

**PERSIUS E. HARRIS**  
**And His Wabash & Erie Canal Connections**

By Charles Davis

Persius E. Harris was born to Samuel and Lydia Jarvis Harris on November 30, 1801 at Wilson county, Tennessee. He and his stepbrother, Isaac Jarvis Silliman, came to Parke county, Indiana around 1822. Samuel had a store in Rockville on the west side of the square. One history relates the following about Samuel:

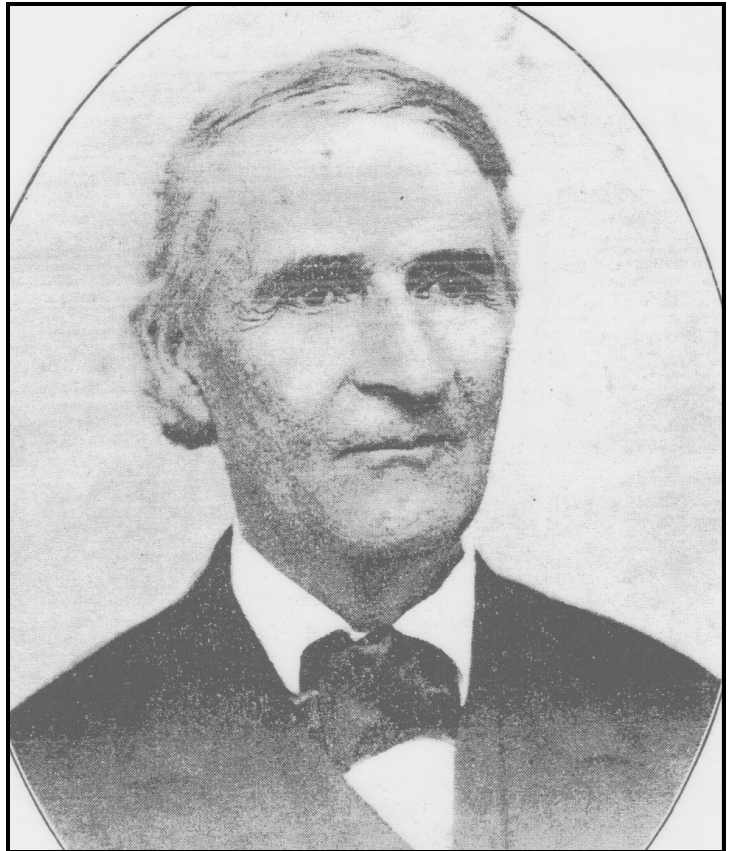
"Persius' father and John Holt were two old men, walking with canes, who met at a muddy time on one of those log walks on the west side of the square. Neither would give the walk for the other. There they stood confronting each other in grim defiance, when Mr. Hold demanded of Mr. Harris, "Who are you?" Mr. Harris replied, "My name is Samuel Harris - who are you?" Mr. Holt answered, "My name is John Holt; my father was a gentleman and a soldier in the Revolutionary war." "Well," replied Mr. Harris, "if your father was a soldier and a gentleman, there is a great difference between a father and a son." This "soft impeachment" had the desired effect of causing Mr. Holt to step aside and give part of the walk, an example which Mr. Harris was not slow to imitate, when they passed each other without further controversy."

Isaac built the Lockwood Mill at Bridgeton in 1823. He sold goods there in his store when the town was called "Sodom." Then Isaac became the sheriff in Rockville from

August 22, 1825 to September 26, 1827.

In June of 1826 the jail and court house were finished in Rockville. The court house was made of hewn logs and sat on the south side of the square. It served as a temple of justice and a house of worship.

Also in 1826 Persius and Isaac became partners in a store in Rockville. They sold goods in a hewn log-house that was located about midway on the north side of the public



**PERSIUS E. HARRIS**

**Born November 30, 1801**

**Died October 3, 1867**

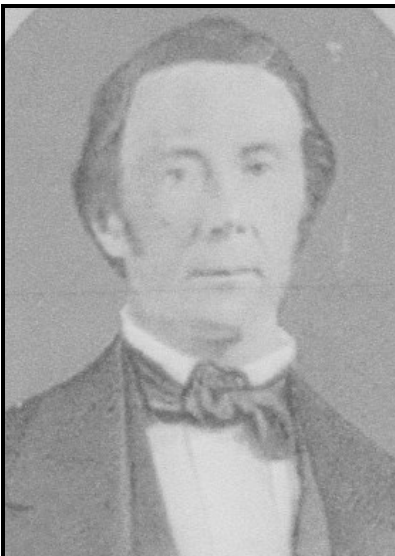
**Buried Rockville Cemetery**

Picture from 1874-1908-1916 Atlas of Parke Co. pg. 23

square. However, this partnership lasted for only a few years. In 1833 Isaac sold his interest in the store to Persius, Deed Record 1/174 went to Armiesburg and bought into a partnership with Gen. Arthur Patterson in the Grist Mill, pork packing, and the distillery. There they engaged in making flour, buying produce, distilling whiskey and boating to New Orleans.

At that time, Parke county had "overseers of the poor" named James McCampbell and Tilghman A. Howard. On January 8, 1835 they bound a child resident, Levice Powers, to Persius. She was to be bound to him until her 18th birthday on December 10, 1841. Emily Michaels, born February 14, 1827 in Davidson, North Carolina, who had migrated to Parke county as a child, was also bound to Persius until she married David Reeder Stith according to her obituary in May 1882.

When Persius' wife, Minerva Harris, died at the age of 28, she had one child living. Minerva was buried in the Rockville cemetery.



**ISSAC JARVIS SILLIMAN**

**Born December 28, 1800**

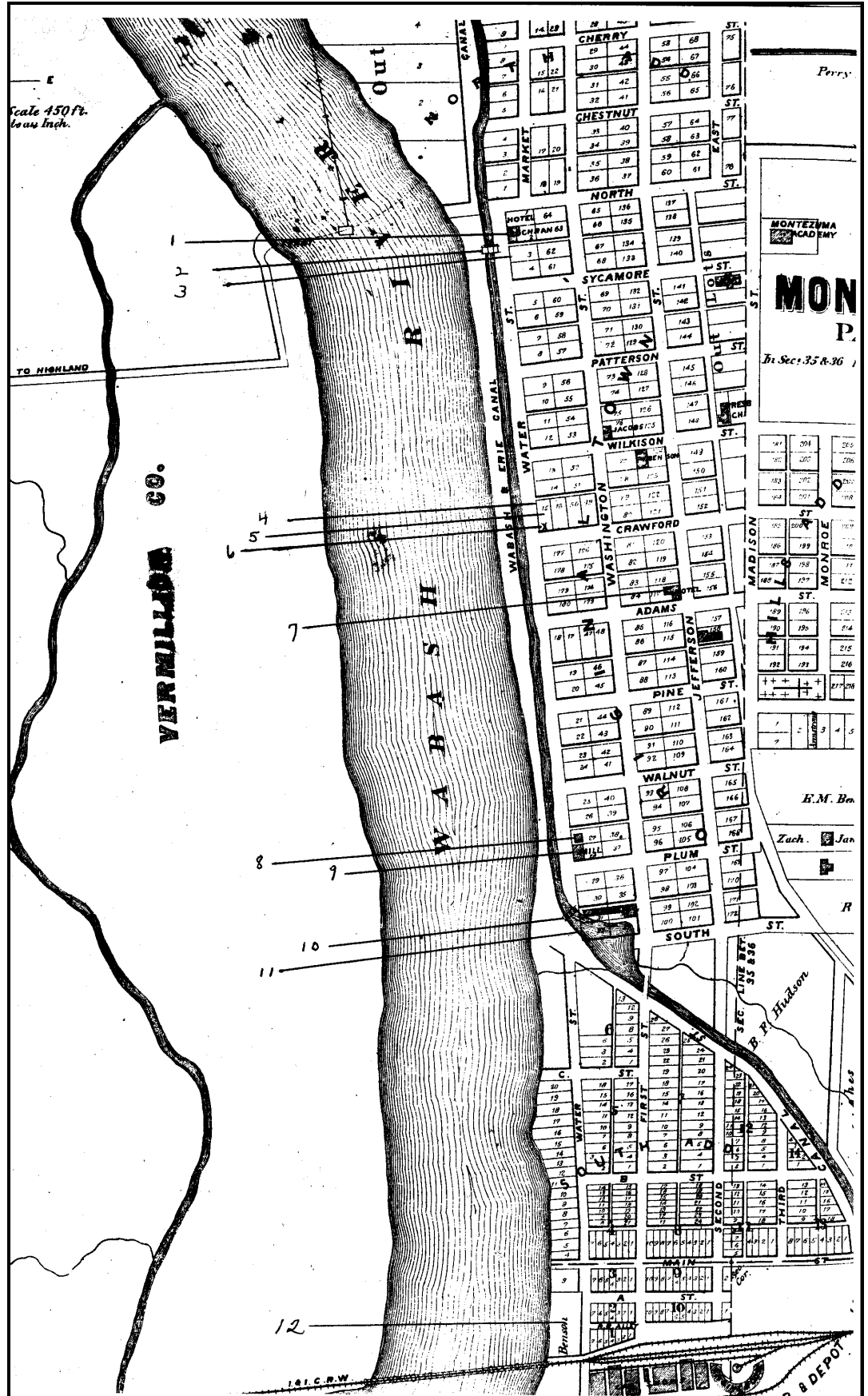
**Died March 2, 1868**

**Buried Rockville Cemetery**

# MONTEZUMA PARKE COUNTY INDIANA

1. James & Jane L. Wilson's  
"Phoenix House" hotel,  
1848 lot 2
2. Upper Wabash & Erie  
Canal bridge No. 79
3. Lot 3 John S. Walter's  
canal warehouse
4. Morris Hughes ware-  
house
5. Peter Sharp store
6. Persius C. Harris ware-  
house
7. Fred Arn house built  
1858 standing in 2013  
later called Donaldson  
Hotel
8. Cooper shop
9. Joseph Bowsher grist mill  
-later Dr. George  
McCune mill
10. Canal road bridge No. 80
11. Benson's Basin and  
warehouse on canal  
(Erastus M. Benson)
12. Benson's slaughter pork  
house

1874 Plat  
Parke Co. Combined Atlas  
1874-1908-1916  
With additions by  
Charles Davis



## THE HOOSIER PACKET - MAY 2014

On Sunday September 1838 Persius was one of the organizers of the Christian church where he and Barzilla Morlan were chosen bishops. They built the church on lot 73 in Rockville in 1839 that stood for 60 years.

Persius married Tabitha Russell Shackelford on January 29, 1839. This marriage produced two children. Later that year Tyler S. Baldwin came to Rockville and became a partner of Persius. At that time their store did the largest business in the county.

From 1840 to 1846, Francis Miller was Persius' partner in the dry goods business. After this Mr. Miller left for Montezuma to do the same. He was born in 1803 and died in 1847.

On June 22, 1844 Persius' wife Tabitha died leaving two children living. Persius was married for a third time in 1847 to Mary Wilson Thomson. She brought into this family two children, William and George, from her previous marriage.

When the Wabash & Erie Canal opened up in Montezuma Persius saw the potential and bought 78 feet off of the south end of lots 15 and 16 from Morris Hughes in that town. DR 10/548

These were the lots next to the canal on Water Street. On these lots he built a large canal warehouse. It was three stories high and had a track that ran across the street to the canal so grain could be transported from the warehouse to the canal boats.

Water street contained most of the stores and warehouses and was paved in brick with brick sidewalks. Morris Hughes' warehouse stood on the

north end of lots 15 and 16. Peter Sharp had his store between the Hughes and Harris lots. John S. Walters had a large warehouse north of the above on lot 3. It was close to the upper canal bridge and the Phoenix hotel owned by James and Jane L. Wilson.

In 1853 Persius' step brother, Isaac, sold the rest of his interest in Armiesburg to others, having made a fortune there by locals and shipping on the canal. He went back to Rockville and opened a general store. By 1855 he along with O. J. Innis and J. M. Nichols purchased the Rockville grist mill on mill pond from Moore and Siler.

The Parke County Bank commenced business on September 1, 1855, with a capital of \$100,000. The first directors were Alexander McCune (of Mecca Mills), **Isaac J. Silliman**, John Sunderland, **Persius E. Harris**, Erastus M. Benson (Benson's Basin), Dr. James L. Allen, John Milligan and Salmon Lusk (of the Narrows of Sugar Creek or Turkey Run).

A brief mention here is that a Mary Jane Gray lived in the Silliman home as a house keeper. When Isaac died, his will said she wasn't fit to take care of herself and provided \$1,000 for her keep.

Persius, now a wealthy man, built the first three-story brick building in Parke county in 1855. It stood about midway on the north side of the square in Rockville.

Persius E. Harris was a bright and hard working man. He died at the age of 66 in 1867. Isaac Silliman died at the age of 67 in 1868.



**MARY HARRIS**  
3rd wife of  
**PERSIUS E. HARRIS**  
Buried in Rockville Cemetery  
Picture from 1874-1908-1916 Atlas of Parke Co.



This residence of Persius & Mary Harris is on northwest corner of Michigan & Highway 36 in Rockville, IN. It was used as Dixie Bee Hotel after their deaths. Photo by Charles Davis May 2013

# THE HOOSIER PACKET - MAY 2014

## HARRIS FAMILY TREE

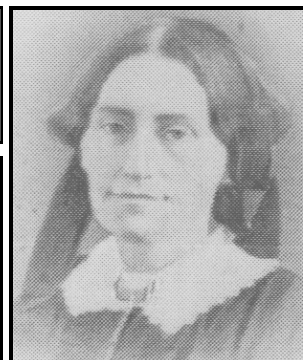
By Charles Davis

Name	Born	Died	Burial	Married
Samuel Harris	10-24-1782	4-05-1846	Old Rockville Cem.	
m. Lydia Jarvis Silliman	1-30-1780	10-02-1854	Old Rockville Cem.	
1st husb. Jonathan Silliman	1770	1817	Old Rockville Cem.	
1. <b>Persius E. Harris</b>	11-30-1801	Wilson Co. TN 10-03-1867	Rockville Cem.	
m1. <b>Minerva ?</b>	10-08-1809	9-20-1837	Rockville Cem.	1-25-1827 Monroe Co. IN
A. John Lorimer Harris	5-07-1828	1-27-1835	Rockville Cem.	
B. Minerva Harris	8-05-1837	1-16-1874	Rockville Cem.	3-14-1855
m. Isaac G. Coffin	4-02-1830	2-11-1899	Rockville Cem.	
1. Louisa Dupler Coffin	6-28-1849	Galena, IL 2-07-1871	Rockville Cem.	
2. Lorimer H. Coffin	5-02-1861	4-03-1862	Rockville Cem.	
3. Grace Coffin		1920		
m. Dr. Edwin Axtell		Denver CO. 12-14-1899	Rockville Cem.	
C. Olivia Florence Harris	6-28-1835	11-13-1836		
m2. <b>Tabitha Russell Shackelford</b>	8-21-1803	6-22-1844	Rockville Cem.	1-29-1839
1st husb. James Shackelford		Mayesville, KY deceased		
A. Tabitha R. Harris	1840	6-23-1841	Rockville Cem.	
B. Mary S. Harris		11-23-1861	Rockville Cem.	
C. Sarah Caroline Harris	1840s	2-01-1911	Rockville Cem.	
m. Alfred K. Stark	2-14-1840	1-02-1931	Rockville Cem.	
m3. <b>Mary Wilson Thomson</b>	2-11-1808	Hamilton Co, O. 11-29-1897	Rockville Cem.	11-??-1847 Montgomery Co. IN
1st husb. Rev. John S. Thomson	12-04-1804	1-03-1843	Crawfordsville, IN	4-09-1829
Children by 1st husband				
1. Wm. M. Thomson	11-27-1833	Waveland 2-04-1921	Rockville Cem.	
m. Emily J. Bryant	1832	2-17-1921	Rockville Cem.	6-11-1866
a. George W. Thomson	6-11-1837	2-15-1912	Rockville Cem.	6-04-1855
m. Sarah M. Bryant				
b. Wm. B. Thomson	1868	Montgomery Co 12-08-1948	Rockville Cem.	
m. Mable White	1875	1947	Rockville Cem.	
1. Wm. W. Thomson	1896	1986	Rockville Cem.	
m. Wilma	1894	1970		
A. Wm. N. Thomson	2-10-1921	4-16-1945	WWII Rockville Cem.	
c. Mary P. Thomson	1870	12-6-1957		1-18-1892
m. Alfred H. Stark	1867	6-21-1952	Rockville Cem.	
d. Jennie T. Thomson	1872	11-??-1961	Rockville Cem.	12-27-1894
m. Howard D. Maxwell	9-19-1864	3-31-1930		
1. Richard Maxwell		Indianapolis 11-??-1961	Klamath Falls, OR	
m. Mary Roodesberry				
2. Margaret Maxwell	1897	France 1925	Rockville Cem.	
m. ? Sheldon				
3. Warren Maxwell				



Knoll Inn, 317 West High Street, Rockville, Indiana Lot 54 was sold to Isaac J. Silliman by George K. Steele on April 18, 1866.  
DR 25/43 Photo by Charles Davis January 2007

**TABITHA STOCKWELL  
SILLIMAN**  
Born June 13, 1813  
Died May 14, 1871  
Buried Rockville Cemetery  
Wife of Isaac J. Silliman



## THE HOOSIER PACKET - MAY 2014

### SILLIMAN FAMILY TREE

By Charles Davis

Name	Born	Died	Burial	Married
Jonathan Silliman	1770	1817	4-19-1800 Christ Church Fairfield, CN	
m1. Lydia Jarvis*	1-30-1780	10-02-1854	Old Rockville Cem.	
A. <b>Isaac Jarvis Silliman**</b>	12-28-1800 Fairfield CN	2-26-1868	Rockville Cem.	2-13-1830 Bloomington, IN
m. Tabitha Russell Stockwell***	6-13-1813 Flemmingsbury, KY	5-14-1871	Rockville Cem.	
1. Mary H. Silliman	1841	5-08-1846	Rockville Cem.	
2. Caroline Lydia Silliman	6-22-1834	8-08-1901	Greencastle, IN	5-17-1855
m. Thomas Carroll Hammond	2-20-1833	11-15-1915		Banker, San Diego CA
a. Charles Silliman Hammond	1856	1940		
b. Chauncey Rose Hammond	1857			
c. Catherine S. Hammond	1862			
d. Wm. Tecumseh Sherman Hamm.	1864	1940		
e. Isaac Jarvis Hammond	1868			
3. Mary Eliza Silliman	1840	5-08-1846	Rockville Cem.	
4. Alice Hamilton Silliman****	1845	1871	Rockville Cem.	11-29-1866
m. Capt. John H. Lindley	1841 Morgan Co. IN	12-26-1891	Rockville Cem.	
a. John H. Lindley Jr.		1867	Rockville Cem.	
5. Florence Stockwell Silliman	1840	1841	Rockville Cem.	
6. William Jarvis Silliman	6-17-1852 Rockville	11-19-1889	Dublin, TX	
m2. Sam(Samantha ?) Harris				12-??-1818 Sullivan
Co. IN				

\*Lydia Jarvis Silliman's parents were Isaac Jarvis (b. 1756, d. 6-20-1788) who is are buried in the Old Burying Ground in Fairfield, CN and Abigail Squire Jarvis (b. 1755, d. 1773).

\*\*Isaac J. Silliman's brother was Abram Benson Silliman (b. 1807, d. 1842).

\*\*\*Tabitha Russell Stockwell Silliman's sister, Eliza Ann Stockwell Ralston (b. 5-21-1812, d. 6-3-1863), is buried behind her in the Rockville cemetery. They were the daughters of John Newton Stockwell (b. 1782, d. 1819) and Mary Polly Hamilton (b. 1788, d. 1830). Eliza married Robert Ralston on 3-24, 1833 in Parke county, IN.

### SHACKELFORD FAMILY TREE

By Charles Davis

Name	Born	Died	Burial	Married
James Shackelford		@1830	Mayesville, KY	
m. <b>Tabitha Russell*</b>	8-21-1803	6-22-1844	Rockville Cem.	
A. Barton Warren Shackelford**	5-02-1830 Mayesville KY	2-19-1898	St. Joseph MO Rockville Cem.	2-26-1857 Rockville
m. Margaret Jane Smith	1852 PA	12-05-1906	St. Joseph MO Rockville Cem.	
1. Lizzie Mable Shackelford	1857	1857		
2. Frank H. Shackelford	6-??-1859	1-??-1930	Jasper Co MO Mt. Hope Cem.	Book keeper
m. Effie Noel	1866		Jasper Co MO	
3. Warren Barton Shackelford ***	1862	7-09-1821	Chicago, Joplin MO	Platte Co MO
m. Luda Belle Recht	2-14-1863	3-17-1947	Joplin MO	
4. Jennie Shackelford	1865	9-??-1866		

\*Tabitha Russell's second husband was **Persius E. Harris** b. 11-30-1801, d. 10-03-1867, buried Rockville Cem.

\*\*The 1880 census for Jasper Co. MO shows Barton W. Shackelford's wife, M. J., was born in Pennsylvania. His occupation was a cry goods merchant.

\*\*\*The 1930 census for Jasper Co. MO shows Warren B. Shackelford was a clerk. Frank H. Shackelford's wife, Effie, was widowed and living in Orange, California with (3) servants.

## THE HOOSIER PACKET - MAY 2014

### Sources:

Combined 1874-1908-1916 Isaac Straus Centennial Memorial and name index of Parke county, Indiana.

Computer research by Mary Jane Davis

Beckwith. *History of Parke county, Indiana*. John Hanson Beadle. 1880.

Bowen. *History of Parke and Vermillion Counties*.

Deeds: Rockville court house, Records Office

Find-A-Grave #9020231 Isaac Harvis 1756-1788.

I. J. Silliman 1800-1868. Redding-Christianson Family Tree, Owner 1930 Dodie.

Lydia Jarvis 1780-1854. Redding-Christiansen Family Tree, Owner 1930 Dodie.

Obituaries from Parke County newspapers:

Barton Warren Shackelford, Parke county *Journal* 2-24-1898.

Caroline L. Harris Hammond *Republican* 8-21-1901

I. J. Silliman *Republican* 3-4-1868

Jennie Shackelford *Republican* 9-19-1866

Mary Harris *Tribune* 12-2-1897

Mary Jane Shackelford *Republican* 12-5-1906

Mary L. Shackelford *Republican* 9-2-1858

P. E. Harris *Republican* 10-9-1867

Tabitha Silliman *Republican* 5-17-1871

Thomas C. Hammond *Republican* 11-17=1915

Probate Bk 6/324, I. J. Silliman

Tabitha Russell Stockwell 1813-1871. Jaulhaber/Fisher & Ring/  
Family Tree-Ringfaul.