

Ivy Edith and I are typical Americans of Pioneer ancestry, both of us with red hair. We had a happy life together for half a century but before we come on the scene we must tell about our ancestors but for whom we would not have had this good life.

When my father's ancestors came to America I do not know, but they lived in Virginia and some of them fought in the Revolutionary War. They were mostly English but one remote ancestor was of German stock that had come to America before the Revolution.

My grandfather, George White, was born east of the mountains and moved to Clarksburg (now West Virginia) where he married Margaret Williams, evidently of some Welsh ancestry.

George was a promising young lawyer but unfortunately addicted to drink and died when my father was only a babe. (Consequently there is traditional enmity in our family against liquor.)

My grandmother died of dysentery (which then was known as bloody flux) and my father was left an orphan at the age of four. A friend of my grandfather, Joseph Johnson, living at Bridgeport, six miles east of Clarksburg adopted my father into his family.

Mr. Johnson was later a congressman for thirty-two years and governor of Virginia for two terms not long before the Civil War.

My father well remembered riding horseback behind Old Tom the head of the Johnson's one slave family, when he came to live with the Johnsons. The Johnsons had older sons already married and gone to Ohio and two old maid daughters. They also had one son George Washington (Wash) the same age as my father and his constant boyhood playmate.

My father had a happy childhood in the Johnson family. The two boys used to get a few cents spending money by taking some of the piles of "Congressional Records" in the hayloft, lowering them to the ground with a string and making off with them and selling them to Mr. Johnson's brother who owned a store. (Mr. Johnson and his brother had had a falling out and never spoke to each other.) The storekeeper used them to wrap goods, saying, "That is the best way to get them read."

"Old Joe" Johnson is now a West Virginia legend and is usually referred to as "the Governor". He was the only governor of the Old Dominion from west of the mountains. He always wore the cutaway coat and high hat customary in those days and one time when he came home from Washington there was snow on the ground. The high hat was too much of a temptation to my father who carefully aimed a snowball at the pretentious head gear bowling it over into the snow. The congressman turned and said, "Was that you, Henry?" picked up the hat and walked on probably carefully hiding his own amusement.

My father from his early youth was mechanically minded. Across the mill dam on the other side of Simpson's creek, rivulets came down from the mountainside. My father made a small waterwheel with all sorts of pulleys, belts and machines run by the wheel making a merry clacking. When the old Governor saw it, he remarked with wonder, "Did you make all this, Henry?"

The old slave Tom had full authority over the 400 acre farm and mill. He ran the mill, managed the farm, traded his master's horses (as he was known as the best judge of horses in the community.) He also punished the white boys as well as the black. He owned horses and had amassed considerable wealth for those days. He once asked the Governor how much he would take for him. But when the Governor said, "\$800," he remarked, "Too much." He was already as free as he would have been, if he had parted with his money and was entirely satisfied. But of course if his master had died insolvent he might have been separated from his family and sold down the river. When a slaveholder died often some of the slaves ran away fearing the fate of being taken down to the cotton fields of Louisiana. Some succeeded in escaping into the free states or better to Canada. Others were not so lucky. Black Hawk was one of the latter. Like most others he ran away one night when roasting ears were good that they might be sure of a supply of food. The next day he was serenely walking along when a white man on horseback accosted him, saying, "Hello, Black Hawk, what are you doing here?" The negro replied, "Who know me, way here in Canady?"

"Uncle" Tom's older son was trained to be a blacksmith. And once when the old Governor was away he refused to obey his father so he had him put in jail. My father went to see him and young Tom said to my father, "I am not going to be a slave all my life." When the Governor returned he took him with him back to Richmond and sold him to a southern planter getting a good price for him since he was a blacksmith. The planter started with him in the stage but in the middle of the night Tom opened the door of the coach, jumped out and disappeared into the laurel thicket.

Some years afterward a man from Clarksburg walked into a blacksmith shop in Pittsburg and there was Tom the owner of the shop. Since the planter had given up all hope of recovering his property Tom was never bothered.

In the year 1900 when I was attending a student convention in Pittsburg, I looked in the city directory but there were so many Tom Johnsons (colored) that it was hopeless to try to find him. In any case after the Civil War he may have gone back to West Virginia.

The Johnsons owned only one family of slaves, mulattos with two sons and two daughters. In the border states most slave owners owned only a family or two. But the negroes called those who owned none "Po" white trash". The negroes greatly feared being sold down the river onto the great plantations where they were not directly under the management of their white master but under a "slave driver" and the negro "slave driver" was apt to be even more cruel than a white one.

My father knew a case of a good looking mulatto girl who was being taken down the Ohio river who jumped overboard and was drowned.

My great-grandmother Saunders in Harrisonville, Missouri had slaves, the oldest also named Tom who said he was going to belong to Marse Sam, my grandfather. But when she died her younger son and son-in-law got possession of the bill of sale of the negroes and sold them, which broke the old negro's heart.

In my childhood when we came back to Missouri, a negro family my mother knew before the war used to visit us and my mother always had them eat at the same table with us.

The negroes had their own churches, mostly Baptist, because they could be independent and not under white bishops or presbyteries, though some attended white churches mostly as coachmen but sitting in the negro gallery.

The most famous negro Baptist minister in those days was John Jasper (whose monument I saw in Richmond). He held the whip hand over his congregation. Dr. Augustus Strong of Rochester told us he once heard him preach, his text being "Tech not the Lord's anointed." and he said, "There was a deacon who talked against yo pastah, what happened to him? Buried him de odeh day. And dere was sistah so and so, she talked about yo pastah, what became o' heh? Ovah deh in de grave yahd."

In my boyhood there was an old man Marion Todd who had a negro who lived with his family who was reputed to be his son or grandson.

Marion Todd was a dyed-in-the-wool Southern Democrat and when Cleveland was a candidate for reelection Mr. Todd rode horseback to Butler the county seat to get the election news. When he saw a lawyer friend he hailed him and asked the news. The lawyer said, "Cleveland is defeated." Mr. Todd fell from his horse, was carried into a house and died on the spot.

The great Western Turnpike ran through Bridgeport and my father used to tell of the stagecoaches with four and six horse teams with their fine harness and circles of bells over the collars. I saw probably the last new outfit of this kind in my early childhood with a great wagon, four big bay horses and shining harness complete with the bells.

My father learned milling and also the building of mills (millwright) from the old negro Tom and helped him run the Johnson's mill.

But when my father was about twenty years old the Baltimore and Ohio railroad was built and passed just across Simpson's creek from the mill making a cut in the hillside. A huge piece of the hill slipped into the creek, destroying the dam and rendering the water-power useless.

The railway purchased the mill and in time steam power was substituted. But in the meantime my father worked in a mill in Morgantown.

Wash Johnson, my father's foster brother, became a doctor in the manner common at that time, by studying in a doctor's office. Eventually he and my father decided to go West in the year 1854. Mr. Johnson was then Governor. He gave my father his blessing and a purse containing ten 20 dollar gold pieces and my father never saw him again, though the governor lived until I believe the year 1891, being over ninety years of age.

The two young men went by rail as far as the railroad had been built, then by stage coach to St. Louis, then by steamboat up the Missouri River to Westport Landing, now Kansas City, where there was nothing but a blacksmith shop and a sod hotel (Westport was a thriving village some miles to the south).

From there they made their way for 30 miles up the banks of the Kaw (or Kansas) river to Lawrence, where the people were living in tents, there being no lumber available to build houses.

So my father proposed that he, my father, should go back to St. Louis and buy a sawmill and engine to supply the need.

Wash, the doctor, established himself at Le Compton, then the capitol of the territory while my father went back to St. Louis.

He found the sawmill and engine and asked to buy them on credit. When asked what security he could give, he said, "The Governor of

Virginia." They promptly telegraphed to Richmond and receiving an okay, my father loaded the sawmill on a Missouri river steamboat and started West again.

On account of its shifting sand and mud banks the Missouri river was never a very navigable stream and once they were stranded on one of these banks for two weeks. But they had a lively lot of passengers so found it easy to kill time. My father told this story as happening at that time; the captain always served the food most generously and one young lady protested, "How can you expect me to eat such a cartload?" When the captain noticed that she had finished her plate, he said, "Will you back up your cart for another serving?" That was nearly a hundred years ago. Recently I have heard this story as having happened on a Mississippi steamboat as possibly it occurred more than once. But was doubtless original on this Missouri river boat on which my father travelled in the year 1854.

The sawmill was unloaded at Westport landing and hauled on wagons eight miles above Lawrence near LeCompton, where it was set up and they began to saw lumber and float it down the river Kaw to Wakarusha now Lawrence.

Helen, Gilbert's wife, in making researches in Boston discovered in copies of the "Boston Post" of 1854 the letters of a young lawyer by the name of Andrews, writing from the territory of Kansas, in which he tells of the people of Wakarusha living in tents until a sawmill should be set up. That was my father's sawmill, the first one in the Territory of Kansas. (Lawrence was originally called Wakarusha from a creek of that name.)

Probably before steamboats plied the Missouri river and for some time after wagon trains went across Missouri from St. Louis making West Point a few miles south of my old home and 60 miles south of Westport landing the base from which to start the long haul across the plains to Santa Fe. In my boyhood there still stood the mostly empty buildings of this once flourishing town with newspapers, and wholesale stores for outfitting these wagon trains.

During the Civil War my mother's oldest brother, Tom Saunders, was impressed into the Confederate Army. But becoming ill in southern Missouri they put him on a horse and sent him home. Because of fear of "Bushwhackers" (guerillas) he never got out of his saddle for several days so that when he reached home his feet were so swollen that they had to cut his boots from off his feet.

Not wishing again to be impressed he hid in the nearby woods until he was well and then going to West Point which was only 30 miles away, he got a job driving an ox team on a wagon train and went to Santa Fe.

They had twenty oxen hitched to each wagon. When one gave out they replaced it with a wild Texas steer that had never been yoked before and sometimes these wild steers would throw themselves and break their own necks.

In R. L. Duffus' "The Santa Fe Trail" (Tudor Pub. Co. N.Y. 1934) West Point is not even mentioned. There was a Baptist Church there to which our family belonged when we lived at Rosier ten miles northeast of West Point. I used to go through the ghost town every day hauling coal for my father's mill. Rosier is now also a ghost town since the railroad was built four miles away and Drexel was ex-

tablished.

My father set up the sawmill on the bank of the Kaw near Le Compton and they established a little village of their own which they called Venitia probably from Venice on account of the adjacent water. My father once swam the river when it was in flood and a half mile wide amid the danger of floating trees and rapidly swirling water. He was a wonderful swimmer and taught me to swim when I was five years old by dumping me in over my head and I had to swim or sink and I swam. Of course he was there to see that I didn't drown.

My father had ten men working for him cutting and hauling logs and running the mill. For some time my father also did all of the cooking and these young fellows had gay times. Their one room was of logs with a huge fireplace and a plastered stick chimney.

Once at least they amused themselves by throwing pancakes from the skillet out through the chimney and trying to catch them in the skillet outside. My father confessed that most of the pancakes were plastered on the inside of the chimney.

My father evidently got tired of doing so much cooking as well as managing the mill so they succeeded in getting a widow lady and her two daughters to come out from Westport to keep house for them. Before they came the men worked "every day and Sunday, too." But before the arrival of the ladies they stopped working on Sunday, cleaned up the place, shaved and became quite decent citizens.

Near the mill a friendly tribe of Pottawatamy Indians had a camp. One day a member of the tribe informed them that he had found a bee tree. So two of the men armed with axes followed the Indian, chopped down the tree, put the honey in a bucket and added the welcome sweet to their larder, giving the Indian a sack of meal as his reward.

There was another incident that illustrates the pranks that these youngsters were up to. Among the people in the little village was a great braggart. He used to boast of what he would do if the Indians were to go on the warpath.

So some of them got the Chief to cooperate with them, with the promise of a ham. Early in the morning mounted on their ponys, bedecked in warpaint and feathers, the Indians came galloping down upon the village yelling and firing their guns in the air.

As the Indians came into one side of the village, the boaster fled out of the other side, making for Lawrence eight miles to the east where he excitedly reported that the Indians had gone on the warpath and were killing and scalping all the people west of Lawrence.

The people of Lawrence raised a rescue party, but were met by riders telling them the true story before they were well on their way.

The braggart did not join the rescue party but galloped on toward Missouri and was never heard of again.

There was a great deal of rivalry between people of different states, especially North and South. The people of New England urged to go to Kansas in order to make it a free state when it was admitted to the Union; while the people of Virginia and Kentucky tried to persuade as many as possible to emigrate in order to make Kansas a slave state. Northerners didn't like to take orders from my father when working for him because they said it sounded too much like a slave driver "Bossing the Niggers". But my father was only used to telling his men what to do, as old Uncle Tom had told him what to do.

The Kentuckians all seemed to the Virginians to have come from twenty miles of Lexington in the Bluegrass country and to believe

they were superior on account of that fact, while the Virginians were just as proud to hail from the "Old Dominion".

My father used to tell a story about the owner of a sawmill who was so stingy that he fed his workmen on nothing but cornmeal mush. It made the men work so slowly that the saw went very slow saying "Corn - meal - mush - corn - meal - mush". So he told his wife to give the men some bread and meat. Then the saw picked up speed saying "Bread and meat, bread n' meat".

That paid so well that they gave them pudding for dessert and then the saw fairly hummed as it said, "Bread an' meat an' puddin' too, bread an' meat an' puddin' too".

The Missouri Compromise enacted in 1820 provided that Missouri might be admitted as a slave state but no other territory acquired by the Louisiana Purchase was to be so admitted. But in 1854 the Kansas-Nebraska act nullified the Compromise and provided that the people of a territory could decide whether a state should be slave or free. This Act started a feverish migration from both North and South to settle Kansas and secure for it the majority of the immigrants for their side.

My father, though not being strong for either side, coming from the western part of Virginia, did not enjoy the bickering between Lecompton where the Southerners wished to retain the capitol and Topeka to which the Northerners wished to remove it, decided to go to Missouri where the people were more congenial.

So he sold his share of the sawmill to his foster brother, Geo. Wash Johnson (for which he never received a penny; perhaps partly on account of the war). Wash enlisted in the Confederate Army and my father never saw him again, though in my boyhood he was said to be living near St. Joseph, Missouri.

My father came to Harrisonville, Missouri, not more than a hundred miles from Lecompton. (Not many years ago I saw the old capitol building at Lecompton, a square two story brick building then used as a school.)

After working in a mill near Harrisonville owned by a man by the name of Brown, he and a man by the name of Bills, built a grist and sawmill on the east fork of Grand river $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles southwest of Harrisonville, just across the river from the farm owned by my mother's parents, the Samuel Saunders.

In addition to four sons, the Saunders had three daughters. My father fell in love with the youngest, Minerva, and perhaps the most beautiful, but who was already considered an old maid having reached the advanced age of nineteen.

They were married and a little girl was born, dying soon after her birth. Then another little girl was born, living until she was three and a half and dying of bloody flux (amoebic dysentery) that same dread disease of which my Grandmother White had died (and which most of our family contracted in China).

My grandfather Saunders and one of his sons had died of Asiatic cholera as it swept the country in the 1850's.

Then came the Civil War, and the governor of Missouri endeavored without success to swing the state into the Confederacy. In pursuance of this policy he issued an order that no one was permitted to leave the state, in order to force enlistment in the Confederate Army.

My father did not believe in "Secession" and did not want to fight the Union. So my father sold his share in the mill to his partner Bills, or rather traded it for land which was sold for a song by Matt Reed in whose care he left it and used the money to pay my

father's debts at my father's request. Many people, if not most, never paid their debts contracted before the war.

Then my father loaded my mother and little Leeny into a wagon and in the night crossed over into Kansas, stopping at first at Lawrence. He feared to stay near the border and well he might for during the war Quantrill's guerillas destroyed Lawrence, killing 123 people.

Before his marriage, my father had enlisted in a U. S. military force to take the place of a draftee (who furnished him with a horse and equipment). This force was raised to resist the force of John Brown. But they never saw any fighting. But my father shot himself in the foot, preparing to clean his revolver, having been in the rain and carelessly snapping the wet loads. My father suffered pain from this bullet all his life as the doctor with the force was not able to remove it.

So the family moved on; stopping awhile in Nebraska, then on to Iowa when they made a longer stay. My father had no difficulty finding a job, being a miller, a millwright and a carpenter and familiar with most machinery of the day.

Finally they moved on to Decatur, Illinois, where I was born September 24, 1870.

Chapter 2

THE SAUNDERS FAMILY

1735

My mother's families, the Saunders' and Morris', came from England or Scotland about the year 1735.

They may have come from Scotland to London with James I. The Saunders' doubtless belonged to the Alexander Clan, the heads of which were several times kings of Scotland.

The two families seem to have come to Virginia together and seemed to have stuck together through the years. My grandmother Saunders was a Morris and a cousin of my grandfather, Samuel Saunders. They settled near Culpepper Courthouse, now Culpepper, Virginia.

In the year 1843 my great-grandmother Saunders, then a widow, with her oldest son my grandfather and his family, another son and a daughter migrated to Missouri. Other sons remained in Virginia and finally removed to Greenville county not far from the North Carolina line.

Aside from the fact that one of these latter Saunders' was the manager of a tobacco factory in India I have lost contact with this branch of the family.

Beside what my mother told me about the family, my mother's old maid sister Sarah used to tell us a great deal of the family history, the only incident of their life in Virginia was that of an annual visit to Chesepeake Bay to catch fish.

My mother was only five years old when the families of Saunders' and Morris' made the five months trek with ox teams from Virginia to Missouri. The Saunders' and Morris' started with another family and being God fearing people when Sunday came they rested for the day. The other family yoked their oxen and went on. Before the following Sunday the Saunders clan caught up with them and they travelled together until the following Sunday. Then the other family went on while the Saunders' oxen rested. Again the Saunders' caught up with them and they travelled together until Sunday. This happened several times, each time the Saunders' would overtake the other family a little earlier in the week.

Finally a week came when the Saunders' wagons overtook the other wagons, passed them and drove on and camped. The other family drove in Sunday evening and camped.

Monday morning they all started out together. But soon the other family was left behind and the Saunders' never saw them again until they arrived at their destination one month after my ancestors!

My great-grandmother acquired the land on which now stands Harrisonville, the county seat of Cass county, while my grandfather Samuel Saunders established himself on a farm in the woods three miles southwest of Harrisonville bordering on the east fork of the Grand river, the river being only thirty feet wide in the widest places.

Here my grandfather built a log cabin for his family of nine and began clearing the land for his farm.

I suppose it was my great-great-grandfather Saunders who carried a long rifle under General Washington in the Revolutionary war. This rifle descends to the oldest son and my grandfather brought it to Missouri. One day the family spied a wild turkey in the woods near the house. But the flint had been misplaced having been used to light the family fire in the fireplace. So while my grandfather aimed

the rifle my grandmother brought a coal and touching off the powder in the pan, the turkey was killed and they had real Thanksgiving.

The rifle descended to my mother's oldest brothers, Uncle Tom and I often saw it in my childhood, though it had been bored to make a shotgun and changed to a percussion cap. Uncle Tom had no children so it descended to Uncle Jesse and then to my cousin Adrian. But he has no children so it went to my cousin Lee and is now in the possession of his son Edgar, Route 1, Box 169, San Marino, California.

My mother used to tell how in those pioneer days they ate corn-bread three times a day except at Sunday dinner they had biscuits. In my boyhood Uncle Jesse's wife, Aunt Fanny, baked biscuits three times a day. And weren't they good. She was the best biscuit maker in the world. She should have been; she had enough experience!

I saw the mound in the woods where the chimney had fallen the only remains of the schoolhouse where my mother went to school. They also had Sunday School in the schoolhouse and my mother said they carried their shoes and put them on just before they arrived; perhaps to save shoe leather and because they were more comfortable barefoot.

They used to make soap from scraps of refuse fat, using lye made by having an ash hopper six feet high into which they dumped the wood ashes from the fireplace, pouring water on the ashes to soak out the lye.

The hogs ran wild in the woods, living on roots and growing fat in the winter on acorns which they called mast. Once my mother was chased by one of these semi-wild hogs that were sometimes quite fierce and and my mother took refuge in the ash hopper until the hog walked leisurely away.

Though there was no yellow fever this far north, Asiatic cholera was a scourge. In those days they thought it was contracted by contact and my mother's father helped to bury a man who died of cholera and soon became ill and died. He was born in the year 1804 and died some years before the Civil War.

One of my mother's brothers, William, had gone to Iowa and married and was a soldier in the Union Army. Uncle Jesse had cholera at the time his father died. He survived but was left with a lame leg. Uncle John, the youngest child, was only a boy when the war came. Aunt Mary had married Thomas Atkinson from Kentucky who also became a Union soldier.

During the war a troop of Union cavalry was stationed in Harrisonville the county seat three miles away. These soldiers used to help themselves to horses wherever they found them. One time they came to my grandmother's farm and drove the horses from the pasture to the barn lot to take them away.

Aunt Sarah then in her early twenties but considered an old maid promptly went out, let down the bars and drove the horses out. The Bluecoats drove them back, cursed Aunt Sarah and swore they would shoot her if she drove them out again. But she did drive them out and the horses became so scared by all the commotion and the rattling of the cavalrymen's sabres that they galloped to the woods and were not seen for several days.

Between their home and Harrisonville there were two ridges parallel to each other. Once during the war a battle was fought between Union and Confederate groups (both probably irregulars) that lasted throughout the day; each group keeping strictly to its own ridge! There were no casualties!