

## No. 40 In A Series

## Strictly Kentucky Genealogy

Various Materials To Aid In Family History Research.

## Hurst

The Hurst family was founded in America about the year 1730 by three brothers, William, James, and John, who came from Buckinghamshire, England. They settled on the south branch of the Shenandoah River; a river valley lying between the Massanutten and the Blue Ridge mountains in Virginia.

The known head of the William L. Hurst branch of the family was John Hurst, son of the original John, who came from England. He was continually-called "Mill Creek" John to distinguish him from the many other John Hursts.

John was born in 1735. In 1759 he married (first) Nancy Nunn. On August 6, 1789 he married (second) Elizabeth Breedwell. He had 17 children.

John was drafted from Shenandoah County for services in the Colonial Army. Soon after the close of the Revolution, the family moved to Claiborne County, Tennessee, and lived on a farm at Elk's Bend. "Mill Creek" John died in 1817, reportedly to have been killed by a falling tree.

Henry Hurst, son of "Mill Creek" John and Nancy Nunn, was born in Shenandoah County, Virginia, October 27, 1762. He died in Morgan County, Kentucky, November 2, 1844. For periods of time in 1780, 1781, and 1782 he was a soldier in the Revolution; serving as a private in the Virginia troops from Shenandoah County.

On January 20, 1784, Henry married Elizabeth Kiser. Soon after their marriage they left Shenandoah County and went to Russell County, Virginia, and settled on Clinch River.

In August 1819 Henry

decided to move to Kentucky. They mounted their horses and made the long tedious trip to what is now Breathitt County, Kentucky. With his household goods and livestock, Henry entered Kentucky at Pound Gap and made his way over to the headwaters of the North Fork of the Kentucky River. He purchased a farm on Quicksand Creek, which empties

into the Kentucky River, a few miles below the mouth of Troublesome.

Henry and his youngest son, Samuel Henry, erected a home on his new land and cleared it for cultivation. They began buying and raising livestock on a large scale. When sufficient numbers would accumulate, they would drive the livestock to Virginia, the best available market, which was many miles from their home.

Samuel Henry, son of Henry and Elizabeth Kiser Hurst, was born September 9, 1799, on Clinch River, Russell County, Virginia. He died December 1, 1888, on Stillwater Creek, Wolfe County, Kentucky.

On July 11, 1825, Samuel married Sally Landsaw, the daughter of William Landsaw, who lived near the mouth of Landsaw Fork of Stillwater Creek. To Samuel and Sally Landsaw Hurst were born four sons and four daughters: Andrew, William L., Elizabeth, Esther, Daniel, Dulcinea, Henry, and Emily.

Samuel engaged in farming, raising stock, trading, and for a time in the merchandise business in a partnership with Thomas Hagins. He owned a number of slaves and with them carried on a very successful farming and stock-raising business; and for that period, in the section of the country, was considered a good moneymaker. Within a few years he owned more than 8,000 acres.

Everything went along in the regular way with the Hurst family until the outbreak of the Civil War. The people of the county were very much divided between the North and the South. Samuel and his sons were in sympathy with the Union. The sons began taking an active part in the fighting, occasionally coming to Samuel's house under cover of darkness for short visits.

William L., son of Samuel Henry and Sally Landsaw Hurst, was born on Quicksand Creek in Breathitt County, Kentucky, on December 5, 1829.

Samuel had selected the profession of a lawyer for William L. He secured a position for him in the circuit court clerk's office at Irvine, Ken-



LaVerne Peyton Howerton of Lexington, Kentucky, shares this photo of William L. Hurst (center); William's son, Julius Caesar (right); and an unknown man, possibly William's son, Hannibal. Date and place of photo not given. See "Strictly Genealogy" above.

tucky, doing work as part of his legal education. In about two years, William L. took up his studies in West Liberty, Kentucky, in the office of Robert Burns, a very prominent attorney. In 1852 he passed the bar examination and secured his license to practice.

William L. established an office in Jackson, Kentucky, began to make money, and soon owned considerable property. He continued with a good business until the outbreak of the Civil War. When convinced he could no longer remain in Breathitt County, he went away to take part in the conflict. He entered the Army in 1862 and received authority from the War Department to raise a company of 100 men of which he was to be the captain.

On May 5, 1862, William L. and 23 recruits were attacked by Rebel soldiers. He was shot directly in the right eye. His men carried him to the house of a friend, but could not get a doctor. Numerous bands of Rebel soldiers were searching the community and thinking that they had him securely hidden, they left to avoid the superior number.

When Samuel received word that his son had been wounded, he immediately started to see him and arrived soon after dark and refused to leave. A squad of Rebel soldiers found out where they were, entered the house, and made them prisoners.

Though almost unconscious, William L. was carried and placed on a horse with his father riding behind him, on the same horse, to hold him on. He endured terrible suffering as they traveled with their captors toward Virginia. They received no medical treatment.

For one month they were placed in a dungeon in the jail at Abingdon, Virginia, and from there to other places until they reached Libby Prison, in Richmond, where they were kept in close confinement until their release in October 1862, when William L. and his father were exchanged for 40 Confederate citizen prisoners. William weighed less than 100 pounds and his father was very feeble.

A U.S. flag of truce boat carried them to Annapolis, Maryland, where they received medical treatment, clothing, and food; which enabled them to gain strength enough to continue their journey homeward. They reached their home on Stillwater Creek in the latter part of November 1862, traveling in the night and laying up in the woods during the day, as they were all the way in the midst of the enemy.

Realizing the impossibility of staying at his home in the mountains, Samuel rented land near Mt. Sterling and moved



LaVerne Howerton of Lexington, Kentucky, shares this photo of the William L. Hurst home on Stillwater, Wolfe County, Kentucky. No date given.

his family there, where they remained until the close of the war.

After their arrival in Mt. Sterling, William L. helped recruit two companies of Federal soldiers for the 11th Kentucky Cavalry Regiment. On June 21, 1863, he received from President Lincoln an appointment as "Commissioner of the Board of Enrollment" and held the position until near the close of the war.

After the surrender of Lee and the assassination of Lincoln, William L. returned to Jackson. The few slaves he had were gone, his houses with all their contents were burned, and all other property of his was destroyed. He reopened a law office in Jackson and enjoyed a liberal practice in Breathitt, Wolfe, Lee, Owsley, Leslie, Perry, and other counties.

Members of the Bar and the circuit judge of the district would all "ride the circuit" together, going from one county to another. They made all trips on horseback and traveled over bad roads in all kinds of weather. After riding this circuit twice each year they had little time to spend with their families.

On October 4, 1877, William L. married Isabella Duff, daughter of Henry C. and Mahalah Strong Duff. To them were born five children: J. Caesar, Minnie, Nellie, Hannibal, and Sally. They went to housekeeping in a log house on the head of Stillwater Creek in Wolfe County, and here all their children were born.

In 1893 William L. moved his family from Stillwater Creek to Campton, Kentucky, for the purpose of educating his

children. He owned a farm there, which extended into the edge of town and on this he erected a large brick residence. Near the courthouse he also owned a brick law office.

When William L. retired from active practice, he owned about 6,000 acres of land and had saved up considerable money in addition to livestock and other personal property.

William L. accumulated a large library in addition to his law books and in his latter years spent most of his time reading and looking after his lands. He always took an interest in politics and attended practically all Republican State and District conventions and was a delegate to at least two National Conventions. He received a Federal pension on account of the loss of his eye in the Civil War.

He died at Campton, Kentucky, on October 14, 1920.

LaVerne Peyton Howerton  
2171 Ami Lane  
Lexington, KY 40516

*The Kentucky Explorer* Makes  
A Great Gift. Why Not Sub-  
scribe For Someone Today!  
See Our Special On Back  
Issues. Order Form On Page  
112. We Appreciate  
Your Support.