

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

BRIGGS

FAMILY

As in the case with several other pioneer families, for the Briggs family there is some difference of opinion as to just when the ancestor came here. That question as to the Briggs covers a period of almost twenty years, one branch holding that his trip here was about 1818, the other that it occurred in 1837. Both agree that he made at least one trip back to Tennessee after coming here, and possible more, so it may be that both sides are right and that these dates represent different trips.

James Y. Briggs was born in North Carolina, and was married in Tennessee to Martha Shockley, who was a first cousin to William, Meredith, Thomas V., and Charlotte Shockley. Regardless of the time they actually came here they made the first trip afoot, settling near Stony Point. James Briggs thinks his grandfather came here first in

1818; Irvin Tackett fixes the date by saying his mother was in her seventh year when they came, which would make it 1837. As said above, both may be right.

They lived in the Stony Point vicinity some two years, and went back to Tennessee, where they stayed three years before returning to Missouri and again settling in the Stony Point community. They later moved to the upper Maries at the place now owned by Mrs. Waters, and later at the present Otto place on Fly Creek near Vienna. They lived at this latter place until the beginning of the Civil War when the family moved to Rolla. Being too old for military service, Mr. Briggs was employed by the government as a teamster in the course of which he met with an accident that caused his death. He is buried at Rolla. His birth and death dates are not known, as the family records have been destroyed.

He was a man of above the average in means of that day, and a family tradition yet extant is that shortly after the outbreak of the war he buried a considerable sum in gold on the Otto place, where he then lived. He took no one with him and did not confide the hiding place to anyone, although often urged to do so by his wife. Finally, after repeated urging, the old man showed up at the house one day with a box which he deposited under the bed, warning his wife under no circumstances was she to look into it until he came home at supper time. But curiosity got the better of her in the afternoon and she opened it, only to see a wren fly out of it. Her husband's first action after coming home was to open the box. When he discovered the wren was missing, he discouraged further promises to keep the secret of his gold cache. It was never certainly known whether he took the money to Rolla with him, or whether it is still buried there.

Martha Shockley, his wife, was born in Tennessee September 8, 1806, and died in this county, to which she returned after the death of her husband, January 8, 1883

They were the parents of eight children living to maturity: Scott T., Zylphia, John B., James L., Mary M., Sidney, Daniel Boone Wherry, and Sharilda Briggs.

Zylphia Briggs, the oldest daughter, was born January 7, 1831, and died in this county February 25, 1922. She was married to Willis M. Tackett in 1856. He was the son of John Tackett, who moved here from present Gasconade County in a very early day, likely at least as early as the Briggs family. John Tackett is believed to have been a son of Philip Tackett who came to Gasconade County from Tennessee between 1818 and 1821. Willis Tackett's birth date is not known. He died in this county August 9, 1909, having lived here his entire life except for his service in the Union Army during the Civil War.

Willis and Zylphia Tackett were the parents of six children living to maturity, of whom J. P. (Perry) is dead; he was first married to Louisa, daughter of Benjamin Eads, who was born about 1856 and died March 31, 1907; the three children born of this marriage were: Ella, who died single; Bertha, wife of P. C. Frey, and Frank, both of this county.

His second marriage was to Alice Frey, by whom he is survived by one son, Clay, also of this county. The living children of Willis and Zylphia Tackett are: J. I., G. H., and Melvina Tackett of this county; Louis of Howell County; and Mary M., widow of John Hughes of Oklahoma. J.I. Tackett, now a widower, was married February 24, 1884, to Lydia, daughter of Lewis Eads, who was born June 13, 1865, and died June 3, 1931. They were the parents of three children: Martin M., associated with his father in the hardware business in Vienna; Lucy who married W. A. Curtis June 28, 1908; and Leona who married Floyd Terry March 21, 1909, also live in this county.

Scott Terry Briggs was born in this county March 4, 1837, and died here January 9, 1900. His wife was Bridget

Fennessey who was born in Ireland February 1, 1830, and died here March 20, 1917. This couple spent their entire married lives in Maries County, but of the five children born of this marriage only one, A. M. (Moses) now lives here. The others living are: James at Union; Terry at Washington; and Dennis in Oklahoma.

Thomas J., the oldest son of Scott T. Briggs, born November 24, 1861, died April 14, 1932. He was married November 24, 1885, to Catherine Agnes, daughter of Walter Birmingham, who was born here in 1866 and died here December 22, 1919. They owned and made their home on the Maries farm now owned by Richard Helton, a couple miles above Venus, most of their lives. The five children born to them, all yet living, are: Andy M. and Walter of Callaway County; William T. and Sylvester of Kansas City; and Bridget, wife of Everett Barnhart of this county.

John B. (Burr) Briggs was born in Tennessee April 4, 1833, and died here December 22, 1891. He married Melissa, daughter of John T. Powers, who is also long since dead. They were the parents of seven children: Charles, Stephen, Eugenia, Emeliza, James T., Newton, and Margaret. Of these seven children Charles is dead; his wife was Amanda, daughter of Thomas Backus (by his second marriage), who is also dead; their five children, Eva, Mollie, Thomas, Walter, and John, all live in Oklahoma. Stephen married Malinda, daughter of 'Slim Ike' Crismon, and lives in New Mexico. Eugenia married Herman Juergens and Emeliza married Jesse Shelton; at last account both families lived in Oklahoma. James T. married Malinda, daughter of Gilbert Hancock, and lived in Oklahoma at the time of his death some years ago; such family as he left still lives in that state, but their names and numbers are not known. Newton Briggs married Missouri, daughter of Marion Rose, and lives in Oklahoma. Margaret, whose married name is not known, lives in California.

Daniel Boone Wherry Briggs born in 1839 married Melvina J., daughter of McKany W. Hughes in 1860. He was killed by bushwhackers on the ridge south of Dry Creek November 6, 1863, in company with Wesley Parker. He was survived by his widow now long since deceased, and his three children, John H., Mary, and Margaret Briggs.

John H. Briggs, born April 20, 1861, married Malinda, daughter of Lewis Eads. He died July 30, 1911, and is survived by his widow and four of their five children: Boney, Wherry, Mabel, and Effie. The widow and all the children live in and near Albuquerque, New Mexico. Ewel, the fifth child, died single in early manhood.

Mary J. Briggs, born April 3, 1864, was married March 6, 1886, to Henry J. (Toby) Sudheimer. She died July 31, 1920, and is survived by her husband and four children: Ella, wife of Bunyan Eads of this county; Tony of Springfield; Clay of Dixon; and Edna of St. Louis.

Margaret, the third child of Daniel Boone Wherry Briggs, married Henry Sudheimer; of the several children born to them all died early in life except Hugh, who lives near Hughes Chapel. Both parents have been dead many years.

Mary Minerva Briggs was born in 1838 and died March 31, 1893. Of the six children born of her marriage to Dennis Fennessey, Mary married William Breeden and Kate married Stephen Breeden; both are dead and their descendants will be found under their married names. The four remaining children, all living, are: Thomas of Meta; Andy of Granite City; Margaret, widow of Walter Birmingham of Washington, Missouri; and Eva, widow of Ulrich Reichel of this county.

James Lafayette Briggs, probably the youngest child of James Y. Briggs, was born in 1840 and died November

29, 1923. He saw active service in the Missouri militia during the Civil War, and after its close was married to Nancy Murphy. The four children born of this marriage and living to maturity were: John, James, Mrs. Oscar Traister, and Mrs. Betty Look. The last three live in this county. John married a Simpson and died in the Springfield vicinity a number of years ago, and any family he left probably lives in Greene County or thereabouts.