

HIRAM HELMS (#425)

Source: Heritage of Putnam County Tennessee – 2008 by Putnam County Heritage Book Committee and County Heritage Inc.

Pg. 143: Family members stated that Hiram Helms (1822-ca. 1890) came to middle Tennessee from Germany with 2 brothers, one of which went on to Kentucky. However, in the census records he stated that he came from North Carolina. He appeared in Putnam County in 1850 and I have found no trace of him before that. Hiram staked out property near Buffalo Valley. The area was known as Denny's Seminary in the 1920's. After he arrived in Tennessee Hiram married Ruth Young (1822-ca 1890) and they produced 7 sons, Marcus, Marley, Aden, Enoch, James Riley, Peyton and the youngest, our ancestor, Lafayette or Fate as he was called.

Jack Tucker's family, John F. Tucker, once sold Hiram a hog to kill for meat at the price of seven cents a pound. Hiram was reportedly astounded by that price and said if he never ate any more pork until he paid that price again, he had eaten his last.

Hiram hauled in the rocks and dressed them to build the chimneys for the house in "Dry Hollow" that Nancy Carr Helms, his daughter-in-law, was still living in during the 1920's. The house was built between 1850 and 1860.

Hiram and all his sons lived neighbors in the 1870 census and Dr. Sybert lived nearby, as well, with the daughters Hiram's sons married. Mark, Aden and Enoch married the sisters Elizabeth, Sarah and Mattie Sybert. Their grandfather, Mathew Sybert was the first medical doctor in this area according to Ina Bell Carr.

Marcus (1846-1940) married Elizabeth Sybert (1847-1932) and had 5 children: Mathew H. (1870-1877), Mary Ann (1872-1940), Ruth Etmo (1876-1955), Albert Mitchell (1880), and Betty Dew (1881-).

Aden (1850-) married Sarah Catherine Sybert and had 8 children: John S. (1873-), Ruth Alice (1877-), Mathew H. (1878-1960), Marie E. (1881-), Mollie (1884-), Oscar 'True' (1885-1965), Nebraska (1888-) and Ma Bell (1891-1983).

Enoch (1852-1931) married Martha A. Sybert and had 3 children: Lilly Belle (1874-1920), Jane (1875-), and Napoleon P. (1881-1947).

Lafayette (1859-1941) was married to Nancy Carr (1873-1967), daughter of John W. "Pap Lash" Carr and Amanda Oaks Carr. Fate was 14 years older than Nancy. Their union produced 5 children: Nadie (1892-), Nettie (1896-1960), Henry C. (1898-1967), Mona (1940-1982), and Newell S. (1908-).

Despite a mental handicap, he provided, as best he could, their livelihood, as well as love, companionship and guidance. My Granddad remembered him and said that Fate worked diligently and hard for neighbors and farmers, but when asked what they owed him, he would say "nothing". They would then later go and pay his wife, Nancy. L. B. Garrison, (1920-1999), said that it seemed that Fate never developed mentally past the age of twelve or so. And that Nancy was aware of this problem and commented to family members that she wanted to marry Fate in spite of it.

Fate was a seventh son and during that time seventh sons were believed to possess curative powers. It was claimed that Fate could blow into a baby's mouth and cure the child of thrush. Thrush is a contagious fungus disease of the mouth and upper digestive tract, usually introduced into the body through food.

At that time medical assistance was difficult to obtain and usually sought only in cases of imminent death. Considering modern science's discount of such folk remedies, it is strange to consider that Fate's reputation as a healer was known far and wide. People from miles around brought their babies to Fate to cure. This suggests that he must have had some degree of success.

Nancy's talents as a mid-wife were sought after in the community. From 1900 to 1930s almost all the children were delivered by a mid-wife. When a family asked Nancy to deliver their expected child, she instructed them to inform the local doctor so he would be available in case of complications. Sometimes, if the family was able to pay for her services, she received two to five dollars.

Once, Fate and Nancy traded their land to Henry Snodgrass for his land in White County. However, Fate and Nancy got homesick and Snodgrass traded back with them on the condition that made the deed to the land to their son Henry at their deaths.

Fate made his grandson, L. B. Garrison, stick horses to ride when L. B. went with him to the spring house or to milk the cow. L. B. remembered that Fate never went to a dentist. Instead, when a tooth became loose, Fate would just pull the offending tooth out with his fingers. L. B. remembered Fate telling of the fighting during the Civil War.

Nettie married Solon Garrison and produced 3 sons: L. B. (1920-1999), Clifford (1928-2000) and Alfred Floyd (1932-1967).

L. B. (see memoirs of L. B. Garrison) married Sarah Elizabeth Ford (1922-1993) d/o Lester Samuel Ford and Maude Mae LaFever. L. B. and Sarah had 2 children Doris Gean (1943-) and Linda Gail (1946-).

Doris Gean is divorced but had 2 sons: Michael Wayne (1961-) and Richard Allan (1964-) neither of which has offspring.

Linda Gail married Charles Gaston Willoughby and had a son and a daughter: Eric Charles (1969-) and Christy Nichole (1973-).

Eric Charles married Stephanie Bowman and had twin sons; Aaron Garrison and Daniel Charles in 1995.

Christy Nichole married Joseph Dean Parsley and had two sons, Justin Blake (2006) and Jacob Dean (2008).

Monie married Euclid Carr, s/o Thomas and Molly Helms Carr and produced 3 children: Baskell (1923-1975) who married Kathleen Uhles, Vestal (1928-) who married Alene King and Unetta (1937-) who married Joe Chaffin.

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