baby later became a well-known Methodist minister, commonly referred to as John Scott, D.D.

My father, John Scott, Sr., died in 1833 when I was 21 years of age. He left the farm to my mother for the duration of her life, after which, it was to be divided between John and me. By 1833, I had fallen in love with Margaret Cassidy, a neighbor girl, and we planned to marry. This we did and I took her home to live with my family. The next year, our daughter, Fannie, was born, followed by our eldest son, John Franklin Scott, the following year.

About that time, I saw that the adjoining farm was much better than our own. Through much hard work and skimping in other matters, I purchased it. This farm was known as Big Spring. It was there that our next ten children were born and there we lived out our lives.

My youngest son, David, died at the age of 3. But our other 9 boys lived to be strong, handsome men, and when they married, I bought them each a farm near to us, so that we were a very close family all of our lives.

Our sons, William and Cassidy, served the entire length of the Civil War and were in the thick of the fighting the whole time. But both boys came back uninjured and took up where they had left off.



Charles Scott Homestead

I died in 1892, and was buried here at Bethel beside my parents and grandparents. My wife, Margaret, and all twelve of our children are also buried here, as are their spouses and many of THEIR children. In addition to the long line of Scott graves here at Bethel, there are, today, eight generations of my wife's Cassidy line interred here.

One would think that with nine sons, living to adulthood, the Scott name in Jefferson Township would have been quite secure. But such was not to be. Of our five sons who produced grandchildren, only 5 were boys to carry the Scott name. But four of these grandsons had no children. Only Jefferson's son, William, gave us one great-grandchild with the Scott name.

The old Bethel graveyard contains at least 49 Scott graves, but the days of burying Scotts at Bethel are over. Our blood line goes on in our descendants, but they bear such names as McClurg, Anderson, Cunningham, and Brady. Yet where I now abide and rest from my labors, I have learned that many of the things that I thought were important when I walked the earth, are really of no consequence at all when viewed from a higher plane. All of life is eternal, and earth life is only a tiny fragment of the whole.

You who still walk the earth, stop someday here at the hilltop of old Bethel Church. Walk among the well-kept graves and think about what I have told you. Then lay aside your worries and fretting about tomorrow and what it will or will not bring. All you can do is the best that you can, with what you have. Believe me, when all of the hardships of life are over, you will barely remember that little span of time you spent on earth. And as I now do, when you DO remember, you will walk among the music, beside the River of Peace, and smile.

