

## The Philburd Wright Family

EMSLEY WRIGHT JOHNSON

In his *Sketches*, Mr. Nowland wrote in 1876: "Among the early settlers of the Territory of Indiana was a large family of Wrights, who emigrated from Randolph County, North Carolina, and settled in Union County in 1813. From Union County a portion of them went to Wayne, and some to Washington County; later four of the sons came to Marion County."<sup>1</sup> Philburd Wright, one of the many persons of this name who came to Indiana, was born in Maryland in 1750. He became a pioneer of Indiana about 1813, taking up his residence in Union County near Brownsville, where he died in 1831, or 1833. It is believed that he served in the Revolutionary War, and later as justice of the peace in Randolph County, North Carolina, for about forty years. He married Elizabeth Reagen and to them were born the following children: Joshua, Caroline (Delilah), Sarah, Mary, Noah, Levi, Joel, Jesse, Elizabeth and Aaron.<sup>2</sup>

The family records of the three sons, Noah, Levi and Joel, are here presented:

*Noah Wright* was born in Randolph County, North Carolina on August 30, 1784. He moved to Indiana in 1808. He located first at Jeffersonville, where he manufactured brick for a year, and then farmed for a man named Holman for a time. He served one year on the frontier against the Indians, for which he was granted a land warrant for 160 acres. He did not receive the land, however, until forty years later, a short time before his death. Following Indian service, he returned to his home in North Carolina where he remained a year. He returned to Indiana in 1810 and settled in Washington County where he was employed in clearing land. He married on July 28, 1814, Susanna, daughter of Arthur and Mary Morgan Parr, natives of Rowan County, North Carolina.<sup>3</sup>

In 1831, Noah Wright came to Marion County, Indiana, where he purchased at different times a total of 640 acres

<sup>1</sup> John H. B. Nowland, *Sketches of Prominent Citizens of 1876* (Indianapolis, 1877), 149.

<sup>2</sup> This record was furnished by George T. Kepler of Cambridge City, Indiana, who received parts of it from Isaac N. Beard, his father-in-law, parts of it from Mary W. Sinks and parts of it from Melissa K. Justice. An additional son, Eli, is named in *Pictorial and Biographical Memoirs of Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana* (Chicago, 1893), 248-44.

<sup>3</sup> "Memoir of Enoch Parr," *Indiana Magazine of History* (December, 1926), XXII, 371-453.

of land, and at that time also owned 420 acres in Hamilton County. He settled on a tract of 160 acres in Perry Township, Marion County, not an acre of which had been cleared, and there he lived until his death on July 11, 1863. He was an old-line Whig, later a Republican. He was a member of the first state legislature that convened in Indiana, and was sheriff of Washington County some five or six times. He was not a church member, but gave liberally to all denominations. His wife died on October 9, 1842. Seven children were born to them: Betsey A., David, Hiram, Isaac, Polly A., Susanna and Jasper N.<sup>4</sup>

*Levi Wright* was born in North Carolina on June 12, 1790, and was married to Sarah, daughter of William and Elizabeth or Betsey (Morgan) Wright<sup>5</sup> (born August 31, 1797, and died August 19, 1834). They moved to Indiana in 1810 and settled in Washington County, near Salem. Levi held prominent positions in the county and owned much land. He died in the old home near Salem.

*Joel Wright* was born in Randolph County, North Carolina, on February 5, 1795, and moved with his parents to Indiana Territory in 1813. In November, 1815, he located on the west fork of the Whitewater in what is now Wayne County. Then he moved to Marion County in December, 1821. He was married September 10, 1812, to Sarah Birely (born April 30, 1789). They had eight children: Alfred, Polly, Jinsey, Emsley, Phoebe, Elizabeth, Lucinda and Joel. All are deceased. Joel Wright died April 9, 1928.<sup>6</sup>

*Children of Levi and Sarah (Wright) Wright:*<sup>7</sup>

*Mary (Polly) Wright*—b. 1818; m. July 13, 1857, George Fultz; d. 1890; no children.

*Henry Wright*—b. 1820; m. Aug. 23, 1842, Rachel Goss; d. 1875; Children: George, of Emporia, Kansas; Charles of Genda Springs, Kansas, an attorney; Albert, of Kansas City,

<sup>4</sup> A sketch of Noah Wright is given in *Pictorial and Biographical Memoirs*, 243-44.

<sup>5</sup> A Revolutionary soldier, buried in the Wright Family Cemetery on the Harrison Deeny farm about three miles south of Salem, Indiana. A government marker was placed on the grave by the Christopher Harrison Chapter, D. A. R. of Salem. William was the son of Richard Wright, Sr., a private in the North Carolina militia, from Rowan County. Other children of Richard were Benjamin, Peter, Richard, Jr., John, Evins, Amos and Philburd. Philburd, born in 1768, was the first of the family to come to Washington County. Grant F. Wright, Route 4, Salem, Indiana, a descendant of Philburd Wright, has compiled a genealogy of this family.

<sup>6</sup> A sketch of Joel Wright is given in B. R. Sulgrove, *History of Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana* (Philadelphia, 1884), 628. In this sketch his birth date is given as February 5, 1793, and May 12 is given as the date of his arrival in Indiana Territory. The name of his wife is given as Sarah Byerby.

<sup>7</sup> These are grandchildren of Philburd and Elizabeth (Reagan) Wright.

Missouri; Walter; Joel; Harvey, of Emporia, Kansas; Henry, of Guthrie, Oklahoma.

*Jesse Wright*—b. Sept. 30, 1821; m. March 25, 1852 to Matilda McAllister; d. June 4, 1856; children: Joel; Louisa (M. Timothy Callahan).

*Lorinda Wright*—b. 1822; m. May 8, 1844, to Sanford Carter; d. 1890; children: Elizabeth; Alice (m. John McCullough, lived in Livonia, Indiana); Cassius Morton (lived in Muncie, Indiana, and later in California); none living.

*Louisa Wright*—b. Oct. 6, 1827; m. David Colglazier, Mar. 26, 1851; d. Mar. 31, 1895; children: Levi, Isaac, Joel, Frances, Marion (d. in infancy), Rachel, William, Mary, Abraham, Walter, Sarah, Jacob, Catherine, John. Of these, Joel (b. Feb. 13, 1854; d. July 1, 1931) m. Adelia Cauble (dau. James and Eunice Hitchcock Cauble) Dec. 21, 1818. Nine children (three died young) were born of this union. This Joel Colglazier was an active member of the Washington County (Indiana) Historical Society and compiled many family records.

*Joel Wright*—b. Feb. 9, 1829; d. Sept. 19, 1851.

*Marion Wright*—b. Oct. 10, 1830; d. Dec. 30, 1852.

*Levi Wright*—b. 1833; m. Louisa Martin; d. in Indianapolis, date not known; children: Franklin, William, Edward, Aurt and Fred. Franklin became a doctor. He and his brothers William, Edward and Aurt live in Indianapolis. The address of Fred, also a doctor, is not known.

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*Emsley Wright*<sup>a</sup> was born in Wayne County, Indiana, on February 18, 1820. When not quite two years old, he moved with his parents to Washington Township, Marion County, where he lived his entire life. He helped cut the virgin forests from the land where the statehouse now stands, and also worked on the construction of the canal through Marion County. He was a member of the Marion County Bar Association and for many years practiced law. He was also justice of the peace in Washington Township for eight years, and was president of the Broad Ripple Old Settlers Association. On January 27, 1848, he was married to Lucy Maria Strong who was born on June 10, 1828, and died on July 21, 1851, leaving two children, Mary and John. Mr. Wright was married a second time on December 20, 1855, to Clara

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<sup>a</sup> Son of Joel and Sarah (Birely) Wright and grandson of Philburt and Elizabeth (Reagan) Wright.

K. Collins, who died on December 14, 1896. One son, George, was born to them, but died at the age of two and a half years. Emsley Wright died on January 11, 1897.

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*Mary Wright*<sup>9</sup> was born near Augusta, in Marion County, Indiana, on November 23, 1848. On March 21, 1867, she married Joseph McClung Johnson, son of William K. and Virginia Johnson. Mrs. Johnson died on January 31, 1930. Joseph McClung Johnson was born on the Rockville Road (now Road 36) six miles west of Indianapolis, on April 1, 1843, and died on July 6, 1933.

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*Children of Joseph McClung and Mary (Wright) Johnson:*

*Cora Josephine Johnson*<sup>10</sup> was born near Augusta, Indiana, on July 21, 1868. She never married and now lives with her brother, Elmsley Wright Johnson.

*Emsley Wright Johnson*<sup>11</sup> was born at Augusta, Indiana, on May 8, 1878, and was married (1) at Greenfield, Indiana, on August 8, 1906, to Katherine Griffin, of Greenfield. He was admitted to the Indianapolis Bar in 1903, since which time he has been in active law practice. Children: Mardenna and Emsley Wright, Jr. Mrs. Katherine (Griffin) Johnson died on January 29, 1918, and Emsley Wright Johnson married (2) Elizabeth Thompson on August 2, 1920. They live at 3447 Washington Boulevard, Indianapolis.

*William Franklin Johnson* was born in Whitestown, Indiana, on June 28, 1881. He was graduated from the Indiana University School of Medicine in 1906. In 1921, he married Gertrude Weirhaye. Their home is at 2102 Sugar Grove Avenue, Indianapolis.

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<sup>9</sup> Granddaughter of Joel and Sarah (Birely) Wright, and great-granddaughter of Philburd and Elizabeth (Reagan) Wright.

<sup>10</sup> Granddaughter of Emsley and Lucy Maria (Strong) Wright, great-granddaughter of Joel and Sarah (Birely) Wright and great-great-granddaughter of Philburd and Elizabeth (Reagan) Wright.

<sup>11</sup> Author of this family history, son of Joseph McClung and Mary (Wright) Johnson, and brother of Cora Josephine Johnson (note 10).