

JOHN STARKEY & POLLY JAMES

By Patricia Conrad

John Starkey was born June 13, 1792 in Hampshire (West) Virginia. Reverend John Starkey, our John's Starkey's uncle lived in Muskingum, Ohio in 1809 and 1810. John, I believe moved to Muskingum County to be near his uncle John before the rest of the family moves here (Indiana) from Virginia. In the **Roster of Ohio Soldiers in the War of 1812** in the Roll of Captain William Wilson's Company is listed John Starkey. This would fit our family tradition that John was in the War of 1812.

John married Polly James on July 13, 1811 in Muskingum, Ohio. In the **Muskingum Messenger** published in Zanesville, Ohio is this tidbit published on October 30, 1814: "Notice is given to all with claim to the estate of Williams James, late of Madison Township, Muskingum County, deceased. Elizabeth James, Admr." Would this be the parents or grandparents of Polly James? More research is needed in this area.

In the **1820 Census of Monroe Township, Muskingum County Ohio**, we find John Starkey living next to his Uncle John. He has two male children under 10, 1 male 16 to 26, 1 male 26 to 45, 2 females under 10, 1 female 10-16, 1 female 16-26. He also says he is engaged in farming. (If the two males and two females under ten were his and Polly's children, who were the others? One of John Starkey's brother's died and the children were panned out to the relatives. This is a possibility for the extra children. They do not all appear in the next census. Perhaps they died)

We find John next in Fountain County, Indiana in the **1830 Census**. He has two males under 5, two males five to 10 years old, one male 15 under 20, 1 male 30 under 40, two females under 5, one female 5 to 10, 1 female 10 to 15, 1 female 15 to 20 and one female 15 to 20. After searching I find no land records for John Starkey in Fountain County, Warren County, and Tippecanoe County, Indiana. This presents a problem in determining where and what was John Starkey doing in Indiana around the Lafayette, Tippecanoe County area.

The Wabash and Erie Canal began construction along the Wabash River about 1832. I believe John Starkey and his family were working on the Wabash and Erie Canal. Most of the workers on the canal were of Irish descent. John's great grandfather came to America from Ireland so he would be of Irish descent. Workers on the Canal could earn up to \$10 a month, which was a lot of money at that time. This would also account for why there are no land records for John Starkey and his family. Canal workers lived in camps along the Wabash.

Polly James and John Starkey had the following ten children:

- William (b. 1812)
  - Lovina (b. abt. 1820, married 1835) also Lovena
  - Polly ? married 1837 mother's remarriage/ daughter's marriage
  - Ingham (b. 1820) father of Harriet Starkey who married David Dewitt Cole
  - Elizabeth (b. abt. 1821)
  - Mary (b. abt. 1823)
  - John (b. abt. 1825)
  - Thomas (b. abt. 1827)
  - Cynthia (b. abt. 1829)
  - Charles (b. abt. 1830).
- In the census records all of the children state they were born in Ohio. This would signify that they came to Indiana around 1830 due to Charles being born in Ohio.

The first record we find of the Starkey's near Lafayette, Indiana is in the marriage records of Tippecanoe County. We find Lovina Starkey marries West James on February 11, 1835. In this marriage record, we find William Starkey, son, and his mother Polly giving permission for Lovina to marry West James. Polly Starkey married John Booker on July 9, 1837. Is this a daughter or is this the mother remarrying?

The next record we find in the Guardianship papers of the Starkey children in 1839. John Starkey dies and his children are put up for guardianship or did their mother remarry and her new husband did not want them? The following is a record of these papers:

"Friday September the 13, 1839. Personally appears in open Court Ingham Starkey age about nineteen years and Elizabeth Starkey are nearly eighteen years, minors heirs of John Starkey late of said County deceased, and chose John Parker be their guardian of their persons and estate, with the appoint of the court, and by their request, and themselves on application to the court also appoint the said John Parker Guardian of the person and estates of Mary Starkey, age sixteen years, John Starkey age fourteen, Thomas Starkey aged twelve years, Cynthia Starkey age ten years, and of Charles Starkey, age nine years, also minor heirs of said John Starkey deceased, the said John Parker have secured filed in the sum of twelve hundred dollars, with George Nichol security therein given by the court approve, and having also been duly sworn in open court according to law is therefore duly appointed."

This document was voided September 1855 in Court Lafayette, Tippecanoe County, Indiana.

What happened to John Starkey and why were his children put up for adoption to John Parker? In my search for answers, I noticed that in 1839 there were pages and pages of children put up for adoption. Why? There was a cholera outbreak in Lafayette in 1839 and it killed nearly 1000 people. Was this the fate of John

446

## Trustees of Wabash &amp; Erie Canal to John Starkey

No 1388

The Board of Trustees of the Wabash and Erie Canal

To all to whom these Presents shall come greeting:—  
 Whereas John Starkey has filed in the Office of the Board of Trustees of the Wabash and Erie Canal a final certificate of the Clerk of the Land Office at Logansport whereby it appears that full Payment has been made for the South East quarter of the North East quarter of section number Twenty two in Township number Twenty Nine North of Range number Nine West, containing Forty Acres West of Peppanawau; which tract was purchased by John Starkey at the Office at Logansport as appears by Certificate No 1754

Now Know Ye, that the Board of Trustees aforesaid in consideration of the premises, and in conformity with the provisions of an Act to provide for the funded Debt of the State of Indiana, and for the completion of the Wabash & Erie Canal to Evansville; approved January 19<sup>th</sup> 1846 and an Act supplementary thereto, approved January 27<sup>th</sup> 1847, have given granted, bargained and sold, and by these Presents do give, grant, bargain and sell unto the said John Starkey and to his Heirs the said tract above described to Have and to Hold the same together with all the rights, privileges, immunities and appurtenances of whatsoever nature thunto belonging unto the said John Starkey and to his Heirs and Assigns forever.

In Testimony Whereof the Board of Trustees of the Wabash and Erie Canal have caused their Seal to be hereunto affixed given under the hands of the Trustees at New Haven the first day of March in the year of our Lord One thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty three.

Charles Butler  
 W. R. Nofsinger  
 Tho Dowling

Recorded this 27<sup>th</sup> day of  
 November A D 1861  
 John Ade R.M.

This Deed No. 1388 was for land set aside by the federal government on January 19, 1846 and a supplementary act of January 27, 1847 to be sold to fund the completion of the Wabash & Erie Canal. The canal did not run through this property purchased by John Starkey on March 1, 1853 from the Trustees of the canal—Charles Butler, W. R. Nofsinger, and Thomas Dowling. The deed was not recorded on page 446 of the record book until November 27, 1861 by John Ade. The original deed may have been on a single sheet of paper. Canals received land grants prior to those given to railroads and land grant colleges such as Purdue University.

Starkey? I think it is a real possibility. We will never fully know for sure if John died of Cholera, but for every ten feet of the Wabash and Erie Canal that was dug one man died of Cholera or disease. (Editors note: Variations of the number of workers dying per feet or per mile are often heard. This may be true at one time in one area, but if that many died for the entire 468 mile length of canal, it would have been more people than were in the state at that time.)

What we do know is that Polly James Starkey was still alive and was not given guardianship of her own children. A woman did not have the means to support her family in those days. John Parker most likely was a very close relative of John Starkey because his mother was a Parker. An uncle or cousin with means of supporting the family would adopt the children for the mother. Or the other possibility is that John died earlier and Polly than married a man who did not want the children.

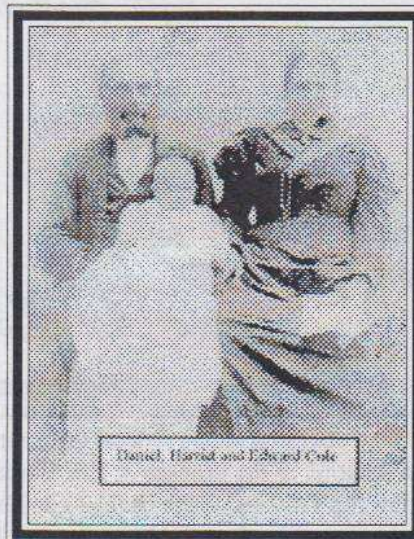
I researched what would have happened to John Starkey's body and where it would have been buried if he worked on the canal. After making postings on the computer, I received an answer from a man who mentioned there was a Canal or Irish Cemetery in Lafayette, Indiana. After further research in the Lafayette Public Library we discovered that the cemetery was located off of Lilly Road on 500 north in a farmer's field. We visited Dwight Sheets, the farmer, who drove us to the cemetery. It is in very bad condition and cattle have the run of it. Only about 21 tombstones remain and they date of the 1830s. If several hundred men died in the Cholera Epidemic then there would have been no time for proper burial of these men. I am sure in this cemetery men were most likely buried in pits. A person who contracts Cholera will die within four to six hours. Sanitation was not a priority in a canal camp so the disease spread quickly. The quantity of men who died would have made proper burial unlikely. Also most people would not have had stones but wooden markers. The likelihood of finding John Starkey's grave would be next to impossible.

The Wabash and Erie Canal prism was clearly visible at the bottom of the steep bluff on which the cemetery was located. It was just above the flood plain of the Wabash River. The dead would have been carried up the steep slope. The cemetery in this location would allow for quick burial. Although we cannot ever be sure that this is the final resting place for John, it does provide an experience in history.

Yet this story does not end here and so we must follow what happened to the family after 1839. Ingham, my grandfather, became a lawyer and married Ruelma Rowe on May 5, 1842 in Tippecanoe County, Indiana and lived near Wyandotte, Indiana. Mary Starkey married Jacob Seaborn on May 15, 1842, and they lived in

Warren County for a while and then moved with the Starkey Clan to Morocco, Beaver Township, Newton County in 1847. Mary died on February 1, 1852. Lovir Starkey who married West James lived in Warren County and moved with the family to Morocco, Beaver Township, Newton County. Thomas Starkey married Matilda and lived in Morocco, Beaver Township, Newton County off and on during his life. He was in the 99th Indiana during the Civil War. He was a Color Sergeant and was wounded. He remarried on July 21, 1898 at Fair Oakes, Jasper County and states in his marriage papers that Polly James and John Starkey were his parents. Thomas died on April 3, 1917 and was buried in the Oakland Cemetery, Newton County Indiana. Thomas Starkey and Jacob Seaborn are both mentioned in the History of Newton County as being early pioneers of the county. John Starkey lived in Warren County near William in the 1850 census. He purchased land in 1851 belonging to the Wabash and Erie Canal. (Editors note: This was land set aside by the federal government to be sold to fund the canal. The canal did not pass through this land.) He moved with his family to Morocco and was killed in the Civil War serving in the 99th Indiana. Charles lived with Jacob and Mary Seaborn in 1850. He moved to Milford, Illinois and served with Thomas and John in the Civil War in the 99th Indiana Infantry. William Starkey is listed in the 1860 census of Warren County. I have no further record of Elizabeth and Cynthia. I suspect that Cynthia died by 1850 because Thomas and William named their first born daughters Cynthia.

Polly James Starkey lived with Mary and Jacob Seaborn after John's death. She moved with them to Morocco, Beaver Township, Newton County. Polly Starkey died on December 11, 1847. She is buried in the north section of Murphy Cemetery in Morocco, Beaver Township, Newton County, Indiana. Her grave states Wife of J. aged 51 year and 11 months.



**DANIEL DEWITT COLE  
& HARRIET STARKEY  
(GRANDDAUGHTER  
OF JOHN STARKEY)**  
By Pat Conrad

Daniel Dewitt Cole was born March 16, 1830 in Westerlo, Albany, New York. This was just after the death of DeWitt Clinton (1828), who was admired for building the Erie Canal in New York. Likely Daniel received his middle name.. He was the son of Nathan

Cole. Daniel Dewitt was 10 years old when his father died. Daniel's mother had to give him away for a time after his father died. Daniel at some time learned the trade of a cooper from a neighboring cooper. In one of her letters, Catherine refers to this cooper's death and how Daniel should come home and buy his shop.

My mother inherited all my grandfathers papers. In one I found a story written by my grandfather Daniel Dewitt Cole about his grandfather Daniel Dewitt Cole. It tells the story of how Daniel ran away from home at the age of 14 and went to work on the Wabash and Erie Canal. It says he worked for it for four years. (1840s) When he got to Lafayette he quit and became a cooper. It also notes that his brother Shubael also worked on the Erie Canal in New York for 40 years. They lived in the Fulton, New York area.

In the 1860 census Daniel is listed as a Cooper in Dayton, Indiana. He was 30 years old. He fell in love with young girl by the name of Harriet Starkey and married her on April 2, 1860. They had five children:  
Ella May Cole (Jan. 20, 1861)  
Grant David Cole (Oct. 1, 1862-Oct 13, 1931)  
John Newton Cole (Apr. 3, 1865-Apr. 22, 1944)  
Charles Shubael Cole (Sept. 19, 1867-Dec.18, 1942)  
Thomas Wood Cole (Feb. 15, 1871-Dec. 2, 1949)

Harriet Starkey Cole was born in Wyandotte, Indiana. Her father, Ingham Starkey was a lawyer on the Indian reservation. Her mother was Ruelma Rowe. Harriet is said to be part Indian from her mother's side. Harriet's father died when she was thirteen years old. This was most likely a hard time for Harriet and her sister Elizabeth and her brother John Starkey. Their mother later dated a German man by the name of Peter Barnhardt and married him in the early 1860s. Peter and John both fought in the Civil War. In the pension records Peter is reported to have been injured in the shoulder during the war.

Harriet's brother John enlisted in the Union Army on September 7, 1861. He was in Captain Kirkpatrick's 40th Regiment Indiana Infantry. He was gray eyed, dark haired, had a dark complexion and was eighteen years old. A touching letter is written to his mother during 1862 telling how the regiment left him at the hospital in Louisville, Kentucky and went on to Bardstown. He left the hospital in pursuit of his regiment only to be put in the calaboose till the next morning. Military Records says he had to pay \$32 in fines. He wished he was home but said everything was better except he didn't have any postage stamps. John was engaged with the Company at the battle of Shiloh; Chaplain Hills, Kentucky; Stone River, Tennessee and was severely wounded in the thigh on November 25, 1863 at the battle of Mission Ridge, Tennessee. John re-enlisted on February 1, 1864 and

was engaged with the Company at the Battle of Rocky Face, Resacca Callas Pine and Kennesaw Mountains, Peach Tree Creek, Atlanta, Jonesboro and Lovejoy, Georgia; Franklin and Nashville, Tennessee. He was appointed a captain on Dec. 12, 1864. He died of Smallpox on March 14, 1865. A family story about John says that when he was in Alabama they were starving and were forced to eat pumpkin seeds.

Daniel and Harriet moved to Lafayette, Indiana, to the corner of 17th and Grove. It is here that he ran a cooper shop. There is an interesting feature about this land. The people from whom they purchased this land for two hundred dollars were Indian, John Taylor. The deed of this land is signed with his Indian sign and his Indian name.

Daniel and Harriet had a tough time financially with the cooper shop. Catherine, Daniel's mother had to send him money to help him survive. She also sent many a care package of cloth and shoes for the children. According to family stories, Daniel had a partner who one night took all their money and left. This left Daniel with many a debt and no money to pay them.

Daniel and Harriet had many a sorrow in their lives. One time Grant would not go to church with the family. He stayed home alone. He started whittling with the Cooper blade and cut his kneecap. He was crippled the rest of his life and had a wooden leg. It seems Grant was never a very happy person. Probably a little overbearing and drank a lot and liked women. He always wanted money to spend.

Ella their only daughter was very headstrong. She really liked boys. They really liked her too. Her diary lists the dates she had in one month. There was not a free night. She went sledding, to church and to socials. They were not with one man but with many. One time Ella is rebuked for sitting on her boyfriend's lap. Even Adelaide admonishes Ella to behave and mind here mama. It seems one of her special friends was J. E. Hawkins. He proposed to Ella but she rejected him.

Yet sorrow is to fall when Ella becomes pregnant. She has a son Edward born on May 28, 1882. Ella did not live long after Edward's birth. Her death is listed in the Bible as October 19, 1884. Ella's death certificate states she died of consumption.

Harriet and Daniel adopted Edward and brought him up as their own. If Ella was ever married I find no record of it. The family Bible does not give a marriage only a death date. Although it is said she did marry the man before the birth of the child. In the Bible Eddie's name is listed as Eddie Johnson born May 28, 1882. Eddie was adopted later by Daniel after Harriet's death.

After Harriet and Daniel's bankruptcy from the cooper shop in 1880, Daniel began farming first in Romney and then in the Colburn area. They saved their money and bought a farm northwest of Lafayette near Hebron. There they built a house and began to farm. Daniel was a success at farming. The land was good and so was the weather. The farm prospered.

In 1898, Harriet wrote to her son Thomas and wife Bessie. Her writing illustrates that although she must have attended school her skill at writing was poor and very phonetic. In her letters, Harriet reports on the activities of the farm such as the boys were hauling gravel from the gravel pit, haying and planting crops. As a mother she is full of advice to her son on having Bessie plant a large garden and put out lots of potatoes. She admonishes her to put them out on Good Friday. She even tells him that she will send seeds for cabbage. Her fondness for her new grandson Dewitt is overwhelming. As she wants to send him lots of kisses. She has a lot of concern for her sister Elizabeth, Lib she is called. At this time, Lib is bed fast and not at all well. Harriet also admits to not being well and hardly able to walk. She also refers to the fact that she might not be long on this earth as we see she was not.

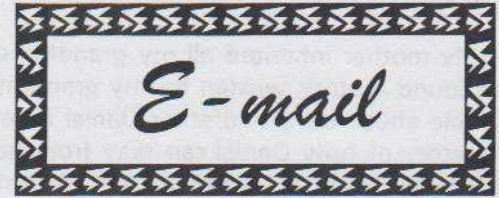
Harriet died on October 3, 1898. She is buried in the Dayton, Indiana cemetery. Her obituary declares that Harriet was a Methodist. She was a hard working woman who was well liked and very resourceful. Daniel became so successful that he could go back and visit his family. On September 19, 1898 Daniel went to a Nathan Cole family reunion in Pennellville, New York. This was the first time the whole family had been together in forty-six years.

Later Daniel went to visit his son Edward Cole at Niagara Falls. Edward had graduated from Purdue with an Engineering Degree and was working in New York for the Dow Chemical Company. Daniel was struck with a heart attack and died on December 26, 1911 in Niagara Falls, New York. He is buried in the Dayton Cemetery, Tippecanoe County, Indiana.

After Daniel's death the land was divided. Charles got the land on the north side of the road, and John, Grant, and Tom got the land where the Cole Farm was located on Morehouse Gravel.

What happened to the sons of Daniel? John, called Jack, ran the family farm along with Grant. They called the farm The Sunny Slope Cole Stock Farm. They raised horses and cows. In 1911 they built a large barn on the farm. Jack married Aleatha Taylor and later divorced her. He never remarried. Grant never married. He would always cause problems within the family. Later in life Grant lived in a trailer in Lafayette on Main Street by the

Aluminum Plant. Charles married Olive Harvey. They lived up the road from Jack and Grant and farmed. Later they lived in Sunman, Indiana. They had one son name Robert who married a woman named Versie. Charles was always a very personable person and was very well liked by all.



#### Cornell Holmes or the Hull Company

I am tracing Cornell Holmes, born 1845 in Indiana. In 1850 he is listed with his family, Daniel & Clarissa (Cornell) Holmes in Lafayette, Tippecanoe Co., IN. However, he is not listed with the family in the 1860 census. Since this was a very close-knit family my first assumption was that he had died before the 1860 census when he would have been only 15 years old. Later I came heir to a stack of letters that tied the writer of the letters to at least one of the sons of Daniel and Clarissa Holmes. Since all other son's lineages were accounted for there was only one possibility - Cornell Holmes must have lived, left the family unit, married, and had descendants. Then I found Cornell's Civil War entry - 1865 and he listed his residence as Carroll County, IN (a connecting county to Tippecanoe Co.)

After over 8 years of posting queries, I finally connected with the grandson of the writer of the old letters. This man, Dan, had more information which proved that his grandmother was actually the granddaughter of Cornell Holmes. Dan was up against a brick wall. Dan provided me with the information that Cornell was married to Mary Ellen Hull in Tippecanoe Co., IN, 17 Oct. 1864 - one year before he entered the Civil War so we know that Cornell was definitely in the same area but with no apparent residence (not in any 1860 census in any surrounding county of Tippecanoe).

Dan also said that his grandmother stated in her memoirs that her father was born in Vigo County, IN and that her grandfather (Cornell Holmes) died in Vigo County prior to 1876. His widow, Mary Ellen (Hull) Holmes migrated in 1876 to Independence Co., KS to be with her parents - William R & Elizabeth (Hutcheson) Hull. William and Elizabeth were from Fort Wayne, Allen County, Indiana. With all this information and the fact that I live in Vigo County, Indiana and was born in Fort Wayne, I am unable to make a confirmation. Not a single document have I found other than the marriage record of Cornell and Mary Ellen. Further, William R. Hull was originally from Ohio.

Now, why the canal information request? Two very distinct reasons. First, the purported migration pattern of Cornell Holmes and the time period of his short life runs parallel to that of the constant repairs of the canal from Fort Wayne to Terre Haute and Riley, Indiana. Second, after checking into the history of the canal, I found that one of the companies who brought his dredges to the canal to ship goods was a Mr. Hull, owner of the Hull Shipping Company, from Ohio. (I do not have that info at my fingertips but I am sure you will know what I am