



THE HARPER FAMILY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 30

SPRING 2025



Harper Letters from the Past

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A letter from 1941 describing Margaret (Simmons) Harper's Escape from the Indians

Cedar Falls, Iowa

Wed. April 26, 1941

Dear Cousin Elsie & family,
I was so glad to hear from you again. It almost seems like I was there again. I often think of the times I spent there among the West Virginia relatives and friends. I was right at home among them all, wherever I went. I would like so well to visit there again, but I couldn't stand the trip. You don't know what a comfort and pleasure it is to hear from there, though - your interesting letters, I read them again and again.

I can remember of mother telling about her great-grandmother being captured by the Indians but don't know how long she was with them. But I remember about her telling how she got away. The Indians put her to carrying wood and piling it on a large pile. One of the Indians asked her one day if she knew what she was doing that for. She replied, "No." He told her they were going to burn her at the stake. He told her if she would do as he wanted her to do, as he said, he could get her away. So he took her one night off to a cave he

found in some hidden place, and told her to stay there until he came after her. I don't remember that mother knew how many days she had to stay there. But soon as the Indian felt safe to venture back there, he took her to some place where she got away, and got back home. They [the Indians] spent most of the time hunting along the river. They thought she had drowned herself. If they had ever found out what one of their own tribe had done, he would most likely have fared same as the ones they massacred.

And the tribe her brother was with got some skates one day and brought them to camp, and the brother made strange of them and tried to use them. They had seen men where they got them [using them]. They insisted on his trying, so he could teach them, and he made awful work of it until he got a safe distance away. Then he made use of his skates to a good advantage and got away.

I had forgotten a number of things she told me. When I read your letter about them, it came to mind plainly what she had told me.

With love to you and all, as ever, your Iowa cousin

Editor's Note: I have made some spelling and punctuation changes in this transcript to allow for easier reading.

cont. on p. 2

Milo, Vernon County, Missouri Dec. 15, 1888

Dear aunts and cousin,
After a long delay, I will try and write a few lines to you again. I received your letter last winter, but fail to write. I wanted to answer rite off, but it seems like there was always something in the way.

We have nice warm weather. It is now almost too warm of the time of the year. The people is generally healthy, no sickness going on. This is a fine country...I'm sure where you live, some people is gathering corn, and some is plowing for corn, and some is mulching strawberry. We have three quarter of acre of strawberry, and about that much in plums, grapes, and blackberry, and apple

trees. We are going to set out two more acres of strawberry this time than we planted last....We raise plenty of vegetables of all kinds except cabbage. I did not get any. I raise the finest beets and carrots I ever seen grow. The beets, some of them weigh from four to six pounds. The biggest carrots weigh four and a half pounds.

...Charlie you said you believe you would like this country. I believe, too, you would, for this is a great place for young people - for young men anyway - and next Spring will still be better. We are going to build a new railroad here and work will be easily got. We are going to build a road from Fort Smith near Kansas to Nevada, Missouri, and from there to Kansas City, Missouri. I don't know if it will be in sight of me or not.

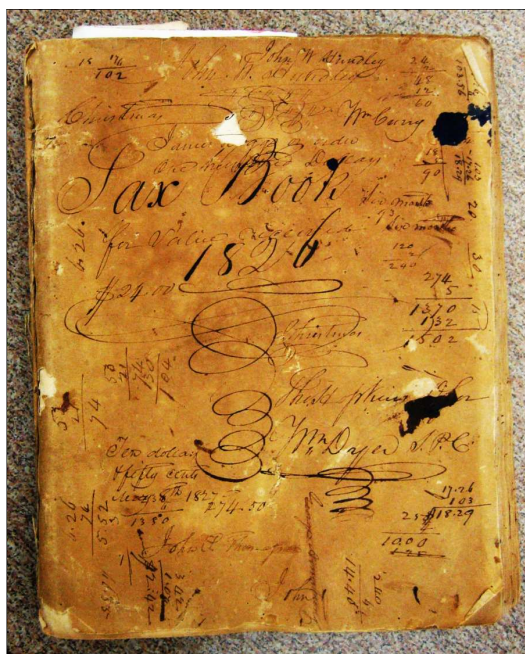
Editor's note: It seems like times don't change - people were too busy to get around to things back then, just like they are today!

ANNOUNCEMENT!

This is my 30th year as Newsletter Editor!!

After 30 years of writing "The Harper Family Newsletter"... it is finally time to hand over the reins! Emily Lantz of Elkins, WV has graciously consented to take over. She is the daughter of Ron & Rosanna Lantz of Bowden, WV.

I will continue to be our Harper Family Historian.



Below & Lower left:

Pendleton County Tax Book 1826

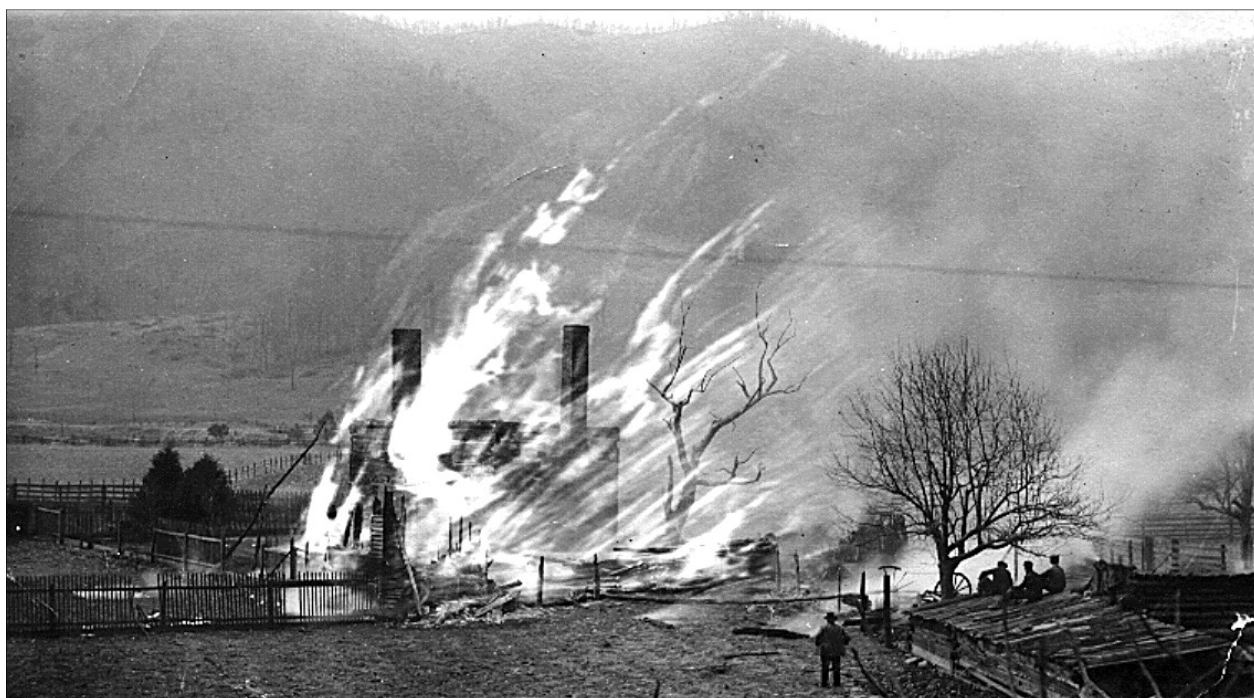
Dr. George Harper

N. Harpers estate Land tax

73	Harper George Dr		
48	To 1 Withe 61- 3 Wrens 36	" 97	
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61			
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Above: House built on site of Philip Harper's house Below: Philip Harper's house burning, circa 1910



Changes in Our Family Tree



Births:

- Merrick Owen Myer, son of Katherine Marie Harper Myer, (and grandson of Rick & Patty Harper of San Diego, CA) was born on Oct. 8, 2022.
- Matthew & Hannah Bell, son of Tom & Jan Bell, moved to Johnson City, TN just in time for the birth of their second son, Owen Thomas Bell 12/22/23.
- From Jim Muse (Grandson of Nan) - My daughter, Colleen, had a daughter - Aven Fern Keefe was born 10/31/23.
- Alexander Claire Lindsay, born 2/20/2020, and Benjamin Joseph Lindsay, born 10/14/2021, sons of Simon & Jennifer (Leitner) Lindsay. Jennifer is the daughter of Bruce Leitner, son of Geraldine Leitner, daughter of Gay (Harman) Montoney, daughter of Jason Harman.
- Rider Jese Delozier, born 1 Aug 2024 - Son of Dusty G. Delozier and Amber Cosar in Ada, OK. Dusty is son of Stephen W. Carr of Converse, TX, son of Jeff L. Carr of Converse, TX.
- Robert and Wanda (5th great-grandchild of Philip Harper the Pioneer) Balducci moved to the Blue Ridge Mountains in Bedford, Virginia in January. Also in January, our 10th grandchild was born, Margaret, daughter of Nicholas and Victoria. Our oldest grandson, Zachary, took a trip to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. Our oldest granddaughter got her driver's license, and her first job. We are enjoying retirement, and cherish the memories of our last trip to West Virginia, and the nice people we saw and met at the Harper reunion.

Marriages:

- No marriages to report this year.

Deaths:

(or, as Bill Darr says - Go Harpers and Beyond!)

:

- Dennis Wilkins died 4/10/2024. He was a grandson of Branson Harper, son of Peter Harper (3rd Child of Jacob C. Harper).
- Betty Jean Harper Harryman passed away at age 96 on April 30, 2024.
- From Wayne Cooper: I am sorry to let you know that

Carol passed away on Feb 26th from cancer. She put up a good fight but is now at peace in heaven

- From Steven Harper Young, Long Beach, CA: My cousin, Gregg Young (Grandmother Wilda Odessa Harper), passed away from a heart-related ailment on September 22 2024. He was 77. "He was one of the hardest-working musicians I have ever played with, and a great guy" said former bandmate Alan Brawer. "Whether we were playing gigs at the Queen Mary, clubs in Hollywood, the Long Beach Grand Prix, the (Belmont Shore) Christmas parade, or the Los Angeles and Long Beach marathons."

During his career, Young himself played on the same bill with Sly Stone, Jimi Hendrix, Steve Miller, Credence Clearwater Revival, Linda Ronstadt, Steppenwolf, War, Jose Feliciano, the Doobie Brother, Santana and Alice Cooper. He is survived by two sons.

I should note that Gregg's father Gene Young is still alive at 99 years old.

- Janet Carol Overfield, age 78, of Buckhannon, WV, died, March 5, 2025, at J.W. Ruby Memorial Hospital in Morgantown, WV. She was born July 20, 1946, in Buckhannon, a daughter of the late Carl and Thelma (Snyder) Harper. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her son, Jason Overfield.



She is survived by her husband, James Overfield of Buckhannon; one son, Derek Overfield and wife Lauren Adams of Fairmont, WV; three daughters, Carla Cosner and husband Chris of Glenville, WV, Cindy Hardman and husband Shawn of Buckhannon and Jamie Riffle and husband Jamie of Morgantown; four grandsons, Jerrad Riffle and wife Ginny of Buckhannon, Joshua Riffle and wife Kayla of Bridgeport, WV, Jase Riffle of Morgantown and Tanner Hardman and fiancé Victoria Epp of Buckhannon; three granddaughters, Jessica Brockleman and husband Luke of Buckhannon, Kristen Cosner of Fairmont and Kylie Cosner of Glenville; two great-grandsons, Jackson Riffle and Layne Brockleman and a great-grandson on the way Jensen Riffle; two brothers, Fred Harper of Bi-



From the Harper Cemetery Association Board of Directors



March 17, 2025

Greetings - from Stelman E. Harper, President, Board of Directors

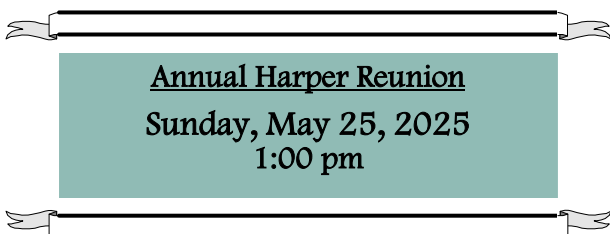
Dear Family and Friends:

Greetings to family and friends. We hope that you are doing well and are thinking about the upcoming reunion during Memorial weekend on May 25.

Please visit our website at <www.jacobcharper.org> where you will find information that has been posted for your use. We try to take an annual photograph of the attendees and post it there for your access. John Harper is the web site director. Marsha Fuller provides the newsletter and maintains the information. Danie Ours and family keeps the family cemetery in great condition which is located further up the road on the farm. We try to maintain it with donations and a perpetual care fund. We encourage donations and bequests to keep the fund growing for future needs. The cemetery is for any Jacob C. Harper descendants and spouses who wish to be buried there.

Our meal will begin at 1:00 pm, on May 25, 2025, after the family photograph and the blessing. It is a covered dish affair with lots of good food. Those attending from far off and do not have means of preparing a dish should not worry about coming. There will be plenty. Please register when you arrive so that we can keep our contacts updated. Those who have email addresses will receive the newsletter and letter electronically. Those not having electronic connections will receive a mailing. The Board of Directors will meet following the door prize drawings, which are graciously provided by Susan Waters, daughter of Margaret (Harper) Stemple. Anyone wishing to communicate and send donations can mail their donations to our treasurer, Eleanor Nestor, 7936 Dry Fork Road, Hendricks, WV 26271. We thank all of you for your donations and continued interest in our family.

Put this on your calendar and we look forward to seeing you there if the Lord is willing and you can make it. Stay well. Any changes and or cancellations will be posted on our web site listed above or by word of mouth. Check on the web site or with members of the family.



If you're in the Harman area on the day before the Reunion (Sat., 1 pm), we could use your help with setting up the picnic tables at the Reunion Pavilion!

Perpetual Care Fund

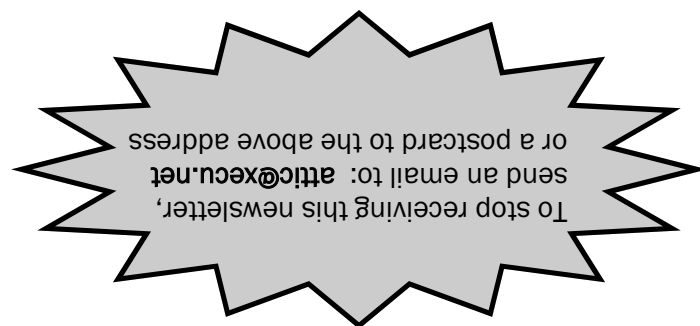


Mail to: Harper Cemetery Association, 7936 Dry Fork Rd., Hendricks, WV 26271-8016

Name: _____

Street & City: _____

Donation amount: \$ _____



Harper Cemetery Association
7936 Dry Fork Rd.
Hendricks, WV 26271



Yokum's Vacationland

If you're coming in from out-of-town, a great place to stay is our cousin's motel, cabins, and campgrounds in beautiful downtown Seneca Rocks. There's also a General Store and Grill.

Harper's Old Country Store is right next door, and horseback riding to the top of Seneca Rocks is only a mile away at Yokum's Stables.

Nearby attractions are Green Bank Telescope, Seneca Caverns, Cass Scenic Railroad, Rock Climbing Schools, Dolly Sods, Blackwater Falls, and Spruce Knob.

www.yokum.com
304-567-2351
yokumsvland@spruceknob.net

Mark Your Calendar for Next Year! Harper Reunion is *always* the Sunday of Memorial Day Weekend



To order a copy of
The Harper Family History
send check or money order for \$49 to:

Marsha Fuller
912 Oak Hill Ave.
Hagerstown, MD 21742

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Changes in Our Family Tree

- cont. from page 4



loxi, MS, and Terry Harper and wife Anna Mae of Grafton, WV; one sister, Margaret Caynor and husband Denver of Buckhannon and several sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, nieces, and nephews.

Mrs. Overfield was a cook for the Upshur County Board of Education and an active member of the Sand Run Baptist Church. She enjoyed reading Amish novels, making bead art, going to flea markets and baking. Burial in the Sand Run Baptist Church Cemetery in Excelsior, WV. Online condolences may be made to the family at <www.polingstclair.com>



- Rose Mary Vance, age 87 of Nappanee, Indiana (and formerly of Seneca Rocks, WV) died on, December 25, 2024 at her residence after a long illness.

She was born on February 1, 1937 in Harman, West Virginia to Carney and Sylva (Teter) Harper.

On April 2, 1955, she married Barden Vance Sr. in Red House, Maryland. He preceded her in death in Nov. 29, 2012. Mrs. Vance lived in this area from 1955 to 1984, when she and her husband moved to Onego, West Virginia. She moved back to Nappanee in 2020. She had worked at Goshen Hospital on their switchboard before retirement. Rose Mary was a member of the Harman VFW Auxiliary.

Surviving are her sons, Michael (Shari) Vance of Wapakarusa, Indiana and Barden Vance Jr., Goshen, Indiana; granddaughter Britny Rose Vance of Mishawaka, Indiana; great grandchildren, Brinleigh Rose Anderson, Maddox Jacob Wade Dolph, Korbin Wynn; brother Howard Harper of Beverly, WV; and sister Anna Mae Hinkle of Chardon, OH. She was preceded in death by her husband, brothers, Billy Harper, Thamar Harper; and sister, Helen Higgs.

Burial was in the Jacob Harper Family Cemetery.

Harpers on the Go:

- From Bob & Lolita (Filipina) Fansler: Thanks from one of the herd.....Being the great, great grandson of Jacob & Susan (MacDonald); the great grandson of Adam, and grandson of Bessie Lee (Ferguson) Harper; and finally, the son of Gladys (Ferguson) Fansler. We also had the fortune of owning the Jacob C. "home place" on the "top of the Allegheny"I offer my family update.: Our family continues our annual trek from Manila where we spend 8 months a year, to our Canaan Valley summer home. We are happy to report that our two sons - Zane & Annika (Swedish) and Quint & Amaya (Filipina) - have blessed us with 2 healthy and energetic grandsons, Quint's Alex (ten yrs.) and Zane's Lucas (1½ years). Zane & Annika expect to add to the herd another little guy this June. Our family is together in the Philippines, where we manage various family businesses; and look forward to summers in WV with family and friends.
- From Nancy Boseman: I wanted to let everyone know they can join the Daughters &/or Sons of the American Revolution. I proved up our Patriot on the Kisamore side, but can join thru Nester n Teter side. We have 5 Patriots so far n one is a woman "Agnes Caldwell". Anyone interested can email me n I'll show them the ropes. I finally did a replica of the quilt that hangs in the Smithsonian that was done by George Teters mom. The back side holds stars for family members who join with stars in the middle. All lists names. I hope to get home thus summer.
- From Chris Harper: I am Albert Harper's grandson and David Warren Harper's son. I would like to notify you about my life to include in the Harper Newsletter. This year for 2025, my mom (Karen Harper-Dorton) and i have trips planned for Florida, Tennessee, and California. On our trips we love watching concerts during the daylight and golfing on flat golf courses.

DNA from Steven Zuraff

<sjzuraff@gmail.com>:

Based on the results of several participants who had their Y-chromosomes analyzed by Family Tree DNA, we see that the Y-chromosome haplogroup for Philip Harper the Pioneer, as manifested by his present-day male Harper descendants is identical (or nearly so) to the Y-chromosome haplogroup of Philip's contemporary Adam Harper (d. 1820), as manifested by his present-day male Harper descendants.

Because of this commonality of the Y haplogroup(s),

it is not unreasonable to conclude that Adam was a not too distant relative of Philip, perhaps separated by only two or three generations back.

Although the implications are applicable to both Philip and Adam, in the discussion below, I have focused on Philip Harper since we have a definite place of origin for him.

Before they were German, the Pendleton County Harpers were Celtic.

That is, the Y-chromosome haplogroup of the Harpers points to a Celtic origin in the distant past.

The Y-chromosome is passed from father to son remaining mostly unchanged across generations, except for small traceable mutations that accrue with time. Family Tree DNA (FTDNA) tracks these mutations using its Big Y test.

The Harper Y-chromosome, as determined by FTDNA's test, is a very downstream branch (subclade) of the much older haplogroup known as R1b-L21. R1b-L21 is one of the haplogroups most often linked to the spread of Celtic languages and cultures.

Philip Harper the Pioneer was born in 1712 in or near the town of Niederweiler, situated in the land between the middle Rhine and Moselle rivers in the present-day Rhineland-Palatinate. Trier, on the east bank of the Moselle, is 31 miles southwest of Niederweiler. Mainz sits on the Rhine about 44 miles to the northeast, although because the Rhine then makes a 17 mile shift to the west, the nearest town on the river to Niederweiler is Bingen am Rhein, about 27.5 miles away. Just two miles to the south of Niederweiler is the northern end of the Hunsrück, a pronounced NE-SW trending upland.

The region of the present-day Rhineland-Palatinate had been dominated by Celts from the Bronze Age to the time of Julius Caesar in the mid-first century BC. Interestingly, during the Iron Age—from around the end of the 7th century BC until about 250 BC—there had existed a cultural group of the Middle Rhine region of western Germany (Rhineland-Palatinate) and eastern Belgium and Luxembourg known as the Hunsrück-Eifel Culture. Between 475 and 350 BC, the Celtic upper class was buried under large mounds in so-called Celtic "princely tombs".

Just three miles southwest of Niederweiler, along the Hunsrück's northern flank, is the town of Hochscheid. Four excavated grave mounds are located nearby. Here were discovered splendid weapons, brooches made of sheet gold, and splendid belt fittings, including a bronze belt ring.

In Caesar's time the Rhine River marked the boundary between the Germanic tribes, who lived on the east side of the river (in what the Romans called Germania), and Celtic Gaul to the west. But closer to the river's banks was an area of overlap and intermingling between Celtic and Germanic tribes, with cultural exchange and even some degree of intermarriage occurring. In time, these Celts adopted the Germanic language and customs.

Then, with the fall of the western Roman empire in the fifth century CE, there was a great westward movement of Germanic tribes into the lands of Celts, Gaul and Iberia. The Frankish king, Clovis I, conquered the Palatinate around 496 CE. It then became part of the Frankish Kingdom, which later evolved into the Carolingian Empire. The Romans had abandoned their occupation of Great Britain in 410 CE, and its invasion by the Anglo-Saxons began some forty years later. They pushed the island's Celtic populations westward, leading to the concentration of Celtic culture in Wales, Cornwall, and Scotland. Ireland, which had not been invaded by either the Romans or the Anglo-Saxons, retained its own Celtic identity.

Today R1b-L21 and its principal subclade R1b-DF13 are dominant among males in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales but have only a small presence in Germany. According to FTNA, the frequency of R1b-L21 in Ireland is 56% whereas in Germany it is only 3%. The very downstream branch of R1b-L21, which is the specific haplogroup of the Pendleton County Harpers, is not represented anywhere in Europe. It currently exists only among the descendants of Philip Harper the Pioneer and his contemporary, Adam Harper (d. 1820).

In conclusion, DNA analysis of the Harper Y-chromosome indicates that it came from Celtic stock. At some later time, the Celtic Harpers were assimilated by the Germans. Of course, we cannot say with assurance how, when, or where this occurred. Church records tell us that the Harpers had lived in the vicinity of Niederweiler since at least 1700. But how much further back do their roots there go? Back a thousand years further to the Iron Age, or even earlier? Or had they been Germanized elsewhere and migrated to the region in only the last few centuries or decades? Dr. David Reich, a prominent archeologist, warns that ". . . [W]e know now, from ancient DNA, that the people who live in a particular place almost never exclusively descend from the people who lived in the same place far in the past." Perhaps FTDNA provides a way to fill in some of the gaps in our knowledge. They say that as more people test, the history of our genetic lineage will be further refined.