This booklet is back to the seventh generation and to the present generation of today. There is no more of the fourth generation of three marriages. They only went to the fourth generation. They are recorded in this booklet. See if you can find them. The date of the first was 1804 first marriage generation second in 1824, as near as I can get the date there ten children born, three of these children married into one family. The 6 sons and 4 daughters was born the second marriage. 4 sons and 4 daughters third marriage. 4 daughters born. Ten sons and 12 daughters 22 children in the three families that were double first cousins, all very healthy from 1844 two 1854. Five of these sons married five of these daughters. First marriage there was nine children born. The second marriage there was sixteen children born. None ever married. Two daughters living. Family name gone. Third marriage eleven children born, none ever married. Parents all children are dead. Family name gone at the fourth generation. The fourth marriage eight children born, four married. Eight children born, four of married, two of them have large families. The first marriage there was six children married. The fifth marriage six children born. One hundred and six all grand children living to the seventh generation. I'll give one marriage of first cousins. Marring six children, born only one daughter. Married parents and all childer dead. Family name gone. The fourth generation at a family Reunion of the Blakes August 2/1953, two more children to add to a marriage. Nine other marriages of the first 22 that did not marry a Relation. I have a Record on one Family. The others are scattered in different states. I can only give a complete Record on one there is Eight of the three first marriages I do not have the information on their families. I will give the one I have the record on complete this marriage of 1883. There was nine children born. Eight of these married and have thirty-nine children, living to day twenty seven are married and have sixty nine children living to day. One is a great great grand child of this marriage of 1883 the seventh generation from 1804 there is 116 living to day. August 3/1953. All the marriages I have given was in Braxton and Lewis County the records will show. I have known many Catholic nothing like this ever taken place in any of their families. I could give similar cases that has happened. It is going on to some extent here in Lewis not so many know it but it is still going on. I think all should be against this practice this has cost Braxton and Lewis, co, quite a bit.

What I have described of this relation last through life you meet them you know there something the matter never but five have had the ability to take care of them selves no one knowes how bad this has bin only the ones that has lived threw this I hate to here a remark made about some having no sense and here some why don't you no the relation of their parents the Blake families is not the only families that have practis
this I could show just as bad in other famileys where this has bin practis I am not trying to cast a shadow on eny one i am just telling what has happend in case of doubt you can investigate the geral publick dosent know so much about this and some dosent like to here this and say why do you tell this the only way i know to brake this up is to let the pulick know it and see the results of what has bin i think the Blakes and Riffles are a avrige people and are taking thir place with others i have twenty four grand childern I never want to see eny thing like this happen to them or eny one there is meny that knows all about what i have related the older people why not let the younger know it has never proved good for eny as i have known all the Blakes in this bookle but five that was dead before my time i have known two to get hurt by saying thay would whip them selves a little Blake one layed in bed for a week or more and he did not whip a blake the other was nocked uut for a hour or two all because of remarks about the Blake familey there is meny to day in other states when i first rember there was no Blakes that had a education that i knew or a Riffle you can find them in schools in difrent countys and thay have made good think in genral thay try to tend to thir own bisness you will find thay have thir falts along with others none are perfick thay have come a long ways sence i can rember let us all try to improve our ways we would be better of if we Did

Here are the disease i rember so well from 1890 to the present Typhord fever 22 cases 6 deths six cases of Diphtheria four death three famileys of twenty childern all had scarlet fever some was very bad one death in the twenty cases four famileys chicken pocks no deaths wasent very bad I remember two famileys seven childern Each all had what they called the black french measels this was bad no one died there has bin menny cases of mumps no one died The worst scars I rember was small pocks in 1898 Olivia. Stuttler of shady brook, and James Skinner, both of orlando, W.V.A. I think it was still called Confluence, at that time Stuttler and Skinner, was workin at cowen or camden on gauley stuttler got the small pocks thay run of and got on train so they locked them in and run them to flat woods and left them locked uo tell the sheriff and members of borad of helth could get there from sutton stuttler had broken a window was out when thay got there all was afraid get close to them thay officers come armed with shot guns stuttler was very sick laying in the snow he had to do what thay told him when he under stand thay was trying to help thay put in a old house above the orlando cemetery and kept them about all winter Skinner never taken the small pocks that was the reason thay were kept in so long I knew two other famileys had small pocks no one died in this comunity clover fork creek is the line betwen Braxton,and lewi and thay had gard to keep you from one county to the other it hard to get to the store or grist mill the first few days was the worst Thay locked the mail train to the rail at Burnsville. finly let it thruh I have knowen of three cases of Polo one death this all happend in a radis twenty mile square a long the lin betwen braxton and lewised county not more then ten mile deep in Either County All thes diseas I do not think have cost state and countys as much as this marriage of this cloce relation ship most of thes diseas only lasts three to five weeks you die or get well

havent written this ofend eny one just trying to tell what has happend as i rember so well i do not have education to tell this as it should be told i hope you can under
stand what i have tryed to tell the Blakes some were very superstisous belived in witchery and gots i do not know eny to day that belives in eather. I will say to all that can look back fifty to sixty five years ago and think of all we have to be thankful for all that has taken place in that time i dont think there is eny one that can Emagin what will take place in the next fifty years this has all bin for our benfit we should be very thankful for it has made better living for us all i have meny mistake in spelling but i hope you can under stand what i am trying to tell there is some that say you should tell this it is not the Blakes alone that had practis this relation if you look around i have went thrugh this booklet very carful and found that some was no more at the forth genration while some has went to the seventh genration i have knowen all of thes names in this booke but five who was before my time i got this information from the parties names in this booklet who are living to day i am just tryin to show what has happend to this relation

In the following pages I have outlined some history of the Blake family. I remember much of it - and have received much more from others. This history dates back more than 130 years. In the beginning, six Blakes with no record of the parents. Some data on four sons and a daughter, coming from Greenbrier county and settlins on Clover Fork north of Orlando. One was probably Andrew, who owned 500 acres of land at the site of Orlando in Lewis and Braxton counties. My great grandfather, Johnny B. Blake owned 320 acres adjoining the first brother---all in Braxton county. The next brother was probably George Blake who owned quite a bit of land up on Clover Fork. He married Nancy Heater; no children. He was either killed early in the Civil War or died about that time. The land was divided among the widow, Martha Blake and Elick Blake---a nephew and neice.Huey Blake owned a large tract of land on Chop Fork in Braxton County. Johnny B. Blake was born in 1804 and died in 1886. He married Abby Chrismore who was born in 1797 and died in 1895. To this union were born ten children. I will outline below the names as I know them or have been informed - on the families and families in which the Blakes married for the past 130 years. Johnny B. and Abby Blake, first son John was killed late in the Civil War; second son, Stuart J. Blake; third son, Anthony; fourth son, Ballard; first daughter, Elsie, Mary and Margaret. No information on other members of the original family. The first son, John Blake wed Elizabeth Riffle. Born to this union eight children, two sons and six daughters: Albert and Chester; Lydia, Elizabeth, Abby, Kathryn, Susan and Elsie. John and Elizabeth Blake: first son, Albert was married to Savina Posey and they had ten children, six sons and four daughters. Sons---Jenkins, George, Burl, Porter, Edward, and Dick or Richard. The daughters---Alice, Laura, Minnie and Ola. The first Son of Albert, Jenkins, married Lillie Taylor and had one son, Furman Blake. The second son, George Blake was wed to Zura Malcolm. The third son, Burl, married Mae Cottrill and to this family were born three sons and four daughters: Harry, James, and Harold (in Army); Juanita, Luma (deceaed), Mildred, Harry married Mary Conley and they have one son and two daughters: Junior, Mary and Sally.
James Blake, married, no information. The first daughter, Juanita, married Raymond Wooddell, four children; Mildred married Roy Ramsburg, two daughters. Porter Blake, fourth son, married Mona Brown; Edward married in New Jersey; sixth son, Richard, wed Civilla Workman, daughter and two sons. Albert and Savina Blake: first daughter, Alice married to George King; second daughter Lura, deceased; third, Minnie, married Edward Heath; and fourth, Ola, married Floyd Markley and lives in Parkersburg. John and Elizabeth Blake: second son, Chester married Mary Underwood, three sons and two daughters: Cecil, Clyde, Thomas, Myrtle and Eva. Clyde married Annie Droppleman, no children; Cecil wed Addie Savage; Thomas married Ona McCoy, two sons and a daughter; Chester and Clifford---no data on the daughter. Myrtle Blake wed Ray Norman; Eva married John Sandy. John and Elizabeth Blake: first daughter, Lydia married James Foster and they were the parents of four sons and three daughters: William B., Albert, George and Frank, and Lumie, Minnie and Annie. William married Eva Bennett and they had six sons and four daughters: Annie, Thelma, Nellie, Guy, Fred, Ralph, Brooks, Bennett and Woodrow. Albert Foster wed Matilda Alkire; George wed Dora Thornhill, two sons; Frank married a Smith. The three daughters named are married and live in Akron, Ohio.

John and Elizabeth Blake: second daughter, Abby married Stuart L. Riffle, five sons and three daughters: Charles, Robert, Allen, John (deceased) and Clyde, sons and Amanda, Minnie and Bessie, daughters. The first son, Charles Riffle, wed Dona Blake---Ellis, Dana, Clarence and Jack, sons, and Joyce, Della, and Rena, daughters. Ellis married Nellie Mick and lives at Flemington; two other sons are married; Joyce married Red Beckner, two sons and two daughters; Della Riffle wed Tucker Wymer, three daughters and a son --- Janestine, Wanda, Susie. Abby and Stuart L. Riffle: second son, Robert, married Lillie Taylor, two sons, Ralph and Oliver (deceased). Third son, Allen married Nellie Groff; fourth son, John, deceased; fifth son Clyde single, lives at Burnsville; first daughter, Amanda married Ervin Conrad, five sons and two daughters---all blind but one daughter, Exie. Second daughter, Minnie, married Ersie Henline, two sons and three daughters, Ruth Jessie, data incomplete. Third daughter, Bessie Riffle married William McPherson, some children---they live in New York. John and Elizabeth Blake: third daughter, Elizabeth married Thomas Posey, three daughters, Mary, Martha and Ora and three sons, Charles, William and Alderson. No data on the children except Mary. She married Sam Ocheltree and they had three daughters. Dessie married Ernest Ocheltree; second daughter, Lulu married Clarence Blake and lives in Akron; Lillie is married. A son, Lydle Ocheltree was killed in action in World War II. Fourth daughter, Kathryn Blake married Sell Taylor. Four daughters and a son were born to this union: Luma, Mollie, Lily, Dora---nothing on son. Luma married William Riffle; Lillie Taylor married Robert Riffle; Dora Taylor married Roy Riffle, two sons and five daughters---Roy, Zella, Mishie, Irene, Madeline and Katherine. All are married.

Fifth daughter, Elsie Blake married Rand Wooddell, a son, Ray; the sixth daughter, Susan Blake married Jack Riffle, three sons, Lloyd, George, Ellis. Lloyd married Alice Blake; George and Ellis both married. Johnny B. and Abby Blake: second son Stuart J.


Seckond son Melrose Davisson. married bored to this union a son William. Davisson. allon Melrose


third son Leroy.Davisson Married no childern


4 son Fred. K. Davisson single at home


5 son Paul. Davisson. married born to this union three childern Conney & Mamie & Nancy.


6.son Sherman. F. Davisson married bornd to this union A daughter Helen. Mere Davisson


first daugh lives at Glenville. W.V.A

3 daugh Viola. Davisson married Raymon Riffle born to this union six childern sons Donld & Maion & Thomas & Truman Daug Opal & Jane Live at Orlando. W.V.A

John. Jackson and Ella Mae. Foster Blake seckond daughter Nora Blake married Roy. Hall borned to this union four sons and two daughters first son Hillery & Larance & Dellis & Bud. Hall daughter Edna & Mary. Edna. married Otto. Scott. no childern to this union seckond son Larnce. Hall. married Polin. Fox. borned to this union four childern live in Ohio the rest of the familey live R# 2. Roanoke. W.V.A all

John. Jackson and Ella .Mae. Foster Blake there is on hunderd forty three living to day counting inlaws from this marriage of 1883 fifth genration or the seventh from 1797 1804

seven other marriages in same familet and two repeat marriages nine in all there is not one hunderd and fifty libing to day you can find them in This Booklet this relation is not good for eny one less discurge this Practis to all

Charles A. Blake married Daisy Heater, a daughter, Ruby who married Thomas Riffle. They had four children, Rosemary wed Paul Crutchfield, one child. Second son, Burley Blake married Dora Fox, several children. Third son, Robert, married Verney Townsend; fifth son, John, married Verna Riffle, no children: (John deceased); Walter is State Hospital; Wesley Blake at Flemington; daughter Esta Blake married Eli Riffle, sons Hoy, Raymond, Rodney, William and daughters Lottie, Eva, Naoma and Hazel. Raymond Riffle married Viola Davis; William Riffle married Ethel Doyle, twin daughters; Rodney Riffle married Virginia Taylor, one child; no data on Roy Riffle;

Eva Riffle married Icen Taylor, large family of children, names not available; third daughter married Will Boggess, several children; forth daughter, Nevie married; fifth daughter, Hazel, married Dwight Skinner, three children, name of oldest, Bernice. First daughter, Lottie Riffle married Stokes Blake, four children, Stanton served in World War II. Ray Blake, all children at home. Stuart J. and Lucinda Blake: second son Ballard, married Amanda Blake, sixteen children, all deceased but two daughters, oldest Rosie, and Nora Blake, not married. Stuart J. and Lucinda Blake: third son, John Jackson Blake, born in 1860 and died in 1940, married Ella Mae Foster. She was born in 1865, died in 1935. To this union, seven sons and two daughters: Lee W. Blake, Ezra, deceased, Alva, Vincent A., Rufus, Ray, Stokes, sons, and Lizzie and

Vincent A. Blake married Clare Posey, two sons and three daughters; Arden Blake married Mary Gillespie, one son; Virgil Blake married Minnie Dye, two sons and two daughters---Mike, Donald, Carol and a sister; first daughter, Reva Blake married Shirley Myers, two sons and a daughter---Jerry and Jackie Myers and sister. Ina Blake wed James Skinner, a son; Jean Blake married Harold Sands. Fourth son of Stuart S. Blake: Stuart, married Janie Posey, six sons and two daughters---Emory, Marion, Orvil, Oley, Amos, Edward, Bessie and Mamie. Emory died in Detroit in 1930; Marion married Charlotte Ethel Skinner, 14 children of whom 12 are living---Francis, Marion, Edward, Edna, Wayne, Katherine, Opal, Nina, Elija, Goldie, Fay, Patrick, Charles. The first son, Francis, married Betty Henline Fox, no children; Edward Scott married Ruth Riffle, son Leo; third son Wayne, married Joan Skinner, no children; Lijah, single, in US Nave; Patrick, single, at home; Fay, resides on Weston Route 4; Charles Duane, at home; Edna married John Ware, no children; Katerine married Arno Gould, three daughters---Helen Sue, Evelyn Joyce, and Alma Kay. The third daughter, Alma Kay, married A. M. W. Hall, two children, Marcella and Arccellus Ralph; Nina, fourth daughter married Foster Hardman, no children; Goldie, single. Orvil J. Blake, third son of Stuart S. and Janie Blake, married Ertha Bennett, some of the children are Richard, Frank, Homer, Cledith, Hazel, Audra, Madelyn---don't have all their names. Oley Blake, fourth son on Stuart and Jane Blake resides on Weston Rout 2; fifth son Amos, married Ethel Dennison, no children; sixth son lives with his sister, Mamie, at Orlando; the second daughter married Joseph Riffle and lives near Frenchton.

Joseph Blake married Martha Posey, two sons, Ova and Terry Blake, and four daughters---Lona, married; Violet, married James Townsend, several children, including Hubert. Third daughter, Nellie Blake married Calvin Riffle, two daughters and two sons; the fourth daughter Ella, at home. Sixth son of Stuart and Lucinda Posey Blake, Andrew Adam Blake, married Vestie Clark; Clarence, the first son married Lula Ocheltree reside in Ohio, no children; Lloyd Blake, the second son, married Ruth Skinner, Amick and Lela born to this union. Gaylord Blake married, lives in Ohio; Doyle Blake, married, one child; fifth son, Delmer, married. Mabel Blake,
first daughter, married an Ocheltree; second daughter, Jeanette, married a Smith; third daughter, Agnes Blake married Red Belt, several children; fourth daughter married. John Blake, third son of Anthony, married Ella Thompson, no children; fourth son, Sam, married Matilda Butcher, a son, Perry, and two daughters, Ada and Genevieve Blake. Janie, the first daughter married William Blake, history previously given; Amanda married Ballard, previously noted; and third daughter, Mollie, married Jackson Skinner, two sons, Oak and Ezra. Oak married Floda McCauley, three sons---Sam, Winford and one other; Ezra married Lettie Blake, two sons and a daughter; Maggie Blake never married. Fourth son of Johnny B. and Abby Chrismore Blake, Ballard, married Mary Jane Riffle, three sons---William Henry, John Jackson, and Bennie, and two daughters, Mary Ann and Alice. William Henry Blake married Mintie Williams, celebrated his 86th birthday in 1952. Born to this union: Sarah Jane Blake married Homer Allen; Georgia Blake wed French Conrad; James Blake married Mary Duncan; Reta Blake married Ezra Skinner; Richard Blake wed Irene Wooddell; Willard Blake married Mabel West, all living. William Henry Blake has 42 grand children, 48 great grand children. Their names are not available. John Jackson, second son was born February 14, 1872, died November 14, 1945. He married Biddie Jane Bragg, who was born on April 9th, 1878, died February 13, 1941. Born to this union, seven sons and eight daughters---Lloyd James, Wilbert, William, Pearl, Hobert Lee, John Ruben, Basil Henry Jackson. Lloyd James married Lola Robinson, four sons and a daughter, Ralph Junior, Paul Wesley, Vaughn, and Matthew Blake, Marguerite Blake. Lora Wilbert Blake married Anna Pullman, eight children, Ruth, Opal, Eugene, Matoska, William Jackson, Clarence. William Pearl Blake married Litho Givens, two daughters, Lela Mae and Juanita. Hobert Lee married Beulah Riffle, five children, Harvey Lee, Earl Shea, Carl Ray, Eulah Anna, and Marjory. John Ruben Blake married Bertha Wade, three children, Grover, Lora Gordon, Lillian; second marriage to Bell Nicholson, two children, Woodson and Leva Mae Blake. Lula married Frank Dean, six children, Hermit E., Zilma, Law First daughter of Stuart J. and Lucinda Blake, Mary, was wed to Marcellus Blake, five daughters and a son, John. Bell, a daughter; Minnie, second, married Arch Riffle, two sons, Leo and Junior; daughter Charlotte Riffle married Bill Mullen; second daughter, Mary wed George Heater, no children; Sylvia married George Posey, two children; fourth daughter, Addie Riffle; fifth, Dorothy, no data. Second daughter, Stuart and Lucinda Blake, Sarah married Franklin B. Riffle, three sons and two daughters---Herman, Ezram, Moses, Dora and Vernie Riffle. Third son of Johnny B. and Abby Chrismore Blake, Anthony, married Rebecca Posey, sons---William J., James, John, and daughters Janie, Amanda, and Mollie. First son, William, married Sovina Blake, eleven children, have a record of but three---Roy, Bert, and Doci. James Blake, second son wed Rebecca Bull, two sons, Darius and Vincent, daughter, Tressie, Darius married daughter of Roy Williams and is in Ohio, as is the other son. Tressie married Howard Wymer. John Blake, third son of Anthony, married Ella Thompson, no children; fourth son,ence, Betty, Vance, Mino Dean.

Basil Blake married Freda Steele, four children---Mabel, Johnny, Homer and Harold
Gene Blake. Sarah Blake married James H. Singleton, a son Reetis Jackson Singleton,
a daughter, Sue Carol. Lona Blake married Ernest Conrad, 2 children, Clarence Jarvis
and Rena Gray; Macel Blake married Clarence Overall, six children, names of two are
Dorothy and William. Youngest son not married. Daughters of John and Abbie
Crismore Blake: Eliza Blake married Jacob I. Riffle, seven sons, three daughters. First
son W. T. Riffle, known as Taylor, served the last year of the Civil War; second son
Stuart L. Riffle married Abby Blake, history given in the foregoing; Henry Riffle, third
son, fourth son Benjamin F. Riffle who married Sarah Blake, previously given; the fifth
son, John Scott Riffle; sixth son, T. A. Riffle; and seventh son, Adam. First daughter,
Elsie; second, Louisa; third daughter Samantha J. Riffle. W. T. or Taylor married a
Posey, a son. Marion J. Riffle wed Cora Reynolds, three sons, Layton, Alva and
Gilbert; daughters, Ora, Pearl, and Hettie. Layton married Bertha Mick, three
daughters, Freda, Betty and Doris; two sons, Ronald and Buddy. Freda married John
Vankirk, a daughter, Diana; Ronald married Jacqueline West. Betty, Doris and Buddy
at home. Second son of Marion and Cora, Gilbert Riggle married Virgie Barrett, no
children; third son, Alva married and lives in Baltimore. First daughter, Ora married
Scott Legg, born to union, Grace, Bessie, Lawrence, Stanley; second daughter, Pearl
married Bill Edgell, three sons, George, Ted and Junior; third daughter, married
Homer Skinner, no children. W. T. or Taylor riffle, one daughter Minerva Riffle
married Wade Mick, no children.

Jacob I. and Elsie, second son of Stuart L. Riffle, history given. Third son, John Scott
Riffle married Mary Ann Skinner, a daughter of Granville Skinner. Born to this union,
Effie, Ora, Anna, Hallie, Mamie, three sons, Joseph E., R. M. or Bos., Effie, Ora, first
daughter, wed Joe Skinner, three sons, Obie, Rupert and Scott Skinner. Obie Skinner
married Lulu Blake, no children; Scott Skinner married Mary Wines, four sons, Joe,
Bob, Don, and Peck. Effie, first daughter, married Robert Ayard; Opal married Clem
Crislip, children, Maxine and Tenna. Second daughter of John Scott and Mary; Ora,
Riffle married Andrew Heater, two sons Jack and Ray Heater, and two daughters, May
and Sybil Heater. May married Buster Parmer and Sybil Married Simon Cole. Third
daughter, Anna Riffle married a Stutler. Born to this union were Oris Stutler who
married Edith Skinner, four daughters one son. Bill, Virginia, Mary and Juanita. Mary
Stutler married Leo Moran, a daughter; John married Juanita Price, no children, third
son Everett married Ruth Henline, two daughters, Betty and Carol Ann; fourth son
Frank married Evelyn Gay, children Frank, Marylin, Arnett and Paul. Fourth daughter
of John Scott and Mary Ann: Hallie Riffle married Sheridan Nicholson, children, Steele
Paul, Bruce, James and Vera. Fifth daughter, Mamie married Roy Lester, children Roy,
Carl, Robert, Dona, Belle, Mildred and Mary Ann. John Scott and Mary Ann: first son
Joseph E. married Bettie A. Skinner, daughter of Frank and Lucy Posey Skinner; their
daughters Grace, Margaret, Jessie and Katerine Grace married George Reynolds, two
daughters, Betty, Bernice; Margaret married Cecil Fleming, two sons and two
daughters---Joseph, Isaac, Pearl and Canna; third daughter Jessie married Pressley J.
Bragg, children Margaret, Joseph, John; fourth daughter, Catherine married Cecil
Skinner, Betty Jane and Linda Kay children.
Oldest son Dwight, served in World War II, died two years after the war, at home. Second son, Brannon, married Thelma Nestor, children, Betty Jane, Donald Lee, deceased, Robert, Sheldon, Geraldine, Jerry and Brenda Joyce. Fourth son Eugene married Deltha Mick, three children, Dwight, Eugene and Sherry. Fifth son, Claude married Christine Gay, two children, Claudia, Jimmy; Sixth son, Jack married Mariana Finster, a daughter, Beverly Jo. Five brothers, Dwight, Glenn, Eugene, Claude and Jack all served in World War II Second son of John Scott and Mary Ann Riffle, known to many as "Boss" married Dennie Skinner, two sons, Fred at home and other son died young. Third and youngest son, Everett Riffle married Tina Scarff, two sons---Lynn Riffle, who married Mildred Posey, a son Tomas, daughter; Virgil Riffle married Edna Posey, a daughter of Lloyd and Maggie Posey, a son. Jacob I and Elsie Blake Riffle; Seventh son Adam, who died in 1951 at the age of 85, married, one son, Jacob Riffle. First daughter of Jacob and Elsie Blake Riffle, Jane married Alonzo Mitchell, six sons and two daughters. Son John married Minnie Henline, no children; William, Art and Cassie Mitchell, all deceased. Ossie married Minnie Godfrey, daughter Ruby; fifth son, Okey Mitchell married Pearl Snodgrass, two sons and two daughters, one son named Garland, others unknown; sixth son, Homer Mitchell, married Lula Henline, two sons. Nelson Mitchell married Francis Hamrick, sons Bobby and Stanley who married Louise Heater, a son. First daughter of Samantha Jane and Alonzo Mitchell, Ollie married John Groves, a daughter, Jacie. John was killed in a sawmill accident in 1896. Second daughter, Minnie M. Mitchell, married J. O. Ruble, five sons, Fred, Jim, Ray, Edward, and Victor, in Army since World War II. First daughter Gay, married a Goff, 12 children; second daughter, Victoria, at home; third, Mary, wed Chester Bruce, two sons. Second daughter of Jacob and Elsie Riffle, Louisa Riffle married James Pumphrey, one son William.

Jacob I. Riffle, second married to Matilda Riffle, a daughter of Jefferson and Elizabeth Heater Riffle: four sons and three daughters---Eli, Arch, Oscar, George, Tillie, Jennie and Ollie. Several of these are given in the foregoing or elsewhere in this history. Fourth son, George married Bessie Fox, several children. Hubert, Edward, Carry, Winnie, Ruth. First daughter, Tillie married Worthy Radcliff, no children; Jennie married Newton Riffle, children, Boss, Jiggs, Mamie, and Edna Riffle. Third daughter, Ollie Riffle, deceased. Johnny B. and Abby Crismore Blake: Second daughter, Margaret married a Donaldson. Born to this union 14 children, 12 living. One son was Alfred and a grandson, Charles. A grandson of Johnny B. and Abby Blake, know as little Stuart married Mollie Riffle. Children known are John, James, Lulu and Alice. John married Mary Atchison, several children, Matthew, Edward, Richard. Two sons married. Mabel married James Posey; Susie married Charles Hawkins. Johnny B. and Abby had two more daughters but have no information on them and can't trace the families. Johnny B. Blake had three brothers and on or two sisters. The brother may have been George who married Nancy Heater and who died or was killed first part of the Civil War. Calvin Skinner married Nancy after the war. Another brother may have been Anthony or Andrew Blake. No trace of this family. A sister---haven't her name---married a Matthews. A daughter, Francis, who married a Duval; a daughter or two and a son, Leet Duval; a daughter married Jackson Skinner. Children of this union---Gid C. Skinner, Delbert, Lloyd, Edmond, of Clarksburg, Earl of Weston,
daughters Ama, Clara of Orlando, Lela of Elkins.

This Blake family came from Greenbrier county in the early 1800's. Johnny B. Blake was killed in the Civil War, married and the father of two sons and six daughters. Huey Blake, brother of Johnny B. Blake, grand children don't know whom he married. Four sons and four daughters, Joseph, Aleck, John, William Blake, Louise, Milly, Cindy and Martha. The first son, Joseph, no record of whom he married. He had a son, John and a daughter, Mary. He married a second time to Elizabeth Jane Sands, four sons and three daughters. Patrick Newlon Blake married Lorena Godfrey, daughter of David Newton and Mary Jane Skinner, a daughter and two sons. Carry Blake married Walter Sharp, no children; Ray Blake wed Jennita Posey, two sons and a daughter—Francis, Robert and Pauline. Francis married Conchita Alveres, two children, Martha Louise and David Blake. Pauline married Lester Carnes, two children, Shirley and Betty Lou Carnes. Ray Blake, second son Robert wed Wilma Conley, three children, Carrie Lynn, Brenda Paige and Stephen Randle. Second son of Patrick Newton and Lorina Blake, Pete Blake, married Fannie Riffle, eight children, Edward, Bernard, Glenn, Wilma, Emogene, Denzil, Billie and Pettie J. Blake, and an adopted daughter, Marie. Patrick Newton Blake was well known. He wrote for the Independent at Weston and for the Braxton papers and died in 1951.


Joseph and Elizabeth, third daughter; Belle married Danny Murphy, eight children, know only these: William, Patrick, Cecil, Arden, Lanta, Ina and Josephine. Huey Blakes' second son, Aleck married Corinne Ocheltree, four daughters, little known but their names. Ellen married Jack White; Maggie married Tucker Bragg, Rebecca married, Elsie married Asbury Losh, son Alonzo. Huey Blake's third son, John, married
Elsie Ocheltree, sic daughters and a son; lived on Kanawha River a few miles above Burnsville. Mary Elsie died at the age of 91 last year. She married William Groff, these children: Docie married James Vankirk. Their first daughter Rose Vankirk wed Pearl Wines; Reatha wed Emmett Conrad; Henry married Charlene Mick; Helen at home; John married Freda Riffle; Nellie Groff married Allen Riffle. First son Mack married Nona Pritchard; Rosie wed Lee Holcomb; Rucks married Virgina Ocheltree; Mary Riffle wed Charles Oswald. Ettie Groff married Oscar Riffle, born to this union: Thomas, deceased, George, Wayne, Myrtle, Nina, Ivy, Ruby, and Fanny. Myrtle married Patrick Barnett; Nina married Arnold Posey, four children. Iva Riffle married Warren McCauley, two sons, Maynard and Barney, four daughters, Delfie, Rosie Lee, Bonnie and Peggy. Fourth daughter married Clarence Posey, a son. Fifth daughter, Fanny Riffle, married a Robinson. Lizzie Groff, fourth daughter of Mary Ellen and William Groff married Cecil Bee; a daughter, Freeda married Hayward Fox, two children.

John and Elsie Blake, second daughter, Margaret married Thomas Groff, the following children: Rosa Belle, deceased; second daughter married Mack Ratliff; born to this union: Lena married William C. Skinner, children Raymond and Forest Skinner, sons; Pauline and June, daughters. Raymond married Sylvia Posey. Forest wed Edith Reed. Pauline married Johnny Getz; June married Bill Clayborn. Lilly Groff married Bill Straight; their children---Margorie married Mike Zellic; Gail Straight wed Maxine; Max Straight wed Madge Williams; John Groff married Lucella Kellar; Ella Groff at home. John and Eliza Blake, third daughter: Sarah, married Ace Conrad, Roy, Charles, Gracie, Jack and Moses. Fourth daughter, Rosie married Morgan Riffle, children: Lena, Belcie, Glodie, Mattie, Clyde, Erroll, Ralph and Fred. Fifth daughter Allie married Ben Ratliff. First daughter of Huey Blake; Back in the early years John Townsend was united in marriage with Louisa Jane Blake. Six children, four sons and two daughters, Perry, Albert, Tom, John Jr., Mary Jane and Margaret. His second wife was Venda Meadley, one son and two daughters; George, Rosa and Diana, all deceased. John Jr., first marriage was to Margaret Mealey, son Darius; second marriage to Georgia Wilson, son and two daughters, Creed, Mildred and Belle. Albert married Virginia Barnett, three sons and three daughters, Cyrus, James, Willis, Vernie, Susan, and Mamie. Willis married Maude Teter, children: Nellie, Macel and Madeline; Susan married David Riffle, Vernie wed Harry Blake, and son and a daughter; James married Viola Blake, three children; Mamie married Henry Ables, four children; Cyrus, deceased; Tom married Melissa Westfall.

Mary Jane Townsend married on April 4, 1889 to James A. Barnett, son of Pleasant and Betty Elizabeth Hitt Barnett. They were originally form England and came to Culpepper and Albemarle, VA. Six children, Ella Mae, Charles, Alva, Willa, Allie Belle and Laura Gay. Ella Mae Barnett married Tony Mick on March 16, 1916---two children, Alice Gay and Grover Lee. Alice Gay married Raymond McCoy, three daughters, Marie, Rena and Dorothy. Her second marriage was to D. D. Delaney of New London, Conn. Grover married Callie Rube of Tennessee, two children; Charles Barnett married on Dec. 14, 1919 to Gay Myers, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Will Myers of Walkersville: three

Sarah Ann Myers Harold celebrated her 90th birthday on July 19th. She is the third daughter of Huey Blake. Millie A. Blake was born April 19, 1840, married Samuel B. Myers Sept. 11, 1860. He died April 13, 1871, at the age of 30. Children, Sarah Ann Myers, married, deceased; children, Stella Law, Weston; May Spaur, Walkersville; Iza Harold, deceased; Lee Harold, Weston; Guy Harold, Altoona, PA.; and Roy Harold deceased. There are seven grandchildren, two great grandchildren, Belle Myers, one son, Leslie Myers; Allie Myers, deceased, married Will Fleming, children, Alula Fleming Krawl's Creek; Harry Fleming, Charleston; Zona Mick, Detroit; Cora Myers married Marsh Myers, now deceased, their children, Troy Myers of Weston; Minnie Cunningham of Krawl's Creek. First son of Cora Myers, Edwin born September 18, 1888, died November 7, 1918, four days before the Armistice in France. H. Tom Myers now deceased, married Ida Galford, also deceased, child, Grey Messenger, Macon, GA. Huey Blake, second daughter, Martha was born May 20, 1836. She married Pete Heater, a son and a daughter, Bennie Heater. Emsey born in 1855 died December 12, 1921. Pete Heater was killed during the Civil War. Martha later married William Ocheltree, no children. Cindy Blake, fourth daughter married John Ocheltree, several children. Sam married Mary Posey; Phillip married Lucy Williams; Tom married Artie Murphy, some children. Only son of John and Ellie Blake, the information on Lockard Blake is he married a Wines who was nicknamed "Cute", several children. Blanche Blake who married Frank Riffe; Rissue Blake; Bud Blake married Bertha Singleton; Bobby Blake married Lou Singleton; Alice Blake wed Homer Lipps; Bessie married George Taylor; Belle Blake married Ballard Bleigh, several children: Blanche who married Earl Burkhammer; Rhoda, Mattie, Virginia, Elsie Lee, Thomas, Samuel, Clare, and Cleveland Bleigh. Three of these sons served in World War II. Jefferson and Elizabeth: second daughter, Amanda married Nimrod Foster, to this union was born four sons and two daughters; first son, Thomas, married, no children; second son, Tucker C. Foster married Dora Cosner, two sons and four daughters, Raymond, deceased; Rondall Foster married; Mabel, Mildred, Lean and Maxine Foster all married. Homer Foster married Ocie Bennett, born to this union Randall Foster, Russell Foster, Carl Foster, Brannon Foster, Nellie and Garnet Foster, all married but no other information. Fourth son, Burton Foster married, some children; first daughter, Ida Foster married William Smith, a daughter, Opal. Second daughter,
Winnie Foster married Ersie B. Posey, four daughters and two sons. Vera Posey married Glenn Jeffries a son Jerry. Opal Posey, single; Lucille, single; Virginia Posey wed Paul Brown, a daughter, Patricia Ann. First son, Edward, second, Elwood, and third son Kenneth all single and all served in the Korean War. Matilda riffe married Jacob Riffle, history given. Fourth daughter of Jefferson and Elizabeth; Nancy Riffle married Cyrus Mitchell, three sons and three daughters: Minter Robert, Charles: Minter, married, no data. Minter is Methodist minister, stationed at Weston for a time, built the Memorial Methodist Church, now lives at St. Mary's. Robert Mitchell, deceased, married Necie Skinner, two sons, Luther and Benjamin Mitchell; Daughter Evelyn married Pete Wymer, one child. Third son of Nancy, Cyrus Charles Mitchell; Betty Mitchell, married; Annie Mithcell, married; third daughter, Katherine married a Simmers.

Jeferson and Elizabeth: second daughter, Amanda married Nimrod Foster, to this union was born four sons and two daughters; first son, Thomas, married, no children; second son, Tucker C. Foster married Dora Cosner, two sons and four daughters, Raymond, deceased; Rondall Foster married; Mabel, Mildred, Lean and Maxine Foster all married. Homer Foster married Ocie Bennett, born to this union Randall Foster, Russell Foster, Carl Foster, Brannon Foster, Nellie and Garnet Foster, all married but no other information. Fourth son, Burton Foster married, some children; first daughter, Ida Foster married William Smith, a daughter, Opal. Second daughter, Winnie Foster married Ersie B. Posey, four daughters and two sons. Vera Posey married Glenn Jeffries a son Jerry. Opal Posey, single; Lucille, single; Virginia Posey wed Paul Brown, a daughter, Patricia Ann. First son, Edward, second, Elwood, and third son Kenneth all single and all served in the Korean War. Matilda riffe married Jacob Riffle, history given. Fourth daughter of Jefferson and Elizabeth; Nancy Riffle married Cyrus Mitchell, three sons and three daughters: Minter Robert, Charles: Minter, married, no data. Minter is Methodist minister, stationed at Weston for a time, built the Memorial Methodist Church, now lives at St. Mary's. Robert Mitchell, deceased, married Necie Skinner, two sons, Luther and Benjamin Mitchell; Daughter Evelyn married Pete Wymer, one child. Third son of Nancy, Cyrus Charles Mitchell; Betty Mitchell, married; Annie Mithcell, married; third daughter, Katherine married a Simmers.

Elizabeth Riffle married Sanford Posey, three sons and three daughters. Marshal Posey married Ida Plymall, several children; Ezra Posey married Bertie Butler, several children; Patrick, Allie and Rosa Posey, all married. Third daughter, Carrie Posey married Ernie fox, a son Dallas; Kathryn Fox, single. Elsie Riffle married John Foster, three sons, Nimrod and Vayden, both deceased, and Cecil, who married Clara Riffle; Mae, single; Floda and Ethel, both married. Seventh daughter, Lucy Riffle, married Hezikiiah Fox, a son and a daughter, Benjamin and Lora Fox. Eighth daughter, Annie married; ninth daughter, Lilly Riffle married Albert Sponaugle, a son, Wayne is married; Ocie, single; Opal married Oley Collins, three sons and three daughters, names of two only---Evelyn and Ruth Collins. Of the nine daughters and two sons all are deceased except the last daughter, who was 79 last Feb 27, (1953) Jefferson and Elizabeth Riffle---first son, Benjamin married Sarah Posey, a son William, who married
Columbia Taylor; Martin Riffle married Samantha Jane Mitchell, four sons, William, John E., Charles and George. Charles and George are deceased. Four daughters, Bertha, Eliza, Civilla S. and Eva Riffle. William B. Riffle married Daisy Todd, three sons and two daughters; Carl, Clyde, Earl, Donna and Lucille. All three sons are at home at Tioga; First daughter, Donna married William Cisna, Baltimore; a daughter. Lucille married William Handschumaker, a daughter, at Charleston. Bertha Riffle married Bingham Taylor, two sons, Cecil who married Dona Heater, Flemington, several children; Ison Taylor married Eva Riffle, Flemington.

A brother of Jefferson Riffle, part of the Charles Riffle family married Bessie Blake. Born to this union a daughter who lives at Wild Cat; a daughter, Dude, married Isaac Posey, three sons and two daughters: William, Joseph, Frank, Florence and Carrie Posey. William married Nora Clark, two sons and two daughters; Clarence married Ruby Riffle; Arnold Posey married Nina Riffle, data on both previously given. First daughter, Phoebe Posey married George Riffle---history given; second daughter married Newton Skinner, several children; Isaac and Dude, first daughter, Florence married John Sandy; second daughter Carrie deceased; Joseph Posey lives in Clarksburg. Benjamin Riffle Married Sarah Jane Posey, A son william Riffle married Columbia Taylor; Martin Riffle married Samantha Jane Mitchell, four sons and four daughters: William B. Riffle lives at Tioga; John R. Riffle at Crowford; Charles Riffle, deceased; George Riffle, deceased; Bertha Riffle, deceased. She married Benjamin Taylor, two sons, Cecil who wed Dona Heater and Ison who married Eva Riffle. William B. Riffle married Daisy Todd, three sons, Carl, Clyde and Earl, and two daughters, Donna and Lucille.


Jacob J. Riffle and Elise Blake. Riffle 6 son Thursa. Anthony known by many as T. A. Riffle. who married. Lucy Skinner a daughter of granvil. Skinner borned to this union
two daughters and three sons first daughter Dessie. seckond daughter Tiney.

First son Ersie. seckond Cllie. V. Riffle third . W. R. or William. Rosco. Riffle first daughter Dessie married Ura. Mcfee borned to this union three daughters and two sons daughters Lucy Lulu Alberta sons Warren. and Edward Alberta Married Ray Ruble borned to this union two childern all information I have on Dessie family... Tiney seckond daughter married Thomas. W. Wymer thay have a daughter Hellen she married Doil Groves thay a child all on Tiney Familey.

.................................

............. T.A. and Lucy first son Ersie. Riffle. Ethel. Tuliver. borned to this union a son Evert. and two daughters Nine. and Elcie Evert. married Jewell. Bligh a daughter of J. O. Bligh. borned to this union three sons Paul. and Jimmy. and Charles. and a Daughter Doris all on Evert. and Jewells .. Familey

................................. Erseie. and Ethel. first daughter Nine married Glenn. Butcher borned to this union three childern Barba. Jene and Jerry. and Sue. all on nine familey

.................................

............. Ersie. and Ethel. seckond daughter Elsie. married Joseph. Lewis all I have on Elsie

.................................

.... T.A. and . Lucy seckond son Cllie V. Riffle was in world war one in germany was killed in battle october the 24. 1918

................................. T.A. Riffle. and. Lucy. Skinner. Riffle. third son William Rosco. Riffle married Bessie Skinner born to this union four sons a daughter sons Arnold. Arnet Gaylord and Raymond a daughter Anna Besie dedesed

.................................

William Rosco Riffle seckond marriage no information all the Jacob I. Riffle And Elise. Blake. Riffle. thre is meny of the sixth genration and several of the seventh only three of the third genration living to day I will give the names and berth date that are great grand parents and great. great. great. to meny living to day you will find names on the front page of this booklet

.................................

.............

Johney. B. Blake. was borned in 1804 Abby Crismore. was. borned in 1797 Thay have meny desendents to day of the seventh genration all the Riffle Famileys formely Lewis county Orlando. W. V. A.

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T.A. Riffle and Lucy . famileys most live in Parkersburg, W. V. A. I said i would tell about four other famileys that are not Blakes that has practised this relation and it has bin just as bad as any thing i have ever noted being borned mently sick or blind or deformed or no helth thay cant help this meny has died in state hospital thay did have the ability to take care of them selves meny has died there the geral publick dosent know about this relation ship meny are embarsed by people asking the matter with thes childern or what the matter with him or her i have talked to some that did not
know the relation of thir parents
........................................................................................................................... 
.............
there is meny grand childern to day that do no know the relation of thir grandparents
thay have taken thir place in publick as thay should this relation ship is not quite sa
bad as it was forty years ago parents have fought aginst this i can rember back more
then sixty years as my own famile was mixed up in this so much it made me note all
other parties that practised this relation ship i do think it is good for anyn case of
doubt of any thin i have told the reckors in Braxton,lewis Countys will show
........................................................................................................................... 
.............
I have twenty four grand childern two are married i never want to see this happen to
any familey as i have noted the results in all cases of this relation I have knowen
about havent told the names of thos parties i have told about most of thir names are
in this Booklet i did not know this practis was this bad tell i went to geathring this
information and found meny that have practised this relation i think we should
educate our childern better practis then this relation ship as I rember back to 1896
the Blakes was hard woking in wood thay made all thir own furnituere and for the
publick in genral made looms spining wheels raised flax made about allo thir own
clothing of this and wool a corn planter was more to see then a new mocel car is to
day and people go for miles to see a moing machin there was not much cleard land
then mostly bottom land this was along the line of Braxton and lewis county very little
stock kept by farmers at that time as was very few had land cleard to keep stock most
all had a cow or two thay let them run out to the comons as thay called it them no
rail road in ether Braxton or lewis at that time may have bin a nar gage rail road from
clarksburg to weston, all merchants had to have thir goods halled from clarksburg or
weston. there was plenty of road houses from one county seat to other county seat to
take care of men and teams at that time then the rail road came threw lewis and
braxton countys some where in the early eighteen ninetys this give a lot employment
to the people in meny ways the next was the C&P.rail road this brought more
employment to all in coal and timber this made better living for all
........................................................................................................................... 
.............
333 There is meny living to day that rember when we had no victrola or raido or car
tha was all writen about long before we had them in genral use thay have brought
better living to all there is meny of us that are not thankful for this and think this just
happend it has happend for all there was a will put forth and a efort to bring all this I
wonder what the next fifty years will Bring us i can not emagin as meny things
brought to us for our comfort in the next fifty years I dont think ther is eny one that
can emagin the changes that will take place in the next fifty years let us hope thay
will be as great as the past fifty years I belive thay will if we would all try to imprue
as our convinces has it would be a much better world to live in and we could make it
that way if we try i have no eduication to tell what i would like to tell as i never
learned to write my name in school may have went as much as six months all to
geather if you wasent able to buy books and dress for the cold weather there was no
way provided as of to day i knew two other famileys in the same conditon as our familey so thir education was very limited like ours i liked to had a free school education i have learned a little just by reading and listning to others i was always dertermend all my childern should have a free school education which thay all did three went to high school one went glenville state teachers school the others had a chance to go to high school but did not take it so thay have all bin albe to take care of them selves

and I have not told this to reflect on any one as there is meny that knows this but did not know how bad this had bin tell you would find the percentage that has survived ,

what i didnt know that i told i got from thes parties who name is in the Booklet the blakes some of them was very superstious belived in wiches and gosto i think this is the stronger mind pring on the weaker mind i learned this thrugh life,

always try to be satfide with what you have,if you want better things then you have you can have them if you will make a efort to have them do not try to have things you are not able to have, some one elce may hafto pay for this,if you you always live up to your word you will be all right

Somithing to rember The suply of untruth is greate then the demand this makes it very cheap,

The demand for truth is greater then the suply this makes it come high.

One fault mended is worth two falts made

if we thought more about others then we do of our selvs we would have more frids

There is so much bad in the best of us and so much good in the worst of us that it dosent behove any of us to speak ill of the rest of us

it has bin more then six years sence i bin able to work i can do nothing and i am geathering this information and writing this to help pass the time i have found meny things i did not know

I would like to see a movie made of what i have related of this relation ship and let
the public see what the results of this relation has bin meny do not know the relation of thir parents i have found in talking to them you here so meny remarks made about them that are not right something the matter with them thay cant help this, in all this relation i have known about there has always bin something wrong withpart of the familey i have seen only one normal in familey of six one normal in familey of eleven three norma in a familey of sixteen childern i could go on and name meny more this mental sickness lasts throug life let us all discurge this practis i bleive this has cost the state and countys more then eny thing i know it is a cost to all (changes to hand written)] Vayden S Blake third son of Lee W. Blake Civilla Riffle Blake his children. Betty Jo married Darell Crites 2 daughters Brenda & Myra K Junior Lee married Georgie Steele 3 boys Gary Vaden Lee & Dennis Stanley O. Married Janie Church 2 sons Allen & Steve. Jean married Cecil Hornbeck one daughter Careen. Leota married John married Faye Barron

2 comments: Links to this post
Labels: Era Heyday, Family Blake, Family Riffle, Transcription

Tuesday, March 02, 2010

**A Widow’s Way**
*Bessie (Riffle) Skinner McPherson*

![Image](image_url)

*A Can a’ E Taters an’ a’ Can a’ Couch*

The barefoot boy, head barely sticking over the counter of Charley Knight’s Store, trying desperately to repeat what his mother Bessie had told him to get from the store, stammered: “A can a’ ‘E Taters’ an’ a can a’ ‘Couch.’” Kindly Charley Knight looked down at young Lester Skinner and said, “I think we have sweet potatoes and kraut.” Charley put the order in a paper bag, handed it to Lester, and the young boy scampered out the door on his way home, proud that he remembered his mother’s instructions. The professional ‘hangers-on’ who loafed at Charley Knight’s store had another little story to tell when they got home that evening from a hard day observing the sights and sounds of the little railroad town of Orlando. Little anecdotal remembrances such as these bring the olden days of Orlando alive.

*Right, above, Lester’s mom, Bessie (Riffle) Skinner McPherson*
The late Mildred Skinner Kotrys, the daughter of Bessie Riffe Skinner McPherson, told her daughter Vicky in their Buffalo, New York home, “We didn’t have it easy,” speaking of the years following the death of Bessie’s husband, Homer Skinner, who was tragically killed in the Delta railroad tunnel at Copen in February 1923. In the days before Social Security and other social welfare programs provided a safety net for young widows such as Bessie, times were indeed tough when the breadwinner of a family met an untimely and early death, leaving a widow and young children to make do on little or nothing. Before Homer Skinner, 39 year old son of Perry and (Emma J. Posey) Skinner, was lowered into his Orlando grave, his young widow Bessie was wondering where the food would come from to feed her young children. Even though Orlando
seemed to be on the surface a thriving railroad town, poverty was commonplace and lay heavily beneath the veneer. This was life in Orlando during the 1920’s and 1930’s and the reality facing the widow Bessie (Riffle) Skinner, the daughter of Stewart L. and Abigail (Blake) Riffle, as she left the Orlando Cemetery on a cold and dreary Friday, February 23, 1923.

Left, above: Homer Skinner as a young man
Left below: 2 pictures of Mildred (Skinner) Kotrys with her mom Bessie (Riffle) Skinner McPherson
Right: Bessie’s parents Stewart and Abigail (Blake) Riffle

Living on the Hill

Vicky Kotrys, granddaughter of Bessie Riffle Skinner, recalls her mother Mildred telling her that the family lived on the hill above the Orlando School in a small house. She remembers her mother telling her that the house was poorly insulated and that Bessie would stuff old newspapers into the cracks of the walls to ward off the winter drafts. Dale Barnett remembers that the house was owned by Mike Moran and was located at the lower edge of the meadow at the top of the hill, near the home of John Blake, and faced Oil Creek and the Orlando Cemetery. Dale also remembers that he went to school at Orlando with Bessie’s children in the early 1930’s.

Bessie’s granddaughter Vicky also recalls that her mother Mildred told her that Bessie did odd jobs in the community to earn money to support the family. She did laundry in the community and frequently received produce such as butter, eggs and chickens in payment rather than in cash. Dale Barnett recalled that Bessie did domestic work for the widower Oley Ocheltree when he lived with his family in the former Rush home beside St. Michael’s Church. Mildred also told her daughter that the family subsisted on garden produce and an occasional squirrel, rabbit, or raccoon. Bessie also was fond of preparing what was called “leatherbritches,” which was made of rolled up cabbage leaves, fried in bacon grease. And of course, what woman of Orlando couldn’t make great home-made bread, and Bessie was no exception. Mildred also told her daughter Vicky that when the family had a beef or hog, every bit of the butchered animal was used for the family table, without exception. Regardless of Bessie’s ingenuity of finding and putting food on the table, life for a widow with a house full of children was a difficult proposition during the Depression when nearly every family was hustling for ways to put food on the table.

And a Man Takes a Wife

In 1943 at age 52, Bessie married Bill McPherson who was one year older. Bill became a widower in 1942 when his wife, the former Floda Heater died. Life-long
acquaintances, Bill renewed his friendship with Bessie which resulted in a trip to the altar. Bill was the son of John McPherson and Maggie Blake, and a half brother of Frank, Tom and Dee McPherson, all well known residents of the Oil Creek area. He was the father of five children of his own. The youngest was Larry, still a toddler, and in need of a mother’s touch. Aside from the emotional aspects of the marriage, this union gave Bessie more security than she had ever had in her life and she no longer had to be worried about what tomorrow would bring. And, importantly for Bill, his youngest child now had a caring and loving mother at a critical stage of life.

*Left: Bessie and Bill McPherson with Bill’s son Larry*

**Life in New York**

Bill McPherson’s employment in 1943 was in Buffalo, New York and it was to this western New York city, the couple moved. Bill worked as a welder in a cooperage which made barrels, both wooden and steel, and later worked in a plant which made trailers. Bill owned two homes near his employment, one of which is now the home to Bessie’s granddaughter Vicky. Bessie and Bill lived in Buffalo until around 1955 when he retired and the mountains of West Virginia again drew them home.

**Return to Orlando**

Larry McPherson was in the 5th grade when his father Bill and his step-mother Bessie returned to Orlando. The family moved to Road Run to a farm owned by Clate Wiant. Larry, now a South Carolina resident, recalls his step-mother as an excellent cook, “a pioneer lady who could take anything and make a meal of it.” Larry recalls his step-mother as a “superb gardener and homemaker” who loved for “company to come visit.” Larry remembers that after living on the Clate Wiant farm on Road Run for a
few years, the family moved to the Ruby Brown farm on Three Lick and lived there until he was a sophomore in high school. The family then moved to Burnsville and lived near the iron bridge.

A Marriage of Convenience was a Happy One

When a 52 year old widow marries a 53 year widower with young children, it could be termed a marriage of convenience, but in the case of Bessie and Bill McPherson it was a union with true affection. They had a happy marriage of nearly twenty five years when Bill died in 1967. After Bill’s death, Bessie returned to Buffalo to live near her children where she died in 1970. Bessie and Bill are buried at the Orlando Cemetery.

Left: Bessie (Riffle) Skinner McPherson's obituary. (Click on it to enlarge it.)

Note:
Lester Skinner, the little boy who went to Charley Knight’s Store for his mother for a can of sweet potatoes and a can of kraut, grew up in Orlando and as most Orlando boys have done for the past seventy-years, went away to find employment. Lester lived and worked in Paterson, New Jersey for most of his adult life. He died in Paterson in 1990 at age 72, survived by his wife Lucille, and four children.
Note: Here are three photos of Bessie's Sons.

Left below: Bessie's sons Warren Lambert, Earl, Kenneth and Lester Skinner

Right: Bessie's sons Earl and Kenneth

Right below: Bessie's son Warren Lambert with his son Thomas Lambert Skinner
Wednesday, May 20, 2009

**My Father Loved Orlando**

*by David Parmer with Ed Riffle*
“Early on Saturday morning, my father would load up the old Ford, and with my father, Jack Riffle and my mother, Bernice (Knapp) Riffle, in the front seat and my sister Donnie and me in the rear seat, off we would go south on U. S. 19 from Clarksburg for an exciting visit to Orlando.”

“My father’s sister, Josie Beckner, or "Jose", as my father called her, lived with her husband, Bill Beckner, in a farm house near the mouth of Road Run. They were always welcoming and friendly, and Aunt Jose made biscuits every day.” Hot biscuits with country butter and jelly always finds a warm reception from a young boy, and Ed was no exception.

Ed Riffle was born in 1937 in Clarksburg. His father, Jackson Riffle, was employed at the Hazel Atlas Glass Plant. After a week of enduring hot furnaces full of molten glass and the clang of machinery making the pressed Depression glassware for which Hazel Atlas was famous, a time for leisure and quiet on Oil Creek rejuvenated the soul and settled the nerves. A visit to Uncle Bill’s and Aunt Jose’s was just the therapeutic dose of tonic needed by glass worker Jack. It also provided an opportunity for son Ed and Beckner cousin, Louie Mae, to scout for darting minnows and menacing crawdads in Oil Creek and roam the hills of the Oil Creek valley. Childhood memories are not forgotten, even with the passage of over a half century. Ed Riffle remembers well the visits by his family to the home of Bill and Josie Beckner.
Examples of Hazel-Atlas Depression Glass. Hazel-Atlas also made Atlas canning jars and a wide variety of every-day ware that is highly collectible today.

Goosepen Hill

The first bit of excitement on a visit to the Beckner home on Oil Creek was the thrill of traveling up and over Ryan’s Hill on Goosepen. The days of modern brakes were still well into the future and war-time shortages of auto parts made the Goosepen Hill into quite an adventure in an aging Ford. To get to the bottom of the hill and the gentler terrain of Three Lick always seemed quite an accomplishment and was the signal that the Beckner home was not far away. And there might also be a visit with Aunt Della Wymer’s family on Three Lick and with cousins Sonny and Sue. To Eddie Riffle, these visits during his youth were memorable.

Left: a view from Goosepen Road, photographed by Debbie Malek. Goosepen Road crosses the divide between the Oil Creek section of the Little Kanawha watershed on the south and east and the West Fork River watershed on the north.

The Beckner Home on Road Run

At the mouth of Road Run on Oil Creek, on the south bank and at the base of a large hill, sets the original home of John Fountain Posey. John Fountain, the son of Alfred F. Posey and Christina Murphy Posey, died in 1934, and the home fell into heirship and was rented out. Bill and Josie Beckner
Ed Riffle recalls his many visits to the Road Run home of his uncle and aunt. “When we visited, my father had to drive through Oil Creek to get to the house. When it was flooding, we had to park and walk across the railroad bridge.”

“There was no electricity or natural gas in Uncle Bill and Aunt Josie’s home. There was a fireplace in one room and a wood-burning stove in the kitchen. In the evening after the sun went down, everyone sat around an oil lamp in the dining/sitting room and talked until it was time for bed. When bed-time came, I went upstairs which was
very dark to go to bed. One morning, Aunt Josie surprised me by frying a duck egg to go with hot biscuits for my breakfast.” Since there was no running water in the home, Ed recalls that drinking water was cranked from an open well in the back yard. “Aunt Josie was a good cook and before every meal, Uncle Bill returned thanks.”

_upper left: John Fountain Posey, the first owner of the Beckner home on Clover Fork at Road Run, is on the left and Josie’s grandfather Stewart L. is on the Right in this detail from a photo of the funeral of Beham Henline in 1912._

_left: Louie Mae Beckner, in Oil Creek._

_right: The Beckners: Rosemary, Marvin, Bill, Ruby and Josephine holding child. Lambert and Louie May are in front of Ruby._

**Bill and Josie Beckner** lived in the Posey house at the mouth of Road Run until around the end of World War II when they moved to a house on Flint Bluff in Orlando. After Bill and Josie moved out of the Road Run home, Josie’s father, Charles Riffle, moved into this house and lived there a while before finally moving to the Three Lick farm owned by his son, Brownie Riffle, where he died in 1949.
When they lived in Clarksburg Ed’s family trekked to Orlando every Decoration Day. (We call it Memorial Day now.) In the mid-1900’s, the roads from Ohio, Michigan, Maryland and many other states were full of vehicles headed to West Virginia cemeteries during the latter days of May. “We always went to the cemetery at Orlando and the Posey Run cemetery. Aunt Jose had made the small red artificial flowers with green stems to be used for decorating the graves of family and friends. The flowers that she made looked just like the flowers in the story on the Orlando web page.” The Decoration Day journey to Orlando was like an 11th Commandment to family-reverent West Virginia-born factory workers from Akron, Canton, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Baltimore and further.

The Bill Beckner Home on Flint Knob

The Bill Beckner home on Flint Knob was a big change from the home on Road Run. Not quite urban, living in Orlando was quite a bit different from the Road Run farm since it had electricity. However, that the Beckners were still in the country was evidenced by an outhouse and lack of running water. The home of the late Ollie Blake, this large two story house had front and back inside staircases with nice banisters, large rooms and high ceilings, according to Millie McNemar. She was a playmate of the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Byrne, both of whom taught school in the Orlando area, and were previous tenants of the house. Millie recalls the beautiful views that were available from the porch.

Ed Riffle continued to enjoy and look forward to his visits with Uncle Bill and Aunt Josie who now had a panoramic view of the town of Orlando. Ed’s last visit to the Flint Bluff home was in 1972, just prior to the deaths of Bill and Josie. Not long after his visit, he was at a church camp in Ohio when he received word of his Uncle Bill’s death and drove from Ohio and back on the same day for the funeral in the brick church. (When the Methodist Church and the United Brethren denomination merged into the United Methodist Church, Orlando’s two congregations were merged into one congregation, and that congregation took over the vacant brick building that had housed St. Michael’s Roman Catholic congregation.)
Time to Reflect

Now at home and retired in Glasgow, Kentucky, Ed Riffle enjoys the memories of his visits to Orlando. His parents, Jack and Bernice Knapp Riffle, now are deceased, as are his Uncle Bill and Aunt Josie. It has been over thirty five years since his last visit to Orlando but the happy memories are still with him. Recently, Ed was elated to learn from his sister in Texas that Orlando reminiscences could be accessed through the web pages of Orlando Stone Soup. His sister happened to be a fellow church-goer with a friend whose husband, Bob Pumphrey, grew up on Goosepen and is an avid reader of the Orlando stories. It is indeed a small world.

Charles Lee Riffle, 1872-1949, Laid to Rest

His grandson, Edgar Riffle, remembers the horse and wagon slowly ascending the steep hill to the Posey Cemetery. Despite the frozen and uneven terrain, the casket of Charles Riffle bounced but little on the way to his final resting space. The funeral service at the Orlando U. B. Church had been solemn and respectful and the small church was full of family and friends. On a cold day in February, 1949, Charles Riffle
was laid to rest and joined his late wife, Donie Zeler (Blake) Riffle, who had died twelve years before.

Left: Donie Zella (Blake) Riffle and Charles Lee Riffle
Right: Young Eddy Riffle, about the time his grandfather died.

A Wedding on Clover Fork
Donie (b. 1870) and Charles (b. 1872) were born and raised in the Oil Creek watershed. Donie was twenty and Charles was twenty-one in early September, 1891. That is when they were married by the Methodist Protestant preacher, the Rev. W. A. Law, at the home of Elizabeth (Sands) Blake Donaldson and her new husband James Donaldson. In the Protestant tradition of the time, folks generally married at home or in the minister's study. Sometimes it was the home of the bride's parents, sometimes another's home. While we can't know exactly why Charles and Donie were married at the home of Elizabeth and James Donaldson, we do know that Elizabeth was a first cousin of Donie's mom and
Charles Lee was a first cousin of Elizabeth's first husband, Thomas Blake. (Joseph Thomas "Thomas" Blake had died of typhoid fever seven years earlier. His widow, Elizabeth, and James Donaldson had been married about two years at the time of the wedding.)

Right: Charles and Donie's wedding certificate. Note that Doni is incorrectly named “Dianah” The facts about their wedding were taken from this form. Click on the certificate to enlarge it.

Their Immigrant Ancestors

Charles Lee Riffle and Donie Z. Blake were descendants of the Riffles, Blakes, Ocheltrees and Williamses, who, with the Skinner/Poseys, were Oil Creek's earliest pioneers.

~ Doni's mother's family, the Ocheltrees, Williams and McCoys, were part of a Scots-Irish settlement in Greenbrier County.

~ Charles' father's family, the Riffles, were German immigrants. According to genealogist Don Norman, "Jacob Riffle was born in Germany about 1725 and died in Lewis County VA in 1816. He arrived at the port of Philadelphia, PA aboard the ship "Phoenix", John Mason commanding, August 28, 1750. Settlement of Jacob 's estate was recorded November 2, 1816 in Lewis County VA Will Book #1, pages 2-4. He married Dorothy ------ in Harrison County VA about 1768. Dorothy was born about 1745 and died in Braxton County in 1817.

The History of Randolph County by Hu Maxwell written in 1898 says "Jacob Riffle was one of the first settlers in Randolph County. There is evidence that he was in the [Tygart] valley in 1772, and that he subsequently owned or had claim upon 300 acres of land on the creek named from him. . . The tradition is that he deserted from the Virginia Army during the French and Indian War and in his efforts to hide, he found his way into Tygart's Valley soon after the Pringles, also deserters, had made their camp in a hollow sycamore on the Buckhannon. He is said to have owned two slaves. His son's name was Jacob and he, probably accompanied by his father, moved to Braxton County at an early date." They settled in the Oil Creek/Salt Lick area of the Little Kanawha River.

~ In addition to these two lines, Doni and Charles both descended also from an English mariner, Jasper Blake, through his great grandson Theophilus Blake, who set to pioneer farming with the Scots-Irish in Greenbrier County.

Charles' parents were Stewart/Steward Lewis Riffle and Abigail (Blake) Riffle, Charles' father was known throughout Orlando as “Stewart L” and his mother was called “Abby."
Their Grandfathers & Great-Grandfathers

Charles' grandfather, that is, Abby's father John William Blake, died in the Civil War, in service to the Confederate States of America, according to Lee W Blake's monograph, "The Riffles and Blakes Back 7 Generations.

Charles' other grandfather, Stewart L.'s father, Jacob Isaac Riffle, left a very different legacy. Jacob had many children (perhaps as many as twenty) by two wives, Francena Blake and Matilda Riffle and allegedly many more “woods colts.” The descendants of Jacob are omnipresent throughout central West Virginia and all are, no doubt, keenly aware of the many stories about the “sire of the shire.

Above right: Stewart L. Riffle on the right with John Fountain Posey. Left: John Jackson and Eliza (Ocheltree) Blake.

Doni's parents were John Jackson and Eliza (Ocheltree) Blake. Doni's great-great grandfather Alexander Ocheltree was among the Protestant Scotsmen who were moved from Scotland to Northern Ireland because of their religious beliefs, and then came to America. Andrew settled in the Greenbrier area and married Elizabeth McCoy, another Scots-Irish immigrant. In 1778 Alexander was killed in the Indian
Their Children

Charles and Donie Zeler Riffle were the parents of seven children:

Josie married Bill Beckner. Bill worked the tracks between Orlando and Burnsville, with Josie’s cousin Patrick Newton “Newt” Blake (aka: Uncle Zeke).

Della married Marion Wymer and they farmed on Three Lick.

Vay Rene never married.

Homer Ellis married an Orlando girl, Pearl Barb.

Dana Herbert married Wade Mick’s daughter Nellie.

Clarence “Brownie,” worked for the rail road and married Treecy Riffle from Boone County.

Jackson Gilbert “Jack” worked at the Hazel-Atlas glass factory in Clarksburg.
there he met his bride, Bernice Knapp from Doddridge County. The materials and photos in this entry belong to their son Ed.

Left: Doni with sons Brownie, Jack and Dana.
Above, right: Charles with Josie, Brownie, Dana, Ellis, Della, Jackson and Vay. Roy Brown has said this photo was taken at the mouth of grass run, facing up the holler. They are in side yard behind the log house that is now torn down. It was his 75th birthday, Nov. 1, 1948. He died Feb 5, 1949, 3 mo. later.

Charles' Life

Like most of his contemporaries, Charles was a farmer for most of his life. He never became wealthy from his agrarian pursuits, but provided food, clothing and shelter for his children. Except for a few years at McWhorter, Charles lived most of his life on farms in and around Orlando.

From his grandson Ed Riffle we know that, like most folks in the area, Charles Lee loved country music. Ed reports that his grandfather loved listening to country music from WJJD in Chicago and WCKY in Cincinnati, Ohio on an old battery-operated radio. Maybe it isn't surprising that Charles' son, Clarence "Brownie," was known as an
outstanding music-maker in the Orlando area and since Charles was descended from the musical line of John Burton "Johnnie B" Blake on both his father's and mother's sides.

Right: daughter Josie (Riffle) Beckner is fixing her hair in front. Behind is the Posey Cemetery, where Charles and Donie were laid to rest.

Looking Backward
It has been sixty years since the horse and wagon climbed the hill to the Posey Run Cemetery to lay Charles Lee Riffle to rest beside his bride, Donie. Family who knew him in life are now old themselves. Memories have faded but the photographs of Charles and Donie return to their descendants a precious look at the life and times of their grandparents who loved the land of their births.

Note 1: Donie Blake: What’s in a Name?
What did John Jackson Blake and Eliza (Ocheltree) Blake, name their daughter? Ed Riffle recalls that his aunt Josie Beckner said her mother’s name was Donnie Zellar. Grandson Clarence Riffle, Jr. stated in a newspaper article dated 1995 that her name was Donna Zellar. Her birth record has “Donzillia”. The 1870 census has “Donzeller”. Her marriage record has “Dianah”. The newspaper account of her death in the Weston Independent said her name was “Donie Zeller.” In the obituary of Charles in the Weston Independent, her name was spelled “Donniee Zella.” Her tombstone in the Posey Cemetery simplifies it somewhat and reads “Donie Z. Riffle.” The official death certificate indicates that her middle name was “Zeler.” Charles was the informant for the spelling on her death certificate and perhaps his knowledge carries more weight than the other sources. Likewise, there is
confusion about her date of birth and the date of her marriage. but if the tangled confusion could not be resolved during her lifetime by her family there is little hope for this writer to straighten it out.