

## Narratives of the Reverend George Knight Hester and His Wife, Benee (Briggs) Hester

The following material is published by the courtesy of the Reverend C. E. Hester, Charlestown. Part I, "Autobiography of the Reverend George Knight Hester", and Part III, "Autobiography of Mrs. Benee Hester, Wife of George Knight Hester," are printed complete; Part II, "Civil, Ecclesiastical and Educational History of Clark's Grant," is part of the additional information sent on request by George Knight Hester to his son F. A. [sbury] Hester, the father of C. E. Hester. All three narratives are contained in a copybook in the handwriting of F. A. Hester, who evidently made a very accurate copy of the original manuscripts of his father and his mother.

The account of the Pigeon Roost massacre in Part I and that of Benee (Briggs) Hester's religious experience in Part III are of especial interest. All of the narratives are valuable for the light they throw upon life in southern Indiana in the early days of its settlement.

The footnotes printed with this article are based upon information supplied by George Knight Hester and copied by F. A. Hester, together with data collected and furnished by Permelia Boyd of Scottsburg.

EDITOR.

### I. AUTOBIOGRAPHY of THE REVEREND GEORGE KNIGHT HESTER [About 1851]

Dear Asbury,—To give you a sketch of those several items, contained in your communication of May last, imposes upon me a duty of no small magnitude,—as I have no time to spare from other pressing concerns; but as you seem to desire one, I will try to comply with your request—circumstanced as I am.

My father, John Matthias Hester, was born in Germany, the Kingdom of Hanover, July 4, 1766. His father<sup>1</sup> and family were shipped for America at Amsterdam and arrived at Philadelphia about eighty years ago. Grandfather not being

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<sup>1</sup> John Laurens Hester. The name in German was Hoerster.

able to meet the claims of the passage, which were sixty lbs., the recorded currency of the time, the whole family were sold for a term<sup>2</sup> to defray the expenses of the passage. They consisted of five members, viz.: Grandfather Hester, his wife,<sup>3</sup> and three children.<sup>4</sup> My father being the youngest was permitted by the purchaser to remain with his parents; but being treated with the greatest degree of barbarity, he was removed by a benevolent person, where he was well provided for. As the inhumanity exercised towards the other members of the family became notorious, in the lapse of one year money was loaned them by a kind friend, by which means their redemption was procured; but not a cent was relinquished for the year's service already performed.

The lapse of several years found Grandfather removed the distance of three hundred miles and residing on his own farm, which had been purchased by means procured by the industry of the whole family—with the exception of 5 lbs of the redemption money as yet unpaid, which he was directed to retain for this special purpose. Being soon called by death to a premature grave,<sup>5</sup> in his dying hours he directed his wife to return back this whole distance and settle off, in person, this amount. And accordingly it was done:—such was his strict moral honesty.

The education of my father was in the German language; and he was brought up in the Protestant religion and received into the Lutheran Church in his youth, after undergoing a regular catechetical training. But being thrown by circumstances far from the watch care of the Church, he, to a great extent, lost his moral and religious character, until the Autumn of 1809, when he was powerfully arrested by Divine truth and induced to join the Methodist E. Church, although [he had been] a violent persecutor of the same for many years; and in this Church he lived until the day of his death.

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<sup>2</sup> Six years.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Margaret Ire.

<sup>4</sup> John Laurens, Mary Magdeline, John Matthias. Four children born in America were: Mary Elizabeth, Mary Ann, Susannah, John Henry. Besides these there were three children who died early and whose names were not recalled.

<sup>5</sup> About 1785. His widow died about 1800. The farm was in Greene County, Pennsylvania.

From the flattering description then given of the rich and fertile character of Kentucky, my father was induced to emigrate to it. Accordingly, when he was a little turned of twenty years, he left the family residence which was then near Union Town, Pennsylvania, for the Far West. After arriving at the place of his destination and remaining some two years,<sup>6</sup> he returned back to see his friends, and remained with them near a year. But the fa[s]cinating charms of [the] country he had seen himself had fixed in his mind a determination to be one of its citizens. He wended his [way] back again through those formidable difficulties which were strewn in the route. His passage was by water. In descending the Ohio River in those times, it was no rare occurrence to meet with attacks from the savage tribes who were prowling along its shores to enrich themselves with spoils of their murdered victims. Through one of those frey ordeals he had to pass. Floating carelessly one day while at dinner, near the mouth of the Kentucky River (the portion of country where their attacks were the most frequent and successful,) they found themselves near the Indian shore;—a white man presented himself with a three-cocked hat, and called to them to land, that he might exchange some of his bear meat for flour. Part of the company proposed complying with the request. My father, being persuaded it was intended to decoy them, immediately threw the boat in such a direction as led the savages to believe that danger was apprehended. This man stepped behind a tree, and instantly a volley of rifle shot was poured in upon them; but fortunately none were injured, although 29 bullets were buried in the plank of their boat. They passed the remaining distance unmolested, until they were landed at Louisville. There he remained a length of time in the employ of [a] citizen of [the] place, to drive his team of horses. In September, 1790, he assisted another teamster in removing two families from a neighborhood adjoining Louisville to Shelbyville. At the close of the first day's travel they arrived at a station known in early times by the name of Benny Hugh's Station, immediately on the route from Louisville to Shelbyville. This point was gained

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<sup>6</sup> First near Lexington, later in the neighborhood of Louisville.

with design, to avoid an attack at night by the savages. Proceeding early next morning to the place of their destination, about one half mile from the station they were fired upon by a party of Indians who had concealed themselves in ambush. The result was that two of their company were wounded—my father and a Mr. Leatherman, the head of one of the families. His horse ran with him and threw him into a sink-hole, where he remained undiscovered. His wound being a flesh-wound in the hip, was not very alarming, hence no surgical means were resorted to in its cure. Although he succeeded to heal it outwardly, in two years after it mortified and killed him. My father was shot with a rifle ball above the left eye, from a distance of 4 paces. He was in the act of turning to the right, which perhaps was the cause of the bullet varying from the centre of his forehead;—though a glancing shot, it broke his skull-bone. He instantly sprang over the off-wheel horse, and fell in the act. As he arose to his feet he saw two Indians approaching, one passing before his team, the other around the hind part of his wagon. The only possible chance of escape was to gain a thick grove of timber and bushes which lay to the right. The loss of the balance of his person from the wound in his head, and the obstruction of his sight by the streaming blood, prevented him from pursuing the wanted course or to keep him from falling to the earth, accordingly he was prostrated three times in running 170 yards. The last time he fell, his pursuers were so close upon him that he could not possibly escape. He determined he would feign [feign] himself dead, and receive, without a struggle, all their butchery. The first Indian that came up drew his tomahawk to sink it in his head, but being a glancing stroke, it chipped up the skull-bone of his head. The second that came saluted him in the same manner; but as he struck with his Indian axe, he slipped and fell—which failed to do the intended execution; it also broke the skull-bone of his head. They proceeded to remove the scalp from the back part of his head. It was very painful in the operation and done with as little mercy. Having had a presentiment that he should fall into the hands of the Indians, from a singular dream he had had a few nights previous to this trip—"of the loss of his whole

team from some disastrous circumstance"—which he dreamed three different times the same night, and at each time he awoke he would find himself in a high state of perspiration:—I say, having had fears that some such calamity would befall him, when the barber trimmed his hair, the day before he started on this trip he remarked to him that he wished to have it cut perfectly close to his head, that, in the event of his falling into the hands of the Indians, he did not wish them to have the convenience of long hair in taking his scalp. During sometime of this bloody scene they speared him in the back with a long spear. He often said, it must have been thrown at him while running; for during the whole scene after they came upon him he had the entire presence of his mind, and felt certain they did not plunge it into his body then. This wound affected him more seriously than all others put together. It caused him to bleed inwardly and the blood settled in his side to a considerable amount. It not being observed for several days after this catastrophe had happened, from appearances threatened fatal results. However from skillful bleeding and frequent and profuse sweatings it was finally removed. He was persuaded his breathing organs were impaired. When he inhaled in his lungs dusty air, he labored under the same difficulty in breathing that persons do in the last stages of asthma, which never was the case with him before this circumstance.—As soon as they had ended their butchery with him they returned back to the wagons, commenced cutting the furniture and wagons, so as to injure them as much as possible. After they had destroyed, to the utmost of their ability, what they could not convey off, there remained among them perfect silence for a few minutes. My father supposing they had left, arose, from his prostration on the ground, to a sitting position, leaning upon one of his hands. He soon heard them coming towards him; he instantly threw himself down in the same position in which he was when they left him. They approached within a few paces; regarding him as being dead, they returned back to the wagons; and soon the rattling chains and the thundering of the horses indicated that they had left in full speed,—each one selecting a route for himself, to avoid forming a trail that

might be readily pursued.—The flight of the families back to the station had rallied its inmates to witness the destruction of life and the loss of property, and, after hunting sometime, they found the wounded. My father presented an awful spectacle, having bled like a butchered hog. From the feverish state of his body, produced by the loss of blood and severe sufferings, he was almost ready to perish for the cooling draught. The only convenience they had to bring him the article was by means of their hats. He was seated on a horse—to be supported by an individual riding behind him on the same animal; but he soon fainted and had to be taken down. They seemed to be at a loss for a plan to remove him. He devised one himself; to which they would not at first comply, regarding him as not being perfectly sane; at the suggestion of which he became displeased. As a proof that he had the proper balance of his mind, he referred them to a certain point on the track he had run where he had dropped his wagon whip. They repaired to the place and found it even so. They then adopted his plan; which was to carry him to the station by four men with a sheet fastened to two poles. After he was brought to the house of the family residing in the station, the inhuman mistress remonstrated greatly against his being brought there, and forbid his remaining. My father became so indignant at these remarks, that he gathered up his upper garment which had been removed on account of its bloody condition, arose, and staggered out of the house and seated himself on a beam of timber which lay in the yard: choosing rather to be mantled by the spreading heavens than to abide under her roof; and it was with difficulty that he could be prevailed upon to re-enter her dwelling. A physician was sent for, who arrived sometime in the night—Dr. Knight, who had been surgeon in Col. Crawford's army, and was taken captive by the Indians at his defeat. The history of his captivity and escape is detailed in the account of Indian affairs.<sup>7</sup> The Dr. declared he could do nothing for him unless he was brought to his own house. On the morning of the next day arrangements were made to convey him to the Dr's—some 14 miles through the woods, by means of what was then denominated a horse-litter; which was composed of a

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<sup>7</sup> *The Western Adventures.*

sheet sewed fast to two poles. The one end of the pole fastened to a horse's hames and the other end borne by two men. In this way he was jolted through the brush and woods, until he found himself placed under the special care of this humane physician and family; and under his care he remained for fifteen months. Had it not been for the skillful treatment of the Dr. and the kind attention of his family, he never could have survived this savage barbarity. The Knight family became so endeared to him that when I was born, which was on the 26th of Sept. 1794,<sup>8</sup> he gave Mrs. Knight the privilege of naming me:—so I bear the family name from this circumstance,—Eighteen months after he fell into the hands of the Indians—in 1793—he was connected in marriage with Miss Susannah Huckleberry,—before his wounds were entirely well.<sup>9</sup>

Being pressed in pecuniary matters, he was obliged to repair several miles to Man's Lick<sup>10</sup> to labor for salt for family purposes, the plan that was then generally pursued to obtain the article. While employed in hauling wood, under the rays of a brightly-shining sun, he accidentally discovered the glitter of two guns moving slowly along an oak tree that had recently been blown down, behind which two savages had concealed themselves, seeking to obtain the most eligible position to level their pieces upon my father. He instantly sprang between his horses, cut the hame-strings, and mounting one put off in full speed in a quarterly direction to avoid receiving a shot in the back; and so escaped with his fellow laborers to the furnaces in safety. As he had made such a narrow escape of falling by Indian barbarity a second time, he resolved to leave the place and return home to his family.

A treaty of peace being concluded with the hostile tribes<sup>11</sup> my father located a piece of land in the Illinois Grant,<sup>12</sup> 14

<sup>8</sup> In Shelby County, Kentucky; six miles west of Shelbyville. A brother, Craven P., and a sister, Mary Muir, also were born in Kentucky.

<sup>9</sup> The following children were born to Matthias and Susannah Hester: George Knight, Sept. 26, 1794, died Sept. 20, 1874; Craven P., May 17, 1796; William died in infancy; Mary, 1798; Elizabeth, 1800; Effie, 1804; David; Sarah, 1807; Rebecca, 1808; William Allen, 1810; Milton Paine, 1813; Uriah A. V. 1816.

<sup>10</sup> Eight or ten miles south of Louisville.

<sup>11</sup> Treaty of Greenville, August, 1795.

<sup>12</sup> Also known as Clark's Grant, now included in Clark and Scott counties. The grant was made by the Virginia Assembly in 1783 and surveyed by William Clark in 1786. The patent bears date of Dec. 14, 1786. Indian claims were surrendered in the treaty of Greenville in 1795.

miles North of Louisville and removed to it in the fall of 1799. —A French store having been set up a short distance from his residence the Indians in repairing to this for purposes of trade had to pass near his residence. They would frequently call and demand lodging for [the] night. On a certain occasion there were two Indians came with a jug of whiskey and demanded quarters. After the barbarous treatment my father had received he had very little love for them, and did not wish to have any about him. On this occasion he denied their application. This was a great insult to them. They called for fire and erected a camp near his barn. Fearing they might burn it, sometime after they had built up their fire he went out and invited them into his dwelling. They accepted of his offer. But the rejection of their first application seemed greatly to embitter their minds; and this was increased with their inflammation by liquor. They spent the night in drinking and conversing together; and occasionally singing. As one could talk very good English, he would interrupt my father's rest by frequent calls. He seemed to have a peculiar pleasure in the relation of deeds of daring barbarity performed by him in the time of the old war. He related one scene of cruelty which he had practiced upon the first settlers of Kentucky in taking no regular rest or sleep for 5 nights in succession, but was constantly engaged in committing depredations upon the frontier settlements. From their movements we became somewhat alarmed. My father arose from his bed, awoke me and sent me to a family residing hard by, where there were some individuals watching with the sick. He directed me to prevail on some one to accompany me back and tarry for the night. I succeeded to obtain Captain B. While I was gone my father discovered one of their large butcher knives lying by their side: he placed it in an opening between one of the puncheons of the floor and the wall of the house, to lessen their means of injury, should they attempt it. When Cap. B. came he requested one of the Indians to let him smoke with his tomahawk. It was granted. He had commenced smoking but a few minutes, when the principal Indian began to feel for his knife but could not find it. He immediately became suspicious, arose to his



feet, and sprang with violence to Cap. B., wrenched the tomahawk out of his hands, and wheeled upon my father with it drawn back to such a distance as to give it sufficient force as though he intended to hew down my father, and at every motion he exclaimed, "Me bad man, me bad man." Father gathered up a chair, and held it between him and the Indian to ward off the blow. In this way he ran my father back to the furthest end of a large house before he could be prevailed upon by my father and the other Indian to desist. Although the other Indian was so far intoxicated that he could not rise to his feet, as far as kind expressions and signs would go to quell the infuriated savage, they were not spared. The apparent manner in which his answers were returned by this enraged being indicated his determination to do as he pleased. We conjectured that when he missed his knife, and that B. had his tomahawk, and was brought at a late hour of the night, that this savage supposed an attempt upon them was premeditated by my father. Though more than 40 years have elapsed since I witnessed this horror-stricken scene, it is impressed on my memory with the freshness of yesterday. I never saw so much of the savage depicted in any being on earth as was in this man. He was very large and well-proportioned and his countenance was expressive of the savageness of his nature.

At this early day there were but few families residing in the wilderness, which is now known as Clarke [Clark] County. One family resided at the present site of Charlestown; a few south and south-east, some three miles, who settled in 1795; a few more some six miles east at a place called Armstrong's station.

At our first settlement here we belonged to the jurisdiction of Ohio, or the North-Western Territory, as it was called; which then embraced the country west of Pennsylvania and bounded by the Ohio River, the lakes, and the Mississippi; until Ohio was formed into a state government which took place near the commencement of the present century; and to Knox county which was laid off about 1790, of which Vincennes was the county-seat, to which we had to repair for purposes of county business. At this place the deed of my fa-

ther's land was first recorded. I recollect that he, in company with others, was called upon by public authority to convey and deliver up to the county jail a person arrested for crime; and this trip was performed on foot by packing their provisions on their backs; and that, too, in the spring season of the year, when business demanded every moment at home.

The wild pasture of the unbroken forest was the only dependence for the subsistence of those animals employed by man in cultivating the earth. I have known my father uniformly to go the distance of 3 miles in the morning before he could obtain his team for plowing.

Money was hard to be obtained, so much so, that it became proverbial that 5 dollars paid all the debts which occurred among the first settlers. When one individual would get into straitened circumstances, he would borrow this amount,—and so of the next, etc.

In early times we that lived immediately in the portion of country where Charlestown is situated were alarmed frequently on the account of Indian drunkenness and insolence. The place of their general rendezvous, especially of the Shawnees and Delawares, was that of Springville, a little village that existed in early times one and a half miles west of Charlestown, called by the Indians Tooby, from the fact that one of its first settlers bore that name. Here they were swindled out of their skins, venison, and bear meat, by the villainy of a Frenchman. The small amount received, in the general, was that of whiskey,—ruinous to themselves and dangerous to the settlers. From this intoxications were numerous and constant whilst they remained amongst us. When they would leave the trading house at this village it generally was late in the evening, so that they would go no further home-ward than where Charlestown is located. Here a vast number of beautiful poplars were peeled to form their camps. Here I have heard them at their drunken revelings until the whole region of country would become vocal with yells of horror. The business of the squaws at these drunken sprees was to hide their weapons of death. Drunkenness destroyed among them the feelings of the most endeared relations. The truth of this is verified by the following circumstance: A

quarrel commenced between an Indian brother and sister. It was fanned by angry passions and liquor inflammation to such a degree that the brother threatened his sister with the contents of his gun. She immediately turned her breast towards him and challenged him to fire. He instantly discharged its contents at her, and the result was that one of her breasts was badly mangled and her left arm nearly torn off, so that nothing remained but a small portion of the skin and flesh. In this situation she repaired to one of the neighboring barns and lodged in the barn part of the night. Before day she left and retired to the adjoining woods. Her husband trailed her next morning by her blood and found her lying on the cold damp ground in a valley rolled up in her blanket. He struck up a camp and was doctoring her for several days with preparations of barks and roots contained by different vessels. I saw him there while waiting on her, mingling his tears and sympathies over her sufficiently to move the most callous heart. Her friends were sent for who were distant 15 or 20 miles. On arriving at the spot where the sufferer lay, they evinced all the feeling that the most cultivated hearts were capable of displaying. Her husband was prevailed upon by the whites to send to Louisville for a surgeon to amputate her shattered arm. He complied with their advice, and accordingly it was done, and she recovered.

Among many of the first settlers of this country immorality existed to a fearful extent—as they had but few checks to vice—such as Sabbath-breaking, profane-swearing, drunkenness, horse-racing, etc. They would seldom call their neighbors together for mutual assistance in their domestic concerns, without closing with a night's dance. However, to all these vices there were some noble exceptions.

As it regards the customs of those times, they were those of simplicity and plainness—plainness of dress and address. Their poverty prevented the introduction of superfluity; and their dependence on each other served to endear them to one another in their several associations. These remarks will apply with peculiar force to the professing community of our Church—in those early times—from the pastor to the humblest of his flock.

The state of common-school education wore a gloomy aspect for several years. The first school I ever heard of, and I think it was the first taught in all this region of country, was kept a few months in 1802, one and a half miles south of Charlestown. In 1803 it was recommenced, and I and my oldest brothers were entered for a short time. We had to commence the first rudiments of language in Dilworth's spelling book, in which we were taught to spell such words as *nation* with three syllables and pronounce them as two. The qualifications of teachers were very defective, both in pronunciation and correct reading. We were taught to nickname all the vowels of the English alphabet, where they stood alone in a word. And I have thought, had the whole vocabulary of nonsense been ransacked from beginning to end, more foolish names could not have been found. So defective was one teacher in pronunciation, that he taught his scholars to pronounce *develope*, dev'-el-o-pe.

Our first books were generally very far from facilitating an education, or affording material for the mental culture of youths. My two first reading books were Gulliver's Travels, and a dream book. The rigid discipline exercised, the cruelty practiced upon delinquent scholars, as well as long confinement of children to their books, from morning until night, with only recess at noon—were doubtless unfavorable for mental improvement.

In 1808, the town of Charlestown was laid off and settled; and men of different professions and different mechanics selected it as the place of their future residence. Its first settlers were mostly moral. In process of time different liquor establishments were got up, and lamentable were their effects upon town and country. To arrest this awfully desolating evil, efforts were devised to establish a temperance society on the old plan. For this purpose the Rev. Mr. Cobb, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Judge Scott, Elder in the same Church, and your father met together at his residence, to draw up some general principles bearing immediately on the Temperance cause, and circulate the same among the community, and thereby prepare the public mind for a temperance meeting. Mr. Cobb, having but little experience in this

matter, was diffculted with reference to the most successful plan of operation. I referred him to the Rev. John Strange who had got up different associations. Strange being Presiding Elder on the Charlestown district, was shortly to hold a campmeeting at Robertson's campground. Here those two Christian gentlemen had an interview with each other; and the result of their deliberations was, to appoint a temperance meeting. Strange was called upon to address the meeting, in conjunction with Dr. Adams, a local preacher, and Judge Ross, together with some Presbyterian ministers. The result of this meeting was, that a number of individuals signed a pledge of entire abstinence from spirituous liquor, as a beverage. This laid the foundation of the great temperance re-form which has since taken place in its precincts.

The first introduction of Methodist preaching in "the Grant" (from the most reliable sources) was by the late Samuel Parker and Edward Talbott, in the Spring of 1801. They attended a two-days meeting in Springville, a village but recently laid off, one and a half miles west of Charlestown. This was before Parker was a traveling preacher—soon after he was licensed to preach. Talbott was also a local preacher:—both from Kentucky. Benjamin Lakin and Ralph Lotspiech were the first Travelling Preachers sent into the Grant. They came in 1803. Lakin first visited Gazaway's neighborhood, 5 miles east of Charlestown, and preached in the woods as early in the Spring as the weather would permit. He then proposed taking them and Father Robertson's into his regular work, and left appointments for this purpose. To these places, at first they devoted but one day in the round, preaching alternately at each place. At this time they were appointed to the Salt River and Shelby circuits. It was not long until Sam. Parker was added to the list of preachers on these circuits, and preached in the Grant. This was before Parker was received into traveling connection. About harvest time William Houston was also employed to travel the same, and preached in the Grant. It is believed that the first society ever formed in the state was organized at old Father Robertson's. It has sometimes been supposed that the first society was formed at Gazaway's: but Bro. Hezekiah Robertson

distinctly recollects, that the first society was formed at his father's; and old Sister Gazaway has often been heard to say, to female members, when excusing themselves for their neglect of class-meetings on account of distance, that she had uniformly gone to class to Nathan Robertson's every two weeks—a distance of 4 miles; which makes it evident that the first class was organized there; and this must have been done in the Spring of 1803, when Lakin and Lotspiech, who were at this time traveling the Shelby and Salt River circuits, came over the Ohio River and took them into their regular work; for there were a few scattered members in the wilderness, and these faithful pastors would gather them into Church-fellowship, at the earliest possible time; and this probably was done in April or May of the above named year. These brethren were succeeded the following conference year by A. (Adject) McGuire and Fletcher Sullivan. Though McGuire was appointed in 1804 to Salt River circuit and Sullivan to Shelby, McGuire preached in the Grant once or twice in conjunction with Sullivan; then McGuire ceased, and Sullivan continued to preach in the Grant the whole of the year he was on the Shelbyville circuit, and he was very useful. B. Lakin and Peter Cartwright followed them. Their successors were Asa Shim and Moses Ashworth, who were sent in the Fall of 1805 and continued to the Fall of 1806. In 1806 and 1807 Joseph Oglesby and Frederick Hood preached in the Grant. Hood did not continue long there. Objections being raised to him on account of some connection with slavery, he desisted. Oglesby who traveled the Shelby circuit this year continued to visit the classes in the Territory. At the close of this year it was thought best to strike off the Grant into a separate work. Ashworth was sent the next year to take charge of it. A two-weeks' circuit was immediately formed; and soon it was enlarged to a three-weeks' circuit; and continued to extend its boundaries and preaching places, until in 1815 it had grown to an eight-weeks' circuit, with only one traveling preacher. At the close of this year it was divided into two separate works.

Ashworth's year on the Silver-creek circuit, as it was called, closed with a campmeeting, which was held in the

neighborhood of Father Rober[t]son's. Wm. Burke was the Presiding Elder. This was a novel affair in our new country, and it called together vast multitudes of human [beings]. I was in attendance, and still remember Burke's text on Sabbath.

The first Methodist Church ever built in this state, it is believed, was erected in this neighborhood the preceeding year in August; and to it was attached a beautiful burying ground, where sleep many of the pious dead, who fell during a succession of many long years. The same house is still standing, though occupying a site some little distance from its former site. In this church the first Christmas meeting, ever held in the state, was held in 1807. Rev. James Garner preached on the occasion from these words: "We have seen his star in the east, and have come to worship him."—It is proper to state that during this term of years the newly settled country was supplied with the labors of local brethern who were more or less efficient.

There were however no special revivals of religion on the Silver Creek circuit until 1809 and 1810. At this period there were a number of accessions to the Church and a number of conversions. Preaching was introduced into Charlestown. Class-meetings and prayermeetings were established; and such was the attendance on common prayer-meeting occasions, that no house could be obtained sufficiently capacious to accommodate the crowds that would be in attendance; and it was the custom in those times for females to bear a part in public prayers when called upon.

Previous to this date, and subsequently, Methodism had its opposition, not only from the world but from the misguided zeal of professing Christians. The Arians, the followers of Barton Stone and Marshall, were active in bringing into disrepute the proper divinity of Jesus Christ, and in discarding all disciplines and confessions of faith. This opposition to this last remark was the most successful with the unthinking masses; and for awhile they seemed to bear all before them. The extraordinary exercise of the "Jerks," prevailing so abundant and so uniformly with their congregations, seemed to excite public mind and induce the attendance

of vast crowds. Not that they were entirely confined to the "Newlights," as they were named by public consent; they prevailed at the most of religious meetings.

Those who embraced the principles of the Calvinian faith were more active than at present in maintaining the peculiarity of their system in opposition to Methodism. One of this school being permitted to preach in one of our churches, conceiving of our doctrines being of such pernicious tendency, regarded it as an imperious duty to expose their fallacy, advertised his congregation, that he had spent a sleepless night in arranging materials for the special occasion. The main point treated on in the discourse was to prove that we have no authority from scripture to believe that Jesus Christ [died] for the whole world. After he labored a length of time to effect this object, he climaxed the whole by remarking that while the Redeemer of mankind was dying on the cross thousands of souls [were suffering] the pains of hell; and the idea was revolting to suppose he could have died for them while thus suffering. As conclusive as this argument was to its inventor, a discerning public could see its fallacy. It was equally obvious to them that at the time our Saviour was suffering on the cross thousands of souls were enjoying the blessings of Paradise; and, of course, by the same paradise [parity of reasoning] were never indebted to the death of Christ for their eternal redemption.

The greatest check to [the] Methodists and the revival influence above noticed, was the state of warfare entered into between this country and England, and the Indian hostilities practiced upon the frontier parts of this circuit. Here it might not be amiss to state at some length some of those difficulties. Some time previous to the year 1811, a state of [hostilities] existed with the Indians to the whites. During this year it continued to increase from the prospect between this country and England, and from the fact that many of the British agents in Canada and in the North-West were active in increasing this excitement. Tecumseh, who properly represented the disaffected tribes made a tour to the disaffected tribes in the South and South-West to secure their coöperation in striking a fatal blow to frontier settlements. Gov.



Harrison being persuaded of his hostile intentions and of the vigilance he would use, raised an armed force and proceeded up the Wabash, either to enforce the late treaty—the treaty of Greenville, or to enter upon some new plan that would secure the frontiers from constant alarm. And although he was successful in driving them from their towns and destroying their property after an attack made by them upon his army, the commencement of hostilities in 1812 with this country and England, and with their supplying the Indians with the means of more efficient warfare tended greatly to exasperate them against us;—accordingly on the 4th of September in this year they commenced an attack on Fort Harrison, and almost at the precise time they attacked the Pigeon Roost settlement, lying contiguous to Silver Creek circuit. Whether these attacks, which were (as just stated) almost simultaneous, were the result of Indian policy to prevent the citizens of Clarke from rallying to repel their aggressions upon the settlers of the Wabash country or otherwise, is unknown.

The Pigeon Roost was so named from the fact that this kind of fowl had resorted to this district of country in vast flocks for many years. Many trees and limbs of the forest were broken down from their accumulated weight. The stench arising from the deposits of large portions of manure was perceivable for more than a mile distant. Such was the fertility imparted to those white oak lands that thousands of persons who rallied from Kentucky and other places when these disturbances took place, were obliged to confess that their productions were not surpassed even in the richest lands of Kentucky. This country presenting great prospects of game and stock induced a goodly number of families to select locations and move to them. During their residence here they were frequently visited by the Delaware, Shawnee and Pottawotomie Indians; who professed to be very friendly. It was believed that [they] were the very Indians that murdered the Pigeon Roost settlers.

The manner of the attack was somewhat as follows: As they approached within about 3 miles of the settlement, they accidentally came across Mr. Pain [Jeremiah Payne] and Mr. Coffman and murdered them both. Coffman lived in Ken-

tucky—was on a visit to Pain. They were both beehunting, without any arms—so little apprehensive of danger were they. They next came across Mrs. Collins, wife of young Henry Collins, who had been on a visit some 3 miles to a neighbor's living near Vienna, and killed her as she was returning home. The first family they fell upon was Pain's, consisting of a wife and 4 children. From appearances [they] must have been killed in different directions from the house,—were dragged trailing the ground with their blood, and thrown into the house; and after plundering it of its contents, was fired and burnt to ashes,—the mangled bodies having undergone the same process of fire until nothing remained but one mass of offensive matter. The time of this attack was late in the evening, the sun about an hour and a half high. Richard Collins' family [were] destroyed by them, consisting of his wife and 7 children. It was sickening to humanity to witness their mangled bodies strewn in different directions, hewed down as they were endeavoring to escape from their barbarous enemies. Collins himself was absent from home—belonged to the company of rangers, and was at this time at Vincennes. At the same time they killed the family of Mr. John Morris, consisting of his wife and three children—the families residing within a short distance of each other. Mr. Morris was also absent—was drafted to meet the call of Gov. Harrison for the Wabash country, and was now on the march as far as Jeffersonville. They next proceeded to old Mr. William Collins'. On their way to this place they met with young Henry Collins. He had been at his father's pulling hemp. His only chance of escaping was to retreat back to the house of his father. In doing this he attempted to cross a meadow. Here his retreat was intercepted by an Indian. He then entered a cornfield, was fired upon by an Indian, he afterward said, he perfectly knew, by the name of Killbuck, who was one of those friendly tribes and was well known by many of the first settlers of Clarke. The ball entered the back part of his head, and broke the skull-bone; he fell as though perfectly dead. This was the first gun they had fired after they had killed the two first,—doubtless fearing the sound of the guns would alarm the families in the neighborhood. They

left Henry Collins unmolested. This was done on Thursday evening. He revived so as to escape to an old flaxhouse on the farm. Here he was found on Saturday about noon—was occasionally in his right mind—lived near a week, and then expired. The firing of the gun was not however heard by any of old Mr. Collins' family. As they approached nearer the house they discovered a boy, one of Mr. Collins family, who had just caught a horse to hunt the cattle. He fled to a brier thicket near at hand and concealed himself. The Indians ran round it and passed through it in different directions, but without success. The little fellow said he could peep under the matted briars and vines, and see their maneuvers; and sometimes they would seem as though they would step right on him, and then would bear off. Here he remained until after they had attacked the house; and in the midst of the attack he rushed up to the house, and was let in. A few minutes before Henry Collins was shot, Capt. Norris, from the neighborhood of Charlestown, some 15 miles distant, had arrived at old Mr. Collins'. Being old acquaintances he felt concerned for the family. The object of his visit was to settle some pecuniary matters, and to dissuade him from remaining any longer in his exposed condition. The old gentleman had just brought a fine parcel of water-melons; and while they were devouring them, he presented the object of his visit; and inquired of Mr. Collins whether he was not apprehensive of danger from the Indians. Mr. Collins replied in the negative. While thus engaged in conversation, their attention was arrested by the appearance of a dog. Mr. Norris looked up the way, and discovered 7 or 9 Indians approaching with a quick step, and the war paint on their cheeks. He exclaimed, "Here they come now." "Not to kill," said Mr. Collins. "Yes to kill." Invention was set immediately to work [to] devise a method of defense. Mr. Collins having at hand two loaded rifle-guns, directed Mr. Norris to take one of them and station himself by the side of the door and he would guard the window. The Indians in their approach were discovered by Mr. John Richey and his wife, a young married couple residing a small distance from Collins'. They instantly fled into the cornfield and escaped. As the Indians entered the yard, a part of them sta-

tioned themselves behind the corn-crib; a part passed on to Richey's house; and one of them presented himself at the door of Collins' to push it open. At him Capt. Norris pulled trigger, when the gun was not more than three feet from his breast, and his gun flashed. The door was instantly closed. Mr. Collins, perceiving his body through the cracks of the door, fired his rifle and instantly the Indian left. Blood was perceived the next day in the yard. Mr. Collins loaded his piece again; and perceiving one standing in Mr. Richey's door, took a deadly aim, and when he fired the Indian fell back into the house; the door was instantly closed. Collins was a distinguished marks-man. He felt certain his rifle had performed execution this fire. As part of the Indians were now in the house and part behind the corncrib, it was supposed they would wait the closing in of the shades of night, and then proceed to fire the house; and as the house was composed of two cabins without a pass inside from one room into the other, it was thought they might easily effect this object. The only possible chance of escape was to leave the house and pass through the fire of the Indians from behind the corncrib, and if possible gain a corncrib that lay hard by. Accordingly the hazardous plan was determined on. Between daylight and dark Capt. Norris proceeded in the advance, followed by two children and Mr. Collins in the rear with his gun cocked and presented before him. As they advanced with a quick step Collins was fired upon by them. A ball struck his gun about the lock. Its violence whirled him right about. And after he had gained the proper poise of his body, and had turned himself in the way of retreat he had lost Capt. Norris and the two children; and after running some distance in the cornfield he halted to see if they were pursuing him, and give them one fire. In this position he tried to cock his gun, and found it so damaged as to be able to do nothing with it. He then proceeded in haste to the woods, and so escaped. During this last attack the Indians yelled most horribly. From this it was manifest that they intended to proceed no further—that they had glutted their hellish desires. Some little time after this, when it was properly dark, Mrs. Biggs, daughter of Collins, hearing the firing of the guns, the distance of half a mile,

proceeding with her 4 children (her husband having been drafted and now in Jeffersonville) and when she came near her father's house she left her children by the side of the road and proceeded alone to her father's house and pushed open the door;—the smell of powder being so strong she instantly became alarmed, returned to her children, and traveled with them some six miles to Zebulon Collins',—and by this means the alarm of the Indians was first brought into the older settlements before day.—The absence of the Indians from the house of Collins when Mrs. Biggs entered the door is enveloped in mystery. For shortly after this they fired the buildings and they were seen burning. It was supposed that Mr. Collins had killed one or two of them, and that they had now left to conceal their dead. Be it as it may, Mrs. Biggs made a most narrow escape.

Collins and Norris, as above stated, having lost each other, at the entering of the cornfield, got together no more that night. Norris proceeded with the two children, through the dark brush and briers, avoiding every pathway, crossing hill and dale and frequently falling with the children into deep ravines, until he lost his direction, and after some hours travel he found himself near the farm from which he had started, and beheld the buildings consuming by fire. He proceeded the second [time] to steer his way for the settlements. At a late hour, being wearied with fatigue he and the children laid themselves down to rest on the ground until the morning star arose. He then proceeded to prosecute his journey, and finally arrived to one of the older settlements. The girl was so badly bruised that it was found necessary to call on a physician to administer relief. Before day a runner was sent to alarm the citizens of Charlestown and its vicinity. As he approached the town, in passing our residence, I heard him just after daylight exclaiming, "Indians! Indians! Indians!" The whole country was thrown into a state of perfect confusion; and before sunset vast crowds found their way across the Ohio river. The cruel massacres by the Indians in a previous war, were yet fresh in the minds of the people, hence they were easily affrighted. A number of men were raised to pursue the savages, but to no purpose. They must have left soon

after they had finished [their] horrid work at old Mr. Collins'; for the next day [Indians] were discovered by a scouting party of our men from Washington county, on the Chestnut ridge in Jackson county, in the direction from [the] Musketuck [Muscatatuck] river for Rockfurd; and had there been any management in the commanding officer, a number of them might have been killed:—for they were first discovered by our men, and had they concealed themselves, they might have dealt a deadly blow on the Indians; but as soon as they were discovered orders were given to charge. As part of the Indians were walking and part riding on those animals they had taken from the Whites, loaded with the plunder taken from the murdered families; they instantly commenced cutting loose a portion of their baggage to lessen their incumbrance in a speedy flight. While doing this, the footmen among them selected positions behind logs and trees and fired at our men. As they attempted to play the same game with the Indians, one of the rangers unthoughtedly drew sight from the wrong side of the tree, where his body was exposed to their view, and received a mortal wound. He was, however, removed to a station and soon expired. There were near twenty in company on this occasion: more than what was supposed to have been at the Pigeon Roost.<sup>13</sup>

In the spring of 1813 another party of Indians or the same came within 9 miles of Charlestown into the neighborhood of Zebulon Collins, and having concealed themselves behind a bank of Silver Creek shot into the house of Mr. Huffman, killed the old gentleman, and shot a ball through his wife,—supposed to be mortal, but she finally recovered. They took his grandson prisoner, who was about 9 years old, kept him some 9 years. The connection applied to Government for means to ascertain where he was, and to redeem him. During this time he had become almost savage. It was with some difficulty he could be prevailed upon to leave the savage tribes and return home to his friends. At the time that Huffman was killed, there was a company of men stationed at Z. Collins' within a few hundred yards of Huffman's house;

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<sup>13</sup> The Pigeon Roost settlement and especially the massacre, Sept. 3, 1812, are commemorated by a tall monumental shaft dedicated Oct. 1, 1904, south of Scottsburg, not far from state road number 1.—[Editor.]

but as this was the Sabbath day they had left their station to visit a family of young people some distance off, contrary to their duty as soldiers; and hence were unable to repel the savage attacks of the enemy. Some of the men having returned in the evening, a Mr. Perry about dark attempted to carry an express into the settlement of Charlestown; in passing down Silver Creek about a mile and a half he came across seven Indians. They ran him in the bottoms of Silver Creek, across gullies and timber and shot at him. It was with the utmost effort he made his way back to the fort. After it became dark he attempted to pass the same route and succeeded. As soon as information was conveyed into the older settlements by Mr. Perry, men were instantly raised to pursue them. It was thought necessary to alarm those families, mostly exposed, of their perilous condition. Accordingly a Mr. Reed proposed to go to Mr. Elliott's for this purpose. Being in possession of a belt which he had worn during the Tipacanoë expedition, he again employed it to compress his body to the smallest possible size. He proceeded to the place above named, and as he came in sight of it he was fired upon by a company of Indians, 8 in number, who had concealed themselves behind a fallen tree, waiting a favorable opportunity to kill the family. Five discharged their guns at him at the same instant, but all without injury to Mr. Reed,—although some balls passed through his clothes, one cut his belt nearly in two. One or two entered the animal he was riding. He however succeeded with it to make his escape. Men were soon raised to follow their trail; but their skill in retreating,—in passing down rivulets and streams made this difficult to be done. From the number of horses stolen by these savages, and other signs, it was manifest that [they had] sallied forth in different portions of the frontier settlements embraced in the bounds of old Silver Creek circuit. Those families who did not entirely leave their homes and places of security and defence, and companies of men were raised and stationed at those places to guard the frontier settlers.

Our traveling preachers continued to travel sometime after these Indian disturbances prevailed, being guarded on

different occasions to their appointments. At last they gave up their regular work and left the country. I recollect of attending an appointment for a quarterly meeting, and that too within 5 miles of Charlestown; when there was neither presiding elder, circuit preacher, nor people except those who went with me. The paralyzing effects of these things to the spread of the Gospel and Church extension was not recovered for years.

In reflecting upon these Indian disturbances and massacres which were witnessed by the first settlers of this country, and of the wild and almost unbroken condition of the forest, who would have supposed [that] even at this distance of time, in those very neighborhoods, where the warwhoop of the Indian was heard—where he prowled around the dwellings of unprotected families with his tomahawk and scalping knife—and that within a few yards [of] where sleeps the moldering dust of many who fell victims to death by his bloody hands:—that there these valleys are cheered by the passing and repassing of the locomotive engine, that most brilliant gift of Philosophy to man, which rushes along with its noble train, shaking the earth with the majesty of its tread, and vying with the eagle with the ease and swiftness of its motion, which constitutes a vehicle for hundreds of delightful passengers:—that there in each of those neighborhoods where individuals thus suffered and died is a camp-ground, erected for public worship, where thousands have listened to the clangor of the Gospel, have hung with delight upon the lips of the preacher, and have united in the praise of Almighty God? All this is even so, and the past year I was permitted to be in attendance at each of those places.

A second revival of religion with which this circuit was favored (though its name was now changed) was in the fall of 1819. It commenced at the campmeeting, held at Jacob's Campground. Never did I witness such a season of awakening and converting power. Many, very many on that occasion made a profession of experimental religion. This blessed work continued to spread this conference year, until the whole of the circuit shared in its saving results. Tho' I have referred to two seasons of revival influence witnessed by the



first settlers of this country, I would not intimate the intervals were entirely barren of such influences; but the periods above referred to were more eminently distinguished in this respect.

Such a thing as a Sabbath-school was not heard of for many years by the first settlers of this country; and when the subject was first agitated about one, it was opposed by different persons, and by some too who were official members of our church, as being a reflection on the citizens of the place, as not being able to school their children at common schools.—The catechetical instruction of children by the ministers of our Church, according to its discipline, was not entirely overlooked at the first introduction of Methodism here. I recollect that the minister who was the regular pastor on the Silver Creek circuit in 1810 purchased a number of catechisms at his own expense and bestowed them to the children of the members of the Church, who were advanced sufficient to read, and formed regular classes round the circuit, and met them for [the] purpose of prayer, recitation, and advice. In one of those classes I was placed and learned to recite the whole of our church catechism. This I have found to be beneficial to me through the whole course of my life.

My connection with the Church, as a member on trial, was [made] in the fall of 1809, when I was a little turned of my fifteenth year, under the ministry of Sela Pain, one of the most devoted men I ever knew. It was some length of time after this before I obtained a sense of saving mercy. Soon after this my mind became impressed with the necessity of preparing for the ministry. Had circumstances been such as to have favored me with scientific training, how gladly would I have embraced the opportunity. For the want of suitable advice I deferred this matter for a number of years. In September 1813 I preached my first sermon from these words: "Be reconciled unto God." I spoke some 45 minutes, with no small liberty. It was the first time I ever attempted to arise and speak in public, whether in the class-room or love-feast. It occasioned as much surprise as though a ship had sailed on dry land. A recommend from the class was immediately obtained for license to preach; but attendance at quarterly meet-

ing was prevented by the sickness of my father. A permit was given by the church to exercise my gift as a preacher until the closing quarterly meeting of the circuit. This I thought was unwarranted by the Discipline of the Church; so I refused to exercise anywhere except in my class; and this was but occasional; until the annual examination in 1819. At this time I was first formally licensed to preach. In the fall of 1820 I was recommended to the traveling connection, and appointed to Mount Sterling Circuit in Crawford county; which was then one of the most gloomy regions in the state. This circuit embraced a very poor and broken part of the state. Many of the people were destitute of the necessities of life, and of course I had to share with them in this matter. On one occasion I recollect to have visited a family, preached, and remained with them for 24 hours and then leave without breaking my fast, simply because they had nothing themselves—the head of the family having gone a distance to procure breadstuff and failing to return while I remained.—This was a four weeks circuit. The number of attempts to preach must have averaged with the number of days in the year, and I must have traveled three thousand miles; and this without any quarterage except a few dollars worth of sugar for my family.

In 1821 I was appointed to Flatrock circuit, and traveled until 1822. The bounds of this were somewhat as follows: commencing at a point within 10 miles of Madison; thence in a westward direction within 5 miles of Brow[n]stown; thence up White River, crossing back and forth to the mouth of Flatrock, Blue River, Sugar Creek; up these creeks some distance; thence across Flatrock, Clifty, Sand Creek, the head branch of the Muskaketuc river to the beginning. This route was performed in 4 weeks. The whole amount of quarterage received this year, in produce and money, was about 29 dollars. No account was taken of moving to and from the circuit.—In 1822-3 to Blue River circuit. This was a 6 weeks' circuit, embracing an extensive territory of country. My quarterage here was about 39 dollars—My fourth appointment was back to old Mt. Sterling. Here was an abundance of hard labor, and but little support,—My fifth appointment

to Corydon:—sixth to Madison circuit.—This ended my first tour in the itinerant field. My horse being foundered died and I was set afoot. In this situation I applied for a location at conference, and it was granted,—The whole amount of my quarterage for these six years was about \$258.00. No account for table expenses, house rent, or the disciplinary [allowance for] children.

After a location of about 9 years, I reëntered the traveling work in 1835, and was appointed to the following circuits, viz: Lexington, Vernon, Lexington again, Salem, Columbus, and Greenville. At the close of this year I again located, and so remained until 1849, at which time I received an appointment for White Creek Circuit. This conference year closed up my itinerant career.

One more item and I am done, and that is with reference to the annual conference which held its session in Charlestown. This should have been noticed in a different place. It commenced its session there August 1825. It was denominated the Illinois conference and embraced the whole of the two states. Bishops McKendree and Roberts were in attendance. McKendree arrived a few days before the sitting of the conference. He proceeded to visit some of the adjoining neighborhoods for the purpose of preaching. He returned the day before conference and preached to the citizens of the town. He preached twice during conference much to the satisfaction of the vast crowds that were in attendance. His method was simple and plain—rarely surpassed as a profound reasoner. When he arose to address an audience the gracefulness of his person, the gravity of his appearance, convinced them that more than an ordinary man was before them. There was, I thought, quite a falling off with the bishop in point of intellect from the time I first heard him in 1810.—Bishop Roberts preached twice—Saturday at 11 A.M., and Sabbath afternoon. This was an ordination sermon from the words: “Yea doubtless, and I count all things loss” &c. It was one of his happiest efforts. Dr. Ruter preached the 11 o’clock sermon on Sabbath much to the satisfaction of, listining thousands.

It was at this conference that the disciplinary allowance

for the children of preachers' families, table expenses and house-rent was first introduced and acted upon. This was done by Peter Cartwright. When he first introduced it Bishop Roberts remarked, that it had never been practiced upon before in this conference. Cartwright remarked, he presumed the conference had never been properly organized.

The subject of missions occupied the attention of the conference to some extent; especially with reference to one that was about to [be] established with a nation of Indians to the Northwest of Illenois.

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The above is a verbatim copy (except words included in [ ] ) from manuscripts furnished me by my father, REV. GEORGE KNIGHT HESTER.

F. A. HESTER.<sup>14</sup>

## II. CIVIL, ECCLESIASTICAL AND EDUCATIONAL HISTORY OF CLARK'S GRANT

GEORGE KNIGHT HESTER.

### The Civil History of Clarke's Grant.

The organization of the county of Clarke was in 1801, in which the Grant was contained, and was named after the celebrated George Rogers Clarke, who at one time was a citizen of the county. At its first organization it was far more extended than at the present. Its boundaries as defined by the Governor:—Beginning at the mouth of [the] Big Blue river; thence up that river to the crossing of the Vincennes road; thence in a direct line to the nearest point on [the] White river; thence up that river to its source and to Fort Recovery; thence on the line of the North West Territory to the Ohio, at the mouth of [the] Kentucky river; thence to the begin-

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<sup>14</sup> The Reverend Francis Asbury Hester was for many years a prominent member of the Indiana Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and a frequent contributor to the *Western Christian Advocate*.

ning. But long since it has been greatly pared down, to its present dimensions.

The first court held in the Grant was April 7, 1801. Eight of the original settlers of the Grant were appointed by the Governor Justices of the Court of General Quarter Sessions. I could name these; the most of them I knew. This was at a village called Springville, one mile and a half [south] west of Charlestown.

Under the Territorial government efforts were made to introduce slavery into the Territory, by most of the ruling men, notwithstanding the Ordinance of 1787 forbidding the introduction of slavery or involuntary servitude within its limits. Hence, laws were made to "indenture" (as it was called) the African race for a number of years. This was not, however, in accordance with the wishes of a majority of the citizens. When Mr. Jennings became candidate for Congress, having published his sentiments as being opposed to slavery, and having been raised in Pennsylvania, a free State, he far outstripped his competitor, who was suspected on that subject.

The citizens of the Territory had no voice, neither directly nor indirectly, in the forming of those laws by which they were governed, until 1805, which was the time of the sitting of the first legislature. Until this session they were governed by laws made by the Governor and judges, from time to time, as circumstances seem[ed] to require, to be enforced until disapproved by Congress. It is the clear conviction of my mind, as far as my limited means of information extended, and my capacity in my boyhood and youth would enable me to judge, that there was but little of that party spirit manifested at our elections in choosing our representatives which characterizes them in the present day. They were not cursed with the fell demon of discord which now threatens the desolation of our Union.

#### The Ecclesiastical History of the Grant.

I have already given you some information respecting this. Though I kept the copy of what I wrote you, it was kept on

loose sheets—some are lost. My memory does not serve me [so] as to recollect all I said.

The first ecclesiastical organization in the Grant was the Regular Baptist Church. I think this was in 1801. It was called the Silver Creek church. Next was the Methodist Episcopal Church. In writing my sketches, I availed myself of evidences from the most reliable sources. Besides my own knowledge of things, Hezekiah Robertson was my principal informant. I think his memory did not serve him in some matters respecting the first forming of classes in the Grant. A few days before the Old Settlers' Meeting here [in 1858,] I went to see old Father Andrew Mitchell, who is 86 years old, just lingering on the shores of mortality, declining fast with an eating cancer on his breast for 20 years; who also was a member of the Gazaway class almost from its first formation. He told me that when McKendree was Presiding Elder of the Kentucky District, he called at "Jack" Bates', as he was called, who was a local preacher, and left his horse, and requested him to canoe him across the Ohio river—for this was the only means of crossing—so that he might attend a meeting at old Father Gazaway's, 5 miles east of Charlestown, arrangements being made for some of Gazaway's family meeting him, with a horse, at the river. Mitchell accordingly set him across in an old tottering dugout. Mitchell went with him to the meeting. Mc,Kendree preached; after preaching formed a class at Gazaway's, appointed old Samuel Bullick class-leader; and formed a class for the Robertson's members that were in attendance, to meet at old Nathan Robertson's house, and appointed Zephaniah Robertson Class leader for that place. Mc,Kendree was then conveyed back to the river. He then beset Mitchell to take him to Louisville, some 16 miles, to preach. Mitchell hesitated on account of the tottering condition of the canoe. Being pressed by Mc,Kendree, he remarked that if Mc,Kendree could risk his life, he ought; so off they shoved for the destined place. When they had got near the landing where Utica now is, Mc,Kendree told him they must stop and meet Benjamin Edge, a young preacher whom Mc,Kendree had sent from Bates's (with a man who was Keeping a stable horse for Bates at old Nathan Robert-

son's) to make his way to old Father Prather's and preach for the people. So they tied up their craft to the shore, and walked some three miles, arrived at meeting in time, Mc,Kendree preached, formed a class for the neighborhood where New Chapel now is, some six miles south of Charlestown. They then steered their way back on foot to the craft, proceeded on their journey to Louisville. Mc,Kendree had an appointment made at Candle-lighting, in the court house, and preached. The next day being Sabbath, he appointed preaching for 11 o'clock and at night. In the winding up of his service there he formed a class for Louisville, the first ever formed there. On Monday they paddled their way back, 16 miles, to Bates', where he got his horse, set out for Shelbyville, Mitchell piloting him several miles on his way. Mc,Kendree then directed the preachers to take them in their circuit; so they came in the month of May. I inquired of Mitchell if he recollected what year Mc,Kendree formed those classes. Said he did not. I then asked him if there was no circumstance by which he could come at the date. After studying awhile, he said there was. The date of the deed of his land would determine this, for he had bought it of Bates, and the deed was given the same year that Mc,Kendree came over. I feel a doubt whether his memory serves him with reference to the date. I think it will not correspond with the Minutes of Conference. I have no means now of determining this. This circumstance would be an important item in the history of the labors of the first pioneers of Methodism. I should have said above that the deed was obtained in 1804.

Had I time to extend my remarks with reference to the history of ecclesiastical affairs, I might say that the first regular Presbyterian preaching in the Grant, at least near Charlestown, was by Rev. Mr. Todd, nephew of the celebrated Davies of Virginia. Mr. Todd was a man of fine education, of good natural abilities, but a very moderate preacher. He had given up the peculiarities of Calvinism, and was Arminian with reference to the provisions of the Gospel being made for fallen man. I have already stated that the "New Lights" commenced operations in the Grant about the years 1806-7. Their regular and most successful preachers were a Mr.

McClung and a Mr. Nance. McClung had been a Presbyterian elder; Nance a Methodist preacher. For some cause they became disaffected with their former churches. Neither of them having been immersed, they deemed it important to have baptism performed in this mode; hence, as I was creditably informed, on a certain occasion Mr. Nance, being the oldest preacher, to[ok] Mr. McClung and immersed him; then Mr. McClung immersed Mr. Nance. They looked upon themselves as being validly baptized. They were industrious in preaching, especially Mr. McClung, and gathered a considerable number into their so-called Church. As their meetings were uniformly held on the Sabbath, they had the advantage of the Methodist ministry in the Grant, as it was on the week days. This doubtless was the cause why the Methodist Church in its first introduction was not able to compete with other churches.

#### The Educational History of the Grant.

On this I have also made some brief statements. In addition to those already, I remark that the Rev. Mr. Todd, just referred to, occasionally taught some individuals in the higher branches. His tuition fee was \$40 per year. Also a Mr. Graham taught school in Charlestown about the years 9, 10, and 11. He was a good scholar. I set in with him to learn something about the English Grammar. A Mr. Roydon was employed by the month and winter season by my father to teach his own children. I learned the theory of Surveying with him. He was a tolerable scholar and a good instructor. He also taught school for a year or two in the town of Charlestown. In 1819 there were two teachers came to Charlestown by the name of Craughherr; were said to be good scholars; taught school a year or two.

I do not know whether I said anything about the first Sabbath-school that was introduced into Charlestown, in May 1820. It was a Union school in which were united different denominations and the world. It was attended well both by teachers and children. Judge Scott was the Superintendent of the male part, and your mother of the females. It was held on the principle of giving rewards for committing portions of Scripture, due attendance, and good behavior.



I have studiously avoided saying anything about the succession of schools taught by your mother in Charlestown, commenced in 1817. But perhaps I should not pass them by. They were mostly of a female character; small boys were admitted; and sometimes those that were pretty well grown. These schools were generally prosperous. The many female teachers she prepared—the length of time she taught in Charlestown, some 10 or 12 years—the circumstance that she had four of Parson Todd's sons in school at one time, who while living here never sent his children to any other teacher, is proof that she possessed rare abilities as a tutoress. You ought to recollect something respecting some of those schools, for the day you were 4 years old she commenced your schooling, and learned you the Alphabet the same day.—I could say something about the educational history of this place down to the present time, but this is not necessary.

You have a wish that I would give a fuller detail of matters and things of gone by days,—at least down to my father's death. I have had thought of reviewing my sketches, and of adding much more, and of publishing them in some of the periodicals of the day. But if Eddy proceeds with the book in contemplation my doing this might forestall the sale of the work in some degree. Hence I have declined. Melville wished me to arrange the items of history respecting civil affairs, and he would publish it in his paper. I have but little more time to write, and little room.

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Adieu for the present.

G. K. HESTER.

### III AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MRS. BENEE HESTER, WIFE OF GEORGE KNIGHT HESTER.<sup>15</sup>

“August 23, 1851.

Dear Son:—In the following pages I have tried, as well as I could, to give you the outlines of some of the items I understood you desired. Whether I have done it to your satisfaction or not you will know when you read them. I have

had nothing but my own imperfect memory to assist me. I have just scrawled down what first came in mind. I have not written or copied any of it over. I suppose you can cull what you want from it. If I have omitted any particulars about which you wish to know more you can let me know.

"Benec Hester."

"I was born Dec. 12, 1789. My father, Thomas Briggs, was a descendant from an English family, but born and raised (I believe) in Fifeshire, Scotland; married my mother, Catharine Cunning, in the town of Dunfermlin, moved her to the country, some few miles from town, where he settled on a farm, on which they remained until they emigrated to America, which was in my fourth year.

I know but little about the ancestry of my father. They were, I believe, a religious family of the Presbyterian Church. I know that my father was a communicant of that order.

My father's father, Andrew Briggs (or "Bridges," as they called them in Scotland), died when my father was quite young. His oldest brother David, and William a younger brother (only 16 years old), left their mother and family and came to the United States. Then all the care of the family fell upon my father. The family then left at home consisted of six children and the mother, (illegible) my father, and two brothers, Andrew and John, both his junior, [and] three sisters, Isabel, Ann, and Ephra. He staid with them and managed for them till he was 28 years old, at which period he married my mother.

My mother was a pure Scot, or a descendant of the old Caledonian race. Her father, James Cunning, I know nothing about; only, he died when she was but six years old; her mother, when she was nine. She had several sisters and one brother. Her oldest sister, Mary, was married to a man by the name of M'Queen, with whom, after the death of her mother she tried to live, but finding him to be a hard, dis-

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<sup>18</sup> The children of George Knight and Benec Briggs Hester were: George Knight, born Dec. 16, 1820; Francis Asbury, born April 4, 1822, died Dec. 17, 1906; Matthias Addison, born Sept. 20, 1824; Thomas Briggs, born Sept. 3, 1826, died May 13, 1827; William McKendree, born Feb. 25, 1828, died June 2, 1900; Andrew Briggs, born April 21, 1830, died April 21, 1870; Melville C., born Jan. 20, 1834.

agreeable man, in her 10th year she left him, and found her way to Dunfermline, where two of her mother's brothers lived, John and James Reed. John was a married man, a merchant in good circumstances, and had no children. He took her and educated her, and treated her well. Her uncle James was a helpless man,—had lost the use of himself when young, so much so that he could not feed himself. He lived near his brother John. And so soon as mother was able to do any thing, she and her brother James Cunning became his nurses as long as he lived; when he died they fell heirs to what he had. Her uncle John having no children to keep up his name, with the most of his wealth founded a hospital in Dunfermline for poor children, which I suppose bears the name of Reed's hospital to this day. He left my mother a considerable sum of money, which remained in bank till she was married,—which was in her 20th year; then of course it fell into my father's hands. He had to make use of some of it to settle off debts necessarily contracted in raising his father's family. So they went to house-keeping in only moderate circumstances.

My father was very anxious to move to America from the first of their going together, but mother was bitterly opposed, and would not consent until she saw how hard it was for him to make a living for his family by farming where rents were high and where he could not own a foot of land. I have heard her say she had not given her consent to move but a very short time before he was ready to move. As soon as he obtained her consent, he made arrangements for leaving. He sold all his stock and nearly all their heavy furniture and house-hold stuff,—amounting, I have heard my mother say, to more than 100 lbs. sterling. It was all sold at [on] a year's credit; at the expiration of which time my father intended to return and collect it and pay for land for which he had bargained with a man who had been in the United States, and who had located land near old Lexington, Kentucky.

Immediately after the sale, they packed up all they had left, and bid farewell to the home of their youth, to try their fortunes in the (then called) 'New World'. I do not know

where they took shipping; but I think I have heard my mother say, they moved sixty miles by land; all I recollect is that we rode in some kind of a carriage that had glass windows in it. We had to take passage in an American vessel, it being against the law for British subjects to leave the country. After suffering all the storms and sea-sickness of a tedious nine weeks' trip, we were set on shore at Norfolk, Virginia, sometime in December 1793, the month in which I was 4 years old. From Norfolk we were conveyed to Stafford county, in carriages or wagons (for I don't mind which), where my father's two brothers had settled. We went into the house with Uncle David, where my father expected to stay while he made preparations to prosecute the remaining part of his journey to Kentucky. We remained there during the winter. My father bought horses and a wagon, but, I suppose, did not intend moving till fall; for he fixed for farming, and put in a crop. In April, after we landed in Virginia, my youngest sister was born. That and the necessary arrangement he had to make for the journey, I judge, made him postpone his removal to Kentucky so long. He never intended settling, when he left Scotland, till he reached the neighborhood of old Lexington.

He commenced working his crop, and continued to labor till the hot weather set in, when he was seized with the fevers. Being unacquainted with the diseases of the country, they knew not how to manage it. They sent for a person who pretended to know something about medicine. He gave him a large dose of tartar, without the necessary precautions. My father, in the height of the operation of the medicine, when the fever was raging high, demanded cold water. It was given him. He drank what he wanted; which stopped the operation of the medicine,—after which nothing could be done to save him. He lived several weeks. A considerable part of the time he was so deranged, mother could not keep him in his bed. Young as I was, I remember how much we were frightened to see him leave his bed and the house and wander away in the field with nothing but his night clothes on. From what mother has since told me, I think his mind was struggling with something she at that time did not fairly understand. She said, one day, some two weeks before he

died, he asked her for paper, pen, and ink. She got them for him. He told her to write. She asked him what she should write. He said, 'Write that Christ is a rock that cannot be divided.' Before she had time to write, he exclaimed, 'That is enough, that is enough.' From that time his mind was calm. He died in peace on the 5th. of August 1794, leaving my mother with six small children, the oldest but 9 years old, the youngest not more than 4 months old. What her grief was no pen can describe. I have heard her say, she did not at the time dare to shed a tear; she felt as if her grief could get vent, the world could not hold it. Before my father died, he, thinking it impossible in the deranged state of their affairs for mother to raise us children, advised her to put us all out except the youngest, but of that mother said she could never think; she could not bear the thought of parting with her children; and rather than commit the care of their souls and bodies to a strange people, a people of whose morality she had a very poor opinion, chose rather to suffer and die with them. And though she had been raised without knowing what toil and hardships were, she immediately set herself about trying to keep her family together, by lessening their expenses in every possible way she could. They had brought a young woman over the sea with them, who had been in their service sometime and who was to serve them seven years for her passage. She parted with her directly, that she might have no charge but her children. She sold what valuable furniture they brought with them; and was about purchasing a small farm, on which—I recollect—there was an old house, into which she intended to move; but God, who has said, 'leave your fatherles[s] children with me and let your widows trust in me', had his eye upon her. He raised her up a friend in an uncle of my father, who lived in Kentucky. He, hearing of her desolate condition, left his home with one of his sons, and came to her relief; and before the flowers bloomed the next spring, we were snugly housed in a little cabin close by him, in Kentucky, where he furnished us all the necessaries of life till we were otherwise provided for. This was in the spring of 1795.

In the course of that season my mother, with the aid and

advice of that Uncle, sold her wagon and one or two horses and bought a small farm in Washington county,—to which we moved the first of winter; for I recollect I was just six years old when we were on the road. The same uncle continued his kindness toward her. He furnished a work hand, *gratis*, to tend her farm the first year; and while he lived, found her all the salt and flour she used. Her corn and meat she had to try to raise. By some means she got a start of cows and hogs. It seems that goodness and mercy followed her; for she prospered in every thing she undertook. By her needle or other labor she would hire a man to break up her ground, and plant her corn, and plow it occasionally. She and her little girls would hand weed and hoe it. Well do I remember seeing her work till the sweat would be dropping off every corner of the handkerchief which she wore around her neck. Sometimes she could not raise corn enough to do her family and her stock; then she would sell blankets, of which she had a good stock when she crossed the sea; or some of her superfine clothing, such as silk cloaks or the like, for which she had little use now, and buy. One season, I recollect, she went to a wicked man who had a mill, and bargained with him for meal to the amount of the price of a cow, which he was to get when he called for her. After mother got the worth of the cow, she wanted him to take her away; but to her surprise he refused to have any thing for his meal. What but the overruling power of God could put it in the hearts of such men to do such acts of kindness? The uncle that did so much for us was not even a believer in the Christian religion.

Mother was a member of the Presbyterian Church, of which she became a communicant in her 14th year. I have no recollection of her attending any other preaching till after we had been several years in the country. A Methodist local preacher settled close by us; she occasionally went with her children to hear him; but I do not think she had a very high opinion of him. He was not very smart. And she thought him rather lazy, and negligent in family government to fill her notion of a good Christian. Mother was scrupulously strict with regard to our moral training. The Sabbath was

with her truly a holy day. We were not allowed to "speak our own words or find our own pleasure" on that day. All worldly concerns except those of necessity were laid aside. And when we did not go to meeting—which was by far the most of the time, as meeting was seldom within our reach; and as for Sunday-schools—we never heard of such a thing—she would read the Bible for us, catechize [us], and relate Scriptural narratives to us in such simple language that we could understand, till often the Sabbath became 'a delight,' instead of a wearisome day.

In the year 1800 a farm was purchased for us in the neighborhood of Bowling Green. Which arrangement was made by Uncle Briggs, my father's uncle, who had been our benefactor, in his last Will. His advice was that she should sell the one on which she lived, and buy a colored boy to work for her, and that his sons should purchase her another in the neighborhood where they lived, which they did. And we moved to it; landed there the first day of 1800.

We began now to learn a little more about the Methodists,—there was a Methodist family living near the farm to which we moved, where meeting was held. There being no Presbyterian church near us, and mother believing it to be her duty to attend public worship, and being deprived of the privilege of her own order, she thought it better to attend the Methodist than none; though she was not right sure that they were correct in their views of Scriptural doctrine,—she did not think it was according to scripture to say, "she knew her sins were forgiven", and could not join with a people that held that doctrine. The first Methodist preacher I ever heard her speak well of was Ralph Lotspeich. He was among the first traveling preachers we ever heard. When mother heard him, she said it was the nearest a Gospel sermon of any she had heard in the country. She still held on to her own opinion about experimental religion, not believing it necessary to make so much ado about religion; said God was a "God of order", not of confusion; therefore she thought it wrong for people to shout and make a noise at meeting,—till in the summer of 1805, [when] she attended a camp meeting held by the Cumberland Presbyterians and Methodists in co. [company.]

There she thought she would go to communion with the Presbyterians, not knowing that they differed from the order to which she belonged. But they objected because she refused to give an experience of grace. She began from that to think more seriously about the matter. She thought if such a thing was to be known, it was high time she was trying to find it out. She became much distressed about her situation, and commenced, in earnest pleading with the Lord to show her her real state. She wrestled with the Lord for sometime, resolving not to be comforted till He revealed himself to her. He did not let her strive in vain; He manifested himself to her in such a way that she was over-powered, and shouted aloud. I heard an eye witness say, he believed she shouted and praised God without intermission near three hours. After that she could tell all about her own experience. She said the time of her conviction and conversion was made as plain to her as if a lighted candle had been brought into a dark room. From that meeting she went home and joined the shouting Methodists, and shouted as often as any of them. And when she was asked, where was her God of order? she replied, God could bring order out of confusion. From this time she commenced reading the Methodist doctrines, and became a firm and settled Methodist. She read Wesley on Christian perfection. She became convinced there were higher attainments in the Christian sphere than she had ever enjoyed. She said, she was resolved, by the helping grace of God, if there were any higher blessing to be enjoyed, she would never rest till she obtained it. I heard her speak in lovefeast one day about it in such a solemn manner that it seemed to thrill the whole assembly. She said she had been seven years pleading with the Lord for the blessing of perfect love,—she was determined not to rest without it. I do not know how long it was before she obtained the victory. But the winter we were married, she gave us a relation of the scene. It was truly a thrilling one. She ever after, as far as I ever heard, lived in the full enjoyment of the blessing, reading her Bible constantly and using all the means of grace. Whe[n] I was to see her last, in 1832, she told me that in less than 13 years she had read her Bible through 14 times. I asked her if she did



not get tired reading one thing so often. She said, 'O no; there was so much of it that there was always something new.' She died in the summer of 1841. I never could get any very minute account of the dying scene. I understood she read her Bible as long as she was able. She died of summer fever. Her last days were rather dosed or slept away.

As far as our mother was capable of instructing her children, she did it; but that consisted chiefly in religious and moral training. As it regarded literary attainments, she never considered the way in which she had been educated, a suitable way to educate us. Our opportunity for learning was very poor, and our early attainments very limited. At 12 years old I could not read, I was then sent to school about 2 month to a poor kind of a teacher; however, it gave me a start, and that was most all I needed; such was my anxiety for learning, that nothing could stop me, and before the 2 months were out I could read so as to understand myself very well. I went but very little more to school till after I was grown. Then I went to the Female Boarding school [in Bowling Green], where I only spent 2 sessions. Which includes all the schooling I ever had.

My mother's religious and moral instruction had [made] a deep and lasting impression on my mind. I was early taught to pray, and reverence the name of the Almighty. And so sacred was that name held that we dare not lightly repeat or sing over a religious song. Mother would tell us, we knew not what we were saying. We were taught to believe that God could hear and knew our softest prayers, and the most secret thoughts of our hearts. This doctrine I very early believed. I will relate a circumstance which took place when I was quite a child. I have never said much about it, though it has had a greater tendency to convince me that the Lord hears and regards the prayers and distresses of little children (revelation excepted) than anything else I ever felt or heard.

When we first settled in Washington County, the country was wild and poorly settled; had been lately the scene of many depredations committed by the Indians. Now and then a neighbor would call in, and most all of them could tell some tragic tale of Indian barbarity. To such tales I listened with

terror, till my mind became so much disturbed that I sunk into a kind of melancholy, which made me very miserable. And while my young mind was yet terrified about Indian affairs, a band of robbers, called the Harps, passed through our country, killing and robbing wherever they could. This brought fresh horrors to my already disturbed mind. I lost all cheerfulness; ceased to play with the rest of the children; moped about the house; the family thought I was sick; I kept my trouble all to myself. One night I shall never forget. I was so oppressed with tormenting fear that I could not rest. I tried to pray, to get rid of it, three times before I went to bed. I went out and prayed. Still I felt no better. After I went to bed it appeared to me that terror would overwhelm me. It seemed like a mountain of horror would roll over me. Twice this terrific feeling passed over me. I would still say, "Lord have mercy on me." The third time I felt it coming. It appeared more horrifying than ever. And I exclaimed from the inmost recess of my soul, "My God have mercy upon me!" In a moment my heart was as light as a feather. I could have danced for joy. I felt like talking to the family; but they were all asleep, and I said nothing to them. I was as cheerful as any one the next day. And never was that tormenting fear suffered to return.

As I grew up, like many I looked upon the world as a flower garden, expecting to find sweets in every flower. I tried to find pleasure in its various vanities, but in vain; I always found myself disappointed and dissatisfied; and early became convinced that nothing of an earthly nature could satisfy an immortal soul. After Mother joined the Methodist church, which was in 1805—under the ministry of James Axley and Miles Harper,—we became constant attendants of Methodist meetings; yet none of the rest of the family joined till 1809, when there was a considerable stir in our neighborhood. The different exercises of people—falling, jerking, and shouting—became very prevalent. My youngest sister, [my] step-sister, and several others were powerfully awakened, fell into these exercises, became very happy in religion, and joined the church. All the time I stood aloof, believing I was a sinner and not fit to die, yet not fully sensible of my danger, nor

yet persuaded that it was now my time to give myself up and forsake my vain companions and worldly amusement.

Sometime in August, there was a lovefeast in the neighborhood; it was held on Sunday and Monday. I attended on Sunday; heard Frederick Stier, a preacher from the East, who had been traveling in the West sometime. I was much pleased with his sermon, and my feelings were [a] good deal softened. I went back on Monday with my youngest sister, who was a member of the church. We went early, as lovefeast was to be held that morning. When we got there, she went in; but the door-keeper stopped me, and asked me if I was a member. I told him I was not, but did not wish to go in through vain curiosity. He took me kindly by the hand, led me in, and bid me "pray with them." The lovefeast was the most solemn and awful I thought I ever saw, some crying and some shouting, while I felt like one forsaken and alone.

Bro. Stier preached that day. In closing his discourse, he gave us a sketch of his own experience. After giving several touching incidents, he related a solemn scene through which he passed during his distress. One morning before he rose from his bed he thought he was at Mt. Calvary; that they were going to crucify our Saviour. He followed them up the Mount; saw them place our Savior on the cross; when the man with the hammer and nails came up and smote a nail into one of his hands. With that he started up and was instantly struck with the words he heard a preacher say the day before, "Sinner! every sin you commit pierces your Savior's wound afresh." These words he spoke with an emphasis; and had he run a sword through my body I could not have felt it more sensibly than I did those words through my soul. I saw in a moment, as I never saw before, that Christ had loved me, had suffered and died for me; that I had been, against better light and knowledge, grieving his Spirit, and sinning against Him. The awful sense of ingratitude that I felt was beyond description. I wept bitterly, till tears refused to flow to my relief. I thought over the opportunities and religious instruction I had slighted from my earliest days. I was constrained to ask myself, "If I never find mercy, will

it not be just?" The answer appeared instantly to be, "Thy damnation is just!" If thou damn me it is just!" I instantly replied. These words appeared to roll through my mind as loud as thunder; and I thought I was crying them as loud as I could, and I knew no better till afterwards. I had fallen senselessly to the floor, and knew nothing of it till I came to and found myself there. From this meeting I went home a true penitent—joined the church the first opportunity; but did not find relief till the 16th of September, which was the second day of the first camp meeting I ever attended. The manner in which the good Lord revealed his mercy to me was as strange and powerful as my conviction was. I had passed through the two first days without any particular change. [I] Began to be fearful I should have to return as I came—with all my load of guilt. On Saturday evening I was called to assist in taking my sister in the tent, who was powerfully exercised. When we laid her down, she looked up in my face and commenced praying for me. I had felt much opposed to having the jerks, with which she was exercised. But when I looked upon her heavenly countenance, saw her uplifted hands, heard her fond and pathetic prayer for her poor sister, I felt abashed; the pride of my heart was completely subdued; I bowed my head and hunkered down beside her, laying my hands across my knees and my head upon my hands;—as I did this I said, "O Lord, if thou wilt grant me the blessing she seems to enjoy, I will willingly have the jerks or anything else thou may please to put upon [me.]" I cannot recollect another thought passing through my mind till I heard my own voice saying, "Glory, glory," and felt my hands slapping together. I then asked myself "Why, what is this?" I instantly felt the reply in my inmost soul, as sensibly as if some one had spoken to me, "This is what you have sought for," I suppose I was in the act of falling back, for I felt my head touch some one behind me, which brought me to my recollection. I then sprang to my feet, and with loud shouts declare to all around what the Lord had done for me. The change was so great in my feelings I never could express it. I felt as if I had been snatched from an awful gulf; and so grateful did I feel for it that my soul was all ecstasy. I was astonished

when I saw some others profess to have found peace, and make little or no ado about it. I thought they had never seen their danger as I had [seen mine.] It seemed like my whole nature was changed. I had been as fond of fashions and foolery as any one; it was now no cross to lay all aside. I had no relish for anything that did not accord with true piety. For some years I would wonder to hear professors of religion talk about trials and cross-bearing; I scarcely know what they meant.—Since that time I have felt the need of all the Christian armor, (and I have) learnt to know as much of the Christian warfare as I have been able to bear; but have always found his grace sufficient for me.

F. A. HESTER,  
Charlestown, Indiana, January 20, 1890.

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The above is a verbatim copy of my mother's manuscript except the words in [ ].