GENEALOGICAL MEMORANDA

of the

BUSH FAMILY

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"I think every man would like to come of an ancient and honorable race. . . . As you like your father to be an honorable man, why not your grandfather, and his ancestors before him?"

—Colonel Newcombe.

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The Bush family, of Clark county, Kentucky, is said to have descended from John Bush, who came from England and settled at Kiccoughtan (now Hampton), Virginia, in the year 1618; and while there is probably no doubt whatever of this being a fact, still, on account of the destruction of many old records in Virginia, it has not been found possible to trace the connection.

The furthest back the Clark county Bushes have been absolutely traced is to John Bush, of St. Thomas Parish, Orange county, Virginia, whose will was probated in that county in 1746. In this will his wife is mentioned as Bridget Bush, and the following children are enumerated: (1) Philip; (2) Martha Bruce; (3) Elizabeth Sanders; (4) John (S) Thomas; (6) Daniel. The testator, John Bush, was probably born not later than 1670, and was doubtless the grandson of the pioneer John Bush who settled at Kiccoughtan in 1618. In this connection the following note from the Virginia Magazine of History and Biography (Vol. 1, page 194) may be of interest:

"John Bush, of Kiccoughtan, in the Corporation of Elizabeth City, Gentleman, who came over in the Neptune, at his own charge, in 1618, was patented 300 acres; 50 in his own right, 150 for the transportation out of England of his wife, Elizabeth, and his children, Elizabeth and Mary Bush, who all came
in the Guinea, in 1619; and 100 acres for the transportation of his two servants, Thomas Hand and William Pucker, who came in the Charles in 1621, said land being in the parish of Kecoughtan and adjoining the lands of Lieutenant Albino Lupo and William Julian and bordering on the main river. Granted by Wyatt in 1624.

This extract mentions only two children, both daughters, but there were doubtless several others, both sons and daughters, in the course of time. The Bushes have never been deficient in that respect.

Philip Bush, Ensign, February 25th, 1741, of St. Thomas Parish, Orange county, Virginia, the eldest son of John Bush, sr., of the same county and parish, was the ancestor of the Clark county branch of the family. The first mention found concerning him in the records of Orange county is where, on March 8, 1745, William Bryan, of St. Thomas Parish, Orange county, sold to Philip Bush, of the same county and parish, one hundred acres of land in the same county and parish, "in consideration of five shillings and the rent of one ear of Indian corn yearly, at the feast of St. Michael, the Archangel, when lawfully demanded." One of the witnesses to this deed was Zachary Taylor, the grandfather of the President of that name. The William Bryan who sold the land was very probably the ancestor of William Jennings Bryan, whose forebears lived in Orange and the adjoining county of Culpeper.
Philip Bush, in his will, probated in Orange county, Virginia, on September 24, 1772 (which was probably not more than a month or so after his death), and witnessed by James Madison, the father of President Madison, names ten children, and disposes of five hundred acres of land, 75 in money, four slaves, and some personal property.

Several of the children received no bequests of land, and doubtless he had previously provided for them in that respect. At the time the will was made, it seems his wife was not living, as she is not mentioned in it, and none of her descendants now know what her maiden name was.

Her given name was Mary. The children mentioned in the will are: (1) Josiah; (2) Philip; (3) John; (4) William; (5) Ambrose; (6) Mrs. Sarah Watts; (7) Mrs. Mary Richards; (8) Joseph; (9) Joshua; (10) Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson.

It is likely that all the sons named saw service in the Revolutionary War. It is known that some of them did.

Most of these children moved to Kentucky, sooner or later, and some of them settled in what was called the "Barrens," in the southwestern part of the State; and to this stock belongs Sarah Bush, the second wife of Robert Lincoln, the father of Abraham Lincoln. Christopher Bush was on Robert Lincoln's bond for this marriage.
Those of the children of Philip Bush, sr., who settled in Clark county, Kentucky, and founded the famous "Bush Settlement," in the midst of which Providence Baptist Church, or "the old stone meeting house," was located, were:

1. PHILIP BUSH, born October 18, 1736. In his youth he courted a young lady in Virginia who rejected him and married Colonel John Vivion instead, but she promised that he might marry her first daughter, if she should have a daughter; and sure enough he did marry her eldest daughter, Frances Vivion, some eighteen or twenty years later, when he was forty years of age. Among his children were Robert Bush, the father of the famous Dr. Bush, of Lexington; Colonel John Bush; Peggy, who married Tandy Quisenberry, and Polly, who married a Mr. McMurtry.

2. MARY BUSH, born July 3, 1738; married Robin Richards.

3. JOHN BUSH, born February 2, 1742. He was twice married, and the name of his first wife is not known. His second wife was Polly Tillman.

4. WILLIAM BUSH (better known as "Captain Billy Bush"), born October 29, 1746; died July 26, 1815. He married Frances Tandy Burris, a sister of Jane Burris, the first wife of Rev. James Quisenberry. Captain Billy Bush accompanied Daniel Boone on his second trip to Kentucky, in 1770, and was a great Indian fighter. He also served under George Rogers Clark in the Illinois campaign, which won the great Northwest Territory for the United States. His tombstone says
that "He was the friend and companion of Daniel Boone."

5. AMBROSE BUSH, born April 8, 1748; married Lucy Colson, of Gholson. They were the grandparents of Hon. Ambrose C. Bush, who for fifty years has been the clerk of Old Providence church, and of Judge James H. Bush, Richard C. Bush, and Valentine W. Bush.

6. FRANCIS BUSH, born February 20, 1750; died 1824. The name of his first wife was Lucy Davis. Their children were: (1) Fanny, who married Thos. P. Bradley; (2) Polly, who married Ambrose Christy; (3) Nancy, who married Thomas Vivion; (4) Betsy, who married Daniel Oear. The second wife of Francis Bush was Rachel Martin, and their children were; (5) Lucy, who married Colby Burris Quisenberry; (6) Sallie, who married George Matthews; (7) Fielding, who married Adelaide Halyard, daughter of Captain John Halyard, who commanded a Virginia company in the Revolutionary war; (8) Jordan, who married Sallie Miller Stewart. One of the granddaughters of Fielding Bush married Hon. John H. Reagan, one of the founders of the Republic of Texas, afterwards Governor of the State of Texas, then Postmaster-General of the Confederate States of America, so called, and subsequently Representative and then Senator from Texas in the United States Congress.

Francis Bush was a soldier in the Revolutionary War. He enlisted February 14, 1778 in Captain William Taylor and James S. Upshaw's company of Colonel Christian
Febiger's 2d Virginia Regiment of the Continental Line, and served one year. His second wife's father, John Martin, served as a sergeant in the same regiment and company from September 16, 1776, to September 16, 1779. This family of Martins are traditionally descended from Captain John Martin, one of the Royal Councillors of Jamestown in 1607.

Francis Bush's home was on the hill, southwest of the old stone meeting house, and distant about one quarter of a mile from the church. It was demolished about sixty years ago (1836), but remnants of the chimneys still remain to mark the spot. He originally owned the spot upon which the old church stands, and deeded it to the congregation to build their house of worship on. He united with the church by open confession and baptism on August 6, 1786. The date of his death is not known, but Rachel, his wife, died in 1861, being then nearly one hundred years old.

THE OLD STONE MEETING HOUSE.

No account of the Bush family, however brief, would be complete without some account also of old Providence Church, which that family in a great measure founded, and which they have largely nurtured and sustained for almost one hundred twenty years.

The records of the church go back continuously to December, 1750, when the congregation was residing temporarily at Holston, Virginia; but the church had existed as an
organized body prior to that time, and, according to tradi-
tion, the following is in substance, its previous history:

Captain Billy Bush, who had accompanied Daniel Boone
to Kentucky, returned to his home in Virginia about the be-
ginning of the year 1780, and he gave such glowing descrip-
tions of the new country that a colony of about forty families,
living in Orange and Culpeper counties, and all Baptists, were
induced to start in the summer of that year for Boonesboro',
Ky., at or near which they determined to settle. Captain
Billy Bush went in advance to Boonesboro' to choose and lo-
cate lands in that vicinity for each of these families, and,
sensible man that he was, he chose the lands on the north
side of the river, in what is now Clark county. The others,
or such of them as were churchmenbers, organized themselves
into a Baptist church, but the name of the church at that
time, if it had one, has not survived. They had no regularly
ordained pastor, but Elder John Vivien acted in that capacity,
and under his leadership, this unique church colony made ready
and started, and proceeded as far as Holston, (now Abingdon,
Va.) which is near the line between Virginia and Kentucky,
arriving there in December, 1780. On their tedious march
through the wilderness to this point they had held divine
services in their temporary encampments every Sunday, in-
variably making a halt for the purpose of keeping the day
holy and engaging in divine worship.
At Holston they received advice by a runner from Captain Billy Bush, who was then in the fort at Boonesboro', warning then not to proceed any further for the time being. The troubles with the Indians at that time rendered it impolitic and unwise for them to proceed into Kentucky. At this point they met Rev. Robert Elkin, a regularly ordained Baptist minister "from the older parts of Virginia," who was also on his way to Kentucky, with his family, and choosing him as their pastor they at once (December 1780), reorganized the church, and the minute records of its history are complete from that time to this. At that time the Baptist fraternity was divided into two factions, known severally as "Regulars" and Separatists," and this church was one of the Separatist faction. Among the names prominently mentioned in the reorganization proceedings are those of Rev. Robert Elkin, pastor; John Vivion, elder; Philip Bush, clerk; Ambrose Bush, Lucy Bush, William Bush, Frances Bush, John Bush, Robin Richards, Mary Richards, Daniel Ramsey, Philip Johnson, William Fletcher, John Vivion, jr., Benjamin Johnston, Mary Johnston, Thomas Sutherland, Joseph Embry, Milly Embry, Mary Harris and Mary Clark. There were forty-five members in all.

This body remained at Holston until 1783, raising three crops there; and, then the colony being reinforced by numerous accessions of people en route to Kentucky, they then
moved forward to Lewis Craig's Station, on Gilbert's creek, in Lincoln county, Kentucky, where they remained until November 12, 1785, or about two years. From this point a number of members of the church proceeded to the so-called "Barrens" of southwestern Kentucky, but the great majority of them, in 1785, removed to the waters of Lower Howard's creek, in what is now Clark county, and occupied the lands that had been located for them by Captain Billy Bush.

Their first meeting as a church in the new locality is quaintly chronicled in the church records as follows:

"Through a turn of God's providence, the church chiefly moving to the north side of the Kentucky river, and for the health and prosperity of Zion, we have appointed a church meeting at Bro. William Bush's house for November 27, 1785."

At that meeting new officers were elected, and the organization was named "Howard's Creek Church," and for about two years the meetings were held in the houses of the members. The first house of worship was erected a log structure, built in 1787 on a lot given for that purpose by Francis Bush and Robin Richards, his brother-in-law. This log church was provided with loop-holes through which the devout pioneers could fire their trusty flintlocks at Indians who might attempt (and they sometime did) to interrupt the devotions with hostile demonstrations.

This building was replaced, on the same site, by the famous
"old stone meeting house," which was finished and dedicated" to God in May 1799.

Spencer's History of Kentucky Baptist says: "In 1785 James Gainsberry, an ordained minister from Virginia, joined this church, and in January of the next year Andrew Tribble, also a minister from the same State, became one of its members. About this time a revival began in the church and continued nearly two years. During this period a considerable number were baptized, of whom were Christopher Harris, Squire Boone, Jr. (nephew of Daniel Boone), and James Haggard, who became preachers. In 1787 the church entered into the constitution of South Kentucky Association. In 1790 another revival visited the church, and many were baptized, among whom was Edward Kindred, who became a good preacher. The church had now become quite large. But during this year a difficulty between Robert Elkin and Andrew Tribble caused a division in the body. By the advice of Elders John Bailey, Joseph and William Hledsoe, and others, the Elkin party retained the constitution, but changed the name of the church from "Howards Creek" to "Providence," while the Tribble party was constituted under the name of "Unity." The two churches agreed to live in fellowship. Providence continued a "Separatist" church until 1801, when the terms of general union between the Regulars and Separatist were ratified at its house of worship. After that it belonged to the old North District Confederacy for a number of years, and finally united with the Boon's Creek Association.
Many prominent citizens of Clark county have been among its members and most of the Bushes, Haggards, Cuisenberrys and Elkins in the State, and multitudes of them in the great West, are descendants of the fathers of this famous old church.

In 1830 another serious difficulty confronted the church. Many of its members then united with the sect originated by Alexander Campbell and others, then known as Reformers but now as Disciples of Christians. The minutes show that on October 2, 1830, there was a "motion in order before us to know whether we will or will not commune with members of the Baptist church who call themselves Reformers. The church says she will not." The Baptists, however, permitted the withdrawing members, who organized a church of their own, to use the church building on alternate Sundays with themselves, and this continued in all peace and amity until 1870, when the Baptists built a new house of worship on the Boonesboro and Winchester turnpike, a mile or so away, and sold the old stone meeting house to a colored Baptist congregation, who still occupy it.

The old church building is in a good state of preservation and bids fair to easily last another century or two.

In 1876 Mr. Ambrose C. Bush printed in the Winchester Democrat a brief sketch of old Providence, in which he stated that up to that time one thousand and forty six members had been received into the church by experience
and baptism and two hundred and twenty seven by letter— a total of twelve hundred and seventy three; and it had had seventeen pastors, viz.; Robert Elkin, 1780 to 1822; Richard Morton, 1822 to 1822; George Boones (A nephew of Daniel Boones), 1828 to 1833; --- Elrod, 1833 to 1834; Abner D. Landrum, 1834 to 1836; Thomas Herman, 1836 to 1842; Buford E. Allen, 1842, to 1847; Edward Darnaby, 1847 to 1849; without a pastor for some months, then; Buford E. Allen, September and October 1849, when he resigned and the church was again without a pastor; Buford E. Allen, 1851 to 1852; Pleasant T. Gentry, 1852 to 1855; Buford E. Allen, 1855 to 1861; Ryland T. Dillard, 1861 to 1865; Henry McDonald (a converted Roman Catholic) during the remainder of 1865; C. E. W. Dobbs, 1866-1867; W. B. Arrvin, 1868 to 1874; G. T. Stansbury, six months in 1874; George Yeiser until March, 1875, and in June 1875, A. F. Baker became the pastor.

The churches that have had their origin from old Providence are Unity, in 1790; Indian Creek, in 1792; these two united in 1845 and formed Mt. Olive; Boggs' Fork, in Fayette county in 1812, which was afterwards merged into Boone’s Creek church, at Athens; the Baptist church at Winchester, in 1859; and the Reform, or Christian church, now known as "Forest Grove Church," in 1830.