A Dramatized History of Christian Metzger
by Ella Milligan

INTRODUCTION

The dramatized history of CHRISTIAN METZGER, the mill-wright, has been built out of a box of jack-straws. The "straws" have been collected during forty years of search, working from the known to the unknown. The far-flung sources are listed below.

All names of persons, all place names, all dates, all historical incidents, buildings, ships, publications or any item used in this story, are actually factual and were or are existent.

Christian Metzger did not come to the Colonies in 1752 seeking relief from religious persecution, as did the Pilgrim Fathers of New England, or the Swiss Mennonites of Pennsylvania. Neither did he carry a land-grant in his pocket nor a colonization scheme in his head, as did many a founder of an American Family in the South, or in Pennsylvania. It must be confessed that nothing more serious than a desire to see the New World and try his luck induced him to break away from well-established family and church connections, and a government in which the people had a voice.

The Kingdom of Württemberg, land of his birth, it must be understood, lay in the "Heart of the World" as defined by Ralph Adams Cram, in his discussion of the source of all modern culture. It lay on the western slope of the Alps and reached to the Rhine. It had been a Constitutional Monarchy since the day of Duke Ulrich and Lutheranism. It had two Houses in its National Assembly. Christian's own father had been a member of the Lower House. This government existed when Christian left Württemberg for America, and still existed for almost a century after the Independence of the Colonies in America was established. Not until the "iron hand" of the Prussian, Bismarck, appeared (1870) did Württem-

berg become a part of the German Empire. In Württemberg literacy, health, the arts and architecture rated high -- higher than in any German-speaking small State.

Christian Metzger's constructive imagination ran away with his horse sense. Or did it? He wanted to try his hand at developing, in the New World, a fine stone mill with water power like the fine stone mill near which he had lived all his young life on the tumbling Rems, at Lorch, beautiful and old historic town of Lorch, on the western slopes of the Alps. Opportunity seemed to be in the New World.

Christian realized his dream, built his mill, and lost it, through strained and helpless financing apparently, to real estate sharks; but it is probable that his inability to grasp the intricacies of the English language and the English law of the land he had sworn allegiance to was a prime factor in his financial failure.

Nevertheless, he lived well -- above the level of many wealthier colonists, his contemporaries. He reared seven children to maturity, American citizens, six daughters and one son. This son entered the War for Independence at Valley Forge, age seventeen, and remained in service until its close. Christian left a secured livelihood to his wife who survived him nine years, and a decent residue to his children.

His contribution to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and through it to the Democracy of these United States of America, which had been established before his death, may be estimated simply in the amazing achievement and distinction of his descendants living today, in the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Generations and residing from Coast to Coast, from Puget Sound to the Gulf.

Their attack and progress in the conquest and development of the Public Domain, their contribution to taxes, their support of education and public works, reflect the ambition, the imagination, the dogged perseverence of Christian Metzger the Founder. It is a historical tale to be taken into account now in these days when democracy is called to prove itself.

Louis Metsker
The Hoosier Schoolmaster and His Children
by Ella Ruhamah, his daughter

THE HOOSIER SCHOOLMASTER AND HIS CHILDREN.

In the eighteen-sixties there lay in northeastern Indiana a little farm of one hundred and twenty acres still retaining much of the freshness of the original Northwest Territory. This place had been rented by a young schoolmaster, turned farmer, tempted by the war prices prevailing for farm products. The county was Whitley, named in 1838 ~~when its boundaries were set, in honor of Colonel Whitley, who had given~~ his life for the Territory at the battle of the Thames, 1813, according to the sheepskin certificates before me, signed by Martin Van Buren, President of the United States, this farm had been bought, part in 1837, more in 1840, from the government, at one dollar and a quarter an acre, by Dawson Pompey of Greene County, Ohio, who before that, had been of Greensville County, Virginia, a county lying on the southern line of that interesting and famous state.

Also, in Tuscarawas County, Ohio, in 1840, there was born a Pensylvania Dutch boy, who, with his parents, had come to Whitley County some ten years later, and in time had taken up school teaching. Thus it was, that the farm and the boy were of the same age, in '65, when this account really begins.

Dawson Pompey's family had scattered to do for themselves. His hair was white and he wanted to quit hard work. The Pensylvania Dutch schoolmaster had married a fine girl, had two children, and wished to engage in more profitable work than school teaching was then. So young Louis Metsker (for so he spelled the good name Metzger with which he had been born, saying, whimsically, that it should be spelled as it sounds), rented the farm of Dawson Pompey, who went away to the peach country of Michigan where his children were.

Now Dawson Pompey knew and liked a good peach; however it was not the peaches of Michigan that drew him thither, but his children. I know well that I am not able to convey to you the fresh fruitfulness of that farm he left behind. The original forest into which he had set his house in 1840, in the twenty-five years elapsed, had receded for the most part to the borders of the place, except on the south, where a tall fence divided it from the farm of Otho Ganay, and other farms, open, like it. The land was undulating, rising gently to the north, for it lay on the watershed between Blue River Lake two miles north, and winding Eel River three miles South. In truth it was over the worn crest of a moraine of the Ice Age.

The house was reached by a lane which turned in from the road, through a heavy wide gate a mile or so to the east. This lane **wound** through a strip of woods thick with dogwood, crossed a tiny run **choked** with yellow cowslips, rose over a strip of clearing, where you might not step without crushing spring beauties and blue violets, came down by the pond with wild iris growing in the edges, and after bumping along over a corduroy bridge, was blocked by a gate into the domestic precinct. Admitted, it passed between the orchard on the right, and the garden on

the left, to halt by the little front gate of the yard around the house. Then bending easily on around the yard it came to the third barrier, a farm gate weighted with stone. Finally free, it turned sharply to the south,riverward, and ran narrow and straight, between rail fences, down to the main road a mile away.

Had a stranger, alighting at that little front yard gate, noted the house, he would have known that Dawson Pompey were not of the North. That architecture was southern. A brain aflame with aspiration to achieve southern gentility and comfort, had constructed there out of the rude logs of the Northwest Territory a house different from any around, and not without artistic success. The main structure was a rectangle, a story and a half high, with low pitched roof, and gables facing east and west. The logs were well hewn and set together. The gables were closed by broad sawn boards set upright and battened. A big fireplace and chimney, built of Canadian gneiss, left there by glacial drift, was built on the outside of the east end, and one similar, at the west. On each side of the chimney were square windows in the second story, only. The closed in stairway at the east end was lighted by one of these. The rectangular space of this main wing was divided into two rooms, the larger the living room, the west end, a bedroom, charming in summer because it had a door and a window of its own opening upon the south lawn.

Extended from the north side of the main structure was an ell. The roof of this portion, also low pitched, started up from the corner of the east end and came down at the corner of the west end, of the main building. Thus the floor space covered by this roof was as wide as the length of the main house. But much of this space was open porch. Under this roof the kitchen walls were built up in such a way as to leave a porch hallway between the living room and the kitchen. In other words the kitchen had porches on three sides, the roof of which joined the main house, affording a pleasant place for breakfast in the morning, for supper in the evening, and for the noon meal, the cool draughts of the open hall between.

The posts of the porches were joined by a hand rail, leaving formal entrances to them. The door of the living room was opposite the one in the kitchen, both opening into the open hallway. The east and the west porches were closed at the north by a leanto built against the kitchen at that end, affording a pantry and storeroom space. Under the eaves of the leanto was the raintrough hollowed from a huge tree trunk, like a mighty Indian canoe. In this the children floated their green bark flutes made from the willows in the spring, and here they fished for young tadpoles.

The west porch was shaded by a row of cherry trees, which extended, also, along the south fence of the yard, further from the house. This row of trees, white in May, red in July, and shady in August afforded two little girls a place to play, a place to climb, and a chance to know the robbins. From the flat boulder step of the east porch a path ran straight to the garden gate.

This gate was of palings, like the fence. It was often open, but guarded by clumps of rosebushes on either side. I have given up findingthe variety of rose that bloomed by that gate. They were luscious and pink beyond any, now. One might hope to find them in a new world, but there are no new places now; all is trodden under foot. The tender beauty of these roses is attested by the juiciness of the snails that fed thereon. Inside the garden was a patch of purple flags. Across the path, back of the gray green mat of May pinks,a generous plot of lavender hyacinths heralded Easter. After they had drooped and returned again to the earthly bed of the playmates of the god, the gray green mat dressed itself out in fringy pink silk. The the bachelor-buttons, the larkspurs, and the poppies took possession of the garden.

But the glory of the garden was the Juneberry tree. That is what Dawson Pompey called it, and he planted it. There was no other tree like it in all the country. Though a school teacher, Louis Metsker knew no other name for it. There it stood in the center of the garden, like a slender cherry tree with a purple fruit like juicy big huckleberries, but a flavor all its own, never to be forgotten if once tasted, a fruit as rare and reticent as the night-blooming-cereus.

The burnt orange day lilies and non-descript hollyhocks had their own way in the lane and about the front gate. Across the lane from the front gate was the log stable for the horses. I have often wondered why so many pioneers put the undesirable stables so near the front gate. But I can understand the convenience of it, when horses were to be saddled for almost any trip or errand, or when there must be haste to bring the doctor in need, or when, after a long ride home from market or a visit, all were tired and hungry.

Beyond the stable, lay the orchard, along the lane down toward the iris bordered pond, and then running back at right angles a long way, or so it seemed, to little feet hunting sweet apples at the far end. In the center, some place, the yellow Harvest apples fell to the ground, and later the Bell-Flowers were to be had. When frosts were heavy the crisp and spicy Northern Spys were prime. In picking time the great green Tulpehockans were laid away for winter. The sweet apples were gathered by the wagon load for cider, and the Rambeaus, sine qua non, were carefully put by for thickening. Sweet cider boiled down, and Rambeaus for thickening made the apple butter ne plus ultra.

If the Juneberry tree was the glory of the garden, the peaches were the pride of the orchard. At the entrance grew the green, but early juicy clings. Along the side nearest the pond grew yellow mealy sorts mostly reserved for jars of peach butter. At the far end grew the red-cheeked juicy yellow freestones, wonderful as the roses at the garden gate. Not in Delaware, nor in Michigan, nor the Western Slope of Colorado, can they be found now. I know, who have searched. The world was new then, and Dawson Pompey knew and loved a good peach, Dawson Pompey, who had accepted wholeheartedly God's command, "Go ye forth and beautify the Earth".

Life on this farm in the sixties was living in a land flowing with milk and honey. Never mind the war, and bloodshed elsewhere. Reports of this came, but it seemed remote. There was the even flow of work to be done, and days between to market, to visit, to think. It seemed like one long Spring, like a continuous June day hovering on Summer. It was the June of life for Louis Metsker and his wife Clarissa Nickey. It was the June time of the farm, too. The trees bloomed; the children played on the grass and splashed in the little pools after a shower; the peacocks spread their glorious tails and strutted across the lawn; the speckled guinea-hens scolded and ran under the fence; the gray goose led her goslings down to the pond; the smelly sheep were being sheared in the shed.

Not all was work; visitors came, frequently for the day. None were so welcome as Jacob Nickey, big, magnanimous and interested in his son-in-law. On his arrival the eldest girl knew the proper courtesy. As soon as he was comfortably seated by the fire it was to bring from the bedroom the shiny brown spittoon and put it by his chair. This was always acknowledged by a look of gratitude, and invitation to climb upon his knee, a chance to inspect the silver box of tobacco, and once only, once to taste a grain. Jacob Nickey chewed like he did everything else, impetuously and assiduously.

The fastidious guest was Miss Rose Nickey, school-mistress, first of the young ladies in Whitley County to be honored with a license to teach within its boundaries. She had been "out west" too, had taught little improvised schools in Missouri, had found the privations too great, and prodigal daughter that she was, had returned to Jacob Nickey, her father. She had found no young man of Whitley County, nor Missouri either, to her liking for a husband, and had remained single even when her youngest sister wed Louis Metsker. When at last she brought formally young husband, George Perry, of French extraction, for the first visit to this farm, the best foot was put foremost as it should have been. Memorable was the rustle of her full silken skirts, memorable the perfect supper, finished by an unparalleled dessert of floating island.

Outstanding in the sixties, was the visit of Maria, eldest sister of Louis, and his brothers Christian and Nathaniel Metsker. She had not seen her brothers since, as boys, they had set out from Tuscarawas County in a Conestoga wagon. She had come as far as Fort Wayne by steam cars, a modern mode of travel not yet tried by her brothers. Maria, the eldest, tall, with snapping black eyes, stern of mien, a whimsical sadness clinging to her, but broken now and then by a flash of wit, or turn of repartee that truly was entrancing. And she brought gifts,too, for the children, toys from the city.

Brotherly was the devotion of Christian, and his wife, Jane Wolf, to young Louis and Clarissa while they were getting started. He it was with his elder children who came of evenings, several miles, to help with the apple paring for apple butter making. He and his wife for the poultry dressing near Thanksgiving time, against an early start for the market at Fort Wayne; when so many barrels of turkeys were dressed and

packed in as, it seemed to the sleepy children, would reed the whole world. Ere the work was done it would be near sun-up and time to start. So they made pleasure out of toil.

A professional visitor was the enterprising Dr. Wiaup, dentist, if you please, who had been a Hoosier schoolmaster. As he dismounted, and was being ushered in, Clarissa's aristocratic nose was in the air. She certainly disapproved of that visit, or was it of the visitor? Well, there was a taint of sharp practice clinging to the Wiaup name. And was not Lizzie, the clever sister of the dentist a veritable Hoosier Becky Sharp, over whom Louis Metsker had dallied a trifle in school-days. For young Wiaup and his sister had been schoolmates of Louis in that famous school of Alexander Douglass, at Columbia City, and to have been mates in that school was a stronger bond than, today, that of any college fraternity. So Louis would encourage his friend's new enterprise of filling teeth, and was ready to grant an operation on his own. He would give him business and a good dinner, too, which unluckily, must be prepared by Clarissa. Would not she have a tooth filled with gold, too? No, indeed! She said she thought it extravagance in people just getting a start! There is evidence, too, that she was a conservative person and that the anticipation of pain was an inhibition easily checking any tendancy to try a questionable innovation. Dr. Wiaup left that afternoon, little satchel of mallets and drills in hand, without fazing the cool reserve of his fellow teacher's wife.

And the dread visitor, Death, came. Suddenly he came, one morning. Clarissa had bathed and cared for her first boy child, and laid him in the cushions in the big Dutch rocking chair before the fire. She had thought him perfectly well. An hour or so later she returned to find him in the throes of a spasm - she rang the dinner bell to call her husband from the far field. Arrived, the only thing to do was to ride as fast as the horse could go, four miles for the nearest doctor, and if he were at home, there were the four miles back! Clarissa got rue from the garden and made plasters for the baby's feet. Then she held her child to her breast and waited in breathless anxiety. At noon the doctor came, at full speed, but when he lifted the babe from Clarissa's arms it was too late. The second morning after, friends, brothers and sisters, gather. Dear little babe is brought from the cold bedroom where he has been lying alone on a little board across the foot of the bed, so lonely and so cold for a baby, and is put in a little black walnut casket with puffs of white satin and lace inside - for all the world like a fine wax doll he looks. Blue ribbons have been tied in the little sleeves of his shiny white dress. Clarissa is prostrate with grief, lying across the foot of her bed. Gently she is assisted to her chair. A good man is reading words from the Bible, and then he breathes a long and feeling prayer. Now the little casket is set gently in the back of Jacob Nickey's spring wagon (Jacob Nickey who was always first in everything, first to have a spring wagon) because it is a spring wagon, and because he is a patriarch, and plays up to his part. Then follow Louis and Clara, and all the others, in their farm wagons, a sad, but neighborly procession moving down that long narrow lane between the rail fences, toward the cemetery on the banks of Eel River.

This Spring passed, and the next one came. Louis and Clarissa had prospered. They were now thinking of a farm of their own. Louis was looking around. One would think the charming seclusion of the Pompey place, added to its fruitfulness were good enough. But access to school, church and market were to be considered. To the North and East a few miles lay the small village,now, of Churubusco, where Louis had taught the school. Within less than a mile of this village, lay a farm developed out of the wilderness by George Harter, a remarkable man. But his work was done, and his seven greedy sons and daughters with their wives and husbands, had quarreled with the widow and his farm was split into small portions. The widow, helpless wished to dispose of the parcel left her and settle under the roortree of a cordial daughter. Thus it was, at the close of the sixties, that Louis and Clarissa had an opportunity to buy a plat of sixty acres, and while it was run down, one that afforded the advantages desired for growing children.

When Dawson Pompey heard that his renter had bought a farm and would leave him, he came back from Michigan to attend to his affairs. Once he came to the farm to see Louis and Clara. A handsome figure he was, well built, well preserved, with snowy white hair above a benignant countenance and a shiny vandyke brown skin. Dawson Pompey was a negro.

Who were the families on the southern border of Virginia, who had freed the half dozen men who in the early forties, or late thirties, had bought government land in Whitley County, founding there a small colony of blacks? First to come was Benjamin Jones who had left Greensville County in 1835. He and the others had tarried some years in Greene County, Ohio, but by 1837 we find Benjamin in Whitley County, Indiana, and Dawson Pompey buying land at the land office in Fort Wayne. When Benjamin got to Whitley County he had with him eight children, one at least, Peterson, a married man, whose wife was distinguished by birth in the Nation's capital. Another of his sons was Britton, who brought up twelve children there in Whitley County. A son-in-law soon followed Benjamin, named Wyatt Jeffries. At the same time came Claybourne Pompey and his nephews Fielding and Dawson, all of whom bought land contiguous to each other.

Had you in '63 gone down that narrow straight lane between the rail fences, a mile to the main road, and then have turned to your right, shortly you would have approached a small frame church and opposite it on the other side of the road, a little white school house. These were the church and school of the colored people. They had not been welcome settlers. For two generations they found it obligatory to attend their own church and school. In the records of Whitley County it is written that on March 11,1840, Benjamin Jones and Winnifred, his wife, were summoned before a Justice of the Peace by the overseers of the poor to show cause why they did not comply with an act concerning "free negroes, mulattoes, servants and slaves". On April 11th of the same year at 12 o'clock Wyatt Jeffries, and Eliza, his wife, at 2 P.M. Lucinda Jones, at 3 P.M. Britton Jones, and at 4 o'clock Claybourne Pompey were required by the overseers of the poor to show cause why they did not comply with the same act. In explanation of these suits I find that the legislature of Indiana had enacted a law requiring all

"Free negroes, mulattoes, servants and slaves, on entering the State, to give bond in the sum of five hundred dollars to indemnify the State against their becoming public charges".

However, they were industrious and thrifty. Else how could they have removed large families from the southern border of Virginia to southern Ohio, and then again to northern Indiana. While these overland journeys were in process, there was no income from gainful occupation and yet children and stock had to be fed. On their arrival, there must be cash to pay for the land, and five hundred dollars indemnity to insure the State against vagrancy. Once more attached to the soil, there must be money to tide them over while clearing was made, a house built, and a crop grown.

They were hopeful and enterprising. In the records of the first Court of Whitley County, held in 1841, there is the history of a case, notable as being the only one of its kind in the country. Claybourne Pompey was indicted for usury. He plead guilty and was fined six dollars and costs. It appears from the record that he had loaned to a white settler, Richard Baughan, forty dollars and had taken ten dollars for one year's interest.

They were pious, too. Peterson Jones acted as religious leader, and pastor of the black flock. The curious white settlers often attended their special revival meetings. Many stories were extant of the religious fervor of these occasions. One will suffice. The dark devotees were gathered at the altar. The Reverend Peterson was praying for a visitation of the Holy Spirit upon his kneeling children. Many times he repeated the request leaping up and down to the loud "amen" and swaying bodies of his brethren. Finally in one supreme effort he called: "Oh, Lawd, come down! Come down now!! Come right thru de roof!!! Is'e pay fo de shingles!!"

Back of the little church rested a tiny cemetery, enclosed in a rail fence in the sixties. Pretentious stones marked the graves of Wyatt Jeffries and Claybourne Pompey. Others there were quite simple. Among them was Dawson Pompey's wife's. And as the colored pioneers passed out, their children scattered, and even now white folks were ready to buy up piecemeal their acres. And that, in the end, befell the pleasant place of Dawson Pompey.

On an early May morning of '70 Louis and Clarissa moved to their own farm of sixty acres. Down past the iris bordered pond, over the new clearing carpeted with spring beauties and violets, across the run, choked with yellow cowslips, winding through the woods where the buds on the dogwood warned that it would soon be time to plant the corn, out through the heavy gate went the procession of three wagons loaded with household stuff, passing out of the sunny, hopeful, prosperous, springtime of the sixties into the strenuous, sweating, despairing Summer of the seventies. Last of the wagons bore Clarissa, delicate, now, for in her arms she carried a young babe, named for her, Callie.

With whimsical thoughtfulness, Christian, the Metsker with the ascetic face, - how well he would have taken the part of Christ at Oberamergau - had fastened the Dutch rocking chair firmly on the top of that load, and there Clarissa rode, like a queen of the carnival, her liege lords preceding. But the crystal tear stealing down her fair cheek and falling on the baby's hand betrayed the emotion in her heart. No carnival this. Rather a procession to deprivation, hard work indoor and out, a run down farm to be rejuvenated, a mortgage to be paid, and a mortgage or debt to Clarissa was a burden, a nightmare, a disgrace to be lived down, a constant threatening calamity.

Closing the gate of the Pompey place behind them the wagons had not far to go to enter the bounds of the new farm. Half a mile to the east brought them to the entrance of another lane, too - a lane through the farm, bringing them up in front of the house. Here the wagons halted, where about them lay what was left of George Harter's dream, materialized with dogged determination out of the wilderness.

If the knowing stranger at the yard gate of the Pompey house had declared its builder from the South, standing at the gate of the Harter house, he would have unhesitatingly said that George Harter was from Philadelphia or environs, red brick and all. There his house stood, shaded by tall scraggly locust trees in front, with the orchard beyond it, good red brick laid up in white mortar, 40 by 30 feet, two full storeys, barge board finish on low pitched gables, narrow cornice on eaves, and long narrow hooded porch across the front. An ample chimney on the east end made draught for fire places on lower and upper stories. The windows were bored for their height, with overlapping sash set with small panes. Until recently there had been a one storey addition on the west end which served as kitchen and dining room - but a fire had destroyed it. There was left only piles of brick and debris, with the exposed plastered wall of the main house where the addition had joined it. The house seemed already old, though it were doubtful if it had yet stood a quarter of a century. Since the death of its owner and builder things had gone rapidly to the dogs.

I said George Harter was a remarkable man. His achievement is the more outstanding considering his handicaps. This was the first brick house in Whitley County, and the brick he had made on his own farm. He had probably laid them up, too, for masons were still few in number in the seventies at which time this was one of three brick farm houses in all the County. That his ambition had been spurred on by his wife is doubtful, and that his efforts had not been appreciated by his children is certain from the decadence into which his property had fallen after his death.

He had been a promotor of education, too. He had given the ground and helped erect the third public school house in the County. It had stood in the field to the west of this house. It had been the school in which Louis Metsker, the boy, after he came from Tuscarawas County in a Conestoga wagon, began his education. Since he was his Mother's youngest son he had not been required to do anything against

his will, in accordance with the custom of his ancestors nineteen centuries before, as recorded in Julius Caesar. At the age of ten, then, he had decided for himself that he would attend this school, on the Harter place, now his own, though every vestige of the building had now vanished but the boulders of the fireplace. In telling this to his daughters, he would say with naive chagrin, that he was soon up with the boys of his own age. The girls, exchanging amused glances on the sly, felt that he was soon beyond them.

Although George Harter thus fostered education, yet, the deeds that came with the sixty acres show that his wife, Elizabeth, signed with "her mark", and likewise two of his daughters. There is another evidence yet remaining that he was a creative and constructive genius, in spite of opposition. In the garden on this place lie three old mill-stones hewn or cut from the boulders which so thickly strewed his farm. These witness that by his own handicraft he made meal for himself and for his neighbors. But this diversion has kept, too long, the wagons waiting.

The household stuff is unloaded and set within with misgivings. The pump standing by the path to the front door will not respond to the vigorous strokes of thirsty men. Its curb is broken and dangerous to little children. The front porch creaks and gives and betrays tendencies to fall beneath the blind tread of men carrying heavy furniture. Once within the broad and well paneled door one sees good building. The walls are thick, the windows deeply recessed. Opposite the front door another opens toward the orchard. The fireplace is ample with a great shelf above it. In the chimney recess a winding stair on one side leads above. On the other is the great cupboard for books and valuables. Opposite the fireplace a smaller portion is partitioned off for a bedroom, which has ample light and draught. Ascending, the second storey is found to be one large room with fireplace in east end and three windows on each side, six in all. The walls are plastered. The floor is laid with poplar boards, more than a foot in width, smooth and white. But are these blood-stains, marring its whiteness? Gruesome thought! A mysterious awe fills the children's minds. Can this be the scene of a Blue Beard mystery? The father explains that the greedy Harters had been wont to hang here their freshly butchered hogs and calves, awaiting the cutting up and salting. The first sawmill in Whitley County was established in 1850 and these fine boards were no doubt of its first product. You may see them there today in this house of George Harter's and of the Metsker family, as they were, beautiful, but with stains of blood. The children play in and out. They make their first acquaintance with fleas, which seem to infest the soil under that front porch where the numerous Harter hounds had been wont to rendevous.

How did Louis Metsker inveigle Clarissa Nickey into all of this! Let those who understand the ways of men with women explain! It is not for me. When his wife sat down in weary despair, every look and gesture one of resentment and rebuke, he laughed lightly and began to busy himself and his men with the piles of fresh lumber already there

for building the summer kitchen. Not by words, but by actual effort would he make things better.

June saw the locust trees bloom and fill the air with fragrance. June saw the summer kitchen finished with an ample handy woodshed into which it opened, making, beside the wood and hickory bark, a place for the barrel of salt, the work bench, the tubs and washboards, the barrels of salted meat, the soap barrel, the scythes, and cradles, and rakes, the hoes, spades and the ash-pails, the boxes of hickory and walnuts, the iron kettle for scalding water at butchering time and soap making, the copper kettle for apple butter making - a place for cleaning muddy boots, yes, and a reserve seat for truant little girls, who had ventured on their own account to visit the fascinating home of Uncle Christ, where were so many little colts, and lambs, and darling baby ducks, a loom-house, too, where Aunt Jane made great treadles and reeds go up and down with a crash, weaving carpet. But a mother in vexation had come for them and helped their recreant little legs towardshome by gentle scutchings of a cherry-limb, which reposed threateningly above their heads while they meditated, sitting in this woodshed.

The world had now become one of sordid toil and hurry that swept even the children with it. Louis had still rented forty acres of Dawson Pompey, and taken the Hyndman forty of the dismembered Carter place. There were many hired hands to feed, and jugs of water to be carried to thirsty toilers. Little girls should carry sheaves of wheat ready for the shocking. In emergency they could help their father by raking the cradled swathes into bundles for his binding. That summer, in the Sunday School in the schoolhouse in the village where their father was well known as a teacher, they had learned to sing two gospel songs, which were readily interpreted by the life of this farm:

"O where are the reapers who garner in
The sheaves of wheat from the fields of sin?"

and that other, so redolent of labor:

"Work for the night is coming,
Work thro' the morning hours;
Work while the dew is sparling,
Work mid springing flowers.
Work when the day grows brighter,
Work in the glowing sun," etc.

and then in the second stanza:

"Work for the night is coming,
Work through the sunny noon,"

and the third, closing out the day:

"Work for the night is coming
Under the sunset skies
While the bright tints are glowing
Work for daylight flies." etc.

Annie L.Walker may have been city-bred, but in some way she caught the spirit of persistent pioneering, and her lines, set to Mason's music were sung lustily, with a meaning, by young and old in Whitley County in the seventies.

On the Pompey place all labor was blended with the beauty of roses, with the gorgeous color of the peacock, with the mellow flavor of juicy peaches. But on the Harter place there were no roses, no peacocks, no peaches. When autumn came, it was the deepest disappointment that there were no good apples. This orchard, though planted by dear old "Johnny Appleseed," with the best intention, had not brought forth fruit true to type. Louis said that next spring he would graft the orchard. Trusting children fancied that grafting was a fairy process whereby, no longer, the desuetude of childish delight through the dearth of a barren orchard was to be tolerated.

In the spring of '71 there was much sawing in the orchard, much visiting of the Pompey trees, and those of Jacob Nickey, whence were brought carefully assorted packages of tips of branches. There was much setting of these tips and spreading of yellow wax over the apparent mutilation, leaving in a stubby state the work of "Johnny Appleseed". But Louis said it would bring the beloved Bell Flowers, and the Spicy Northern Spys, and it did, though the time was long to waiting children.

But there were compensations. This lack of fruit in the orchard made excuse for fresh morning walks to the peaceful Pompey woods where juicyblackberries abounded, or to the Hyndman forty where was a grove of wild plums, yellow, and rosy purple. It gave occasion for a day off when the men drove ten miles and brought back huckle-berries with a truly Boston flavor.

No doubt the want of roses brought out the beauty of the snowy trilliums, blooming under the umbrellas of the amorous Mayapples, or the slender yellow columbines dipped in red, skillful batik-work of Mother Nature, or the reddish leopard lily of the fields, the scarlet flower, the butterfly weed flaming on the hillside, blue and fragrant iris by the pond or the rare yellow lady-slipper of the marshes, northern member of the orchid family. The yellow primrose and the rose-pink horsemint shed their fragrance in the lane and in the corners of the fence along the dusty roadside.

Rarer were the flowers, still, when the sudor of the seventies was washed away by a picnic on the shores of Blue River Lake, rarest gem of Indiana. In each direction there were chains of lakes, intra-morainic, for as I said, the Erie moraines of the Ice Age stretch across Whitley County. But Blue River Lake was unique, not an intra-morainic, but an inter-morainic body. That is, it lay on the top of the low broad moraine and not between two of them. This explains its rare aquatic vegetation of great variety. There were three miles of boating along the curving shores among the rarely disturbed life of Mother Nature's acquarium, along the shores as fresh and undespoiled as when haunted only by skulking Pottawatomie or Miami. Here, alone, of all the lakes, grew the pale yellow petaled lotus, Nelumbo lutea,

Victoria regia of the north, with leaves rolled up and rocking like a boat, or expanded into orbicular shields twenty to thirty inches in diameter and flapping in the wind. Resting on the polished table of the water's surface were in abundance the waxy white saucers of Nymphaea, filled with yellow honey. Here there were the triangular leaves and showy purple spikes of Pickerel weed, the symmetrical oval crimson shields of Brazenia, the graceful dignity of the reed grass, the graceful stems, and densely whorled capillary leaves of the water Milfoil. And in the boggy jungle of the inlet, passable only to birds and reptiles, grew the carnivorous Pitcher Plant, undisturbed for centuries.

Returning from a day like this, there was carried home a basket of rock bass, and shining sunfish, for a delicacous breakfast, inspiration for a fresh beginning. In truth '71 was, for Louis and Clarissa, not unlike its place in the decade, a year of fresh beginnings. Many a cherry, a plum, a peach, a pear was planted. Grapes, raspberries, blackberries, were set out, that in the eighties brought glorious and full fruition. And the scraggly locust trees underwent their share of surgery. Their lofty tops were brought low, but even the first summer they poured forth healthy thanks in a wealth of shade and fragrance. And Mrs. Clarissa was busy making borders. Visits to the Pompey place brought back roses, and blue falgs, and May pinks. No opportunity was lost to get a start of Bleeding Heart, Lemon Lily, of Peonies and Phlox.

The autumn of '71 was smoky. For weeks clouds of it hung on the horizon. The small of it was continuously in the air. They said there were marshes burning in the Township. A fire caught in the marsh on the Hyndman forty where the yellow lady-slipper grew. Men fought it several days, smouldering in the dry muck, and destroying, almost,forever, the growth of these rare plants. One morning a colored hired hand arriving, announced that the house on the house on the Pompey place was burned to the ground. It was so, nothing left but melted glass, and bits of iron. The papers brought the news of Chicago's firey castrophe, and the people thought that the barage of smoke in Whitley County was increased from that disaster.

That fall the daughters of Clarissa came into possession of their first story books for children. Was it Mother Goose Rhymes? Oh no, The Book of One Hundred Pictures; one bound in green, one bound in blue, and bought from the pennies earned in harvest, carrying sheaves, or carrying water. One Hundred fine wood engravings of scenes with children in them, and with intelligent comment on the meaning and the moral in the picture. Mother Goose was to be had in print then, but Louis thought such nonsense beneath the caliber of his children. How long until they had been read through? About two hours. What then? Read them again. Most appalling was Sampson pulling down the pillars over the heads of all the Philistines. Most amusing was Dick being dashed headlong from a gig attached to a run-a-way horse, Dick who had disobeyed his parents. How could this be amusing? 'Twas like things seen on the stage - just retribution - leaving the tricky Dick flying through the air in a most compromising position, and the audience wondering what he would say when he came up before his father. As to

a broken neck, the audience expected him to appear at once and bow and smile before the curtain.

In the sixties the family reading had been largely furnished by Township traveling libraries, a trunkful of the best books, well bound in sheep, being deposited with each Twonship trustee, and loaned as many as three at a time to a family; an institution maintained by the State and largely taken advantage of by the people. As a Trustee of Smith Township, Louis Metsker had had such a trunkful of books in his house most of the time at the Pompey place. The weekly paper had been the Cincinnati Enquirer, or was it the Times? - with a Mast-head appealing to the pioneer. The letters of this were formed from log cuttings in the method of rustic chairs, or arbors, the construction softened and graced by little twigs and tendrils. On the father's lap behind that paper the little Metsker girls had learned to read. How? No one can say. Louis was a school-teacher at heart, and enjoyed experimenting on his children.

But in the seventies the paper was Harper's Weekly, illustrated, and opening up the boundaries of the children's world even to some region across the ocean. There was the visit of the Prince of Wales, and the grand balls given for him in this country. There was the wedding of Nellie Grant. What child would not feel familiar with the White House after that? There was Horace Greeley with the curious fringe of whiskers for so cultivated a gentleman. But he was a Democrat and Louis laughed at him, and, so, did his children. There were the ugly pictures, in the upper left hand corner, on the last page (not in the middle of the front page) drawn by Nast, which Louis and Clarissa thought clever, concerning men, somewhere, called Boss Tweed, and the Mayor. But, when the railroad joining Detroit with Chicago was completed through Churubusco, this paper gave way to the Chicago Inter Ocean.

Yet the numbers, bound into two or three huge volumes by the deft Clarissa, were enjoyed for many years, in the attic, by the children on rainy days, or when they wished to slip away from dish washing or dusty sweeping. There was a rarer volume, still, bound by this practical lady, ere she was Clarissa Metsker. "The Children's Friend", of the fifties, a welcome and appreciated visitor, (evidently) to the Sunday Schools of those pioneer times. Clarissa's children of the seventies found it better than their own, and wore it out with reading. There were the wood cuts of the Victorian painters, masterpieces. Sir Wilkie Collins was a favorite. There was the story of Grace Darling, and a picture of her in the boat with her father on the black and stormy water. When the next little sister was added to the family, the children begged that she might be called Grace Darling, and so in 1872 it came about she was.

When Grace Darling came, things were mending. The new "Georgian" front porch had replaced that old one. The curb of the well, and the cellar doors were solid and safe for children to play upon ad libitum. The deep windows were filled with gernaniums even in the winter. And Jacob Nickey had made another innovation.

On a snowy wintry night Louis and Clarissa with their little girls all wrapped in buffalo robes - had Louis realized that those robes meant in the destruction of the bison he had never bought them - no nor had them as a gift - but wrapped in buffalo robes the family slipped over to the patriarchal headquarters. On entering, not the usual glowing hearth and roaring chimney greeted them, but out in front where it had drawn the numerous families about for so many years stood a veritable, and creditable, reduction of the Monument of Lysicrates, done in shining Russia iron and nickel. Evidently Lord Elgin had made Greek art so popular that Greek design had permeated industrial art and reached to the pioneer regions of Whitley County, Indiana. The utility of this parlor stove was so complete that the cheer and romance of the open fire vanished like mist before the sun. Louis and Clara would have one, too. But since they were paying off that mortgage they would be satisfied with a plain cast iron model.

When now the little girls numbered four, Clarissa felt the burden of hand made garments, lovely as they were when done by her. Again Jacob Nickey played his role of patriarch. He had presented to his wife an improved Wheeler and Wilson, which made a stitch alike on both sides. Gladly he would let his daughter Clarissa have the discarded Grover and Baker, a good machine, though leaving a chain stitch on the under side. But Clarissa was pleased to have this help and looked forward hopeful of prosperity like her father's. Louis, too, ventured to avail himself of a mower, and a Dodge self-rake reaper. Now the cradles and the scythes and the rakes were relegated to the archives of farming. Now the lovely cordings, and shirrings, and dainty puffings of cambric and percale were replaced by rows of machine stitchings often in gay and contrasting color.

In a prosperous autumn Louis and Clarissa attended the State Fair at Indianapolis. They saw the Soldier's Monument, and the Blind Asylum, and the School for Deaf and Dumb. 'Twas wonderful! They brought each little girl a bead basket made by the blind children, who made not a mistake in the colors of the design. At another time Louis took his wife to visit his people in Tuscawras County. She found them not nearly so Dutch as she had anticipated. Some of them were quite well-to-do and aristocratic.

During the early seventies the "Georgian" front porch was the center of life on a Sunday. Here in the Dutch rocker sat Louis, and in the new cane rocker sat his wife, the song books of their courtship in hand, some with buckwheat notes, some with round, but containing the most melodious music as they sang them together again, her soft treble, his mellow base.

Later in the seventies that religious activity which occupied the family to the end of the century set in, and Louis became the superintendent of the Sunday School and steward in the church in which his children were to direct the music, teach, and put on the many entertainments. Local charity and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union began to give Clarissa something to do outside her home, although its duties were increasing.

When 1879 arrived Louis had paid off that mortgage, and had immediately taken the obligation of another purchase of the Hyndman forty. The Harter house had been enlarged now by an ell pro-viding, kitchen, pantry, cistern, and porches, one opening on the garden, one on the setting sun, where the family was wont to gather when the day's work was done. The great room up-stairs, with six windows, was now divided making private bedrooms for the growing family. The children numbered six, six daughters, and late in December came the seventh, in December 1879, the charmed seventh daughter, destined by the Dutch saying to see the world.

The eldest daughter now a tall and slender girl of fifteen birthday's had made a good record for herself at school. The only standardized tests, then, of intellectual attainment in the County were the teacher's examinations. Having tried one of these, on her teacher's recommendation she had been granted a teacher's license, a first class teacher's license. Although so young, yet Louis and Clarissa thought she might safely try a summer session of the country schools, and one was secured for the asking, on the reputation of her father. Now came a break in the continuity of the family life for she must be away from Monday morning to the Friday evening. However, so well she played with that school of fifteen boys and girls that her reputation was made as the daughter of her father, and in that autumn, having now turned sixteen, she entered on her career as a primary teacher in the little town of Churubusco.

The easy eighties were ushered in by the addition of an organ, a musical instrument bought from the earnings of the eldest daughter, It was a fine one bought at the factory in Fort Wayne, where the father, mother and daughter had selected it themselves, while the father had so proudly said that his daughter was buying it out of her own money. Now the three older girls had music lessons. More and more that organ, on evenings after supper, and on Sundays, became the center of a whole-some social life as these daughters grew up through the eighties. The second daughter took up teaching, and then spent a year in the city, specially studying music - this sister so full of natural talent. Late in the eighties Callie, named for her mother, followed in the footsteps of her sisters, and kept up the reputation of the family, The lane, now a handsome avenue of hardwood trees, owing to the thoughtful planting of louis in the seventies, the people called "Lover's Lane", leading to "Locust Lawn", abode of bounteous hospitality.

At the close of the eighties Louis has purchased the Pompey forty, and is looking with covetous eye on another forty between him and the village. He is busy building a barn, the finest in the County. So occupied with his own affairs is he that he hardly knows the romantic stork has sent advance information of another visit to Locust Lawn. Clarissa awaits its coming in quiet communion with herself, and some confidences entrusted to her eldest daughter. An ineffable and mysteri-ous loneliness enthralls, during gestation. This eighth daughter, or ninth child will have a bond of sympathy with its mother that willmake her slightest wish its first consideration.

The house is full of good reading. The Century Magazine is a regular visitor. Howells, and the modern novels lie at hand. The poets are household texts. The rag carpets are displaced by ingrain

manufacture. The simple, but fine old furniture is moved out, foe new, ugly, marble-topped, but modern. Sheer draperies on those old recessed windows make them beautiful. Flowers and fruit now are unsurpassed anywhere. Locust Lawn has become a real Place, known widely and a rendevous of Whitley County's best young men.

On a September night, while the clock is not yet on the stroke of twelve, a gentle lady, Aunt Ruah, comes to the rooms of the seven girls and gently wakens them. She tells them to rise. It is the dawn of a great day. For there has been born in the Metsker family, late, and at last, a son, a brother. The girls dress and descend, doubtful, and one by one. In the pillowed Dutch rocking chair reclines a wonderful child, and there is such an atmosphere of wonder and joy and surprise in the father and mother as would convince the sturdiest skeptic. At last the girls have a brother, and to bring him up, he has seven sisters.

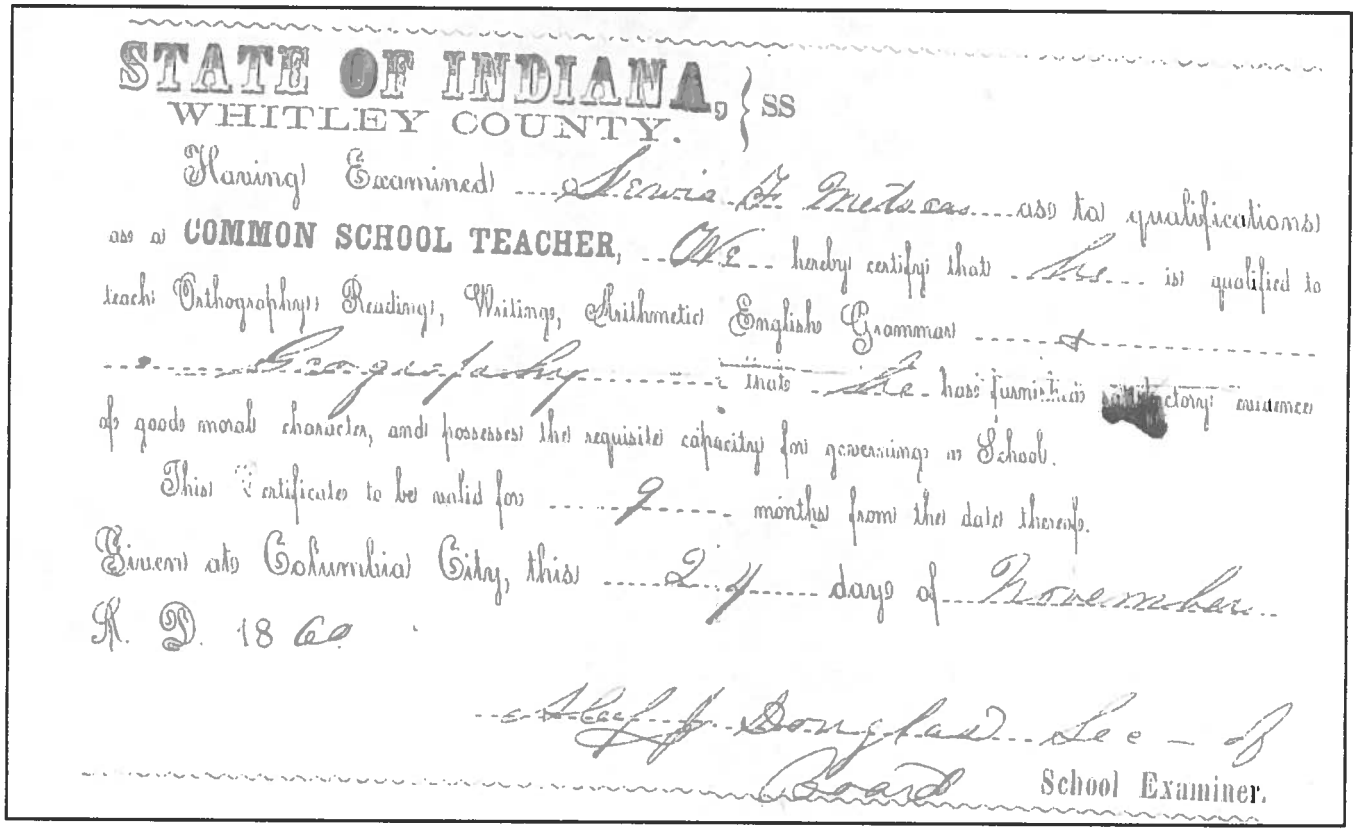
That boy child was born into a world completely changed from that into which, some twenty odd years before his eldest sister was ushered. There is a telephone in the house to which he has come, and a daily paper. Its doors and windows are protected by wire gauze screens, and from his first day he is surrounded by comfort and prosperity. His father's wheat will be cut by a self-binder, and threshed by steam power. He will never see horse-power tread-mills running any machine. He will never ride in a farm wagon except about farm work. The milk will be sent to a dairy, and he will not be called upon to lift a churn dasher. Electricity will light his way; candles will be used for festal occasions only. He will be showered with "children's books", and ere he starts to go to school his doting sisters will have read to him again and again "Uncle Tom's Cabin", "Black Beauty", "The Great Stone Face" and "The Stories of the Bible" with half-tone reproductions of the masters as illustrations. His musical taste will be developed at a piano, not a reed organ. He will finish a modern High School with an elaborate Commencement. He will teach school like his father and each of his seven sisters but he will enter a University and train for engineering, leaving his father's farm to strangers, and agriculture to others - sad, but due to the government's failure to make the profession of agriculture profitable, even as profitable, as school-teaching was then in the beginning of the nineteen-hundreds.

<u>La fine corona l'opera.</u> A Place, an avenue of hardwood trees, a life of leadership in his County, seven daughters, and, at last, a son delighting his advanced years, is the tale of the Hoosier School-master's achievement.

* "When Adam dolve, and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?"

Ella Ruahmah.

* Lines used by John Ball to encourage the Rebels in Wat Tyler's Rebellion. See Hume's History of England, Vol.1, ch.17.



STATE OF INDIANA, } SS
WHITLEY COUNTY.

Having Examined Lewis G. Metscer as to qualifications as a COMMON SCHOOL TEACHER, We hereby certify that he is qualified to teach Orthograpghy, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English Grammar and Geography, that he has furnished satisfactory evidence of good moral character, and possesses the requisite capacity for governing a School.

This Certificate to be valid for 9 months from the date thereof.

Given at Columbia City, this 24 day of November, A.D. 1860.

School Examiner.

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Letter from a Civil War Soldier to his friend Louis Metsker

To: Louis F. Metsker
Churubusco, Whitley County, Indiana

Camp at LaVergne Tennessee
January 22, 1863

Friend Louis,

As this seems to be a sort of play spell for me I concluded to improve the time by answering your kind letter which was read the 19th and read with pleasure.

I went down to the slaughter shop what is more generally known as the Hospital this morning for the first time since enlisting. We were out on a scout yesterday and marched some 16 miles in the trip and when I awoke this morning I found my jaws swelled up on each side not a little to my inconvenience in the grinding of slapjacks and other things too numerous to mention. Fearing that I might catch cold by doing duty, I went to the Doctor to be excused. My health in other respects is as usual except the above mentioned (mumps).

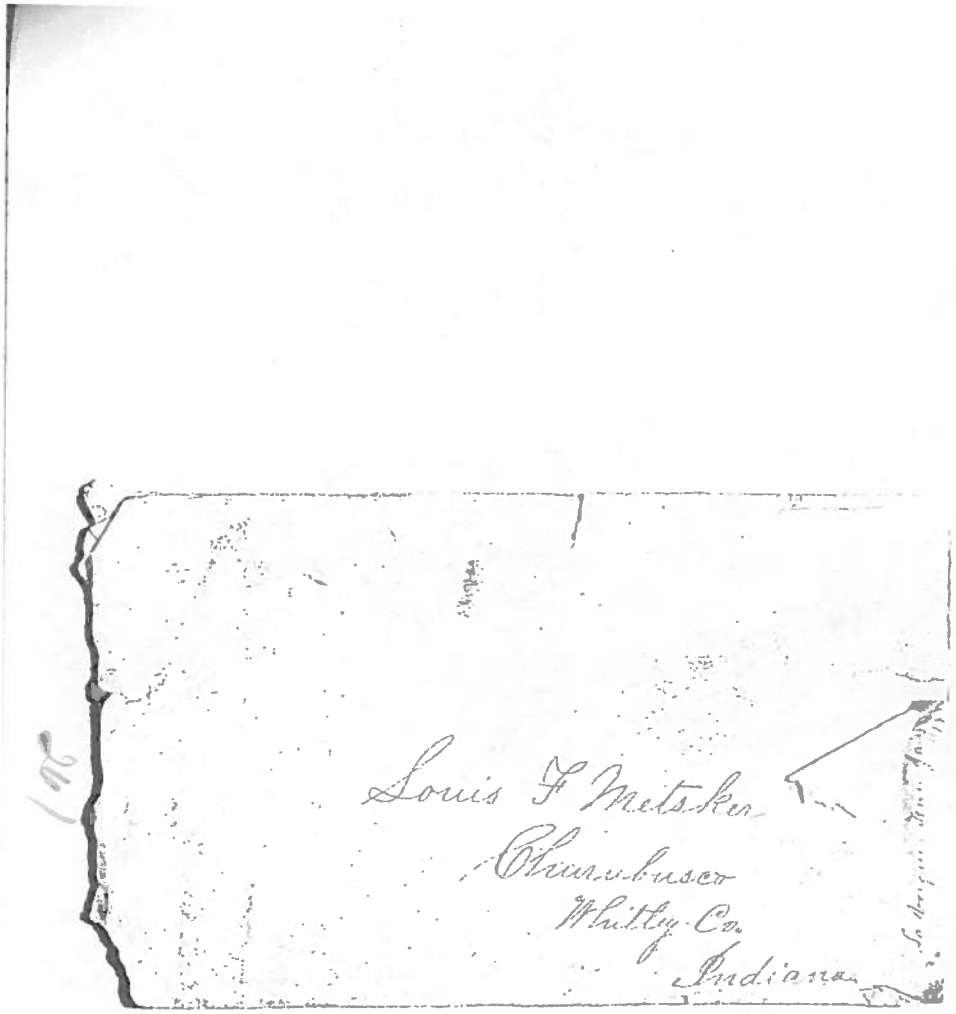
This place (LaVergne) is 15 miles from Nashville and the same distance from Murfreesborn on the Pike leading between the two places also on the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad. It has been from all appearances a flourishing village but there is nothing now left but one map of ruins in the place where the town stood. There are only 3 or 4 houses left in town of any account. The country about here seems level at a first view, but on taking a more extended view of the country we find it quite rolling country the hills gradually ascending and descending to a great distance. Our camp may be seen from the direction of Nashville 2 ½ miles so you may judge of the face of the country. The Brigade is about being divided and scattered along the Pike in order to protect our supply trains on the way to the main army. The soil is clay and of a very adhesive nature when mixed with water. Consequently as we have had a great deal of rain here lately we have likewise our share of mud. There are many things here that have met our view so often that we do not think it worth while mentioning yet they might interest you. It might be quite a treat to you to have the privilege of entering some of the caves of Ky. and Tennessee and viewing their spacious rooms or of quenching your thirst at some of the lost creeks or rivers where they emerge from the earth and run a few rods - perhaps above the surface and then disappear and not be seen again for a mile or two. There is one in this town where you go down through a narrow opening about 15 feet to a small cave with a nice little stream flowing through its opening. The roaring of the water may be heard as it pours over a precipice, while standing on the ground above the cave you cannot be seen when in the cave.

Brother Mac is trying to bake some biscuit for dinner, as we drew some flour instead of hard bread the last drawing of rations, but we are so ill prepared for using flour that I think crackers much the best. Lieut. Slagh is still unable to speak aloud and it is my opinion will never recover while he remains in the service. Hank Rice has never been with the Regiment since we left Danville, Ky. Jasper McNear was left back at Gallatin quite unwell. Josiah's health is pretty good.

We have not received any pay yet nor do I expect to before the middle of March. I don't know how long we will stay at this place. We have been cutting the timber around our camp where it approached near to us and preparing to fortify. I have not time to write any more at present as the biscuits are done and I'm out of paper. Write soon and often and Oblige

Your Friend

G.L. Walker
Direct as before



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Thorntown
Whitley Co.
Indiana

Camp at LaVergne Tennessee
Jany 22nd 1863

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Direct as before

Newspaper Articles and Letters to and from the Metsker Siblings

MISHAPS OF A DAY.

Miss Grace Metsker Shot While Riding in a Street Car.

A. Kolb, a Carpenter, Mashes His Hand—H. L. Downey Hurt While Coupling Cars.

Miss Maxie Nickey, of South Wayne, has as her guest Miss Grace Metsker, a young lady who resides near Churubusco. Yesterday afternoon, before the shower, they planned an excursion to Lindenwood. Shortly after arriving at the cemetery a threatening rain cloud moved overhead and they hastened their way homeward. They boarded a Main street car, and at Broadway were transferred to the Belt line. On West Creighton avenue, near Williams grove, Miss Metsker raised her hand to the bell rope and rang for the car to stop. Before she dropped the bell strap a bullet struck her left arm a few inches above the wrist. The bullet was not a spent ball, as it was imbedded deep in the flesh. The young lady leaped from the car seat and screamed: "I have been shot!" Miss Nickey rushed to her assistance and caught her as she fell in a faint. The young lady revived in an instant and walked to the Nickey homestead south of the Williams park. Dr. George O. Stemen was called. He probed for the bullet and found it easily as no bones had been broken. The wound is not considered dangerous, not even serious, but unless this promiscuous shooting inside the city limits or near its suburbs is not discontinued, serious results may be apprehended. The officers are of the opinion that the ball was fired from an air gun as no residents in the vicinity of the accident heard the report of fire-arms at that time.

CHURUBUSCO AND VICINITY

A FAMILY OF TEACHERS.

A rather unique fact concerning the family of Lewis F. Metsker who resides just southwest of Churubusco was brought to light since the recent return of his daughters, Miss Ella Metsker of Delta, Colorado, and Mrs. Katharine Barry, of Beaumont, Texas. The entire family of seven daughters and one son, have been or now are school teachers, and even the father himself was a pioneer schoolmaster some forty odd years ago. This is a very unusual situation and is one of which the family can justly be proud.

Miss Ella Metsker, the eldest daughter, has been in the profession for twenty years, including a number of terms in Smith township, at Auburn, and lastly at Delta, Colorado, where she was principal of the schools. She left Sunday for Chicago to enter the Chicago University for one year and will not teach next winter

The next sister, Rose, spent six years wielding the birch until she became the wife of J. H. Grisamer of this city. Miss Callie taught several terms at Churubusco and Columbia City and finally accepted a position as bookkeeper for Will Brown now at Mitchell, Ind. She held this situation for ten years at a lucrative salary, giving it up to accompany her sister, Mrs. Sam (Grace) Nickey to Colorado on account of the latter's failing health. Mrs. Nickey taught three years in Churubusco and in the township.

Mrs. Harvey (Gertrude) Lawrence, of Springfield, Ohio, taught two years at Columbia City and later at 'Busco before taking up a domestic career as a minister's wife.

Mrs. Charles (Katherine) Barry spent a couple of years in the school room at Churubusco, was deputy auditor under D. W. Sanders, and is now the wife of a prominent attorney at Beaumont, Texas.

Miss Lois Metsker, the youngest daughter, has taught three years at Auburn and 'Busco and just returned home Saturday from the State University at Bloomington, where she finished her second year in fitting herself for the teaching profession.

Last, but not least, is Fred Metsker, the youngest child and only son in the family. He has taught two years in Smith township and is preparing for the school room next fall. Mrs. Lewis Metsker has been a powerful factor in urging her children to secure the best in the educational line and both she and her husband are entitled to credit for rearing such a family. It is quite probable that another, similar to it, does not exist in Indiana.

Letter from Grandmother Nickey to her sister Ella in 1904. This was prior to her marriage to Grandfather Nickey.

Bloomington, Ind.
May 10, 1904

Meine liebe Schwester Ella:

(First part of the letter is in German)

That is a sample of my German. I fear you will think I am a fierce blunderer and I have a picture of you laughing at my mistakes. I thoroughly enjoy my German classes and get my Ger lessons with more zest than I would pick up a novel. We are reading a G- drama now. We are reading Vergil this term - "Do" about 75 or 100 lines per day - That is much harder for me. Such fine days we are having now - The temptation to go walking and riding quite overcomes my good resolutions very often. I have a good friend who takes me to every baseball game and then I am learning to play tennis.

You spoke of the World's Fair. Can't you plan to meet our people there? I wrote to mother saying I would keep house while she went but she thinks she is not well enough to stand the trip - Then father is not going - and that will make a difference. I rec'd a letter from them today - conveying the news that they have a phone - at last - It tickled me thru and thru to hear of it.

You spoke of social affairs. Really everybody entertains here with cards and dancing - I never saw such a place for it - Now and then, there are other things but nothing startlingly new. You play "Pit" of course. A Juvenile party is nice for girls - All come in short childrens dresses, bring luncheon in baskets and play children's games. I have a lots of sets of questions - prizes are given for the best answers - can send them if you like. Once the hostess gave each of us a stick of gum & the name of an animal on a slip of paper. After chewing the gum till it was soft we were told to mold our gum into the shape of an animal. Once we were given watercolors and told to paint a little picture each having the same things in it - viz- house - road - tree - fence - awarded prizes to best picture - (I got it too) Once everyone brought something funny done up in a parcel and then auctioneered them off - after which they opened them.

O My - I just noticed it is 12 PM - think I must go to bed and perhaps I can write more in the morning. I have been getting up at 5 AM - latterly. Just think of it.

Adios

Lois

Letter from Fred Metsker to Sister Ella

Churubusco, Indiana, December 14, 1904

Dear Sister Ella,

I wonder how you pass the long winter evenings and I wish we could pass them together and learn how to play chess or study German together or talk art or maybe I could persuade you to take a hand at whist. My how I wished for you when I went through the fine arts building at the exposition for I know you could have told me so much and made things so much more interesting. The way it was I was never sure that I was looking at a good picture until I saw the price and as for the artists I did not know them from Adam and Lois and I quarreled over a picture because she said it was a Madonna and I said it wasn't but the worst was that we were not able to pick out a single statue of Venus. One thing that I noticed in particular was the difference between the paintings of the different nations. for instance, you could tell the instant you left the German exhibit and entered the Italian. though just what the difference was I can't tell. We were lucky enough to hear the greatest organist in the world. I forget his name, play on the finest organ in the world. He made a terrible racket part of the time and part of the time he played beautifully. I could write you my tablet full about the wonderful things I saw and it was the most remarkable three days of my life unless it was my week in Chicago. I am going to have a weeks vacation after Xmas and Lois will be here next Thursday. I send you lots of love for my Xmas gift, for that is the cheapest thing I can give and I have lots of it to give away. I am saving every penny I can to go to college next winter and I think that if I have fair luck with my potatoes that I will have enough by spring for two years at least. I want to go west next summer and see things and make my expenses and I intend to go if the folks have things arranged so they can spare me. I have bought a new fountain pen which writes fine. even better than my old one and it only cost a dollar too. School goes along in the same old way: some days are long and hard and others short and easy. I have to punish very little and have good order most of the time, but once in a while I have to sail in and then I rattle their bones together about proper. I wonder if you ever have to give your kids a raking up to keep them straight and I would give a quarter to hear you when you wax eloquent. I am forgetting my German terribly but hope it will come back to me easily. I can say over a lot of declensions and conjugations and don't even know what they mean. I put an hour every evening on my algebra except when I write letters or go to town and I am getting along slowly. It is very easy but I have forgotten a good deal. I am teaching it now to my seventh grade and they take to it easily. Maybe you remember Paul Egolf. I think that you started him and he is the brightest boy I have ever seen. He is twelve years old and does eighth grade work finely. I think I remember my geometry best of all my high school studies and I wish I had the chance to teach plane G. If I was going to be a school teacher I would go in for mathematics and history for they are the two things I like. My school house is a perfect wreck and I have to burn about a cord of wood a day to keep it warm. The stove is cracked and split and the drafts are all broken and when the thing gets going it is impossible to stop her and we all just lay back and let the sweat come and the kids look so comical and distressed that I just sit and chuckle to myself to watch them. Wishing you a merry merry Xmas and a happy New Year. I must close.

Your Affectionate Brother, Fred

Letter from Fred Metsker to his sister (Grace Darling Metsker) and then wife of Grandfather Nickey. Lois in the letter refers to Grandmother Nickey.

Spellings, etc. or misspellings are as they appear in the original letter.

Mrs. S.M. Nickey
Denver, Colo

Churususco, Indiana
September 16, 1906

Dear Sis:-

I have finished Conistan. Therefore I have time to write a letter as all my odd moments in the past few days have been occupied with that book. Lois read it through the first day - and night - after it arrived but it has taken me almost a week. I don't read novels as fast as I used to but observe the charachters more closely and pay less attention to the yarn part. I thank you very very much for the book and for remembering the significance of the 7th. Not that the 7th is very important but just for remembering it anyway. Father gave me a check for ten, and Mother a complete set of Shakespear. Lois and I are holding the fort all by ourselves since dinner as Father and Mother have gone to Uncle Alex's to spend the afternoon. We are kind of lonesome or else it is just the effect of Lois' cake which we had for dinner. Lois made a devil's food yesterday - Mother superintended till the dope was all mixed and Lois did the rest. When it came out of the oven it was expanded mightily but I guess it got punctured - anyhow it sort of condensed so to speak - a sad affair. I bought a new horse yesterday. She is a pretty little four year old sorrel and very gentle apparently and also a goer. Old Tony will now be relegated to the junk heap or at least be retired on his merits at a ripe old age. I am sure he will be missed up town. I know have a most perplexing question before me. What girl shall I choose to ride with me behind my gallant steed? I sure don't want any punkins hurled at my head as I cross the bridge at midnight. I have several favorable candidates in view and the election will probably soon take place. The great Fort W. fair happens next week and I expect to hold down a seat. Perhaps Ella has told you about my friend Doctor Stetrick. I had to make him a present of one dollar to settle. I guess I am owing letters to everybody. This is my first attempt at letter writing for almost four months. I think I will commence with the oldest and work down: that is what I have been thinking for three months and is quite a good thought. Lois has been painting the house or at any rate she has been drawing it. She sits on the barnyard fence and draws and eats green peaches. Give that tall girl Eleanor my very best love. I have a letter up my sleeve for her the very next one. With lots of love I am as always

Dein Bruder

Fritz

Letter from Fred Metsker (brother to Grandmother Nickey) to his niece Eleanor (daughter of Grandmother and Grandfather Nickey). At the time of this letter, Grace, Grandmother Nickey's sister, was then the wife of Grandfather Nickey.

Spellings, etc. or misspellings are as they appear in the original letter.

Miss Eleanor Nickey,
Denver, Colo

Churubusco, Ind.
October 2, 1906

Meine Liebe Mädchen:

I understand that I am addressing an eight grade star. I suppose I must be very careful of my grammar and spelling now or you will laugh at me. Well I am still a little the biggest and you want to be carefull or I will turn you over my knee the next time I come to Colo. Yesterday I had to help my girl get a couple of arithmetic problems just like the ones you have to work I reckon and she is a great big girl getting ready to teach. We got them both worked though after putting our heads together over them and then we went to another girls house and stayed awhile. I liked the second girl best and I think I will have to help her work her problems next Sunday. She has a big dimple in each cheek and can play the piano to beat anything. After we left girl number two's house, girl number one and I went to a temperance meeting at the M.E. church. Just as the preacher was at the most thrilling point of his discourse a big tom cat strolled out into the pulpit and rubbed between the preachers legs and flustered the preacher and tickeled everybody. After this two girls tried to sing a duet and made an awful noise in the effort. I wanted to improve the sound and tried to coax the cat up to my seat so I could prick his tail. A week from last Sunday I was at Uncle Sam's for dinner. I ate so much that they will never ask me back again. Sam tried to hold me even and made himself sick or else it was the excitement over the new railroad he is going to build. His railroad will have three rails instead of two and the cars are going to run faster than a Japanese cannon ball. Sam went into Fort Wayne yesterday in an auto which went so fast it caught fire and all burned up but the front wheels. Sam did not get home until very late because of it.

It has been almost three months since I got your last long letter. I have been picking apples this afternoon but stopped in time to take my biweekly shave before supper. I wish you were here to climb the tree and pick those I can't reach from the ladder. We have a crazy kitten too. It is blind in one eye, has fleas, and positively has no sense at all. I call it Mowler. It will eat nothing but fresh milk. This morning I killed a nice fresh juicy rat with my gun and took it all the way to the barn and that kitten just turned up its nose. Then I offered it a nice fresh warm sparrow and it just sneaked off under the granary. It is a wonderfully wild beast too. You can't catch it with your hands but have to sneak up on its blind side and lasso it with a string. Halloween will soon be here and I wonder what you will be up to. I have an eye on one of Uncle Sam's buggy wheels but am afraid he will lock the barn this year. Colo. School of mines' football team plays Indiana University soon. I have bet a quarter on the Indiana boys. I don't think the Colo. boys amount to much, do you? I was in Dr. Briggs office last night when there was a boy came in and told the doctor that there was a dead man lieing in the yard by the church. We hurried up to where he was and struck a match and he really looked dead. He was stretched out on the grass with his eyes closed and you could not see him breath at all but there was a little color in his cheeks and the Dr knew he was not dead. We shook him around some and he began to come to. Doc asked him if he had been drinking and he replied "three days." After while he got up and staggered around. Said he had been drinking "Hopkins and Allen" and was up there "tending Sunday school." I have only been three days writing this letter - just about a page a day when I would be called to something else. We must close with lots of love to all. I am ever your humble and obedient Uncle to command.

Fritz

Letter from Fred Metsker to his mother, Clarissa Nickey Metsker, in 1910

Spellings, etc. or misspellings are as they appear in the original letter.

Laramie, WY, 3/24/1910

Dear Folks: Just a line to tell you where I am. R.F.D. #1 Hogs Ranch, Laramie, Wy. Everything is lovely except the weather. It was fierce yesterday but not so bad today. Grub is fair and a coming appetite. I got my men and baggage aboard the train just as it started. We reached Laramie at five A.M. We were in Cheyenne from eleven till three. There was about thirty russians, men, women & children sleeping on the station floor in Chey. The babies all got hungry about twelve o'clock and there was a general nursing. The kids all had their clothes up around their necks and they didnt have any panties on either. Some of the women wasnt much better. I wish you could have seen their stockings. Had the rainbow beat forty ways. The boys were riding in the smoker with a bunch of dagoes when all of the dagoes took a notion to take off their shoes. The boys came out in a hurry.

Adios

With love

Fred

Letter from Callie Metzger to her sister Ella in 1956

Dear Ella and Edward,

No knews—am here, not assure of anything from today. Just close your eyes and draw your own picture if you can, just waiting for release. HR lied hard and fast in Federal Court in _____. That is the job. We cannot do anything about. Do not discuss it with Lucy, just forget about her. She trusts HR quite well. Let it rest at that. The burden is on HR.

Keep me in your hearts and minds, but take care of yourselves. I cannot write more not.

Lots of love.

Callie

The Legacy of the Adventurous Metsker Women

Not only were the Metsker women well-educated and artistic, but they were also strong-willed and adventurous. A scrapbook called "A Wedding Journey" documents a hiking trip to Colorado made by Ella Metsker Milligan, daughter of Louis Metsker and older sister of Grandmother Nickey, and her husband, Edward Milligan in 1914 . The scrapbook notes that, according to the park rangers and the old settlers in the area of Berthoud Pass, Ella was the first woman to walk over the Continental Divide, an elevation of 11,306.5 feet. From the foot of the Pass to the top was six miles. Part of her description of the trip:

> In all one hundred seventy-five miles were made on foot. They were mountain miles, which constantly wind about, and are uphill both ways, so that they are equivalent to two hundred straight miles. Three hundred miles were made by train, stage, or auto. This journey consumed fourteen days. The longest day's walk was from Granby to Grand Lake, the hardest and also most awe inspiring, over the trail into Estes Park. Baggage carried, beside the camera, weighed eight pounds. Highest altitude reached was between 12,000 and 13,000 feet.
>
> It is called a "Wedding Journey" because it was the first vacation since we were married, and it was better than honeymooning in the accepted fashion.

Another interesting Metsker story for anyone interested in Southwest art and artists is found in the Metsker family history book regarding Katherine Metsker, another of Grandmother Nickey's older sisters.

> She was graduated from the Churubusco Public and High School. She taught in the Columbia City Public Schools; she spent a year as private tutor to a group of children on an extensive cattle ranch, near Springer, New Mexico. Residing at this ranch was the young American painter, Irving Couse. Katherine and Irving Couse formed a party, traveling on horseback, to visit the Indian Fiesta and Dances at Taos. This visit to Taos led gradually to the establishment of the famous Artists' Colony at Taos, of which Irving Couse was pioneer.

The Nickey Family
Division IV

A Brief Chronology of the Trail from Herrnhut, Saxony to Memphis, Tennessee through the Nickey Family

George Niecke

Married Johanna Eleonore Donath
Emigrated from Saxony to America in 1743

David Nickey
? – 1803

Married Elizabeth
Emigrated to America in 1769 (26 years after his parents emigrated to America)
Settled in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia

Samuel Nickey I
Born 1766 in Saxony
Died in 1832 in Virginia

Emigrated to America in 1769 with parents
Lived in Pennsylvania and Virginia
Married Anna Catherine Balsley
Anna Catherine lived in Pennsylvania and Virginia. After Samuel's death, moved with children to the Northwest Territory of Ohio and later to the wilderness of Indiana

Division I
Samuel Nickey II
1809—1864

Moved to Ohio with family
Married Elizabeth Gradless
Moved to Indiana

Addison Boyd Nickey
1844—1917

Born in Indiana
Married Orpha Lavinia Mossman
Moved to Memphis

Samuel Mossman Nickey
1868—1959

Born in Indiana
Married Grace Darling Metsker
After Graces' death married her sister,
Lois Frances Metsker (also his cousin)
Moved to Memphis

Samuel Mossman Nickey, Jr.
1912 – 1992

Married Elizabeth Concord McKellar
Lived entire life in Memphis

Division IV
Jacob Nickey
1814—1892

Born in Virginia
1st wife was Elizabeth Briggs
Moved to Indiana

Clarissa Nickey
1842—1913

Born in Indiana
Married Louis F. Metsker
Lived in Indiana until after her husband's death

Lois Frances Metsker
1879—1949

Born in Indiana
Married Samuel Mossman Nickey
Moved to Memphis

The Nickey Family - Division IV

Clarissa Nickey Ancestry

The Trail from Herrnhut, Saxony through Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Ohio and Indiana to Tennessee

This branch of the Nickey Family begins with Jacob Nickey, son of Samuel Nickey I and brother of Samuel Nickey II. See the Nickey Family - Division I for details of the life of Samuel Nickey I and ancestors.

Jacob Nickey was born in 1814 in Virginia. At the time of his birth, his father Samuel was still enlisted in the War of 1812. Jacob and his four siblings were well educated in the Lutheran parochial and private schools in Staunton, Virginia. While in Virginia, the Nickey sons learned from their grandfather Christian Balsley how to measure lumber, estimate the commercial value of a tree and to handle men and machinery. The lumber industry, as well as farming, became traditional in the Nickey family.

Jacob was eighteen years old when, after the death of his father, Anna Catherine, his mother, packed up her family in wagons and moved to the Northwest Territory of Ohio. When his mother moved again in 1834 to take up land on the Eel River in Indiana, Jacob and his first wife, Elizabeth Briggs, decided to stay behind in Ohio. Later in 1838, after they had acquired some means, they followed the Nickey family to Indiana. Upon their arrival, Jacob continued to make his livelihood as a farmer and also became very active in the local politics and the business of the community. Elizabeth contracted malaria and died, leaving Jacob a widower at age 30 with five little girls and an infant son in the wilderness of the Northwest Territory. Over the course of the next four years, Jacob undertook a project to build a church for the United Brethren in Christ as a memorial to his wife. Whitley County records say it was built in 1848. His children and grandchildren attended this church for over forty-five years until changing social conditions forced the abandonment of this rural community center.

In 1849, Jacob married Catherine Crabill who "accepted him at par value and assumed the responsibility of his six children." Jacob was known for his tender care and protectiveness of his daughters. Brought up in Virginia, he retained the Southern view of the Negro and during the Civil War was known as "a Copperhead," one who sympathized with the South. He is described as the family patriarch in financial, social, religious and personal matters. Jacob was the first in his community to

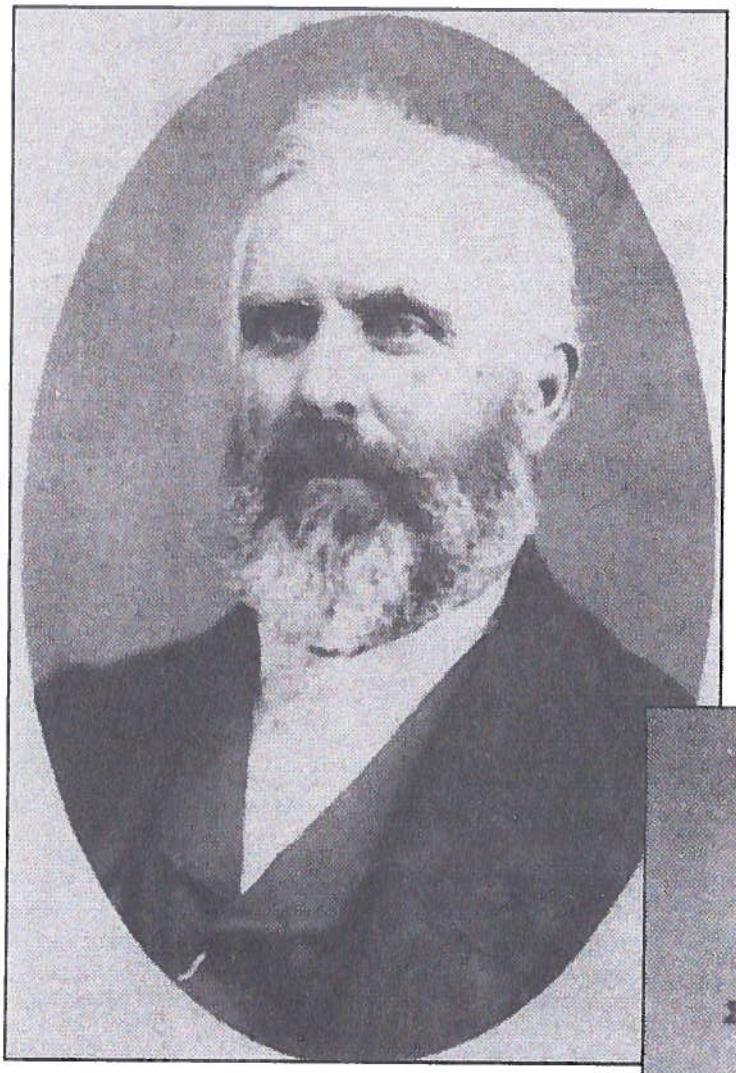
purchase the most up to date equipment and elaborate furnishings. He was known for his generosity to his family and his lovable character. In his later years, he "lived a leisurely life, merely supervising his estate, and expressing his opinion."

This quote from Jacob's story in *The Nickey Family* history is an excellent description of the educational opportunities which faced his children in the rural Indiana wilderness at the time.

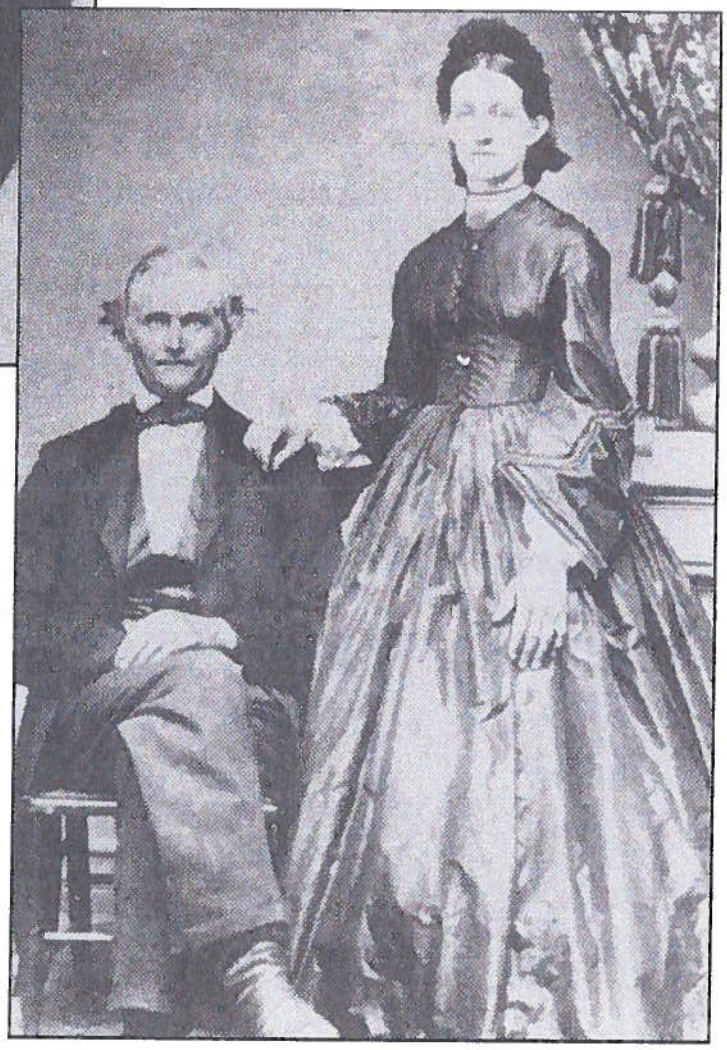
> His children were given all the education available in the pioneer country schools, the mere beginnings of the excellent System of Education of Indiana, later. The tragedy of pioneering is that the children of pioneers, rather than their parents, pay the price of pioneering. In the case of Jacob Nickey, he, himself, as a child and youth, enjoyed the opportunities of Virginia, reflecting wealth and a stage of culture already developed on the Atlantic Seaboard at the turn of his century. He had the added breadth of horizon, too, obtained by his thousand-mile journey, leisurely, across the Mountains and the Western public domain until he had reached the land office at Fort Wayne, Indiana. But his children were born in the wilderness. As children and as youth their horizon embraced only this wilderness and the rude early living conditions thus enforced. They had only the beginnings of schools, the rarest and poorest of teachers, who might be willing to face the privations and poorer pay of these primitive efforts at education: often only sixty days of school in a year. They had no musical instruments or music teachers except, now and then, a strolling musician who would "get up a singing school." Social activities were confined more or less to the "frolics" connected with labor; and the means of transportation limited the dress to that of the very practical. Further, as the Public System of Education gradually was organized to include high schools and higher institutions of learning, the burden of taxation to build up and support this system fell, rather upon these very children of the pioneers who had enjoyed not the slightest iota of these very advantages they paid for and developed for the young to come. How often one heard these children of pioneers say, "I didn't get to go to school, but I want my children to have a good education, - the best there is.

It was in this environment that Jacob's daughter, **Clarissa Nickey**, born in 1842, lived. Her mother had died when she was four years old and she grew up under the tutelage of her father and later, when she was seven years old, under the care of her step-mother. Clarissa married Louis F. Metsker in 1863. One of her daughters wrote the attached character sketch of Clarissa which was read at her funeral in 1913.

Louis and Clarissa Metsker had eight children, six girls and one boy. **Lois Frances Metsker**, born in 1879, was the youngest of the girls. In 1910, Lois married Samuel Mossman Nickey, her second cousin and widowed husband of her older sister Grace. Sam and Lois had two children, **Samuel Mossman Nickey Jr.** and Lois Elizabeth Nickey. See the Metsker and Nickey Family histories.



Jacob Nickey
1814—1892



Elizabeth Briggs
1817—1844
and
Jacob Nickey

Character Sketch of Clarissa Nickey Metsker
Read at her funeral on March 27, 1913

Character Sketch of

Mrs.Clarissa Nickey Metsker

Read at her Funeral

March 27,1913

Denver,Colo.

CLARISSA NICKEY METSKER, 1842 - 1913, the daughter of a young Virginian farmer, pioneering in Indiana; the wife of a young schoolmaster, a Hoosier Schoolmaster, who adopted farming as a preferred profession; the mother of eight children, reared to maturity; a consistent Christian;a loyal member of the United Brethern Church; in her prime,active in woman's temperance and woman's missionary work; in the home town where she lived over sixty years of her life, well known among the poor for her charities; a woman of strong convic-

tions and conservative standards, from which no modern progressivism could win her; a hard-working, self-sacrificing mother, ambitious for her children, and very clannish in her devotion to her family; a woman, who, having lived her three score and ten, felt that it was good to live, and who was now ready to give life up; one, who, at the last, looked into the future with only pleasant anticipation, accompanied by no regrets; a plain average woman, and an ideally typical mother.

A Few of Mother's

Last Thoughts and Expressions

"Jesus, Lover of My Soul"

"Joy Cometh in the Morning"
(Hymns that were in mind)

"Life is worth living, but I am old, and my family is raised - I am ready to give it up.

"I have never done a dirty trick in my life."

"O, if people weren't so foolish! They leave so many chances to do or say a beautiful thing undone."

"Young people are so beautiful! Especially young girls, boys are, too, if they are pure-minded."

"Do you know, Ella, I feel as though father were around here? Perhaps, it is imagination, but I feel that way."

"That dear little Sammy! How I would love to see him! I expect I will never have the chance. I hope no calamity will come to him. I would love to see Eleanor and him together."

"I hope the little I leave each one of my children will fit away in some good place for them. It is good to think that one has a little to leave behind. Treasure up my poor old things. Give what

the children do not want, to worthy poor, if they are worthy."

"Oh, if I could only see my children just for a little while, to talk with each. If I could gather them in my arms like sweet little babies."

"Oh, everybody has been so good. All my children have been so good. I am so proud of my children; a mother has to sacrifice and it is hard, but it is worth while."

"Ella, be a good mother to those little children; overlook little faults."

"That long stretch of dreary plain between here and Home! Ella, you'll go with me, won't you?"

(Speaking of Death) "'Twill be a rest after a hard life. We have quite a colony over there which it will be lovely to see again. That is the way I think of it, anyway."

(The notes were jotted down a week or so before her death, when I felt, in some way, I must try to get her thoughts to the children. I only wish I could have recalled more, or have taken them down while fresh in my mind, as these were)

Ella R. Milligan,
April 5, 1913.