

NANCY WORK HARRIS

The paternal grand-parents of Nancy Work were David Work and Mary Ann Porterfield, who came from Ireland to a point near Philadelphia, Pa., thence to St. Clairsville, Belmont County, Ohio, where their children, David, John, Mary Ann, Alexander, Ruth and Samuel were born and reared. The parents were buried at Cadiz, Ohio. We have no information as to their relatives in Ireland.

David married Theodate Todd, who at the age of 18 years drove from the State of Georgia with her parents, brothers and sisters to Captina, Belmont County, Ohio. The children born to this union were, Theresa the eldest (died when three months old and buried at Cadiz), John born 1812 (never married), Sarah Ann, Robert, Elizabeth, and Nancy.

Nancy was born September 1, 1819 on a farm near St. Clairsville, Belmont County, Ohio. The farm was carved from the native forest by patient toil. There were no organized schools and Nancy received all told six months schooling in a subscription school. While still a young girl her father died and the family moved to a farm a little northwest of the village of Pennsville, Morgan County, Ohio. All were accustomed to work and Nancy took her part in the home and in the field in order to meet the vicissitudes of a new settlement. The stock had to be penned up at night to protect it against the inroads of wolves. Deer and wild turkey were abundant. They had to take their grain to the mills at Zanesville and Beverly, the trip requiring two or three days.

On April 9, 1835, she was married to Watson Harris, who had come from Mt. Pleasant, Jefferson County, Ohio. About this time Nancy's brothers, John and Robert bought the farms long known since as the Grimes, and Galbraith farms on the State Road in Berne Tp., Athens Co., Ohio and they and their mother moved to the farm while Nancy and her husband remained at Pennsville until after the birth of their sons, John and William. They then removed to the Alloway farm near Pennsville, thence to the Balderson farm on Bald Eagle Creek, thence to Windsor (Stockport) when Leander was a baby. On account of continued sickness and the immoral conditions of Windsor the family moved to Chesterhill, Morgan County, in 1845. Their experience at Windsor is described in Watson's autobiography. In Chesterhill they lived near the Quaker meeting house in the property afterward known as the John Plummer property, where George was born, thence they moved to the south end of town, second house west side as you enter town (a log house), thence back into the Plummer property.

While living in Chesterhill Nancy was converted and joined the Methodist Protestant Church about 1845. At this time Watson was building a house for John P. Wood (later owned by John Edgerton). After the men had gone to work Nancy took the family Bible down and read and prayed and told the children that their father was praying. He joined the Church the following year and became a devout Christian. John Harris, a son, then about eight years of age, frequently related an incident that took place at the family altar about this time. His cousin, Ajalon Alloway, was visiting in the home and as Watson was reading the Bible a mouse made its appearance on the scene and Ajalon, forgetting that he was in a devotional service, exclaimed, "There goes a mouse". The incident did not arouse much devotional spirit.

They then moved to her mother's old house since known as the Abner Galbraith place on the State Road in Berne Tp., Athens County. (The old house was replaced by a new one and that also has disappeared through burning. The writer remembers both houses.) Nancy's brother Robert lived in a cabin across the road North. A pole-cat persisted in coming into the house at night and Robert set a trap (dead-fall) and caught it, but the stench nearly drove them from the house. They lived here about one year while they were building the splendid hewn log house on the seventy acre farm just south of the Galbraith farm which John T. Work, her brother, had willed to Nancy. They then moved to their own farm, in 1851, where Jane and Charles were born. As Watson was a cripple, they rented the farm to Leander and the family returned to Chesterhill, where they lived in a house north of the Nelson Gray property then in the VanLaw property on MillSt. just west of the Mill, then in the Lee property (replaced and now known as Worrall property) in North end of Chesterhill. It was here that Watson died April 29, 1871. Nancy remained in Chesterhill perhaps two years and moved into the old house on the farm, (Leander occupying the new house) in Berne Tp., Athens County. Leander moved to Stewart and Charles took charge of the farm until he went to Arapahoe, Nebraska about 1879. Her grandson Joe Harris lived with her for some time until she sold the household goods and went to Charles in Nebraska. After several months she returned but never kept house again regularly. George rented the farm and Nancy made her home much of the time with her daughter Theodate Marquis. George moved to McLouth, Kansas in the spring of 1884 and returned in the Fall.

John took charge of the farm for some time and then Theodate with her family moved to the farm. The farm (the surface) was sold to Charles Caldwell, who built both house and barn on the opposite side of the road from where the original buildings stood. The old barn was built of logs with frame sheds attached. Nancy's last years were spent with John (her son) and her daughter-in-law Margaret on what was known as the Perkins farm near Mt. Hermon United Brethren Church, Athens Co., Ohio. She had been in poor health for some time but rallied again and was in fair health, but was taken ill again in the home of her son John and within a week was ushered into the presence of her King April 4, 1910 at the age of 90 years, 7 months and 3 days. Her son George conducted brief religious services in the home and interment was made beside her husband in the Marion Township cemetery at Chesterhill, Morgan County, O. The funeral director was Mr. Goddard of Chesterhill.

N.B. The above information was secured by the writer from taking notes in conversation with Nancy Harris and her son John Work Harris. It is put together in this brief form to invite constructive criticism and further and fuller information which anyone may be able to furnish. The motive is to get as full and accurate information as possible so that it may be handed down to succeeding generations.

Joseph Hastings Harris,
Westerville, Ohio, January 4, 1927.

MEMORIES OF GRANDMOTHER HARRIS

According to the record, I was about nine months old when my grandfather, Watson Harris, died and grandmother was about 51 years old. About my earliest recollection of her was the devout manner in which she prayed. She used frequently the expression "grant Lord, etc." and since the only "grant" that I knew anything about was Ella Tonarr's little dog bearing the name "Grant", I was puzzled to know why grandmother dragged the dog into her prayers.

After Uncle Charles went to Nebraska in 1879 I stayed with grandmother much of the time, going to school, and choring for her. I was then about eight to eleven years old. In years that followed she was in our home part of the time and always near enough to keep in close touch with her until her death. I wonder now that I did not write to her more frequently and show greater appreciation of her wonderful life.

Grandmother was of medium stature (possibly below the average) straight and erect, and moved about swiftly, but with a grace and dignity becoming a queen. She wore a small shoe, dressed neatly. Some people thought she was proud. Although her schooling was limited to six months in a subscription school, she possessed strong intellectual faculties which somehow made you feel that you were in a commanding presence. She loved to read and doubtless if trained in the schools would have achieved in the field of literature. So great was my appreciation of her moral ideals that as a boy I could not think of grandmother doing anything that was not exactly right. How she loved the children! In later years our young boys spoke of her as "The grandmother, with the crumpled face, that smoked the pipe".

Her reverence for God and the unseen verities impressed me. During a thunder storm she soothed my childish fears by telling of God's protecting care. Her prayers whether in the home or in church led me to believe that grandmother walked with an unseen presence. She was kind to me and memories of her will be enshrined through time, yes, through the eternal ages.

J. H. Harris.