

To Lloyd Legendre

John Holcombe's Odyssey

A NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICAN PIONEER

1797-1876

Herbert G. Holcomb

by

Herbert Gordon Holcomb

Printed in the United States of America
Copyright © 1999

Cataloging Data
Holcomb, Herbert (1922-)
John Holcombe's Odyssey
A Nineteenth Century American Pioneer
1797-1876 / by
Herbert Gordon Holcomb

1. Early American Families - Their Migration
2. United States Early Settlement
3. Early Baptist Church History
4. Northwest Arkansas Local History

Acknowledgement

*Compilation of data and manuscript made possible with the
aid and support of my faithful wife, Henrietta K. Holcomb*

Books may be ordered from the author at:

548 Gray Avenue
Fayetteville, AR 72701
email: ~~herbh@ipa.net~~
herbholcomb@aol.com

JUST-US PRINTERS
SPRINGDALE, ARKANSAS

A Nineteenth Century Pioneer Family



John Holcombe and Dorothea (Woolbanks) Holcombe

CONTENTS

Preface	ix
Chapter I: The South Carolina Start 1797	1
Introduction	
John's Parentage	
Beginning Environment	
Chapter II: The Kentucky Trail 1801-1811	7
Early Experiences	
Surrounding Families	
Portentous Events	
Changing Environment	
Brothers' Reunion	
Leaving Friends	
New Introductions to His Life	
Chapter III: Pathway to Indiana 1811-1824	15
New Lands	
John's Heritage	
Journey to Indiana	
Arrival in Indiana	
The Campaign	
Home in Indiana	
Beginning of Homelife	
Other Events	
Shifting Communities	
New Frontier	
Providence Church, Gibson County, Indiana	
Young Social Group	
Wedding Bells	
Church Politics	
Beginning Family Life	
Chapter IV: The Illinois Frontier 1824-1836	35
Fresh Frontiers	
County Development	
Family Notes	
Establishing Life's Vocation	
Illinois Church Activities	
Community Sorrow	
First Land Purchase	
Sisters' Reunion	
Indian Versus Settler	
A Training Day in 1830	

The Black Hawk War
Mustering Out
Peaceful Times
Restless Pioneers
Decision Time

Chapter V: Two Beckoning Trails 1837-1838	53
Return to Indiana	
Establishing Residence	
Beckoning Future	

Chapter VI: Arkansas—Land of Opportunity 1838	57
Relocating to Arkansas	
Arkansas Beginnings	
Local Baptist History	
Renewing Vocational Ties	
Community Discipline	
New Horizons	
Family Matters	
Expanding Interests	
Establishing Home	
The Shiloh Village	
Transition Days	
Basis for Livelihoods	
Shiloh-born Siblings	
Maturing Family	
Settling-in Years	
U. S. 1850 Census	
Family Adjustments	
Supportive People	
The Fading Frontier	
Prosperous Fifties	
Son Jo's Endeavors	
New Daughter-in-law	

Chapter VII: The Civil War Years 1861-1865	81
War Clouds Gathering	
The Beginning Struggle	
Family Response	
Other Comrades-at-arms	
Union Gains	
Protecting the Family	
Sojourn to Texas	
Early Family Sacrifices	
Continued War Involvement	

Prairie Grove Experiences
Personnel Changes
Battle Front News
Soldiers at Home
Atwood Diary Excerpts
Washington--State's Capitol

Chapter VIII: Staying the Course 186599
End of War
Returning Home
Atwood's Return

Chapter IX: Regaining the Vision 1866-1867105
John Leads Out
Rebuilding the Shiloh Church
Gathering the West Fork Church
Rebuilding Home
Beginning Mineral Springs
Shattered Dreams
John's Younger Family
Celebrating Good Times
Post-war Financing
Family Business Matters
Original Plat
Jo Perseveres
Right-of-way Legalities
Continued Speculation
Introduction to Isabelle
Planning Their Future
Returning to Shiloh

Chapter X: Triumphal Finish 1868-1876119
The Trail's Ending
From Village to Town
Major Educational Movement
Shiloh to Springdale
Shiloh Baptist Church Prospers
Partnership Meetinghouse
Crowning Achievement
Family Notes
West Fork Church Struggles
Shiloh's Supporting Ministers
John Loses Companion
Future for Springdale
Springdale's Growth Planned

... my RECORD
... I was also encouraged to record some of them. Mary Parsons, a former librarian and archivist at the Shiloh Museum of Springdale, Arkansas, kept suggesting that I at least should carry a recorder around with me to preserve what I knew about the family and its place in history.

Being too self-conscious to utilize a recorder, I finally began to put on paper the story of my great-great-grandfather for posterity. The facts about his life and the inter-relationships with his relatives and community of his experiences, became an historical study about the development of our national heritage. This book is the results of my efforts.

The reader will observe various spellings of the family surname name. The first family members to immigrate from England used the spelling Holcombe. However, as the family branched out, phonetic spellings began to appear. These phonetic spellings have been indicated at various places in the story. John Holcombe, the subject of my story, continued to keep the original family name in practically all his records and I have continued to use that spelling for his name throughout the book. In 1854 after John had moved to Arkansas, his brothers who remained together in Indiana agreed to drop the final "e" from the name. I have used the modern spelling for simplicity.

Some who read the story will be critical because there seems to be a lack of professional genealogical support of the question, "How do you know?" but I leave that to the reader. Anyone following the same path of research will find plenty of evidence to support the factual statements that are made in the book. No attempt has been made to list all the references and sources of information. The reader will be able to detect where there is a lack of direct confirmation of that which is stated.

Introduction

There is an old proverb, "You cannot know a man unless you walk a mile in his shoes." The person of John Holcombe is more fully revealed as we follow his footprints in the sands of his lifetime. Local history has recorded many facts about the latter part of his lifespan of approximately seventy-nine years, which was spent in Washington County, Arkansas. But we gain a better appreciation of his relevance to us beyond history by reviewing his life in the light of his experiences.

John Holcombe became a settler of Washington County with his wife Dorothea (aka Dorothy) and their children in late 1838 or possibly early 1839. It is known that he was preceded here by other close friends and his brother-in-law William Wilbanks (Woolbanks). He originally settled on an 80 acre tract of land which is now in the town of West Fork. Deed records, personal property assessment, and church records validate his entering local history at this time. Now we turn our attention to who this friend and neighbor really was.

John's Parentage

John Holcombe was born December 10, 1797, probably near his Grandmother Eleanor Holcombe's property in the old Ninety-six District of South Carolina. Incomplete genealogical records about his parents make it impossible to say with certainty the exact location, but later census records verify the State of South Carolina. John's grandparents had established themselves in 1763 in what is now known as Union County. John's grandfather, John Holcombe, was deceased in 1769 and 200 acres were deeded to his widow, Eleanor Holcombe, on the Holcombe Branch of John's Creek in 1770. Holcombe Branch flows into John's Creek, waters of Enoree River. The names were memorialized to Eleanor by the State of South Carolina, January 10, 1775, because of the family's early settlement in the Piedmont region on the waters of the two streams. Grandmother Eleanor's date of death has not been recorded, but it is not possible for John to have known her.

John's father, Jeremiah Holcomb, was born in 1752 in Virginia. The following year the family migrated to Granville County, North Carolina, was established there until 1763, when the family moved to South Carolina.

There is much evidence to indicate that John's mother was Mary Mercer, the daughter of James Mercer I. He migrated to Georgia in 1767 after selling the home in North Carolina. In 1773, he was granted 150

acres on the first branch that flows into Harden's Creek, Wilkes County, Georgia (according to early Georgia records). A microfiche record of the children of James Mercer lists two girls and one son, Silas Mercer, born to him and his first wife Ann Jones Mercer. James married Sarah Simmons in 1748 after Ann's early death. Five sons and four daughters are listed as their children. Their fifth child, Mary, was born about 1763. The eldest child of this union, Thomas, was born in 1750. He, along with their famous half-brother Silas, were Baptist ministers and had close association with Holcomb family members. This gave Jeremiah Holcomb occasion to know Mary.

The James Mercer family was in dire straits in 1776 and Mary evidently left home to marry at a young age. No other Mercer family record of Mary has been found. An old Testament passed to Elihu Holcomb, John's younger brother, had a notation that Jeremiah Holcomb married _____ Mercer, the blank being too faded to read. There is evidence that her given name was Mary. The names of children of Jeremiah and Mary (Mercer) Holcomb have been established with certainty.

John was the eighth child among seven brothers and two sisters of Jeremiah and Mary (Mercer) Holcomb. Their first son, Asa, was born in 1777 or 1778, and had a namesake in the Simmons family. It is probable that Mary was 13 years of age when she married Jeremiah. The children in order of birth after Asa were: Benjamin 1779 or 1780; Hosea on December 24, 1782; Henry 1784; Enos 1786; Patsy 1787 or 1788; Jeremiah 1793 or 1794; John December 10, 1797; and Elihu June 1, 1800. Baby sister Catherine's birthplace has been given as Warren County, Kentucky, in 1801. The children have all stated their place of birth as South Carolina with the exception of Patsy. An 1850 Arkansas census gives her birthplace as Georgia. Three of Mary (Mercer) Holcomb's sons named a son Silas Mercer. This name has been further perpetuated by this branch of the Holcomb family.

Beginning Environment

John Holcombe grew up in the outer fringe areas of pioneer development. There was always a close relationship between him and his siblings even though there was a wide range between their ages. There was also a heritage of several families migrating together as a community as succeeding generations sought to find open land to support themselves. Although their settlements were widely spread, a social life as close friends developed. Some of the forebearers of the families have been

traced back before 1753 in Virginia and into North and South Carolina. This closeness led to many inter-marriages among the families which in turn furnished support and strength to overcome the perils of frontier life. John began his pilgrimage with Reding Putman, a son of Daniel Putman. Reding was born in Union County, South Carolina, in 1792. The association of these two young boys was to last a lifetime.

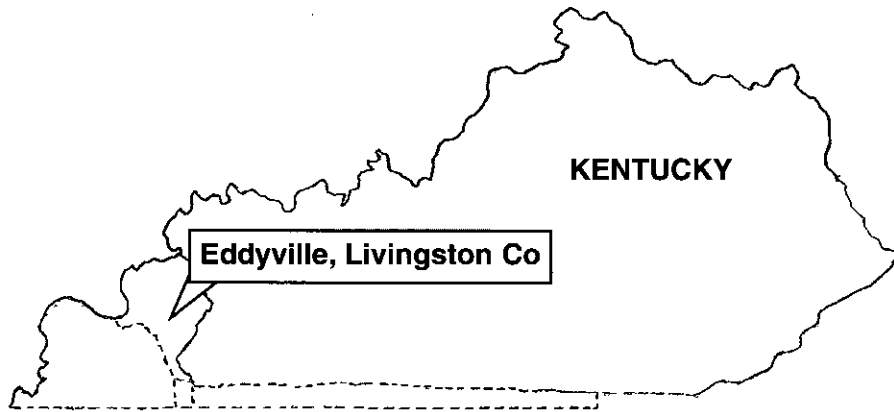
Other social forces of the environment and history developed the character, personality, and independence of the frontiersmen as America began its march westward following the Revolutionary War. These pioneers found themselves free to rely on their industriousness and courage to develop their own future. In the context of a strong religious freedom of belief, in cooperation with their fellow countrymen, a strong national spirit developed that became the heritage of this nation. John Holcombe was the benefactor of these forces as he began his life's journey.

In 1797, Kentucky was opened up for pioneers to claim free land. Joel and Harmon Holcomb, John's uncles moved to Warren County and filed for land near Bowling Green. At the same time, Jonathan Holcomb, a first cousin to Joel and Harmon, also entered claims in the area. This was the beginning of the westward movement of the Holcomb family. By early 1800's the three families had become well established and were beginning to prosper. Jonathan Holcomb's oldest son was named Jeremiah and was just of legal age in 1801. He quickly began to speculate in land near Bowling Green, later Simpson County, Kentucky, and even as far west as Livingston County. His name sometimes becomes confused with John's father Jeremiah as one reads official genealogical records. However, there is some evidence that John's father followed his brothers and cousin to Warren County in 1801, and then later settled in Livingston County in western Kentucky. Probably he followed Laban Putman, a family friend who was married to an Elizabeth or Betsy Young in Livingston County March 1, 1800.

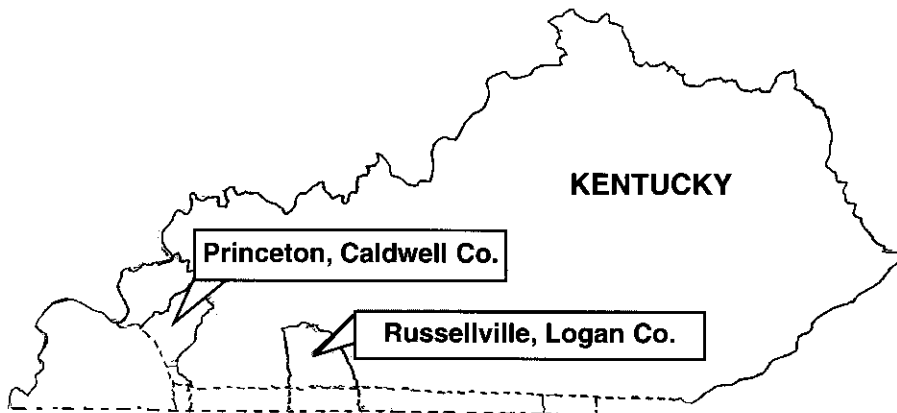
CHAPTER II

The Kentucky Trail

1801-1811



John's family settles in Livingston County in 1802



Kentucky in 1811 as the Holcomb brothers leave for Indiana.

Early Experiences

John Holcombe, by the age of four, had experienced the birth of a baby brother, Elihu, in the family, then traveling with his family to Kentucky, and the birth of a baby sister, Catherine. By 1802 John's father, Jeremiah, is assessed as a citizen of Livingston County for one male (poll tax) and one horse. A notation adds that he was located east of Livingston Creek. The records show that Jeremiah attempted to obtain title to some land but was unsuccessful because of a prior claim. No other county assessments were ever made on Jeremiah.

The next known important event in John's life was the marriage of his sister Patsy to Caleb Holcomb (Holcom). Caleb was Patsy's father's first cousin. As a young girl Patsy had lived in proximity of where Caleb had been raised. Caleb was still at home in South Carolina in 1798. It is not known when he moved to Livingston County, but it can be presumed to be at about the same time Patsy's family settled there. A marriage bond was filed in Christian County, Kentucky, consenting to the marriage of Caleb to Patsy on February 13, 1804. The bond carries the signatures of both Caleb and Jeremiah and are very legible. This event appears to have established a home for John and his younger brothers and sister for a few years. The same year official record shows that Caleb was assessed in Livingston County one male (poll tax) and one horse, being on Camp Creek in the county. The bond was executed in Christian County only because of administrative reasons.

After Kentucky became a state in 1792, the various counties were formed progressively from the territory to the west. In 1795 Logan county was created from the south central part of the state west all the way to the Tennessee and Ohio Rivers. It was noted to be an area where lawless people escaped to from the east. Subsequent religious revivals swept the area and families of believers migrated to the area. Although profound changes took place, it remained a rough and ready citizenry as of 1800. Warren County was created from the eastern and Christian County from the western part of Logan County effective in 1797. Livingston County was then created out of Christian County in 1799. This was essentially the area between the Tradewater and Tennessee Rivers. The remainder of Kentucky west of the Tennessee River was Chickasaw Indian lands until 1818.

Livingston County, Kentucky, was the far western development towards civilized life of the United States at this time. A William Prince,

originally from the Piedmont area of South Carolina in 1782, led a group of people through Tennessee to the Eddy Creek area on the Cumberland River of Kentucky. This group of families quickly formed a settlement called Eddyville in 1798, which became the county seat of Livingston County. The community was primarily of agricultural nature in the fertile Cumberland Valley with large tracts of land. The legendary Matthew Lyon, then a Congressman from the State of Vermont, decided to investigate settling in the Cumberland River area in 1800. He termed the group of Carolinians that he met "a group of uncivilized ruffians." He returned to the east to finish out his term of office. However, in 1801, he returned to Livingston County and proceeded to lead the area for the next decade in the development of business and commerce. Eddyville became a center for boat building on the Mississippi River because of its natural resources in timber and iron ore. John Holcombe, the young boy, was too mature to his early teens through this decade.

Surrounding Families

The movement of a large contingency of families of friends and relatives of the area of John's origin in South Carolina would eventually have a great effect on his life. Barnet Putman's son, Daniel, had heard of new opportunities in Kentucky and in 1802 had contracted some 200 acres of land near Bowling Green. He with his brothers Thomas and Ezekiel accompanied their father to Bowling Green in 1804. Although a fourth brother, Laban, was originally in Livingston County in 1800, he apparently rejoined the others in Warren County as he is carried on the tax lists of that county in 1803, 1805, and 1806, but not later. Barnet Putman and his family moved to homestead in the Bowling Green area of Warren County, Kentucky.

Accompanying the Putmans were the Skelton families, Dolly Combs (the widow of Bennett Combs) and her family, the Duffs, some Barnetts, and other friends. The Duff family included Abraham and Verlinda (Combs), Dolly's oldest daughter, and their children. Among the group moving to Kentucky was John's first cousin, John Holcomb, (a son of Joel Holcomb) born about 1772 in South Carolina. He appears later in Livingston County records in 1809. Records show that two tracts of land were surveyed for this John Holcomb in Warren County previous to 1810. He was accompanied by a wife and unknown number of children.

Caleb Holcomb continues to be on the tax rolls of Livingston County for the years 1806 and 1807. John has two first cousins, Thomas and

Daniel (sons of Harmon Holcomb), to be assessed in the same county, beginning in 1806 and later years. Thomas Holcomb has 200 acres on Long Creek, a poll tax, and one horse assessed in 1806 and 1808. Thomas' brother Daniel is assessed one poll tax and one horse in 1808. Benjamin, John's older brother, also appears on the tax rolls in 1807 and 1808. These are the first public records of any of Jeremiah and Mary (Mercer) Holcomb's sons.

Portentous Events

The beginning of the romantic side of John's life story was developing in Warren County. A bond for the marriage of Rueben Woolbanks and a Janey Combs was executed in Warren County on the 13th day of March 1807 with the bondsman being John Barnett. The marriage was not officially recorded on the county records until October 1, 1807. The record reads: Woolbanks, Rubin - Jane Comes - J. Hightower officiating. The true relationship of Jane to Bennett and Dolly Combs is not known but subsequent events strongly suggest a close one. Rueben and Jane Woolbanks gave birth to a daughter, Dorothea, January 15, 1808. A son William was born the following year. Both of the children and a third, a baby girl, are accounted for in the 1810 Census of Warren County in Rueben's household. There are records that suggest that the baby was a daughter named Stacy. The Census also records a male between the ages of 10-15 who possibly could be a brother to Jane. Although John Holcombe would not have knowledge of these events for many years, long term destiny would lead Dorothea to be his life companion.

Changing Environment

Land records furnish evidence that in 1807 the older brothers of Jeremiah: Zachariah, Joel, and Harmon, along with some of their children, migrated from Warren County, Kentucky, to the territory of Illinois. In 1808 they moved to the New Madrid area of Missouri which was soon after the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. Here they were caught in the great earthquake of 1811 and returned to Illinois in the area that is now St. Clair County. Many of the children of Joel and Harmon continued to live in Kentucky.

A Livingston County Court record reveals some of the stature Caleb Holcomb had in his community. In 1808 he was asked by William Prince to be a witness to his will. The area had developed to the point where it became administratively feasible to partition Livingston County and form

Caldwell County out of the eastern half. The partitioning line started midway on the Tradewater River (the north boundary of Livingston), running southwesterly to intersect Livingston Creek, and along the creek to the Cumberland River, extending on across the Cumberland to the Tennessee. The area of the new county enclosed Eddyville, however the growing town of Princeton became the county seat of government. It was through the leadership of William Prince that the town flourished and it is named for him. The partitioning of Livingston County took place in 1809.

Caleb and Patsy had a son, Dempsey, born to them in late 1808 or early 1809. Historically this appears to be Mary (Mercer) Holcomb's second grandchild and John's first nephew that he knew personally.

The tax books of Livingston and Caldwell counties indicate that the two cousins of John, Thomas and Daniel, continued living in their same location. However, Thomas has reduced his land holdings on Long Creek from 200 to 100 acres in 1809. Daniel has not acquired any land titles. John Holcomb (son of Joel) has acquired 200 acres of land on Eddy Creek. The same year his name appears abruptly in Logan County as a voter with one horse. This is a significant change, for John's brother Hosea is assessed a poll tax in the same county. In 1810, John's brother Benjamin is still located in Caldwell County but brothers Hosea and Enos are being taxed in Logan County and listed as voters. It is evident that the sons of Jeremiah are beginning to rally around their cousin John (son of Joel) in Logan County.

The 1810 census of Caldwell County reveals some significant information. Caleb is listed in that county as head of a household. The head count and ages recorded match that of Caleb, Patsy, Dempsey, John, Elihu, Catherine, and that of an older woman of Mary (Mercer) Holcomb's age. There are two other females in the household, too old to be Patsy's daughters. There is no accounting for Jeremiah by record after a possible signing of his name as surveyor in 1806 in Livingston County. John's father is presumed deceased by 1809. There is absolutely no trace of John's mother after this census. John is now approaching 13 years of age.

Brothers' Reunion

The year 1811 becomes a momentous year for John. Brother Benjamin still is listed as being in Caldwell County but has acquired a second horse. Brothers, Hosea and Enos, are listed as voters of Logan County. Also January 21, 1811, the Logan County Court Order Book Number 5, page 118, contains the names of an overseer and then lists the names of the

hands to construct a road from the local courthouse in the direction of the newly formed Butler County line. Among the names listed for the hands are elder cousin John Holcomb along with John's brothers: Asa Holcomb, Ennis (Enos) Holcomb, Hosea Holcomb, Jeremiah Holcomb and an unknown Abner Holcomb. A following entry for Book 5, page 124, Monday February 1811, adds to the list of Robert Patterson, overseer, the names: Cousin John, Enis (Enos), Hosea, Asa, and Jerry (Jeremiah) Holcomb. All of John's immediate family is now of record in Kentucky with the exception of Henry. The date of his brothers coming to the state cannot be established. It seems plausible that Henry remained in South Carolina a few years later than the rest. He married a daughter of a Strickland family and they had a son, Henry II, in 1805 or 1806. He remained close to the Stricklands as they migrated to Kentucky. The Strickland clan belongs in the community of families historically. Hosea, now twenty-eight years old, gives leadership to the sons of Jeremiah and Mary (Mercer) Holcomb. Hosea marries Mary (aka Polly) (Lee) Cook, widow of Dr. John Cook at Russellville, Logan County, Kentucky on August 12, 1811. Polly had a daughter, Eliza Cook, who was later to marry Elihu, Hosea's youngest brother. John, now 13, and Elihu approaching 11 years of age leave Caleb's and Patsy's home to join their older brothers in Logan County. This was just prior to their moving to Knox County of Indiana Territory with a large group of South Carolinians.

Leaving Friends

Caleb Holcomb is listed on the tax rolls of Caldwell County for the year 1811. This same year he was a bondsman for Daniel Holcomb's marriage to Malinda McKinney July 10, 1811. Thomas is also on the tax rolls of Caldwell County. However, Thomas does not have any land in 1811 but has acquired five horses. This is the last year of these three Holcombs to appear on public records in Kentucky as they migrate to Arkansas. Daniel Holcomb has a tax record in Lawrence County, Arkansas, in 1820 and afterwards. Thomas soon seems to have joined his father, Harmon Holcomb, in St. Clair, Illinois. John's elder cousin, John Holcomb, remains in Logan County, Kentucky, and probably migrated with the group going to Indiana.

Caleb and Patsy Holcomb move to Lawrence County, Arkansas, with their son Dempsey. Patsy must have taken her ten year old sister Catherine with her as it will be many years before she can be located. Caleb's name is on the tax list of Lawrence County in 1816. His name is

on the reconstructed census of Lawrence County of 1819, 1820, and 1821. He remains quite active in local affairs and is last recorded as an Independence County, Arkansas, Magistrate, October 17, 1835. Patsy is enrolled in the 1850 U. S. Census in the household of William R. Holcomb, a 25 year old with wife and children. John's nephew, Dempsey Holcomb, is in Izard County in the 1840 and Lawrence County in the 1850 U. S. Census records. Patsy and Dempsey are reported moving to Texas afterwards.

Daniel Putman was hearing of new opportunities in the Western Territories of Indiana in 1810. He appears to be the leader in encouraging a large group of the South Carolinian families to move together to this area the latter part of 1811. He is known still to be in Warren County as late as June 6.

John Holcomb has now taken his place among his older brothers in Logan County as they prepare also to move to Indiana. For the next few years, he will be associated closely with Hosea, as will Elihu. After Hosea's marriage to Polly, the Holcomb brothers join a caravan with the South Carolinians in their trek to Indiana.

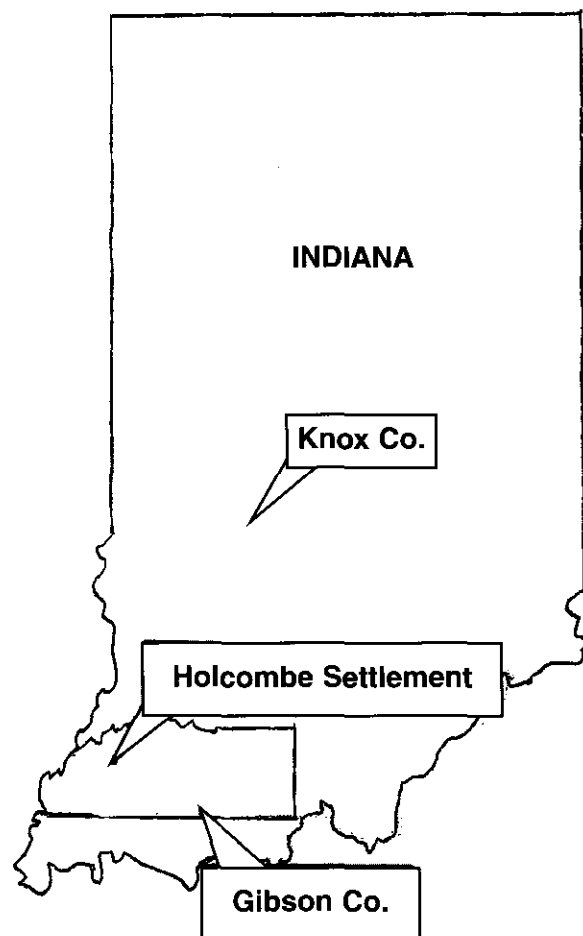
New Introductions to His Life

John, leaving South Carolina at three years of age, would only remember names of families that he had been told about in Patsy's home. Having spent his younger boyhood days in Livingston-Caldwell County, there would be opportunity for actual acquaintance with only a very few. The different counties were separated some distance apart, except Logan was contiguous to Warren County. However, as the group of families made plans and may have gathered together in preparation to travel, his community of friends expanded rapidly. He, and Elihu were experiencing much excitement in relating to their older brothers.

CHAPTER III

Pathway to Indiana

1811-1824



Gibson County, Indiana, founded in 1813 from Knox County

New Lands

The move to Indiana began in the latter half of August 1811. A study of the geology shows that those coming from Warren County could move west to join the Logan County companions along the Mud River that flows north from Russellville to the southern Butler County line. Any of the families from Butler County could also meet at the River which is the western boundary of the county. The Mud River continues all the way to Rochester where it flows into the Green River. The Green flows northwesterly all the way to the Ohio River. The route would give the caravan a winding, level trail along the rivers through the hills all the way to the border of Indiana. "As the crow flies," the distance from Russellville to the border is approximately 85 miles. The Pigeon River of Indiana flows into the Ohio River almost directly across from the mouth of the Green. The nearly level terrain along the banks of the Pigeon River made fairly easy traveling for the remainder of the trip to where they were to settle. This is a straight line distance in Indiana of approximately 25 miles. The winding river trail would make the total trip at least 150 miles. The caravan reached its stopping point in very early September.

The great Northwestern Territory had a large enough population by 1798 to be organized with a self-governing body. A legislature was elected and it chose a young military leader of the Indian Wars, William Henry Harrison, as Congressman from the area. His election and leadership led to the Liberal Land Act of 1800 whereby settlers would be able to obtain ownership of land from the Federal Government. This Act included a plan for eventually dividing the Territory into separate states. By 1801 the Ohio area had been separated from the Northwestern Territory into a separate jurisdiction. The remainder was recognized as the Indiana Territory. The influx of settlers into the Ohio Territory became so great that in 1812 it was made a State.

In 1801 the Indiana Territory had been divided into four main counties, Clark and Knox in the eastern area, and Randolph and St. Clair to the west. Originally Knox County extended southwesterly to the west of the big bend of the Ohio River bordering Kentucky, which would include some of the present State of Illinois. It was in this area that the overland trail from Lexington, Kentucky, crossed the Ohio River to the west. The trail would skirt to the south of the Green River for the Ohio River crossing. A settlement known as Old Shawnee Town became established west of the Ohio and south of the mouth of the Wabash. In 1809 the Illinois

Territory was formed from the Indiana Territory with the Wabash River becoming the territorial border between them. The caravan probably chose to cross the Ohio River at the mouth of the Green River.

William Henry Harrison had been rewarded for his early efforts as a Congressman by being made Governor of the Indiana Territories in 1800. He retained his Governorship of Indiana in the division of Illinois from the larger territory in 1809 and was continuing in office when the South Carolinians arrived in Knox County.

John's Heritage

By joining in the daily life of his older brothers and making the subsequent trip to Indiana, John Holcombe is again surrounded by his great heritage. Members of family clans that had traveled together for almost a century were again united in the nation's expansion. Although their motives were basically for livelihood for large family support, nevertheless their way of life contributed greatly to our present history. Their self-government, social order, and deportment was in great part influenced by their church and religious practices.

The settlers of northern North Carolina had left the repression of the established Anglican-State Church of Virginia. John's grandfather, John Holcombe, along with three of his brothers, Richard III, Benjamin, Joseph, and a first cousin, Grimes Holcomb, were enrolled in Colonel Eaton's Regiment of Granville, County, North Carolina, October 8, 1754. Thomas Putman and James Barnet are also on this muster roll. Land transactions in 1755 reveal Grandfather John being on a 480 acre tract on the north side of Sandy Creek. James Barnet, John Putman, and Thomas Putman each own land described in the same location. Other settlers' names include Wilbanks and Mercers. At the same time period a Shubal Sterns came to the area and began spreading the Baptist doctrine.

One of the earliest churches established in the area was Sandy Creek Church which sent out so many missionaries that it became known as "the mother of Southern Baptist churches." On April 25, 1761, Thomas Putman deeds "two acres of land to Male members of Baptist Church where meeting house now stands, with Rev. Wm. Walker as minister, part of land where Putman lives." This church could well have been the Shilo Baptist Church located close to the headwaters of Sandy Creek.

As the families began to migrate southward to South Carolina, they carried their Baptist beliefs with them. Benjamin Holcomb, John's great-

uncle, donated two acres bordering Sugar Creek in Union District, South Carolina, where Fairforest Baptist Church was built in 1772. The constitution of the Padgett's Creek Baptist Church in 1784 after the Revolutionary War gave impetus to the Baptist movement as many members migrated to Kentucky. These Carolinians continued to "community together" under the leadership of Elder Alexander Devin and John Hightower. After the groups migration into Kentucky these men "helped raise up most of the churches in the Warren-Allen County region." In light of the legacy of his surroundings, John Holcombe matured from his boyhood days to a young man.

Journey to Indiana

The journey to Indiana was no doubt very arduous for the large caravan. However, being able to follow a river through the hilly area, made it "down hill" all the way to the Ohio River. As it was in the latter part of summer, the weather would be kind to them. It would have been possible to use some water transportation.

John Holcombe was experiencing the trip with a major part of his family where he could contribute to the labors of the journey. The Holcombs traveling together were: Benjamin; Hosea, his wife Mary (aka Polly) (Cook), and her daughter Eliza Cook; John; and Elihu. Tax records show that John's other three older brothers, Asa, Enos, and Jeremiah remained on the rolls in Logan County until the summer of 1813. They probably migrated to Indiana in late summer since Asa was married that fall in Gibson County. The elder first cousin, John Holcomb, also has poll taxes for 1812 and 1813, but is accessed only for land in 1814 with others paying the taxes.

Daniel Putman is accompanied by his wife Prudence (Skelton) and their family, Lavina, Reding, Elijah, William, and Thomas; Hazeal and wife Isabelle (Combs) and their children. Hazeal had married Isabelle, the daughter of Dolly Combs, in 1806 in Warren County, Kentucky. Traveling with them was Stacy Combs, Isabelle's sister, who was seventeen years old.

Abraham Duff and his wife Verlinda (Combs) and their children accompanied the group. Verlinda was an older sister of Isabelle and Stacy. There may have been several other members of the Combs family with the group.

Among the families leaving Kentucky for Indiana was William Sherry

and his wife Esther (Holcomb) Sherry. Esther was a daughter of Jonathan Holcomb who was an original settler of Warren County. Other prominent families within the group were the Skeltons. The Pierson family was to follow if it did not make the trip at this time.

The Reverend Alexander Devin and the Stephen Strickland families removed to Indiana in 1808, locating near what is now Princeton in Gibson County. Stephen Strickland's wife was Elizabeth (Skelton) Strickland.

Doubtless on the trip, even the younger members had chores to do. In the approximate two weeks of travel, they would have ample time to become closely acquainted. Although Reding Putman was five years older than John, a close bond between the two young men would develop. Reding had had a good deal of formal schooling from his father and other teachers, and it was natural for John to be interested in him. Also, after being united with their older brothers, John and Elihu closely followed the leadership of Hosea.

Although the trip would have many hazards and dangers, it was accomplished safely for everyone. After crossing the Ohio River, the Indiana terrain was only slightly rolling and travel would become easier as they progressed up the banks of the Pigeon River to their destination.

Arrival in Indiana

The travelers continued up the Pigeon River of the then Knox County of Indiana towards its headwaters. The terrain they encountered was groups of rolling hills with wide, shallow valleys between the clusters of hills. Early geographical descriptions of this area portray it as being well forested with hardwood trees. As Pigeon Creek turned into a wide swampy area, the travelers appeared to have turned westward for the more appealing environment of the rolling hills along the banks of Hurricane Creek. The elevations ranged from a minimum of 350 feet to a maximum of 500-550 feet and was more appealing than the steep ridges of Kentucky. The land was easily purchasable and was very sparsely populated at that time. It is not known if a pre-arranged destination was determined by Daniel Putman or others. The later location of the clusters of Holcomb families describes where they ended their travels. It is very probable that their location was determined by the location of the other Carolinians in the area.

However, upon their arrival they discovered that the area was in tur-

moil by being harassed by hostile Indians. Great Britain was attempting to limit the development and expansion of the newly formed United States by gaining control of the Great Lakes and the Northwest Territory. They were using and arming the American Indian nations for this reason. This action was the beginning of the War of 1812.

William Henry Harrison had been a very active and successful negotiator of treaties with the various Indian groups. He had maintained their peaceful allegiance to the United States to a great degree in the area. Two great Indian Warriors who were brothers, Tecumseh and The Prophet, had ambitious designs of uniting the tribes into one big nation. They were willing to use the French, British, or Americans against each other to limit the encroachment of any white settlers. Their experience in the so-called French and Indian Wars had embittered them so, they were willing to ignore all the treaties as worthless paper. The Fort of Vincennes had been built on the Wabash River for an outpost for areas that had previously been purchased by the Treaty of Ft. Wayne.

Governor Harrison proposed to make a show of force to enforce the treaty. By marching a small army of 1,000 men to the northern border of the treaty area, he hoped to gain the end of hostilities in southern Indiana, and also blunt the British designs. The Fourth Regiment was sent from Kentucky where it was mobilized for the expedition. Harrison was also advised to use local militia. The planned march was set for September 19th, but for tactical reasons was postponed until the 26th. The Carolinians arrived in Knox County in the area of danger in time to join the local militia for a three month's tour of duty.

John Holcombe's experience with native American Indians had been a peaceful one in Livingston County, Kentucky. The Indian Nation of Western Kentucky was further advanced in agricultural pursuits and supported its members west of the Tennessee River. Now he was experiencing friends being enlisted to maintain security of life for the travelers.

The new arrivals that enlisted for duty were Labon Putman, Hazeal Putman, Reding Putman, and Hosea Holcomb. Hosea's record cannot be found, but other historians include him. John's friend Reding is said to join "to prove his manhood" at 19 years of age.

The Campaign

The troops moved up the Wabash River to Ft. Vincennes. They departed the Fort on September 26 and halted their march 65 miles north of

Vincennes. Here they constructed a blockhouse for protection of supplies on the banks of the Wabash. They then crossed the Wabash and continued their march on October 26 towards Prophet Town. It was hoped that hostilities could be avoided as they approached the Indian encampment on November 6th. A delegation entered Prophet Town under a flag of truce to arrange for a pow-wow the next day. The Prophet agreed to such a meeting and allowed Harrison to move to an encampment of his choice nearby for the pow-wow the next day. Harrison, fearing an ambush, stationed the troops in a protective position with scouts in place for just such an eventuality. At 4:30 the next morning, The Prophet and all his warriors descended on the encampment. Army scouts fired warning shots in time to alert the camp. The ensuing battle, called the Battle of Tippecanoe, was fierce with heavy losses on both sides. At daylight the Indians withdrew in confusion. Harrison, expecting another attack, arrayed against Prophet Town only to find the area deserted and the enemy hastening to cross over the Mississippi River. The immediate mission was accomplished to allow the troops to return to Vincennes by November 18. The militia was released from duty by early December. The result of the engagement thwarted British plans to the extent, that although there were other engagements later to the north, southern Indiana was to remain relatively quiet for the duration of the War.

Home in Indiana

The families with all their men safely returned, began to exploit the benefits of their excursion. As the area was relatively open from development, there was ample opportunity for them to begin to establish desirable property rights for a home. Daniel Putman had considerable training in the study of law and proves to help develop local government of their area. Through his leadership, Gibson and Warrick Counties were formed out of the southern area of Knox County in 1813. The legal base had already been established in 1789 by the Federal Government for the surveying of all new government lands. Thus secure titles could be patented and recorded by the rectangular system. Although home sites were decided upon, surveyed, and houses built long before 1813, Daniel and Hazeal Putman have the first deeds recorded in Gibson County. Daniel's deed is number one.

Hosea is going to furnish John a home for at least a few years and is to have a great influence in his development. John is turning fourteen years old when Hosea returns from his duty tour in the militia. The first prop-

erty of record that belongs to Hosea is a patent signed by President John Quincy Adams. It is an eighty acre tract described as "the West Half of the Southeast Quarter, Section Thirty-four, Township Three South, Range Ten West." (Northwest Territories). Signed by the President "in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred twenty-five and of the independence of the United States of America the fiftieth." This is the original and only homesite for Hosea in Indiana. He is known to have purchased parallel adjacent 80 acre tracts, one on either side of the original, very soon afterwards. (This is not meant to construe that this was the extent of his farming enterprises but just to locate his life's close environment.) John was available to assist in the construction of a home for them to live in along with other unmarried brothers.

John's friend, Reding Putman, returned home from his war service, a man of almost twenty. He resumed the tasks of building a new home for the family. It is said of him, "he had spare time in the spring of 1812 and courted Stacy, the daughter of Dolly Combs." Stacy was living with her sister, Isabelle Putman. On June 7, 1812, Reding and Stacy were married in Princeton, Indiana.

For the next few years all the families devoted themselves to establishing homesites. The area under development was roughly Townships 2, 3, 4, and 5 South between Ranges 9, 10, and 11 West which comprised the countryside around and south of Princeton to Fort Branch, and Habstadt to Francisco, and further south.

Beginning of Homelife

Hosea's home in Gibson County, Indiana, was built on the south side of a road that divides his original eighty acre tract of land that was patented to him. The homesite is still well developed but all the buildings have been replaced. Hosea and Mary (aka Polly) have a daughter, Elizabeth, born soon after their arrival in Indiana. Polly's daughter, Eliza (aka Nancy) Cook, Elihu, and John are in Hosea's household. It is unknown where Benjamin would be living since he is approximately thirty-two years old in 1812. Henry's family is associated with the Stephen Strickland family.

John's three other brothers, Asa, Enos, and Jeremiah are in Gibson County early in 1813. Asa (aka Ace) is again in close proximity of a former acquaintance, Lucy Devin, the daughter of Elder Alexander Devin. Ace and Lucy marry October 12, 1813, with Hazeal Putman conducting

the ceremony. Hazeal had been previously licensed by the Old Regular Baptist Church in Kentucky. Ace and Lucy have a son in July 1814, who is named Alexander after his grandfather. Ace settled on a large tract of land five and one-half miles from the present Ft. Branch, Indiana, and four miles from the main Holcomb settlement. Ace was stricken and dies before March 1, 1815.

Hazeal Putman, Daniel Putman, and Stephen Strickland were appraisers of Ace Holcomb's estate of personal property on March 1, 1815. An auction sale was held on April 17 to liquidate the property. Lucy Holcomb was forced to bid on items that she wished to keep possession of. The list of the items that were sold to her as described in the appraisal were: "Bead (bed), furniture and bead cord; one cotton wheel; one pair cotton cards; two chairs; one piggin; one water pail; one sifter; one testament; one pair sissors; one pair nitten needles; one oven lid and hooks; one set of knives and forks; all the shelf ware; one yearling calf; one sow and two pigs; one bridle and saddle; and one hoe." It is ironic that Lucy had to bid 1.25 1/2 for a tool with which to garden, that had been appraised at 1.50. Some other items: "one deer skin, one axe, three chair frames" were purchased by others. Lucy's father, Alexander Devin, was to retain one certain cow and some corn to be his property as administrator for the deceased.

Ace is the first of John's brothers and sisters to die. It would be natural for John to witness the sale.

Lucy Holcomb gave birth to her daughter, Katherine, shortly after Ace's death. By July 1815, Lucy was to marry John Flenner. Katherine eventually started a home in Hot Springs, Arkansas, after marrying (unknown) Fairbanks.

Alexander inherited the grant of land received by his father. Lucy's brother, James Devin, was appointed Alexander's guardian in 1830 until he became of age. After marrying in 1836, he established his own home and remained in Gibson County. Alexander was so much older than his nephews and nieces that they referred to him as "uncle."

Benjamin Holcomb is to marry Margaret Downey February 6, 1815, in Gibson County, Indiana. Margaret's birthplace is recorded as Tennessee. The family appears to have set up its household in Posey County. The names of children, if any, are unknown. Vandenburg County is constituted from Posey County in 1818 which includes Benjamin's property. Margaret is deceased by 1821, and Benjamin marries a second wife, Lydia Patten, October 19, 1821, and they have a number of children. The family

remains in Vandenburg County.

Brother Henry had been established in Gibson County earlier with the Stricklands. His son encumbers some property in 1836 with a mortgage to his Uncle Hosea described as the Southwest quarter of the Southwest quarter of Section Twenty-eight, Township Three South, Range Ten West, in Gibson County.

John's brother, Enos, was physically handicapped to the extent that he was unable to do many kinds of work. He, however, was "a companion to his nephews in their boyhood sports, hunting and fishing, training them by his gifts as a naturalist in forestry, flora, and fauna of the region, and in marksmanship, in which he excelled." He alternated living with his brothers, becoming very close to Elihu.

Jeremiah Holcomb was forty-three years old when he married. His spouse was Elizabeth (Unknown) who was said to be born in Tennessee. He established his home in Gibson County where all his children were born and raised. He was always affectionately known as "Jerry."

John and Elihu continued to live in Hosea's household as they approached their manhood.

Other Events

Esther (Holcomb) and William Sherry had two young boys, John and Green William, when she died before 1815. Her husband, William, then married Martha (Reaves) Goodwin, who was the widow of John Goodwin, on March 28, 1815. William adopted Martha's twelve year old daughter, Malinda. William and Martha were to have three daughters by 1821 before William was deceased. Special guardians were then appointed until Martha died before February 23, 1824. On this date a Special Court of Probate appointed Hosea Holcomb to be the guardian of John, Green William, and Malinda Sherry. A Daniel Reaves, probably the father of Martha (Reaves) (Goodwin) Sherry was appointed guardian of the three young girls.

A bad flu epidemic struck the people in the Gibson County area in the early summer of 1816. Daniel Putman was to succumb to the disease July 19, 1816. A few days later, Thomas Putman was to die also. After the estate was settled, Daniel's wife Prudence moved in with her son William.

Prior to leaving Warren County, Kentucky, Daniel had sold several pieces of property on a contract. Upon his death the purchaser had to file suit in 1817 to clear the title. In Daniel's will of July 14, 1814, he had

named Hazeal and Reding co-executors of his estate. Also Daniel had not finally settled the estate of his father, Barnet Putman, in Warren County. It became necessary for Hazeal and Reding to return to Kentucky to settle the affairs.

In 1817, the Putman brothers and their families made the long trip back to Bowling Green, Kentucky, where they had resided six years before. While there, Hazeal planned to sell the land given to him by his father. Upon completing the business affairs, they returned to Indiana. Hazeal built a home in the newly formed Vandenburg County that included part of Gibson County where his farm was that he had left.

Reding and Stacy were to stay back in Gibson County, Indiana, for a short time in 1818. Upon returning, Reding sold the home that he and Stacy had built right after they were married. They then traveled to Butler County, Kentucky, and remained there until late 1821. Apparently Reding had returned only to obtain bounty lands in Fulton County, Illinois, that was awarded for service in the War of 1812. He was to secure bounty property for Hazeal also. Reding and Stacy were then to make the short trip back to Gibson County.

Shifting Communities

Dolly Combs had remained back in Warren County near Bowling Green, Kentucky, with her daughter, Rachel, when the others migrated to Indiana in 1811. Abraham Duff, Dolly's son-in-law, signed the marriage bond for Rachel's marriage to Abraham Dilbach in Kentucky in 1817. It is not known why Duff was available at this time. Hazeal and Reding were to be close to Dolly on their business trip the same year.

Jane (Combs) Woolbanks appears to be deceased by 1817, as Rueben Woolbanks marries Nancy Barnett in Tennessee that year. The Combs, Woolbanks, Putman, Barnett relationship is so close that the assumption has to be made that the children of Jane (Combs) Woolbanks are now residing in the home of Dolly Combs.

When Reding and Stacy Putman return to Butler County, Kentucky, for the period of 1818 to 1821, it appears that Dolly moves her household to be with them.

It is pure speculation if Reding takes the role of match-maker between John Holcombe and Dorothea Woolbanks, who is approaching 14 years of age, by mail. But it is known that John had a notice in 1822 that he had a letter in the dead-letter file in Russellville, Logan County, Kentucky.

Reding and Stacy take Dolly Combs back to Gibson County, Indiana, with a brief stay, before going on to Illinois. Dolly remains behind to live in Gibson County until 1829. She is to sign a deposition in Gibson County, Indiana, that year for Reding in a court case. The deposition contained the statement: "she had lived in Gibson County for several years, but that she was going to Illinois and did not plan to return."

The children of Jane (Combs) Woolbanks appear to have traveled to Gibson County in 1821 with Reding, Stacy, and Dolly on their return trip from Butler County, Kentucky. Unless John Holcombe had traveled to Butler County himself previously, he was to meet his bride-to-be for the first time.

New Frontier

A new community for the future for John Holcombe was to be in Fulton County, Illinois. Elijah Putman, soon after marrying Elizabeth Duff in Gibson County, Indiana, on April 17, 1817, moved to Springfield, Illinois. It was then in Madison County which comprised most of the state north of St. Clair County. Elizabeth's parents, Abraham and Verlinda (Combs) Duff, and the rest of their children at home moved with them. Elijah, who was born in 1794 in Anderson County, South Carolina, and Elizabeth were young people John Holcombe met and traveled with on the trip from Kentucky to Indiana.

In late 1822, Reding and Hazeal, Elijah's older brothers, moved to their War of 1812 land grants in Fulton County. Elijah and his family soon move to join his brothers there. Reding is the first land owner in the area and Putman Township of the County is named in his honor. Thus a new community was being formed further west that many other families would join.

Providence Church, Gibson County, Indiana

The community of Carolinian friends and neighbors in Gibson County got together to form a new church, March 24, 1822, which they named Providence Regular Baptist Church. The names of the persons constituting the church were:

Stephen Strickland, Sr.
Elizabeth Strickland
James Shelton
Joseph Manning
William Putman

Dycea Strickland
Mary Holcomb
Patsy Peerson
Abigail Birchfield
Leah Manning

Edy Shelton

Tabitha Reaves

Elisha Strickland, Jr.

John Miller

As the custom of Old Regular Baptist churches was to have monthly meetings, the new church received additional members April 26, 1822. Those listed were: Elisha Strickland and Mary Strickland by letter; Elijah Strickland, Hosea Holcomb, and Elihu Holcomb by experience; and Tabitha Holcomb by recommendation and experience.

The following month, May 25, 1822, meeting, John Holcombe and Stephen Strickland Jr. were received by experience.

The Church chose Hosea Holcomb and Elisha Strickland, Jr. deacons on Friday, June 21, 1822, and agreed to ordain them the next evening.

John Holcombe, now 24 years old, had shown leadership in the community and gained the respect of his peers. The minutes of Saturday, July 27, 1822, includes his name along with James Cockram, Sr. Joseph Manning, Hosea Holcomb, John Miller, and William Putman as a committee to choose out the ground where the new meeting house shall be put. They were charged to make their report the next church meeting and agreed for that report to be final. These minutes are signed by David Banta, Moderator, and William Putman, Church Clerk.

The committee reported Saturday, July 27, 1822, that they had agreed: "The Church will be put on a handsome mound lying on the northwest corner of Bro. John Miller's land on the road leading from Booneville to Providence, described as 16 rods south, 20 rods east, 16 rods north and on to the beginning west." The tract chosen would face on an east-west road, with a road to the north intersecting the frontage road at the northwest corner of the tract. The report was signed by all the members of the committee. As the second item of business, the Church, "agreed the building shall be built 25 feet by 30 feet." William Putman attests to the business meeting as Clerk.

The legal description of the chosen property is: Beginning at the Northwest corner of the Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section Eight, Township Three South, Range Nine West; running thence south, east, north, and west as presented by the committee. The flat hill-top was at an elevation of 560 feet with the frontage road sloping westward to a minimum of 450 feet in a mile to the west, and downward to the east about 30 feet in 3/8ths of a mile to a small stream. As you approached the Church house from the north, the rise would be about 50 feet in three-fourths of a mile. (1997: A new building stands at this same location and

a congregation continues to remain active.)

The following regular business meeting, August 24, received James Combs by experience. (This James Combs could be the 9-10 year old male in Ruebin Woolbanks household in 1810.)

Sunday, April 27, 1823, Item One: The Church took under consideration the gift of Brother Elihu Holcomb. The Church liberated said brother to exercise his gift not only in the bounds of this church, but in the bounds of our sister churches around us, in a way that God in his wisdom may direct.

Signed: Stephen Strickland, Moderator

William Putman, Clerk

Young Social Group

Dorothea Woolbanks was just past fourteen years old in the spring of 1822. Reding and Stacy Putman were to stay in Gibson County a very short time after returning from Butler County, Kentucky, before moving on to Illinois. Reding would assuredly have introduced Dorothea to John Holcombe and the other young people in the community.

William Putman, Reding's younger brother, had married Ellen (aka Allie) Bridges on August 8, 1817, in Gibson County and they had established a home there. They were a part of the younger married families in the area. William, who was only three years older than John, had made the trek to Indiana from Kentucky. It is possible that Dolly Combs who remained in Gibson County after Reding left, could have lived in William's household. The Woolbanks children probably continued making their abode with Dolly.

As the local Carolinian community of Gibson County became more settled, it found an increasing number of occasions to celebrate. These frontiersmen were noted for their friendliness and sociability, especially their generosity and hospitality toward one another. They enjoyed their festival seasons and other special occasions. It is said that they worked hard and played hard. The men were highly competitive with one another, yet respectful to each other, and gentlemanly and courteous to their women-folk. House parties and gatherings were common occasions and the young people had opportunity to socialize and get acquainted. The more stricter Baptist religious groups did frown on dancing, but would indulge in other parlor and singing games that somewhat resembled dancing.

Weddings were always a joyous time of coming together. The Holcomb younger set at this time includes John, Elihu, their nephew Henry II who is 16 years old, and Hosea's step-daughter, Eliza Cook who is now approximately 16 years of age. Other young people approaching marriageable age in John's community that were socializing together were:

James Combs	Elizabeth Strickland
Stephen Strickland, Jr.	Edy Grimes
Abraham Duff	Catherine Burchfield
Elisha Strickland, Jr.	Patsy Sherry

There were other Sherrys, Skeltons, Stricklands, and Woolbanks (Wilbanks) as well as members of other families that would attend social gatherings.

A writer about the history of Indiana during pioneer days states: "Customs relating to courtship and marriage were definitely conditioned by distance and poor transportation facilities. Courtship was a serious business for the reason everybody knew when a young couple began to 'set up' with each other. They could tell by the sparks flying from the chimney late at night."

Wedding Bells

Two marriages are very prominent events for the year 1822 for the young social group.

Stephen Strickland, Jr., son of Stephen Strickland, Sr., is united in marriage to Edy Grimes, November 28, 1822. The ceremony is performed by the father of the groom who is a licensed minister of the Old Regular Baptist faith. Rev. Stephen Strickland, Sr. had been active in the ministry in Kentucky before moving to the Princeton area in 1808 with Rev. Alexander Devin. As already noted, Stephen, Sr., was a founding member of the Providence Church on March 24 of this year. Stephen, Jr., and John Holcombe were both received into the new church by experience May 25.

James Combs is united in marriage to Elizabeth Strickland, December 29, 1822. This ceremony is preformed by Rev. Alexander Devin who was then the pastor of the Providence Baptist Church. Elizabeth Strickland is a daughter of Stephen Strickland, Sr. and a sister to Stephen, Jr.

The custom of the day was to hold the wedding ceremony in the home of the bride if the parents were living. Old Regular Baptist Church buildings were not utilized for these occasions. The groom would arrive at the bride's house at 11:30 a.m. sharp to take his vows. Family and invited

guests would witness the ceremony and then would join in the wedding feast. An enormous banquet would be furnished by all individuals that partook of the occasion. Enough food would be furnished to last way into the night and the next day. The food would give way to merry making, dancing, jests, pranks, and a chirivari at the expense of the married pair. The next day the whole company would repair to the home of the groom's father for another "infare" dinner. In the afternoon the married couple were escorted to their new home if one was ready. If the couple lived with the old folks until a house was built, the young people gathered together for a last ceremony of the wedding, that of inducting the couple into their new home. This was called a house warming.

It is not known to the extent these traditions were carried out in the two weddings just described but they were very important affairs. The events of the summer of 1823 were to include three more marriages within the ranks of the young people.

John is giving his attention to Dorothea. They make their plans to be married on July 24th of that year. Elihu has also reached his maturity and as he begins to develop his gift in the ministry, he sets a marriage date with his step-niece, Nancy Cook.

John and Elihu have continued to live close to their older brother Hosea. But as Hosea's family has grown to five young daughters and one son besides his step-daughter, it is highly probable that both young men have helped erect auxiliary living quarters on Hosea's land before they purchased land for themselves.

John appears to have made careful plans for his wedding. When parents were not available for a wedding in the home, it was proper for the ceremony to be conducted at the home of a Justice of the Peace with the banquet and festivities to take place with a close relative. As the date approached, John obtained his marriage license on Tuesday, July 22, 1823. He arranged for Alex Johnson, Esquire, to perform the ceremony on Thursday, July 24. It is expected that Hosea and Polly Holcomb furnished the home for the merry-making. John would have prepared a cabin for him and his bride to retire to.

Nancy Cook has her own mother, Polly Holcomb, to help her with her wedding. Elihu obtains Rev. Larkin Burchfield to conduct the ceremony, as he has been licensed by the Providence Church on January 25 of this year. The couple are married on September 11, 1823.

A description of wedding presents of the time were utilitarian articles such as homemade blankets and other forms of bedding, toweling, a bucket of sorghum, a bucket of dried apples, a supply of candles, or a rag carpet. The bride's mother usually presented a feather bed and a pair of pillows; the father a heifer and a start of chickens or a sow. After the wedding all the finery was wrapped in linen sheets and carefully put away in a chest of drawers or a trunk.

In between the weddings of the two Holcomb brothers, Rev. Stephen Strickland, Sr. has the pleasure of conducting the ceremony for Elisha Strickland, Jr. and Patsy Sherry. The wedding took place on Saturday, August 8, 1823. This was a very important event in the community as Elisha, Sr. and Dycea Strickland, Elisha, Jr.'s parents, were also members of the Providence Baptist Church.

Church Politics

The beginning of the 1823 church year ushered in some unrest in the Providence Church. Some charges of unorthodoxy were made against David Banta by a sister church of Kentucky. David Banta had labored with Stephen Strickland in Kentucky churches before they had removed to Gibson County, Indiana. Providence Church appointed a committee of two to travel to Kentucky to investigate the charges. The committee reported at the regular January 25, 1823, Providence Church meeting that Banta had violated a previous covenant and had been excluded from the Kentucky sister church. This led to the Providence Church withdrawing the pastorship and fellowship from David Banta.

The following meeting on February 22, 1823, the Providence Church chose Rev. Alexander Devin as their regular Pastor. Elihu Holcomb's gifts were recognized at the following April meeting. It is noteworthy that Stephen Strickland, Sr. acted as Moderator for the April meeting with William Putman, Clerk.

In June, the Church accepted Polly (Dolly) Combs into membership. The minutes also reflect that the Church met in their new meeting house August 22, 1823.

However, in the December 27, 1823, meeting, Brother John Miller introduced a charge against Elisha Strickland, Jr. and William Taylor for giving an unfaithful testimony against Isaac Strickland before Brother DePriest, Esquire. (According to Brother Miller's belief.) This led Stephen Strickland, Sr. to resign his moderatorship at present. The Church then

appointed Stephen Strickland, Jr. Moderator at present. The case of Elisha Strickland and William Taylor was then laid over until the next meeting. However, Stephen Strickland, Sr. endeavored to lay in a charge against John Miller for casting reflections on the principals of the Church in charging them partiality in the case of Elisha Strickland and William Taylor. Miller in answering to the Church for himself states that he was sorry. He believes he had cast it on the innocent not giving away his belief but that there was some guilt. Stephen Strickland, Sr. then proposed to unfellowship with Brother Miller and all that did fellowship him. After his proposal, Stephen Strickland, Sr. abruptly absented himself from the meeting.

The final item of business of the Church on this date: "All those delinquents among this Church shall be chargeable by this Church, and cited to attend the next meeting for disobeying Church authority. To Wit: Jacob Banta, James Combs, Henry Manning and John Holcombe. These minutes are signed by William Strickland, Jr., Moderator and William Putman, Clerk.

The regular meeting of the Church, January 24, 1824, has Elisha Strickland, Sr. bringing the charge against John Miller as proposed by Stephen Strickland, Sr. at the last meeting. At this time the Church restored Stephen Strickland, Sr. to his former standing.

At a special meeting on Friday, February 24, Elisha Strickland, Jr. applied for a bill of faults after having been excluded from the Church. The Church agreed to furnish the bill as he had requested. Later in the month, at the regular meeting of February 24, Stephen Strickland, Sr. withdraws his pastoral care and Moderator seat of the Church.

The unrest lingers on into the summer of 1824 and is to have far reaching future effects in the community. For some reason, the records show that Stephen, Sr. brings a charge in the Church against Stephen, Jr. in the month of July.

Beginning Family Life

John and Dorothea are busily starting their family life the fall of 1823 and spring of 1824. It appears that they did not attempt to buy any property during this time. The community had become fairly well settled, and the younger generation was preparing to migrate to the new community being established by the Putman brothers in Fulton County, Illinois.

Dorothea is with child, and a daughter Sarah is born April 30, 1824. The family was soon to know heartbreak, as Sarah was to live only until the 3rd of July.

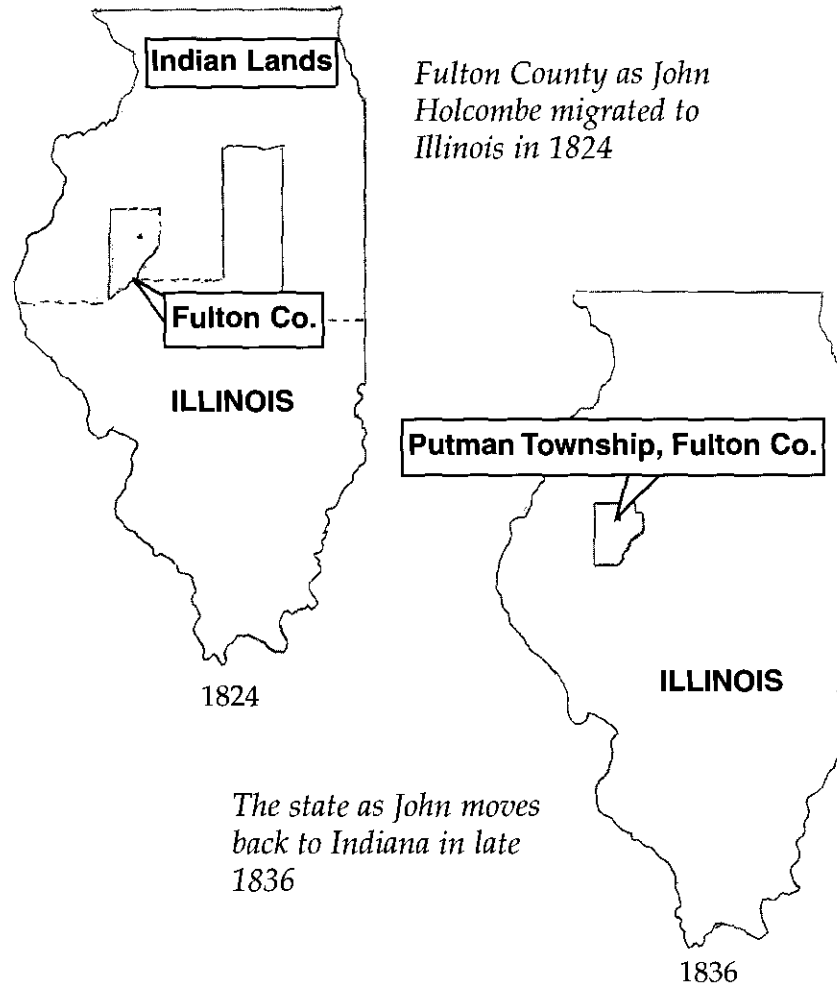
John and Dorothea were now free to travel with the groups planning to go to Illinois. The travelers belonging to the Providence Baptist Church applied for letters of dismissal on August 24, 1824. Most of those of record are of John's generation and included the following: Joseph Combs, William Shaw, Sid Shaw, John Miller, Polly Miller, William Putman, Rebecca Taylor, Ede Strickland, and Stephen Strickland, Jr.

Some spouses of the above list and a few others not on the Church rolls were included in the group. Elisha Strickland, Jr. and Patsy (Sherry) Strickland were part of the travelers who were to leave Gibson County, Indiana, for Fulton County, Illinois, in early September.

CHAPTER IV

The Illinois Frontier

1824-1836



The state as John Moves back to Indiana in late 1836.



*The graveyard established by Redding Putman
in Fulton County, Illinois*



Site of probable church building located in graveyard area

Fresh Frontiers

John and Dorothea Holcombe set out to travel to a new frontier that was just beginning to open up for settlement. Their destination would be Township Six North, Range Three East which was later designated Putman Township. Deeds to land in the area were to have clauses "all of which land is lying and being in the tract appropriated for Military bounties in the territory of Illinois."

Reding and Hazeal Putman had previously received some of the bounty land in 1821, moving to the area by 1822. Putman Township was near the center of Fulton County which was organized in 1823 from the non-county area. The County's permanent boundaries of today were drawn in 1824, reducing the original northern area of Fulton County. This change did not affect Putman Township.

The traveling group was essentially Carolinian friends and relatives of the younger generation of families that had historically migrated together. Their destination was the area to rejoin in community with the Putman families. Their settlement was originally started in the northeast corner of the township, namely Sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, and 12.

John Holcombe did not obtain any bounty lands from war service but purchased land from others. Reding's property is recorded as the Northeast Quarter of Section Two with a part of the East One-half which amounted to fifteen acres out of the Southeast Quarter along a roadway by the Northeast part, also the Northwest Quarter of Section One. The Southwest Quarter and the East One-half of the Southeast Quarter of Section One was also controlled by the Putmans.

John may have built his home first on a very small tract of land in the extreme northwest corner of Section Twelve. He is proven to have had ownership of such a tract commencing at the northwest corner of the section with square dimensions to contain exactly three acres, which he is to sell to Elijah Putman just before leaving Illinois. The traveling group arrives in Fulton County in late summer 1824 but John's first land purchase in the county is not recorded until March 7, 1829.

Little can be said about the activities of the community during the first few years except that of the known rigors of hewing out a home in the wilderness. Many historians commend this particular group of settlers for their industriousness and fortitude in community development. The nature of the livelihood of the settlers was basically agricultural. The clearing and improving of the land and the constructing of houses was

their major basis of wealth. Artisans, tradesmen, and skilled craftsmen developed among them to supply their basic, simple needs. The need to develop as professionals was always present and was sought after.

County Development

The settlers of Fulton County moved in unison for development of that part of the State. Lead ore had been discovered on the upper Mississippi (or Fever River) and mines were being developed. This was furnishing a market for agricultural products, especially beef cattle that would pass through the country. The need for a roadway from Springfield northwesterly became evident very early. A petition was presented to the 1826-27 Term of the Senate and House of Representatives which read:

To the Honorable the Senate & House of Representatives of the State of Illinois in General Assembly Convened

The memorial of the undersigned citizens of Fulton County and its vicinity Respectfully represents. That in our opinion it would greatly promote the interest of the State to have a communication opened between the Lead Mines on the upper Mississippi (or Fever River) and other sections of the State by means of a public road. We would represent to your Honorable body the fact, that for some time past enterprising citizens from different parts of the State have been in the habit of passing through this county with droves of cattle destined for the mines who for the want of some kind of a trace or marks to guide them through the extensive wilderness intervening between the frontier settlements of the county and the mines have experienced great difficulties and inconvenience in getting to their place of destination. Although persons who are best acquainted with the Country all admit that there will be but little difficulty in finding excellent ground on which to locate a road from the Seat of Justice of Fulton County to that place.

Believing as your memorialists do that those mines will be the means of creating the best market for the produce of the western Counties of the State which will be within the reach of the citizens of these counties for some years to come, and that it will greatly promote the general interests of our Country to have the communication with that market made as easy and attended with as little risk, trouble, and inconvenience as possible. We

are induced to request that your Honourable Body will take the subject under consideration and if the measure should be deemed of sufficient importance to justify the expense that Commissioners may be appointed to view, mark and lay out a Public (or State Road) on the nearest and most eligable ground from Springfield to Sangamon Town in Sangamon County and from thence to Lewistown in Fulton County, and from thence on the nearest and best ground to the Lead Mines on Fever River and your memorialists as in duty bound will ever pray—

Among the 110 signatures attached to the petition, there are the names of persons listed below who can be identified as living in the Putman Township area. This is the area described mainly in the first paragraph of the petition. The petition was a giant step forward and progressive move for the betterment of life for these people. The following list has no importance of order; although Reding Putman is one of the very early signers:

Reding Putman	A. T. Ball
Hazeal Putman	Levi Millard
William Putman	Absolom Maxwell
John Holcombe	Seth Hilton
Stephen Strickland	Solomon Sherwood
Levi D. Ellis	

Family Notes

John and Dorothy (the name she is now using on legal documents) are beginning to establish their first real home. A later history concerning the area gives this brief description.

Holcombe's house was the most roomy in the settlement. It was a cabin with two rooms, situated on the prairie. He had no stable, but on the ground, ready for raising, he had the logs for a small log barn.

In September of 1825, they have the pleasure of a visit from Elihu from Gibson County, Indiana. Elihu's trip may have been initiated by the organizing of a local Baptist Church in the Fulton County community. On August 29, 1825, Elihu had told his church, the Providence Baptist Church of Gibson County, "that he was going to travel in the State of Illinois and he desired a letter of recommendation that was granted him." Larkin Burchfield made the same request with Elihu which was also granted. Both men had previously been licensed to preach. Such requests were customary when members were going to be absent for a period from their home church.

Also, John and Dorothy are beginning their family again. Joseph, their first son, was born November 2, 1825. Joseph was followed by a brother, William Henry, October 28, 1827. The two boys were to have a baby sister, Tabitha, born June 27, 1829. Elihu II, a namesake for John's brother, blessed the family on June 10, 1831.

Establishing Life's Vocation

John Holcombe, like all frontiersmen had to be engaged in agricultural pursuits for a living. He apparently possessed some skills in the trades but proves to be an astute businessman. His educational pursuits were limited at best because of environment but he remained persistent in self-improvement. He appears to have strong leadership qualities as histories give him a listing among all the different groups he becomes associated with. His human qualities seem to attract other people towards him.

John's first step in a consuming life vocation was his reception as a member of the Providence Baptist Church of Gibson County, Indiana. His continued interest in the welfare of people and the church obviously led him to be set aside as an Elder in the church among his peers. Later testimony from his fellow travelers gives evidence that he began early in a preaching ministry after arriving in Illinois. It is obvious that he helped establish a local congregation next to his home and began his life's ministry among friends and neighbors.

John had been present when the Providence Church licensed his younger brother Elihu to exercise his gifts of preaching as he felt led. John was to learn later that Elihu was ordained and set apart as an Elder for the full functions of the ministry on Friday, October 26, 1827. Elihu was elected Pastor of Providence where he continued serving until his death in 1858.

Elihu Holcomb was appointed to help a presbytry form a church on the south side of Pigeon Creek which was on land owned by Hosea Holcomb, January 23, 1830. The Providence Church granted authority for the following Holcombs to go to this church to-wit: Sarah, Abner, Catherine (Hosea's daughter), Elizabeth, Mary, Nancy, Icypheny, and Tabitha. Others who were also granted letters were: Reding Taylor, Polly Ann Taylor, Abigail Burchfield, Larkin Burchfield, Mary Burchfield, Malissa Ashley, Nancy Duff, Catherine Duff, William Bass, Martha Bass, Mary Combs, Ralph Skelton, and Mary Skelton. After a review of the members' Articles of Faith and Church Covenant, they were pronounced a Church of Christ

by the presbytern through Moderator Elder Elihu Holcomb.

Hosea Holcomb became the Elder and Pastor of this church which went by the name of New Salem Baptist Church. The Old Regular Baptist Church tradition of the Holcomb forefathers was now being perpetuated by the three brothers, Elihu, Hosea, and John.

Illinois Church Activities

Along the north-south road bordering Section Two in Putman Township, situated in the northern corner of the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter, a five-acre graveyard is established. It was owned originally by Reding Putman and contains many Putman monuments. There is evidence that a church building was located here. I believe that the local community had its own home church here. However there are no records to be found, or a known name for a church. It is suspected that a fire destroyed all of their testimony at an early time. However, details of the activities of Old Regular Baptist Church members, including John Holcombe, abound in other areas nearby.

The first religious organization in Liverpool Township was the Salem Baptist Church. It was constituted the 10th day of August 1830, in the house of Jeremiah Farris on the Northwest Quarter of Section 10. (Liverpool Township would be Township Five North, Range Four East.) This would be approximately ten miles distance from John's and Dorothy's homesite. The homesite as previously described is less than one-fourth mile south on the road by the graveyard and where their home church probably was.

The practice of the Old Regular Baptist congregations was to have a business meeting on one Saturday a month, followed by a full worship service on Sunday. Then leaders in churches would attend sister churches on the other weekends. This would be in the form of officiating at beginning new churches in other areas, or on other special occasions. Some Elders would act as a Pastor of more than one church. These sister churches would group into an association of Like Faith and Order in support of each other.

This is the story of the beginning of the Salem Baptist Church of Illinois. The visiting officials were Elders John Logan and Stephen Strickland, Jr., along with Deacons Landrian Eggers and James McCan. There were ten lay members and their wives in the beginning membership of this congregation, none of whom were a part of the Carolinian travelers. Among

the first Elders of the church were John Goforth, John Muier, John Holcombe, and Squire Wilcoxon. Elder John Holcombe probably acted as visiting Pastor from his home church for a period. Elder Stephen Strickland, Jr., and John would have received ordination from the church they attended regularly.

Elder Stephen Strickland (the Jr. will now be omitted) was very active in Fulton County assisting in the establishment of other churches and leading them in the organization of the Spoon River Valley Association of Baptist Churches.

On June 6, 1830, Elisha Strickland, Jr., and Elijah Strickland both write letters to the Providence Baptist Church back in Gibson County, Indiana, acknowledging their faults, asking for full fellowship, and, if restored, letters of dimission. The two letters were acted upon favorably by the Providence Church on July 24, 1830, bringing the two men back into full fellowship with the Faith and Order. Elisha Strickland remains active in religious groups with his cousin Stephen, along with John Holcombe.

Community Sorrow

Tragedy struck the Reding Putman family December 16, 1827. Stacy, Reding's wife dies, at the age of thirty-three, leaving him with seven young children. The eldest, Delilah, was fourteen at the time of her mother's death.

Reding's mother, Prudence, who at the time is living with William, and his sister, Lavina, move in his home and assist him with his family.

Later, February 21, 1829, Reding marries the widow Phebe (Marsh) Stelle, whose husband, Alexander Stelle, had died in Ohio in 1826. Phebe had six young children of her own, so their household grew to thirteen young children overnight.

First Land Purchase

John and Dorothy made their first recorded Illinois land purchase March 7, 1829. The property was described as two separate tracts although they touched each other, north to south.

The first tract was located in the East one-half of the Southeast Quarter of Section Two, containing sixty-five acres. The remaining part of this eighty acres belonged to Reding Putman. The southern part of this fifteen acres has been previously described as the cemetery and probable location of the community church.

The second tract was the East One-half of the Northeast Quarter of Section Eleven, both being in Township Six North, Range Three East. John's and Dorothy's homesite is speculated to have been gained by squatters rights, or adverse possession. The three acres would be just across the road from the northeast corner of this eighty acres.

Both parcels were purchased from Asiel T. Ball, the deeds being witnessed by Reding Putman and Levi D. Ellis.

Sisters' Reunion

Reding Putman had to return to Gibson County in 1829 to answer a lawsuit filed against him in his sale of his 1818 property in that County. In the court proceedings Dolly Combs, who was still living in the County, was to make an affidavit in Reding's favor, which won the lawsuit for him.

Stacy Woolbanks, Dorothy's younger sister, will be nineteen in 1829 and is near or with her benefactress, Dolly Combs, at the beginning of the year. January 29, 1829, Stacy marries John Sherry, who had been a ward of Hosea Holcomb. The wedding is performed by Elder Elihu Holcomb.

John and Stacy (Woolbanks) Sherry request a letter of dismissal from Providence Church, August 21, 1829. They accompany Reding back to Fulton County, as he returns after his lawsuit. Dolly Combs also travels with them as far as Sangamon County to join her daughter, Verlinda Duff, where she is to spend the rest of her life.

Stacy (Woolbanks) Sherry is now where she can be reunited with her older sister, Dorothy (Woolbanks) Holcombe.

The whereabouts of their brother, William Woolbanks, is not known at this time. He will become a citizen of Washington County, Arkansas, in the 1830's.

Indian Versus Settler

The native American Indian population outnumbered the white settlers at the time Reding Putman took possession of his bounty land. However, within a span of two or three years many settlers took land rights, and the demography changed rapidly. As land development took place, the natives had less reason to pass through the area. A non-antagonistic attitude prevailed in general throughout the Fulton County area.

As early as 1804, General Harrison negotiated a treaty with the Indians whereby they ceded all their claims east of the Mississippi River to the United States, but in this they reserved the right to both reside and hunt

until the land should be actually sold for white settlement. This treaty was again ratified in 1822 in a "full council" held at Fort Armstrong on Rock Island.

About 1828, the country around the mouth of Rock River was surveyed and sold. The next year it was taken possession of by American families. At this time, in accordance with these treaties, the United States gave due notice to the Indians residing there to leave the territory. Keokuk, then chief of the Sacs, at once withdrew across the Mississippi, accompanied by the majority of both allied tribes, the Sacs and the Foxes. Meanwhile, Black Hawk, a man then sixty years of age, and long a pensioner of the British government, becoming dissatisfied, endeavored to rally all the Western Indians into a confederation to resist further encroachments of the whites. He was only partially successful, yet he was able to gather about him most of the young and restless of the two tribes. He exercised a sort of chieftainship over them because of his long leadership in war.

After their winter hunt was over, the Indians collected in a body at their old camp under the guidance of Black Hawk. At this time he had about five-hundred well-trained Indian warriors under his command. His strategy was to injure property but not to kill any whites in an effort to provoke war and to compel the government forces to take the first hostile step. Stories of numerous depredations and midnight raids quickly spread throughout the settlements creating much excitement and alarm. With all reports bearing evidence of their hostile purposes, Governor Reynolds issued a call for volunteers to organize and guard the frontier.

The inability of the Indian and the white settler to exist in the same environment was rooted in the opposing cultural philosophies concerning the ownership of land. Although the different tribes would claim separate territories, the land was held in common, for the benefit of all. The individual settler knew how to prosper only by ownership or control of his separate tract of land. It was inevitable that conflict would develop, as the settlers imposed their culture and way of life over the land by sheer numbers. Mistreatment spawned by greed, or fear of savage atrocities generated most of the animosities among the settlers toward the natives. The frontiersman was seeking the same freedom from oppression, as the native was attempting to preserve for himself.

A Training Day in 1830

The community settlement of northeast Putman Township, along with the other settlements of Fulton County, were developing local militia organizations in 1830. The groups were formed as a means of having a feeling of safety against imagined or real external attack. A young man, eleven years of age named Harrison P. Fellows, Esq., describes a day of training for the local group of which John Holcombe was a member. The recollection is recorded in the book *Canton, It's Pioneers and History* by Alonzo M. Swan, Canton, Fulton County, Illinois, 1871. Excerpts of the tale are related here for a first hand glimpse of John Holcombe's world at that time.

...my father, Hiram Fellows, had rented part of Captain Haacke's house. I soon found out...that Haacke was a captain of a militia company, ...One day I mustered up courage to ask him if I might see them muster some time and received a kind and cordial invitation to accompany him to the next training...I looked forward to the expected day. It came at last and the captain notified me to be ready the same time he was.

On our arrival at Holcombe's, we found the company waiting for the captain. He strode into the house "with all the pomp and circumstance of glorious warfare," and I could see that by his bearing he was making an impression upon his subordinates that must be conducive to good discipline. I ventured to peep into the cabin, to get a glimpse of Captain Haacke's Staff, and noticed that he was the best dressed, and by no means the worst looking, of the party.

The captain now ordered Orderly-Sergeant Seth Hilton to muster the company and call the roll. This order was obeyed with due formality, and so reported, when the captain made his appearance before his men...The captain stood for one moment in front of his company in dignified silence: looking slowly up and down the living line, he raised his voice to a tone of command, and shouted, "Company halt!" This order was obeyed. The next order was given in a lower tone to the Orderly, and was: "Seth, I reckon the boys are a gittin' dry; you come in with me and we'll see what can be done." The captain now disappeared into the house, followed by Hilton. They soon reappeared, Hilton bearing in his hands an old-fashioned wooden-

handled 'piggin,' which held perhaps a gallon and a half of Holcombe's whiskey. Hilton was ordered to commence at the head of the line and pass the 'piggin' which contained, in addition to the fluid courage, three small gourds as drinking-cups. "Officers, don't you drink out of the 'piggin,'" shouted Haacke. "You come this way: I'll 'tend to you." The officers seemed to manifest no disposition toward insubordination, but followed their commander to the rear of a corn-crib, when he proceeded to unbutton his coat and draw, from an inside pocket, a gourd that would hold perhaps a quart, this gourd was bottle-shaped, with the end of the neck cut off smooth, and a corn-cob stopper. "Here, boys, don't you see I've got a little something nice for us officers,—Oh, my stomach!" said the captain, as he handed it around to the evident satisfaction of the heroic band who surrounded him.

After this performance had concluded, the serious work of drill commenced, and I soon saw that Captain Haacke was quite proficient in tactics. At one time during the day, the captain's shoes began to hurt his feet, and he ordered the company to "Hold on, boys, till I get off these c____d shoes."

During the day, Captain Saunders brought his company on the ground from his house, several miles further down the Lewistown road. He said they had run out of whisky at his house, and hearing Holcombe had a barrel, had concluded it would be best "just to march the boys up" you see.

Captain David Haacke was an early settler, homesteading in a part of Section Eleven of Putman Township.

The Black Hawk War

Illinois Governor Reynolds, becoming alarmed at Black Hawk's activities, issued the call for volunteers to guard the frontier on May 27, 1831. He also requested of General Gaines the assistance of regular troops to expel the invaders from the state, an openly avowed enemy of the United States.

The response to the call for volunteers found sixteen hundred men, most of them on horseback in rendezvous at Beardstown by the 22nd of June. Meanwhile, all over the region threatened with trouble, stockade forts were being hastily erected and the scattered inhabitants were form-

ing themselves into garrisons.

Fort Armstrong on Rock Island was being prepared for the headquarters of ten companies of regular troops. General Atkinson, widely and favorably known as "White Beaver," was in command of this post and acted promptly, dispatching stern orders to the invading Sacs and Foxes to withdraw at once from Illinois Territory. Black Hawk, rendered confident by the advice of his prophet, returned defiant answers. Meanwhile he traveled up Rock River, accompanied by his braves, as far as Prophetstown, in what is now Whiteside County. His advance was considered as a challenge.

A second gathering of volunteers at Beardstown was organized into regiments with Brigadier General Samuel Whiteside in overall command. These men were duly mustered in as United States Volunteers.

May 9, 1832, the combined force of regular and volunteers took up Black Hawk's clearly marked trail along the east bank of Rock River. Whiteside, with his mounted frontiersmen, led the way on land with other forces under the command of Atkinson following on boats with supplies and provisions.

When Whiteside reached Prophetstown, he found it completely deserted of Indians. The signs of their departure were fresh and he pushed on as far as Dixons. Here the force was augmented by two battalions under Majors Stillman and Bailey which had been organized in that upper country. They had not yet been regularly sworn into United States service and they demanded to be employed as scouts or on detached service. Whiteside was anxious to use them in any manner possible so on the 13th sent them ahead of the slowly advancing column under Stillman's command.

Meanwhile, Black Hawk had gained little encouragement in council with the assembled Winnebagoes at Prophetstown. He pushed on to the mouth of Sycamore Creek in Ogle County. Here, in council with the Pottawattomies, his schemes of a great Indian alliance were again defeated through the personal influence of Chief Shaubema who remained an avowed friend to the whites. Black Hawk was discouraged and ready to meet any overtures of peace which might have been made by the whites. But at this very moment circumstances suddenly arose that made the continuation of war inevitable.

Major Stillman's force of undisciplined scouts had made unsuspecting

camp in a clump of open timber, surrounded by open prairie, only three miles southwest of where the Indians were still holding council. Black Hawk learned of the presence of the troops about sunset. He had with him at that time only forty or fifty warriors with the remainder of his band, along with the hostile faction of the Pottawattomies encamped on the Kishwanhee, seven miles distant. Supposing the advancing soldiers to be under the command of Atkinson, whom he knew well, he sent forward three of his young men to open parley with them, bearing an offer to meet with "White Beaver" in council.

Stillman's troopers, totally undisciplined, and, as many report, in liquor, were busily making camp, when the three Indian flag-of-truce bearers suddenly appeared on the summit of a little prairie knoll nearly a mile distant. Instantly a yelling mob of excited whites, without waiting any command, dashed out upon them, driving the three helpless and surprised savages into the camp amid curses, blows, and threats. Black Hawk, in precaution against failure, had despatched a small party of five braves to watch the reception of his truce-bearers. These were likewise observed by the crazed soldiery, and fiercely charged upon by about twenty troopers, who had hastily mounted their horses. Two were killed, the other three succeeding in escaping to the council grove, where they reported that the truce-bearers were also slain by the whites. The old Sauk war-chief rose up with indignation, and, determining at once to avenge such foul treachery, sallied forth, his little party mounted on ponies, to meet the enemy. Even as they thus emerged onto the prairie, Stillman's force, over three hundred strong, came rushing toward them like an undisciplined mob. The Sauks, withdrawing behind a fringe of bushes, remained firm, but as sight of the Indians thus making a stand, the troopers came to a sudden halt. Instantly, inspired by anger at the performance of so desperate a deed, Black Hawk sounded the war-whoop, and his little band of savages, scarcely forty all told, sprang forward, firing fiercely as they advanced. Without even returning the volley, the terrified militia turned and fled. All night long, although the Indian pursuit is said to have ceased at dark, those frightened volunteers of Stillman's plunged wildly onward in their mad retreat, through swamps and creeks, for twenty-five miles to Dixon's. Nor did all of them pause even there, but kept on to their distant homes.

At Old Man's Creek in Ogle County, a Major Perkins and a Captain Adams with about fifteen men made a determined stand and held back

the savage pursuers until their companions had opportunity to escape. Captain Adams sacrificed his life for this purpose.

This skirmish is known as "Stillman's Run." The abundance of stores that Stillman left behind were of much assistance to Black Hawk in holding his braves together and encouraging some others to join. However, it forced a continuance of war which was not settled until late August 1832. Black Hawk was delivered up by the Winnebagoes after a determined campaign that became an unmerciful slaughter of the rebelling Indians.

Mustering Out

John Holcombe had a very traumatic experience as being involved at "Stillman's Run." The training group of Captain Haacke furnished volunteers for the Captain David W. Barnes Company of Mounted Volunteer Rangers, organized at Lewistown, Fulton County, Illinois. This Company was under the command of Brig. Gen. Isaiah Stillman acting as Major for the Battalion of which they were a part. The Battalion was organized according to the orders of the Sixteenth of April 1832 received from the Commander-in-Chief of Illinois. It was entered into service of the United States against the Hostile Band of Sack and Fox tribes of Indians on the 21st day of April 1832, and was discharged out of service at Lewistown, Fulton County on the 25th day of June 1832. The records of this muster list names fifty-four men, along with additional comments. These comments include the following information about the volunteers from Putman Township.

John's friend Reding Putman, 2nd Sergt. was shot from his horse and severely wounded in action at Sycamore Creek. John rescued him and was able later to place him on a boat, paying four dollars for his passage to the place of his residence. Reding's horse was stolen by the Indians at Dixon's Ferry. John, Absolem Ellis, and Isaac Swann also had their horses stolen at the same location. Those who were killed in battle were:

Bird W. Ellis (minor), 3rd Corporal. His horse was captured in battle.

Tyrus M. Childs, private, also having his horse captured in battle.

Joseph B. Farris, private, with horse killed in battle.

Samuel Baughman, private, and Jeremiah Farris, private, only had their horses captured in battle.

John Holcombe served his duty as 1st Corporal. Hazeal Putman was promoted to 3rd Corporal in the loss of B. W. Ellis in battle. David Haacke

is listed as having served as a private.

Seth Hilton, who was 1st Sergt, resigned his position after thirty days, and Josiah Marchant, private, was promoted to his position for the remainder of the time.

Peaceful Times

The frontiers of the State of Illinois became calm and quiet with the help of the loyal and honorable Chieftains of the remaining Indian tribes after 1832. The State began to become settled rapidly and the people to prosper.

John Holcombe's business activities began to expand immediately after all the hostilities had ceased. On September 4th 1832, Seth Hilton sells a thirty-two acre tract located in the West Half of the Northeast Quarter of Section Eleven to Elisha Strickland. John Holcombe then purchases the property on October 19th from Elisha. The property is adjacent to the East Half of the same Quarter Section that he purchased from A. T. Ball in 1829. John appears to be accumulating a larger farming area.

John and Dorothy also have two new daughters during this era of time. Alpha was born April 7, 1833, and Mary, two years later, on April 28, 1835.

Restless Pioneers

The frontiersmen of the community were beginning to think in terms of new adventures. Some land in northwest Arkansas had been spoken of as available to military men of service for the United States. Scholars of history point out that frontiersmen were prone to look for new conquests.

Reding Putman was not recovering satisfactorily from his battle wounds. The more mild climate of the south was appealing to him and many others. By 1833, several of the community were preparing to move on. However, it is evident later that the exodus is not as simultaneous as before.

The resale of the thirty-two acre tract by Elisha Strickland to John may have been prompted by plans to migrate. Mary and John Miller are known to be in Washington County, Arkansas, the first Saturday of August 1833 when they were accepted for membership in the Regular West Fork Baptist Church.

Since tax records in Territorial Arkansas do not begin until 1836, it is difficult to give exact location dates for families before that time. The Miller family arrived in mid-summer of 1833 and many of the Illinois

neighbors joined the same church in the immediate months of 1834. A listing of old friends and relatives include:

Elisha and Edy Stickland	Sally Ann Pierson
Stephen Strickland	John Pierson
William Ingram	Joseph Ingram
Priscilla Miller	Susan Ingram

It can be surmised that the Millers, the Stricklands, the Ingrams, and the Piersons probably moved to Arkansas together at this time.

Among the travelers to Arkansas in 1833 were Levi Combs, his wife, Sarah (Arrington) Combs, and their children. Mrs. John (Mary Stevenson) Arrington, Sarah's mother, and Sarah's own son, Ethelbert Arrington and wife, Hannah (Pierson) Arrington were included in the group. Levi, considered to be the son of Bennett and Dolly Combs, was born 1796. Levi was probably taken in and raised to manhood by the Arringtons in North Carolina after Dolly Combs became a widow. The above family moved to Fulton County, Illinois, in about 1830 seemingly to be near their Combs relatives. Levi was to be a peer of John Holcombe and outlived him in the Arkansas environment.

Green William Sherry, brother of John Sherry, (both previously wards of Hosea Holcomb of Gibson County, Indiana) stayed behind a few months in Fulton County. Here he married Delila Ingram on July 18, 1834. However, they hurried to join the new community in Arkansas. Green William was chosen Clerk of the West Fork Baptist Church in January 1835 right after he joined.

Meanwhile John Holcombe seems to be consolidating property around him. On March 18, 1835, he buys the West One-half of the Southeast Quarter of Section Two, and the rest of the forty-eight acres he doesn't own in the West One-half of the Northeast Quarter of Section Eleven. Then on July 4, 1835, John sells the total one-hundred sixty acres of land to Harrison Putman, son of Hazeal Putman. Harrison is accumulating land to enlarge his acreage as he takes over some property belonging to his father.

Decision Time

The year 1836 becomes a decisive one for the Putmans, the Holcombes, and some other families. It appears that the older members of these families leave Illinois, while younger members and children of age, elect to continue to be life residents.

Hazeal Putman moves to Schuyler County, Illinois, the adjacent county southwest of Fulton. Isabel dies on July 23, 1841, and Hazeal remarries a widow, Mary Baker, September 30, 1841. Hazeal Putman dies September 30, 1843, the second anniversary of his second marriage.

Reding Putman and his brother, William, sell their Illinois lands. In the latter part of the year, they make the trip to Washington County, Arkansas, with their families. They are accompanied by Prudence (Putman) Keys, their mother, and Lavina Putman, their sister. Also making the trip were Delila (Putman) Rizley, Reding's daughter, her husband, John, and their children. Prudence Key's younger brother, Ralph Skelton, and his family were also among the group. Reding's other married children remained in Illinois.

John Holcombe considers the options for his future and makes the decision to return to Gibson County, Indiana, to be near his brothers. All, with the exception of Ace now deceased, still live in the near vicinity as when he moved to Illinois. His son Joseph is now nearly eleven years old and he and the other children do not know their many Indiana cousins.

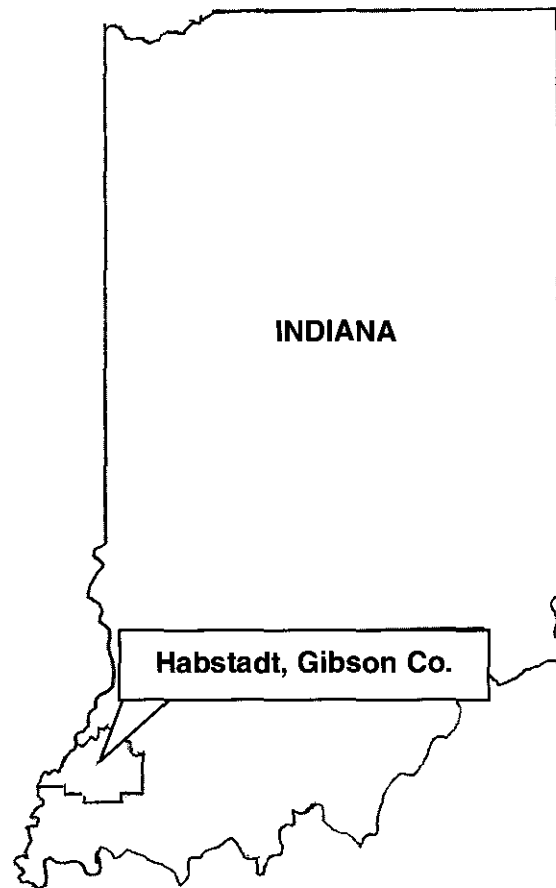
In making preparations for his move, John sells his remaining real property to Elijah Putman, Reding's younger brother, who will remain in Putman Township. The land consists of the one hundred forty-five acres by the cemetery and across the road from his three acre homesite. He is also to make a warranty deed to Elijah for the three acre homesite property. The deeds are dated July 4, 1836.

Dorothy Holcombe's sister, Stacy (Woolbanks) Sherry has previously passed away. The date of her death is unknown. Her husband, John Sherry, will accompany John and Dorothy in their move back to Gibson County. Her brother, William Woolbanks' movements cannot be traced until he later becomes a tax payer in Arkansas.

CHAPTER V

Two Beckoning Trails

1837-1838



John Holcombe parts from his friends and returns to his brothers in Indiana in 1837.

Return to Indiana

John and Dorothy Holcombe travel back to the Holcomb settlement in Gibson County, about four miles east of Haubstadt, Indiana. They make the trip in the latter part of the year 1836. After a twelve year separation, it was again a reunion of brothers for John. The many young cousins getting acquainted added much excitement to the times.

Establishing Residence

John set about obtaining a permanent home soon after arriving in the County. When John and his family arrived back in Indiana, it appears that he probably made his abode with his younger brother, Elihu. He purchased a forty acre tract with buildings from a William and Nelly Covey on the 13th of January in 1837. The property was in the vicinity of Elihu's home.

Dorothy was expecting their seventh child that summer as they set up their new home. Their son Reuben W. was born July 4, 1837.

John Sherry, also having returned to Gibson county, became re-united with the family of his deceased step-mother. The Reavis family was involved in John Sherry's guardianship when he was a young boy, but later he became a ward of Hosea Holcomb. John Sherry met and courted an Elizabeth Reavis, marrying her December 17, 1837. The wedding was performed by Rev. Larkin Burchfield. The Sherrys obtained a forty-five acre tract of land nearby John Holcomb's recent purchase.

During the years of 1836-37, John Holcomb made application and purchased 200 more acres through the Bureau of Land Management at Vincennes. Later, on October 20, 1838, he purchased John Sherry's property from him which made a total of 285 acres that was altogether in one tract. The accumulation of this amount of farming land manifested some determination to make Indiana his permanent home.

Beckoning Future

The Providence Baptist Church under the leadership of the Pastor, Elder Elihu Holcomb, was a very active organization. The New Salem Baptist Church whose membership consisted mostly of the Holcomb family, was also still active under the leadership of Elder Hosea Holcomb. No records have been found that indicate that John joined either group. John had established his life's vocation as an Elder and Pastor of the Old

Regular Baptist Faith and Order while in Illinois. Not wanting to compete with his brothers and the lure of many of his past congregation being in the West Fork Regular Baptist Church in Arkansas offered possibilities for his continuing in his vocation.

The news that Stephen Strickland had caused a disturbance in the West Fork Church gave him an additional incentive to move on to Arkansas. Stephen Strickland had actually left the church, drawing many others with him as he started a church in 1837 with Campbellite philosophy.

William (aka Woolbanks) Wilbanks and wife, Eliza Ann (Pierson) may have moved together with her father, William Pierson, and his family to Washington County by 1836. William Wilbanks had married Eliza Ann, probably in Illinois. Pierson has a house assessed in the 1836 tax records. He is to purchase a forty-acre tract August 28, 1838, in Section 32, Township 16 North, Range 30 West just south of Fayetteville.

William Wilbanks is assessed for personal property and poll tax in 1838. On September 20, 1839, he purchases forty-acres with other lands which is in Section twenty-nine. This property would be just over one mile north from his in-laws. William's first child, Jane, is born in Washington County in 1839.

The news that Dorothy's brother, William Wilbanks was established in the West Fork area of Washington County furnished John and Dorothy another incentive to follow their inclination to do the same.

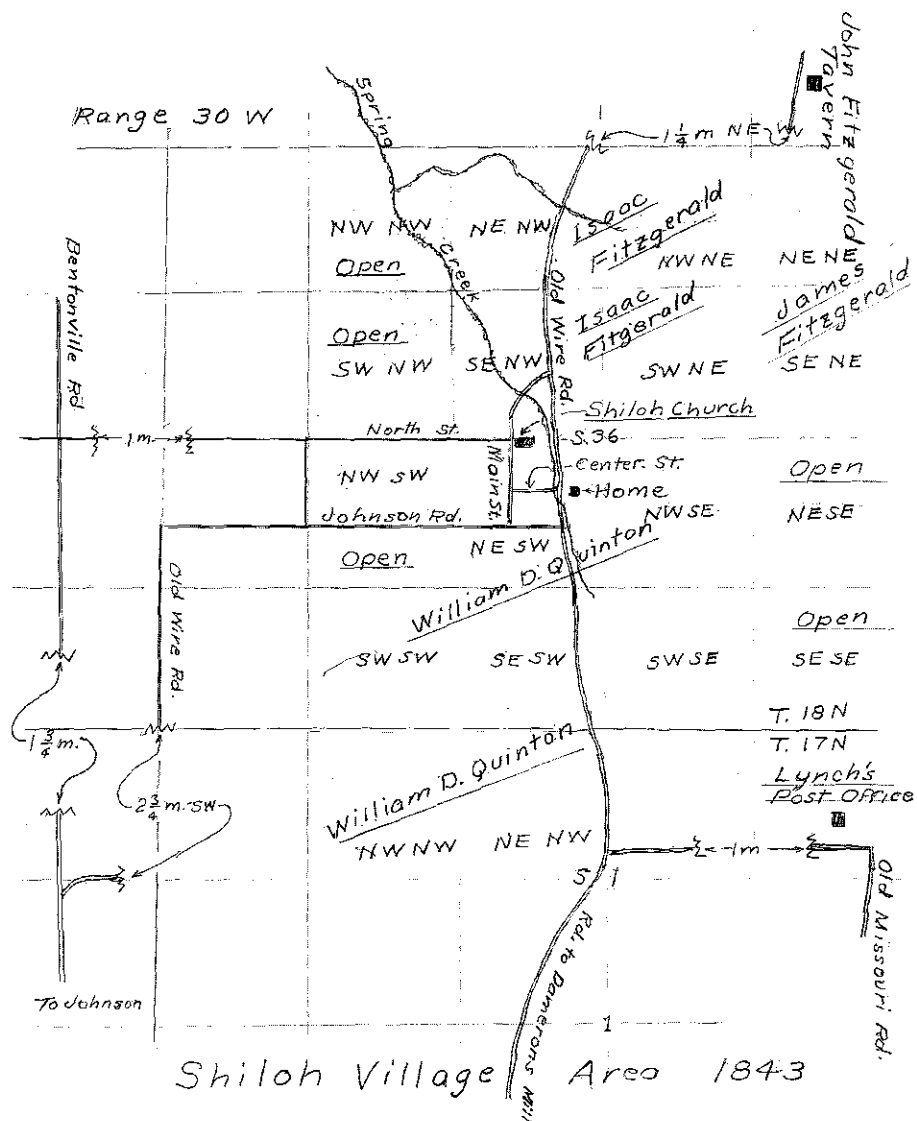
CHAPTER VI

Arkansas - Land of Opportunity

1838



John Holcombe rejoins his frinds in Arkansas, 1839.



Shiloh Village area 1843

Relocating to Arkansas

John and Dorothy Holcombe appear to travel to Arkansas during the late winter months of 1838. It is mere speculation that they probably traveled from southern Indiana along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to reach Lawrence and Independence Counties in northeast Arkansas. Caleb Holcomb, Patsy's (John's older sister) husband was holding a public office in Independence County in 1835. There was never any hint that Catherine, the baby sister, had ever left Patsy's home and had been in Gibson County with the rest of the family. Although Caleb is deceased by 1840, Patsy lives in the area for a few more years, close to her son Dempsey. It appears that John and Dorothy bring Catherine Holcomb to Washington County, Arkansas, with them.

The Ozarks area was mostly uplands of prairie areas with clumps of hardwood trees. The southern part of Washington County was more timbered, hill land cut by many flowing spring-fed streams. The earliest settlers had favored the western part of Washington County of Arkansas Territory and south of the Fayetteville area. These settlers became more numerous after 1830. The Illinois group coming after 1833 had more opportunity for land in the hilly areas to the south. They began to group in Township 15 North, Range 30 West. This was the part of the County drained by the forks of White River. Their main settlement was among the other families south of Fayetteville along the West Fork River.

Arkansas Beginnings

John and Dorothy came to the West Fork area where most of their friends had begun to develop a community. The 1839 tax records reveal that they began homesteading right on the West Fork River. Elisha Strickland obtained a patent for the Southeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter on September 20, 1839. The same day George Putman, a son of Reding Putman, secured the Northeast of the Southeast, both being in Section 32, Township 15 North, Range 30 West. Each of them made an assignment to John of their respective forty acres. The eighty acres are presently part of the town of West Fork. John was again among descendants of the families that had nurtured each other for many decades.

They had just begun to be settled when their first child was born in Arkansas. Martha's birthday is April 4, 1839, enlarging their family to eight children.

Local Baptist History

The earlier community began a church of the Old Regular Baptist Faith and Order on August 3, 1830, meeting at a John Wood's home. Originally

it was called the Middle Fork Baptist Church but the name was changed to West Fork Church in November 1836. Members of four families met and constituted the body under the leadership of a Samuel Wheat, Moderator. The church met in various homes of its members for the next few years.

At the regular meeting on September 1, 1832, the church agreed to become in an associated capacity with its sister churches of Washington County. By February of 1833 the group request Brethren Lamar and Jackson to attend the church as pastors.

The August 3rd meeting of 1833 saw the first family migrating from Illinois, John and Mary Miller, to request membership in the church by letter. Soon many more of those migrating from Illinois began to ask for membership. The list of these is revealing:

Jan. 1834	Elisha Strickland
Feb.	Edy Strickland
	William Ingram
	Stephen Strickland
July	Priscilla Miller
Unknown	Green William Sherry
June 1835	Sally Ann (Peerson) Pierson
July	John (Peerson) Pierson
	Joseph Ingram
	Susan Ingram

The new members proceeded to be very active in the affairs of the church. The very first monthly meeting following his joining, Stephen Strickland volunteered to be Moderator. In the following months, the Church would choose him often for this position. The business meeting of January 1835, elected Green W. Sherry as Church Clerk. Meetings were scheduled in John Miller's home on occasions.

The church in regular meeting January 1836, "resolved to build her meeting house on the 16th section near the ford of the creek by approbation of Judge Yell, Governor." This location is now known as Baptist Ford of the West Fork of White River. This is the location of the ford for the Old Wire Road across the river. The 16th section was the section set aside for the building of local schools in the State of Arkansas. The Union School house was at this location. The church was to use the school house for several meetings.

A serious disagreement over the Church's Abstract of Faith and Rules

of Decorum among the members caused Elder Stephen Strickland and Elder William Robinson to withdraw from the church. At the 1836 July meeting, Elisha Strickland brought a motion to the Church to lay in a public charge against Stephen Strickland and William Robinson and to declare "unfellowship with them and all that withdraw with them." Many of the Illinois group were cited for withdrawing because of loyalty of friendship with Stephen Strickland. Those withdrawing were:

Stephen Strickland	William Robinson
John Miller	John Pierson
Mary Miller	Sally Ann Pierson
William Blyod	Green Sherry
Eli Bloyd	

Strickland and Robinson were also stripped of their Baptist Church credentials at this meeting.

In August, all the withdrawing members were given the privilege of returning or having their names erased from the church roll. Sister Martha Pierson was restored at this meeting. Again the hand of fellowship was offered for attending the next meetings. Elder Samuel Wheat was now Moderator with Gilford Ratcliff, Clerk.

The October 1836 meeting opened the door for reception of members and received Sister Elizabeth Mayfield by letter. Also Mary Miller and Sally Ann Pierson returned for membership and were received. At this meeting William Ingram was granted the privilege of exhortation as led. John Miller returned to the church May 1837.

James Mayfield had joined in membership with his wife Elizabeth. At the November meeting he was elected Moderator of the Church. The Church received his letter at the February 1837 meeting and he was unanimously chosen Elder, which he accepted.

Reding Putman and his fellow travelers are now settling in the community and at the February meeting, he presents himself for membership. His wife, Phebe Putman, will present her letter in June. Reding's mother, Prudence Keys, and his sister, Lavina, join in March of 1838.

At the April 1837 meeting, the West Fork Regular Baptist Church requested Elder Mayfield to read the Abstract of Faith that he had gotten from the Spoon River Association of Regular Baptist of Illinois. These Articles of Faith were adopted. In subsequent meetings, the Church's Rules of Decorum were reviewed bringing an end to the controversy. In

May 1837 John Pierson returns to the Church.

Other Putman family members joining in 1838 were William Putman in February and James G. Putman in August.

Renewing Vocational Ties

John and Dorothy Holcombe have spent the months of 1839 settling into their new home, with Dorothy having to attend to the new daughter, Martha. It was also a time to become adjusted to their new surroundings, visit and renew old friendships as well to make new acquaintances. Doubtless, they would have visited and attended several meetings of the West Fork Baptist Church during the year.

On December 7, 1839, John and Dorothy requested membership in the West Fork Church and were received by letter at a regular Saturday meeting. It was like a homecoming for them to be among the many friends and relatives they had worshipped with for so many years. Twenty of the church members were from families that John had already ministered to as Elder while being a pastor in Illinois.

Obviously the church community welcomed John with open arms. The following monthly meeting of January 1840, he was chosen to be the Moderator for the day. Berry D. Graham was chosen Clerk pro-tem. The Church scheduled its next meeting to be at John Miller's residence. John Holcombe would again be honored by being designated Moderator for the February meeting.

The March meeting was conducted by Elder Wheat as Moderator for the day. Thomas Putman was received at this meeting by experience. The meeting was "adjourned until her next meeting in course at her meeting house." A worship service was held there on Sunday, March 29, 1840.

Friday, the 5th of June, the West Fork Baptist Church agreed to ordain John Holcombe to the ministry as Elder in the Church. On Saturday a presbytery composed of Brethren Elders William Poston and J. W. D. Taylor, and Deacons John Arnett, B. D. Graham, and John Wood was chosen to attend the ordination of Bro. John Holcombe. On the first Lord's Day morning (June 7, 1840), "the Presbytern all being present they did ordain Bro. John Holcombe (to the work of the ministry)."

The same three-day weekend of John's ordination, Elisha Strickland requested through John on Friday that the Church remove his name from the rolls because he had joined the Reformers Church. Also during the continued meeting on Saturday, Joseph and Rhoda Baker were received

by letter. The Bakers were the parents of Rebecca Baker, then ten years old, who would become the bride of John's second son, William Henry.

Although John Holcombe had previously been ordained as an Elder in his church in Illinois and had functioned as such for several years, he was now fully launched as a Baptist minister for life. It was the practice of each church of the Regular Baptist Faith and Order to ordain its Elders locally. However, John would now continue in his life's vocation in unbroken service though he will have a future change of church membership.

Community Discipline

The movement of the Baptist faith through the frontier community settlements was of untold value to the expansion of the nation. Many other faith groups were of equal importance and contributed greatly. In general the frontiersman was living beyond the reach of any law enforcement agency. The self-policing pressure of Christian principles as practiced by democratic means in each congregation, gave stability to the advancing frontiers.

The Articles of Faith and the Rules of Decorum of each separate Old Regular Baptist congregation were always adopted by each group by majority vote. These Articles and Rules governed the way each group selected its leaders as well as the relationships among the members of the group. These groups assembled monthly for business and worship. Reception of new members to a congregation was by unanimous vote. Members were expected to base their deportment and relationships with each other on the Eighteenth Chapter of Matthew of the New Testament of the Bible. This basis of group judgment also provided for forgiveness and continued inclusion in the community.

In general the elected officers were chosen for their demonstrated ability to function in the position as well as their standing in the community as a whole. These leaders within the church served without financial remuneration, even though they might travel long distances to minister to a group.

John Holcombe held this esteem among the peers of his community as he launched out in Northwest Arkansas on his life's career.

New Horizons

The regular meeting on August 1, 1840, the West Fork Baptist Church received a request from the Brethren at William Graham's (eleven miles

north of Fayetteville) for her official aid in constituting them into a church. Church minutes state that the request was granted and "agrees to send Elder John Holcombe, Deacon John Wood, Joseph Baker, and Berry D. Graham as her official members to attend them on Saturday, August 22, 1840."

The prospective church members met on the appointed date and were duly constituted into a Regular Baptist Church of Washington County, State of Arkansas. Those composing the Presbytry and signing the constitution were:

Elder Samuel Wheat of War Eagle Church

Elder William Poston of Union Church

Elder John Holcombe, Deacon John Wood and

Deacon Berry D. Graham of West Fork Church

The church was named the Regular Baptist Church at Shiloh. At the time of constitution, the group of beginning members lived in the proximity of the village of Shiloh.

The West Fork Church prepared to send delegates to the fall Association meeting by choosing their delegates at the September 5th, 1840, regular business meeting. Elder John Holcombe, Bros. Reding Putman and Joseph Baker were named to represent them. Berry D. Graham was named as an alternate in case of failure. In October John Miller was added to the letter as a second alternate. Again John's sphere of influence was evidenced as he met with representatives of all the associated churches.

The years 1841 and 1842 were normal years of progress and growth of the membership. The Church members concentrated their concerns somewhat in attempting to finish a suitable meeting house.

Family Matters

John and Dorothy had two other children born to them while living in the West Fork area. John Howard's birthday was June 23, 1841. Not quite two years later, Ellen was born February 13, 1843.

Saturday, July 29, 1842, John had the pleasure of his baby sister, Catherine Holcomb being received into membership of the West Fork Church by letter. Elder J. W. D. Taylor was Moderator for the day. This is the first known public record of Catherine since childhood days.

On January 8, 1843, William Wilbanks (Dorothy's brother) was received by the West Fork Baptist Church and his wife, Eliza Ann (Pierson) Wilbanks, was received at the April meeting the same year.

Expanding Interests

William D. Quinton was a principal land owner in the Shiloh Village and was undoubtedly a promoter of the Shiloh Church. At some time before October of 1843, he deeded three-quarters of an acre of land for the Church to construct their meeting house. The tract was on the southeast corner of Main and North Street as it was then called (if North were extended on east), a narrow strip from Main to the unopened Church Street.

The book containing the minutes of the first four years of church record was lost. The roll of members was reconstructed by listing all of those still belonging to the fellowship at their regular meeting day of the second Saturday of May 1845. However, the Church had flourished and had constructed its first meeting house. (The building was used in the metes and bounds deed description.)

John Holcombe had taken an active interest in the Church from the start. With the Shiloh Church having an alternate meeting date from the West Fork Church, he was able to furnish ministerial support to its members from the beginning. The Shiloh Baptist Church accepted his leadership as an Elder and he became deeply involved in the Church's affairs as a visitor.

John was still giving full devotion to the flock of the West Fork Church as well as being prominently active as one of their representatives to the Associational activities.

Establishing Home

The village of Shiloh was a very inviting place as was the surrounding area. John and Dorothy were highly attracted to it as a homesite as they were not completely settled at the West Fork area. Many of his Illinois colleagues were moving closer and closer to Fayetteville and some friends were being attracted further north.

During the year of 1843, William D. Quinton and John at least began to talk about William relocating to West Fork to be with his brother John Quinton. The discussions culminated in John and Dorothy purchasing all of William D. Quinton's property in the Shiloh area on October 7, 1843.

The description of the land totaling approximately 239 acres is listed below.

The Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter, the East one-half of the Southwest Quarter, (with the exception of 3/4 acre along North edge) and the Southwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter, all in Section 36, Township 18 North, Range 30 West.

Also the North One-half of the Northwest Quarter of Section One, Township 17 North, Range 30 West.

John Quinton in turn purchased John Holcombe's eighty acres in West Fork on the same day. William appears to be freeing himself of all property, perhaps for health reasons.

The Shiloh Village

The early Graham family of Northwest Arkansas with their allied kin, the Wolfs, Sneed's, McGarrahs, Fords, along with the Fitzgeralds were in the area by 1826. Colonel Mathew Arbuckle, the Commander of the Garrison at Ft. Smith, received instructions in December of 1826 to permit the settlement of Lovely's Purchase of which Shiloh Village was a part. This area was considered a most desirable tract due to the water, soil, and climate.

John Fitzgerald, Sr. came to the northern area and settled northeast of Shiloh. His land and many others of the Shiloh area were originally Choctaw Land Grants of Dancing Rabbit Creek Treaty of 1830. This treaty gave the Choctaws land from the western border of Arkansas Territory to the 100th meridian. With the permanent western Arkansas line established, the Choctaws sold their land to those entitled to own land in the area. The Old Missouri or Springfield Road was one of the many Indian horse trails to crisscross the area.

The area was surveyed by the government in 1834. In the nearby area of Section 36, Township 18 North, Range 30 West there were six farms and over 100 acres in cultivation. Only James Fitzgerald's family is mentioned in the survey notes. James is the son of John Fitzgerald.

The beginning of a community center was developing in the Northeast of the Southwest Quarter of Section 36. There was a convergence here of the major travel ways across the region. The Old Missouri Road was becoming of major importance between Springfield, Missouri, and Ft. Smith, Arkansas. The Old Wire Road diverged from it in places for some communities. John Fitzgerald, Sr. established an Inn and Tavern about two miles to the northeast. Later Lynch's property became a stage coach stop and mail center.

There were possibly some houses of service in the center in 1843, as well as other dwelling places. However, the title to all the property at this time was in William D. Quinton's name with the exception of the gift to the church.

The surrounding land was a nearly level plain with the exception of a slight slope down to the depression along the headwaters of Spring Creek. The church was located in the northern edge of the forty acres on the western side of the stream. It is assumed that Quinton's home was on the east side, near some fresh springs. This was considered east of the village center, about one-eighth of a mile from the church. John may have used Quinton's dwelling house originally but if so, he soon built a new one in the same vicinity.

John's son, Silas Mercer is to write a letter in 1922, "as long as he lived in the old double-log house across the creek...he settled that place (Shiloh) and built the house and no one else ever lived in it."

The William Graham property was approximately two miles northeast with several other church members living south and east in proximity of the travel-way. The Old Wire Road was a convenient travel-way for John to commute between the two churches.

Transition Days

As John's interest in the Shiloh Church increased, his activities became so interlaced that it is difficult to log them. Just how soon the Holcombes moved to Shiloh after purchasing the Quinton property is unknown. The years 1843 and 1844 are very active ones for the West Fork Church, with John very much involved.

February 3, 1844, the West Fork Church minutes reveal that "after exhortation by Bro. Holcombe, the church meeting was organized" and he was chosen Moderator for the day. Later in the business meeting, John applied for letters of dismission for himself, Dorothy, and his sister Catherine to join the Shiloh Church. Bro. Berry D. Graham also applied for himself and wife, Sally, for the same reason. All of the above letters were granted.

The Church then passed the "motion that Bro. Holcombe is unanimously requested to attend the church regular with us at each meeting."

Since the Shiloh Church was then meeting on the second Saturday of the month, it is assumed that the Holcombes presented their letters the following week at Shiloh and were received. The Grahams are also record-

ed as becoming members. It is assumed that John had relocated to Shiloh by this time.

Basis for Livelihoods

The frontiersmen of that day were entirely dependant upon being successful agriculturalists. With large families to support, this also required large acreages. Some men would become skilled tradesmen for monetary support and to meet some of the community needs. However, most of the owners of large farms developed their own skills to be as self-sufficient as possible. The number of tradesmen was increasing as population centers began to develop. This was the era that was developing in Washington County. Land was still wealth and successful settlers would accumulate as much as possible for production of goods or for buying and selling it as improved property. This was beginning to require governmental and administrative centers to function as seats of justice. Fayetteville Courthouse became the county seat of Washington County in 1836 when Arkansas became the 25th State of the Union.

The purchase of their new home and move to Shiloh made John and Dorothy's decision to relocate from Indiana to Northwest Arkansas a happy one. They had retained the two hundred eighty-five acres in Gibson County, Indiana, that they had purchased there in 1837-38 as an investment.

Now that they had the equivalent property in Arkansas, with a bright future for themselves and their children, they began to sell the farms in Indiana. March 7, 1845, they sold a tract of land containing one hundred sixty acres. That fall on October 9 the remaining one hundred twenty-five acres were purchased from them. With this sale, all of their business interests had been transferred to Arkansas.

Shiloh-Born Siblings

John and Dorothy are to have children added to their family after moving to Shiloh. Dorothy (aka Dora) was born July 2, 1845. A son, Silas Mercer's birthday was April 1, 1847. He was named for John's uncle, the well-known Baptist preacher, Silas Mercer. George Washington Holcomb's birthday was August 14, 1850.

Maturing Family

John's oldest son, Joseph (aka Jo), was past eighteen years of age when the family moved to Shiloh. He began his first endeavors teaching in a

home school. He probably had the benefits of the educational climate that existed in the Fayetteville area during his four years of living in the vicinity. He was hired as a clerk in the County Clerk's office in Fayetteville when he was nineteen. John was to experience his son beginning to develop his talents as an administrator and business man. However, he was a very experienced woodsman and also a knowledgeable land trader. As he began his work around the County government offices, he also expanded his sphere of influence in the business world. Like his father, he had a natural talent in leadership.

Jo continued to be employed in Fayetteville with the family living in Shiloh. The record shows that his father purchased lots Eight and Nine of Block Thirteen of the Original Plat of Fayetteville, December 11, 1845. Perhaps living quarters were being secured for Jo in the town.

The settlers of Northwest Arkansas began to obtain land by buying the Land Grant Script from the Choctaw Indians who had applied for their forty-acres granted to them by the Federal Government. The script could then be assigned to any owner as property rights. Any time after the assignment, the endorsed script could be exchanged for a land patent from the Government Land Office. Jo, as an experienced woodsman set about to obtain title to as much real estate as possible. In a very short time he had obtained ownership rights to thousands of acres scattered throughout the whole northwest region of the State. One of the forty-acre tracts is the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 36 which lies adjacent to his father's land in Shiloh.

Tabitha Holcomb, John and Dorothy's oldest daughter turns seventeen on June 27, 1846. On July 30th, she unites in marriage with Francis M. Smiley. The couple make their home in the Shiloh community.

William Henry Holcomb marries his childhood sweetheart, Rebecca Baker, July 30, 1847. Rebecca's parents, Joseph and Rhoda Baker, had joined the West Fork Baptist Church on the day John was ordained as an Elder. Rebecca was then ten years old. Joseph Baker became very active in the church and this provided twelve-year old William to have a lot of opportunity to be associated with Rebecca. After the Holcombes moved to Shiloh, the families still had monthly contacts for a week-end.

The year following Rebecca's and William's marriage, John obtains the forty acres due west of the Shiloh Village (the Northwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section Thirty-six) by patent on July 10, 1848. William Henry is to take up an interest in the north thirty acres immedi-

ately and purchases the property from his father some years later. John had actually been homesteading on the land since 1845. William Henry is also to take up the West One-half of the Northwest Quarter of Section Thirty-six just north of his purchase from his father.

Settling In Years

The move to Shiloh and the acquisition of some adjacent lands gave John at least two hundred acres for a farming operation. As this was his main livelihood, his farmland became very productive for him in the coming years. In the beginning only a small fraction of his total area was encumbered by the village center.

The first few years, two of his sons were available to help him. It is expected that some special aids shops would come to be established in the village.

During these years of developing a family income from his land, John is still fully engrossed in ministering to his two church groups. He is also cooperating with a large group of Elders of the many associated churches.

The West Fork Church completes their new meeting house on the land which was donated by John Miller. Several new members are joining both by experience and letter. John is often chosen as Moderator to conduct business meetings. He has developed the practice of having a period of exhortation on Saturday morning before each business meeting when possible.

As the Shiloh Church expands in numbers it remodels some aspects of its building to better accommodate the services. The minutes of church meetings reveal that John is inviting different associate Elders to be visiting service leaders who are commonly elected to be Moderator of the day. John in turn becomes available to their congregations on occasion.

On November 9, 1849, the Shiloh Church unanimously elects Rebecca (Baker) Holcomb to their fellowship.

U. S. 1850 Census

The 1950 U. S. Population Census of John's household is listed here:

Washington County, Arkansas

Clear Creek Township # 29

Baptist Clergyman

John Holcomb	52	SC
Dorothy	42	KY

Joseph	24	IL
Elihu	18	IL
Alpha	17	IL
Mary	15	IL
Rueben	13	IN
Martha	11	IN
John H.	10	AR
Ellen	7	AR
Dorothy	5	AR
Silas M.	3	AR
William Smiley	18	TN
Catherine Holcomb	49	KY (corrected from SC)

The 1850 Agriculture Census of Washington County, Arkansas, Clear Creek Township, December 21:

Inventory	Quantity	
	John	William H.
Improved land	120	40
Unimproved land	225	5
Cash Value of farm	3,000	300
Value of Farm Implements & Machinery	450	15
Horses	11	1
Asses and Mules	1	—
Milch cows	8	3
Working Oxen	4	—
Other cattle	11	4
Sheep	35	14
Swine	50	7
Value livestock	936	112
Wheat, bushels	250	100
Indian corn, bushels	2,000	400
Oats, bushels	200	15
Tobacco, lbs.	100	—
Wool, lbs.	50	25
Irish potatoes, bushels	50	12
Sweet potatoes, bushels	25	—
Value, orchard products	50	—
Butter, lbs.	200	75
Cheese, lbs.	50	—
Beeswax, lbs.	50	—

Value homemade manufactures	200	30
Value of animals slaughtered	60	20

The above census report is a good evaluation of John's experience with his farming operations for the year.

Family Adjustments

John's son, Elihu, appears to have been giving full support to his father in his farming operations. Now past nineteen years of age, he takes a bride, Elmira White, August 23, 1850. Land and census records show their probable beginning home to be located in Section Twenty-seven northwest of Shiloh. Here he was to begin homesteading and later to obtain patents on four forty-acre tracts for himself.

Margaret Smiley, the first child of Francis M. and Tabitha Holcomb died in 1848, a few months after she was born. There were several other deaths in the Holcomb families between the years 1848-1853. Grandfather John Holcombe had made preparation for such an eventuality among his family. Although a cemetery was developing beside the Shiloh Church yard, he obtained land and deeded two and one-half acres in the Southwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section Thirty-five for an adequate burial ground. The legal survey of the property is dated much later than its first use.

After Margaret Smiley died, Tabitha and Francis M. were to have two sons, Rueben on January 27, 1849, and John Howard on November 30, 1851. On the 28th of the following January, Tabitha died and was buried beside her daughter. Grandfather John and Grandmother Dorothy took the two boys into their home and raised them. Francis M. continued to live in the Shiloh community.

William Henry and Rebecca Holcomb have a very disappointing experience with each of their first three children. The first, William, was born and died May 17, 1849. Rebecca followed July 20, 1850, with Martha Jane living only from August 18 to October 25, 1851.

The tragic years continue with John and Dorothy losing their son Rueben W. (initial possibly for Wilbanks), November 20, 1851. Rueben is fourteen years old living at home when he was stricken and died.

Within the next two years, John and Dorothy were to experience more trauma in the loss of their last two children at childbirth. Catherine, born July 15, 1852, died the same day, while Francis S. born August 31, 1853, lived until September 18 of that year.

The census of 1850 lists William Smiley as a member of John's household. John and Dorothy had nurtured him as a teenager. December 11, 1853, their daughter Alpha and William are married and make their home in Shiloh until 1882.

Catherine Holcomb, John's younger sister who had been making her home with him, passed away on August 30, 1855. Oral family history, tells that Catherine was able to go to Gibson County, Indiana, and visit with her other brothers earlier in the 1850's. Catherine would have been able to have renewed relationships with Elihu, Benjamin, Jeremiah, and possibly Henry. Hosea did not die until 1850, but it is not known how long Enos lived. There were many nieces and nephews still in Gibson County for her to have met.

John Holcombe receives word that his younger brother Elihu dies September 25th 1858, in Gibson County, Indiana. John received great solace in the loss of his closest brother by the esteem with which the Providence Church held him for his over thirty years of service to them. The members of the Church expressed their regard in a resolution adopted and recorded in the official Church minutes. Elihu had been the pastor of the Church since his ordination as an Elder and election on October 26, 1827. His passing marked the end of an era for the Church.

A Stafford family, Pleasant and Margaret (Reed) Stafford united with Shiloh Church, June 1856. John Holcombe's daughter, Mary, joining the same day, married their son, John N. Stafford in October 1858. Mary and John made their home in the area until the War. John joins the church in September of 1860, along with Alpha (Holcomb) Smiley and Ellen Holcomb.

John's daughter Martha, having joined the Shiloh Church in 1856 with her sister Mary, is to marry Steve Bynum on May 31, 1860.

Ellen Holcomb is listed in the 1860 U. S. Census as being in John Holcombe's household. Charles Wildes joins Shiloh Church on the same day with Ellen, and they are to marry in early 1861.

Supportive People

While the decade started out with both joyous and somber notes, there were many memorable experiences in the 1850's for John Holcombe. It is a true statement that a man's vocation, family, and friends make up his life. With his vocation being his church, he developed many friends throughout the region. Establishing his family absorbed much of his

interests during this time, as he also participated in the growth of Washington County.

Francis M. Smiley, John's son-in-law, was a member of the Shiloh Church at the time of his marriage to Tabitha. The minutes of the Church for September 1846 reflect that Francis M. was the Church Clerk at that time. John was to have the support of a good scribe with the minutes continuously until just before the Civil War. Francis Marion started a new life on February 28, 1852, by marrying the widow Sarah Ann (Norman) Reed. At this time it appears that they are making their home in Section 27 on land formerly owned by Elihu.

A young man, Evans Atwood, and his mother, Eliza (Mrs. Simeon) Atwood join the Shiloh Church by letter, March 7, 1851. In June his father, Simeon Atwood, along with John and Mahala Lynch, present themselves. Simeon and Eliza Atwood are to leave the Church in September of 1852. Evans is an exceptional young man, born November 10, 1836, in Vermillion County, Illinois. He will become a very close friend to William Henry Holcomb and a great aid to John Holcombe in the Church, especially after the War.

Evans took penmanship lessons under Mr. William Price in Washington County, Arkansas. He became a noted scribe, teaching public schools and also special penmanship classes. During the 50's, Evans taught a country school about five miles northeast of Shiloh. He took lodging Monday through Friday with William Graham, a founding member of the Shiloh Church.

Evans and William Henry will be deeply involved in the Civil War together and figure prominently in the family experiences in the future.

Both the Shiloh Church and the West Fork Church remain very active and continue to attract and enlist many members. There are many new Elders nominated and ordained from both memberships. As the County becomes more settled and thickly populated, there is a corresponding demand for Presbyterys to constitute new churches.

John's close friend, Reding Putman, remains loyal to the West Fork Baptist Church along with many of his family. John uses Reding's services many times for legal advice, as Reding knew some rudiments of law. Reding's younger brother, William, continues to be a dependable Church Clerk, either regular or pro-tem as the situation requires.

Dorothy Holcombe is a very hardy, stalwart person who appears to

always be in full partnership with John in his life's work and projects. A compliment to John is the fact that with only a few exceptions, Dorothy's name appears in their legal documents together. She was known to endear herself to a large circle of relatives and friends, participating fully in the church activities.

An anecdote concerning Dorothy inside the home in Shiloh around the later 1850's is related by her son Silas Mercer:

There was one (Baptist Preacher) by the name of Tommie Dodson and a wedge of apple pie fit his mouth for three bites. One day a dozen or 15 old preachers was eating dinner at our house and us boys was waiting and starving. Uncle Tommie took the last piece off the dish. Gerge (George Washington) broke into a cry and said there old Tommie has got the last piece and I won't get any. But he was wrong as there were about fifty left.

Bobbie Young and Tommie Dodson lived in Richland Pass in Madison and other one I have forgotten his name lived at Little Flock Benton Co. Will Ingram lived in West Fork.

A compilation of the names of active Old Regular Baptist Elders at this period of time that could have been dinner guests are listed below:

Joseph Baker	F. E. Lacey
John Barnes	Grabriel H. Loving
Thomas Brinson	J. D. Loving
Thomas Dodson	W. W. Lucas
N. F. Goodrich	William D. Mahuron
William Hammock	William Poston
John Holcombe	A. G. Smith
William Ingram	Samuel Wheat
Jesse Keller	Robert Young

The Fading Frontier

The village of Shiloh and the surrounding area began to experience changes during the 1850's. When John first moved to the village, only a few settlers with large tracts of land surrounded it. The Fitzgeralds, John and his son James, had the largest holdings to the east and north. The main means of outside communication was the Old Missouri Road (Springfield Road) and the Old Wire Road (Telegraph Road). The two roadways coincided from the north with the Old Wire Road separating and going more southwesterly from Shiloh. These roads however were a

major route for migration through the area. John Fitzgerald had established a tavern and inn about four miles northeast on the Old Missouri Road. The Road then came into the east of Shiloh by the fresh springs. The route then turned east slightly below the village center for about a mile and then went on south to Fayetteville.

Many travelers were using the route as they were able to find sporadic means of transportation. A Dr. Wade and I. T. Pollard of Fayetteville owned a line of stages that met delivery of the mails to the north and the river to the south. This service was set up in 1834.

James Fitzgerald began to sell off his property to the east of Shiloh. In 1851 he sold a tract of land to the John Reed family. Other settlers were coming into the area taking up open areas or purchasing from others.

Wade and Pollard sold their stages to John Butterfield of Fayetteville in 1858. When Butterfield received his contract for overland stage and mail service, he cut a more direct route from the Fitzgerald Tavern to where it would intersect the corner in the Old Missouri Road to the southeast of the village. This moved the main route to the east of Shiloh. John Lynch then built a post office and stage stop at this intersection, making two stopping points for the stages.

When John Reed purchased the homesite from Fitzgerald, an old road ran between his house and his barn to the west, cutting across the corner of his forty acres. The house was in the extreme northeast corner of his land. When Butterfield cut the new stage route through, he jogged it east to go around Reed's property. The story goes that Reed found it more convenient to get to the barn, but he had to build a front door to his house on the other end.

The Old Wire (Telegraph) Road gets its name because of telegraph communication being installed along it. It is not known when this occurred.

The area around Shiloh was now becoming a more developed area than it was at the time that John Holcombe first moved there.

Prosperous Fifties

The economic gains experienced by the populace of Washington County was the main contributing cause of the characteristics of the frontier life to be rapidly changing.

The land was being improved for more efficient use and larger tracts were being acquired for production. With increase in the number of

patents being issued on the open property during this time, a number of new roadways would necessarily have to be built.

The establishing of in-and-out stage transportation and mail service was a big boon to the area. Although farm production was primarily for domestic use, markets were being developed to accommodate those beginning to supply goods and services in general.

The John Holcombe family continued to acquire patents for additional land. Some of this land was being sold as improved land to new families coming into the area. During this decade John and members of his immediate family will have approximately one thousand four hundred forty acres of land at their disposal within Shiloh and the surrounding area. John was actually in possession of three hundred sixty acres of these in the village proper and for his farming operations.

Washington County as a whole had been making the same progress and different agencies were developed to measure and record the growth. The U. S. Agricultural Census of 1850 underscored the beginning of the advance.

An article in the Fayetteville newspaper, *The Arkansian*, dated August 12, 1859, reads:

Agricultural Society

At the annual meeting of the Washington County Agricultural and Mechanical Society held in the Courthouse on Saturday, August 6th, 1859, the following officers were elected: John Holcombe, B. F. Boone, and T. W. Frost among a total of 16 board members.

Son Jo's Endeavors

Jo Holcomb, by the age of twenty-five, had collected the assignments on many acres of land in Northwest Arkansas for an investment. These assignments were the equivalent to a title that could be obtained by the issuing of a patent by the Federal Government Land Office. Thus it was a legal process to issue a warranty deed in a sale for any of the land.

Jo had accumulated some influential friends in his work around Fayetteville, but his first association with Stephen K. Stone is unknown. Stephen was just starting in the mercantile business. Jo, in early 1851, was now needing to raise some capital to purchase a one-half partnership interest with Mr. Stone in the business. Beginning early in 1851, Jo starts

to liquidate his land holdings. He sells one forty-acre tract to Stephen for \$39.50. The advertised price seems to be one dollar per acre. Jo was fairly successful in selling hundreds of acres in Benton County alone. (No other canvas was made of his sales in Washington, Madison, Crawford, and Carroll Counties.) The sales price did increase from fifty cents per sale in November to one dollar more in December. The record of Benton County reflects no deeds were issued beyond the year 1852 on any of the land. It is assumed that he let any claim on other lands in the County lapse beyond this time. Later sales may be found in other areas. The Bureau of Land Management records show that he made signatures for all the patents he received by 1857.

John Holcombe is to sell the lots Eight and Nine of Block 13 in the Original Plat of Fayetteville, February 13, 1851, to an H. R. Chaffee. He received \$67.50 for the property. Whether this is to aid Jo is purely speculative.

The May 12, 1855, issue of the *Southwest Independent*, weekly newspaper for Fayetteville at that time, has a 4 x 5 inch display add for Stone and Holcomb for a wide variety of staples, dry goods, books, and hardware for sale at their store.

Jo, working in Courthouse offices, becomes acquainted and makes firm friends of other County Officers. In 1853, he is a colleague of John Crawford, the Deputy County Sheriff. Their lives remain entwined for life.

Thomas W. Frost was a fairly influential citizen of Washington County. He was an active member of Drake's Creek Baptist Church in the Richland Community where Elder Thomas Dodson was Pastor. Mr. Frost was well known to John Holcombe through church Associational work. Jo would know him through a Fayetteville local lawyer, Billy Franklin Boone. B. F. Boone was a first cousin to T. W. Frost's wife, Mrs. Polly (Boone) Frost. In 1854 T. W. Frost would bring, Sarah (aka Sally), Cener, and Daniel Boone to Washington County to be with their sister Polly after their father had died in Bedford County, Tennessee. Cener Boone was fifteen years old at the time and would start attending Sophia Sawyer's Female Seminary as a boarding student in Fayetteville which was located on Mountain Street.

Stone and Holcomb apparently proves to be a successful enterprise as Stephen purchases the large Walker Home in the late 1850's. The deed is actually dated January 18, 1859. The home was located between Mountain and Center Streets. Meanwhile, Jo is beginning to purchase

Sarah Ridge's house facing south on Center while boarding at Stephen K. Stone's home as a single man.

New Daughter-in-law

Cener Boone is twenty-one years old on March 14, 1860. She is listed as a senior in Sophia Sawyer's Female Seminary catalogue for 1859-60 as one of two graduates for that school year with the session ending the last Thursday of June. Cener was graduating just one year ahead of Mary Amanda Stone, the daughter of Stephen K. Stone. Mary Amanda was attending the school, living at home, which was just across the street, with Cener attending as a boarding student. With Jo Holcomb boarding in the Stone home, he is to become acquainted with Cener as she would no doubt visit with Mary Amanda at home.

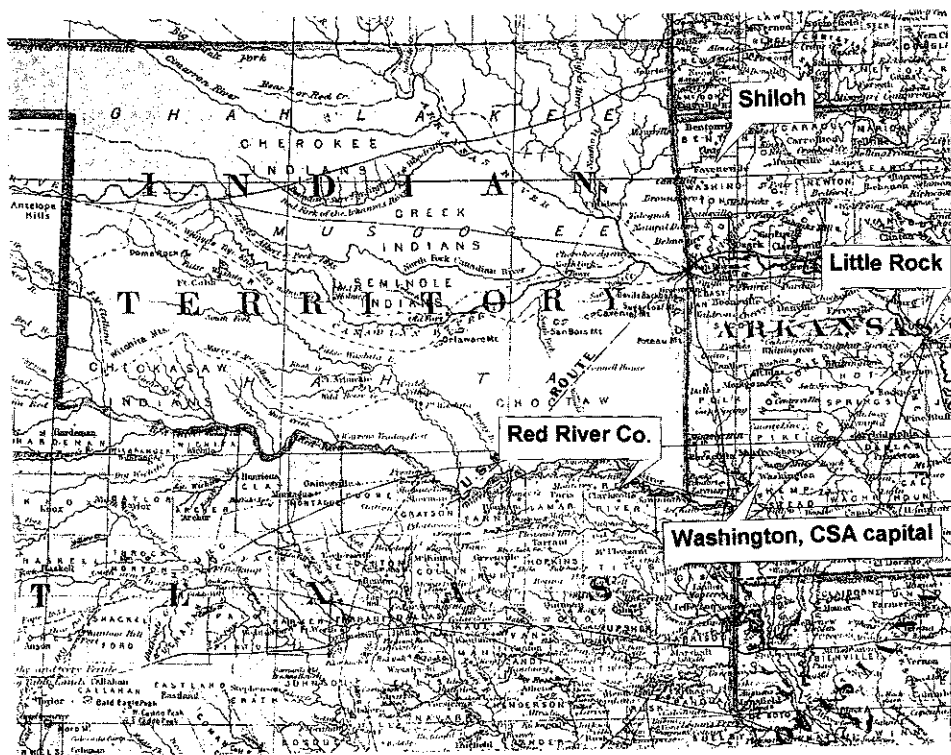
Thomas W. Frost requested and is released from his guardianship of Cener in July 1860 as she has become of age. Joseph is very attracted to Cener and presses his suit with her, having the other contacts with her relatives. Joseph Holcomb and Cener Boone are married December 12, 1860, with Thomas Standford, a minister of the Methodist Church South, officiating.

Joseph and Cener probably never lived in the Ridge house as they were to deed it along with three lots in Block 18 to John G. Scarbrough on April 19, 1861.

CHAPTER VII

Civil War Years

1861-1865



John Holcombe sojourns to Texas for family safety, 1862

War Clouds Gathering

John Holcombe continues to minister to the people in both the Shiloh and West Fork Baptist Churches during 1861. Each church had always accepted persons of color for membership if they requested it. However, there were not many requests as not many households dealt in slavery. The church minutes of each church reflect that the politics of the day did not become a matter of concern for their business.

Most of the pioneer families living in the area were opposed to Arkansas seceding from the Union. They, however, were opposed to the politics and tactics of the northern states. Washington County residents were badly divided in their loyalties. May 6th, an Arkansas secessionist convention assembly passed an ordinance withdrawing the State from the Union. State Militias of volunteers were formed for protection of the State. One such company was organized June 11, 1861, at Nashville, Hempstead County, Arkansas, called the "Davis Blues." They were one of the first such volunteer groups formed. There were many other militias formed including companies organized in Washington County.

Americus V. Rieff organized a company of ninety-one men in the month of June at Fayetteville, Arkansas. It was known as Captain Rieff's Company in the Regiment of Arkansas Mounted Volunteers. It was called into service of the Confederate States of America under proclamation of Brigadier General Ben McCulloch to serve for a term of three months from the date of enrollment, unless sooner discharged. Upon organization, it marched to Camp McRea (Walker) where it arrived July 5, 1861, a distance of forty-one miles.

Among the men volunteering for Captain Rieff's Company were John's son, William H. Holcomb, and three of his sons-in-law, Francis M. Smiley, William M. Smiley, and John N. Stafford.

John was to have his son Jo volunteer for Arkansas State Militia service apparently as a storekeeper in the Quartermaster Corps. Jo Holcomb billed the States on July 3, 1861, for services of a four-horse wagon and team in hauling ammunition from Ft. Smith to Fayetteville. On August 1, 1861, he billed the States for the purchase of seven mules for W. M. Montgomery, Major Quartermaster. He signed as "Joseph Holcomb" certifying that he received payment at Camp on Wilson Creek, Missouri, August 7, 1861.

The Davis Blues arrived in Little Rock on or about June 23, 1861. Afterwards they were enrolled as Company F, 5th Arkansas Infantry,

Thomas B. Dockery commanding. This unit was sent to Camp Walker, a staging area in Benton County for training.

Benton County was organized and boundaries established out of the northern half of Washington County when Arkansas became a State in 1836. The borders of both counties have remained intact since that date.

The Beginning Struggle

Arkansas seceded from the Union May 6, 1861, by a vote of sixty-nine to one by the convention called to decide the matter. A standing convention was re-assembled by Judge David Walker, the president of the Convention. President Lincoln had requested 76,000 militia to be raised to vindicate Federal authority over the States. This request for troops after the firing on Ft. Sumpter was the deciding factor for the Convention. A resolution was passed declaring Arkansas a sovereign State. Delegates later ratified the provisional constitution of the Confederacy and elected delegates to the Confederate Congress.

The action at Wilson Creek was the result of General Price of Missouri attempting to maintain the freedom of the State from occupation of Union troops. The combining of his forces with the militias of Arkansas under Brigadier General Ben McCulloch resulted in the attack by Federal troops. Jo had stayed at Camp Wilson until the morning of the attack of August 10th and was caught up in the action. In the official records of the Battle of Wilson Creek, August 10 1861, he is on the roster of the Davis Blues, Company F, with Captain A. S. Hutchinson commanding. They are recorded as guarding an artillery group in action at Reid's Field. A Southern victory was won and Springfield, Missouri, was momentarily captured. The Arkansas militia retired from the area which was soon re-occupied by Union forces.

After the hostilities ceased at the Wilson Creek (Oak Hill) area, the Arkansas 5th forces were discharged. The roll of the men carried this endorsement: "This Company has been in service under me since the first of July 1861. The Company is now discharged. It has done much valuable service.

Camp near Springfield, Missouri, August 13th 1861,
Ben McCulloch, Brig. Genl. Commanding."

The Davis Blues were to return to Nashville, Arkansas, for reorganization into a new unit. Americus V. Rieff's Company disbanded to re-enlist for the formation of new units.

Jo Holcomb returned to Fayetteville to continue to procure for a large storehouse of food and supplies for the Confederate States Army. His records show that he was an active storekeeper in the employ of Col. T. C. Hindman for ten and one-half days in September 1861. He continued to procure for the Confederate States Army through February 7, 1862, in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

The victory at Wilson Creek was to become a short interlude between the opposing forces. The Federal forces were to concentrate their objectives to protect Missouri. They started amassing troops along the border of Northwest Arkansas under the overall command of General Curtis. The strategy was to capture and control the area relieving threats to the border states.

The Confederacy was busily reorganizing its Arkansas force units under the overall command of General Van Dorn with headquarters at Ft. Smith. Brigadier General Ben McCulloch and General Price were placed under the command of Van Dorn. Many Arkansas Companies of fighting forces were being formed in the area during the fall of 1861.

Family Response

John Holcombe's family responds to the call of duty again. Jo was busily engaged securing supplies for the Quarter Master Corps.

William Henry Holcomb, whose wife is Rebecca (Baker) Holcomb, enrolls in the 15th Arkansas Mounted Infantry of Northwest Company G. It was organized by Captain Richards.

William M. Smiley, husband of Alpha (Holcomb) Smiley, joins an allied unit with William Henry, the 15th Northwest Infantry Company G.

Hiram S. (aka Steve) Bynum, husband of Martha (Holcomb) Bynum, enrolls in the 34th Infantry Company A.

John Howard Holcomb, still a single man, joins 23rd Infantry Company H.

Charles E. Wildes, who had recently married Ellen Holcomb, is inducted into 35th Arkansas Infantry Company F.

Francis Marion Smiley, the husband of now deceased Tabitha (Holcomb) Smiley, enrolls in the 15th Northwest Infantry Company G with his brother William M.

John N. Stafford, husband of Mary (Holcomb) Stafford, enrolls in 6th Arkansas Infantry Company I. He is subsequently substituted for with

an unknown A. J. Milner.

Elihu Holcomb does not seem to be listed among the Arkansas troop rosters. The date that he migrated to Louisiana has not been determined. It is known that he and his first wife are in the 1870 U. S. Census there.

Silas Mercer and George Washington Holcomb are both still minors and are at home with their parents along with their older sister Dorothy.

Other Comrades-at-arms

Evans Atwood, whose family had moved to Shiloh, joined the Shiloh Church March 7, 1851. He became close to the Holcomb family in the ensuing years. He married Lucy Jane Roberts November 6, 1859. They had two children born to them, Martha Jane April 3, 1860, and James Calvin October 2, 1861. During the mobilization of the troops in the fall of 1861, Evans enrolls in an allied unit of William Henry's unit, the 15th Northwest Infantry Company A.

Samuel Pickney Pittman, whose wife is Sarah (aka Sally) (Boone) Pittman, a sister of Cener (Boone) Holcomb (Jo's wife), enlists in the 34th Arkansas Infantry Company K.

Daniel Boone is a brother to Cener and Sally. He enrolled in the 16th Arkansas Infantry Company I with the rank of Captain.

John Crawford had been a colleague of Jo Holcomb since the early 1850's. John had been elected for the 1861-1862 term of the Arkansas State Legislature from Washington County. The legislature voted to call a Convention to settle the question of secession and adjourned. It is not clear whether Crawford was a member of the Convention or not. He appears to have resigned his legislative office. During the last half of 1861 through 1862 he acts as a liaison officer between the military and the Indian Nations. He is later to become an officer in the Confederate States Army.

Union Gains

The main forces of Ben McCulloch and Price reorganized Confederate troops were to face Union armies at Elk Horn Tavern in what is called the Battle of Pea Ridge, March 6, 7, and 8, 1862. The loss of Generals McCulloch, Herbert, Slack, and McIntosh in battle left the Confederate forces in confusion and they were forced to withdraw southward.

The loss of the battle of Pea Ridge left Northwest Arkansas very vulnerable to attack. It seemed prudent to torch the military stores in

Fayetteville, to keep them from falling into enemy hands. This was very demoralizing to the area. Jo Holcomb was to see his past few month's efforts go up in smoke.

Protecting the Family

Jo and Cener Holcomb had a son, William Herbert, born December 17, 1861. As the safety of living in the area decreased, Jo began to plan to remove much of the Holcomb(e) family somewhere to a point of safety. The date of his last official act in Fayetteville was February 7, 1862.

John Holcombe is now sixty-four years old with many of his children grown and married. The political turmoil, and broken families are taking their toll on both of the churches. The West Fork Church holds its last business meeting before the War in December 1, 1860. William Ingram was Moderator with Jones Pierson, Church Clerk. William Ingram has been the main Elder of the church for some time. John was last chosen as Moderator in May 1860.

Shiloh Church members had been facing traumatic problems also. John has been very faithful in ministering to them. The last recorded meeting of the Church until after the War was held January 1, 1862, with John Holcombe, Moderator, A. G. Smith, Church Clerk.

Sojourn to Texas

John Holcombe agrees with Jo to remove the family at home out of harm's way. Sometime in March 1862, they leave the area and travel to Red River County, Texas. John and Dorothy Holcombe are accompanied by Ellen (Holcomb) Wildes, who is with child or has a very young son Charles II with her. Dorothy, Silas Mercer, and George Washington are with their parents. Jo and Cener Holcomb go with them taking their young son, William Herbert. Jo will return to Northwest Arkansas when all of the family is safely situated.

Cener's sister, Sally Boone, married Samuel Pickney Pittman in 1857. Cener was to invest her inheritance in a mortgage for them to buy a farm. It was near the village of Prairie Grove in western Washington County. As the danger grew for all of the County being invaded by Union Troops, Sally became alarmed about the safety of her prize horse. As Jo and Cener travel to Texas, they take Sally's horse with them for its safety. It is possible that the horse was needed for transportation for Cener.

Family letters tell of John N. Stafford returning to Arkansas from Texas

about the 1st of September 1863. Having been substituted for in his military unit in 1861, it is probable that he and Mary made the trip to Texas with John Holcombe in 1862 with two young daughters, Martha Jane and Amanda Mabel.

Early Family Sacrifices

There were many skirmishes throughout Northwest Arkansas during 1862. Bad feelings were harbored between Unionists and the Southern Loyalists. Union military patrols were harassing the countryside and lawlessness was becoming prevalent. With most of the men away from home in their military units, the women folk were having a hard time fending for themselves.

William Henry Holcomb and his wife Rebecca give unquestionable loyalty to the Arkansas cause. As frontier people, they, nor any of the rest of the Holcomb(e) family, had ever dealt in, or supported, slavery. However, they by necessity were caught up in the politics of the day and would give their all to protect homeland.

His discharge from A. V. Reif's Company reads:

This Is To Certify that W. H. Holcomb Served as a 2nd Sergeant in a Independent Mounted Company Designated as Yell Rangers and called into service as a "Spy Company" by Brigadier General Ben McCulloch at Fayetteville, Arks., on the Twenty-seventh Day of June 1861, and was Honorable Discharged near Springfield, Missouri, on the Thirteenth day of August, 1861.

A. V. Reif

Captain Yell Rangers.

As he prepares for his new duties with the 15th Arkansas Mounted Infantry of Northwest Company G, William H. sells 18 bushels of corn at \$.75 each, \$13.50 for the use of Lt. Col. Joseph S. Moon's Battalion Arkansas Volunteers, for which the State will pay.

Rebecca Holcomb is given the following receipt:

Camp Cave Springs, Benton

Co. Ark., Aug. 25, 1862

Received of Rebecca Holcomb one double-barrelled shot gun for the use of Co. & Col. Carroll Rgt. of Ark. Cavalry, valued at twenty-five dollars.

J. Fenn Rieff

A copy of another receipt of note that was given by William Henry that is revealing:

Received at Camp Priceville Sept. 30, 1862 of Lt. A. Mitchell, A. A. 2nd QM the following list of Qtr. Master's Stores

- 35 Thirty-five prs. pants
- 35 Thirty-five jackets
- 25 Twenty-five prs. shoes
- 27 Twenty-seven prs. drawers
- 21 Twenty-one shirts
- 14 Fourteen Caps
- 1 One Coffee Pot
- 1 One small blank book.

William H. Holcomb
Commanding, Co. G.

The last item listed on the receipt is very significant. William H. is to transcribe the letters he receives from Rebecca into the "small blank book." These preserved letters will give us an insight into the travail of the Holcomb(e) family.

The John Holcomb(e) family experienced the first family loss due to the War on December 29, 1861. Francis M. Smiley after being enrolled in his unit was in his home area where he was attacked by "bushwhackers." He ran so hard to his house to get away from them that he became ill and then died of pneumonia. His home at the time was in Section 27 close to Shiloh where he was living with his second wife, Sarah Ann (Norman) (Reed) Smiley.

Charles Wildes probably succumbs to illness when he dies in Little Rock, Arkansas, June 6, 1862. It cannot be said with certainty whether he ever knew his son.

Continued War Involvement

Jo Holcomb spends the summer of 1862 attending to the security of John Holcombe and the family group in Texas.

The beginning mobilization of militias in June of 1861 prompted President F. R. Earle of the Cane Hill College to close the school and lead all of the eligible students into forming a Company of Confederacy troops to serve under Brig. Gen. Ben McCulloch.

After the closing of the College, a dormitory for ministerial students was utilized as a hospital and thus managed to escape the burning of the

other buildings. It is not known just when the other buildings were destroyed but the temporary hospital was in operation by the fall of 1862.

Jo Holcomb's options were limited when he returned to Northwest Arkansas from his sojourn to Texas with his family. He wished to continue applying his skill as a supply officer, but Fayetteville as a supply center had been abandoned. He instead volunteers as a Commissary Officer at Cane Hill hospital as one of a hospital staff of seven. His first act November 14, 1862, is to sell his horse to a CSA Quartermaster for the price of \$135.00, though he was not paid for lack of funds. Other vouchers for goods and services contracted for by Jo Holcomb for the hospital attest to his effectiveness as a staff member in the following days.

Prairie Grove Experiences

The engagement of Confederate States Army under Major General Thomas C. Hindman, commanding, and those of General Blount, commanding Federal forces on December 7, 1862, is known as the Battle of Prairie Grove. It is to be the last major battle in Northwest Arkansas. The Confederate States troops retired from the field at dark while still in charge of their position. Due to lack of provisions and ammunition to continue fighting, Hindman marched his main body of troops towards Van Buren during the night. He negotiated with Blount the next day a truce to care for the wounded and bury the dead. General Blount then retires his army to Camp Rhea's Mill, his headquarters, to end the fighting.

Samuel P. Pittman, the husband of Sally (Boone) Pittman (Cener Holcomb's sister), who was 1st Sergeant in Company I of 2nd Regiment Arkansas Infantry is promoted to 1st Lieutenant for brilliant conduct on the battlefield at Prairie Grove.

Samuel Pittman later tells this story: "The dusk of the evening was coming on, and our regiment was moved from the corner of 'Bordon's Orchard' where we were formed after our last charge and where the hardest fighting of the day had occurred. When we were into the woods about 150 yards away, the order to 'lie down arms' was given with permission to take a rest. We had marched from Morrow's in the morning, fought one of the hardest battles of the war, and were nearly famished for food and water."

"Since I was very close to my home, I was very anxious about my family. It had been several months since I had seen them. I obtained permission to visit them for an hour or two, slung two extra canteens over my

shoulder, and struck out through the woods to my house. When I arrived I found the family well and uninjured but the house had been turned into a hospital. I was soon among the wounded who occupied all of the available space in the building. Among those there I found my 2nd Lt., fatally wounded and 3rd Lt. slightly wounded. Many more of my regiment and some others were receiving treatment. Surgeons were dressing wounds and doing all that could be done for the men. They could not hide their suffering, though I tried to cheer them up by describing events of the battle after they had fallen. I was convinced that we had a victory at hand and would be marching towards Springfield on the morrow. Telling them about the bravery of a special comrade in action raised their spirits."

"Leaving them on an optimistic note, I returned to where my unit was supposed to be. This was a time when ignorance was bliss. As I approached the spot, I expected to be challenged at any moment, but none came. When I saw my gun gleaming in the moonlight, leaning against a fallen tree where I had left it, I knew I was alone. I could even hear the waters of the Illinois River splashing over the rocks to the Northeast."

Realizing that no enemy was near, Samuel was then to retrace the battle in the orchard looking for fallen men and trying to assist them there in the moonlight. Finding three wounded men unable to leave the field grouped under a tree where they had kindled a small fire, he left them the canteens. Two of the men wore the blue overcoats of the Federal army and the other, the gray jacket of the Rebels.

"Being able to hear our army passing over the mountains south, I struck out after them. It was a long and lonely tramp, but I went into camp with the others just at daylight. It was the same ground we had left just twenty-four hours before."

"That morning when I called the roll many gallant fellows failed to answer. From this camp our hardships began and the homes that many of us had left behind that night would see us no more until the end of the war."

Although our subject, John Holcombe, was now removed from the center of these events, this was the world that was beginning to swirl around him and have an influence on his future life.

The aftermath of the battle that began in the Cane Hill area and ended at Prairie Grove completely overloaded the hospital at Cane Hill. The hospital roll dated February 9, 1863, states that there were 222 indexed. This

roll contains the names of the staff and attendants.

Benjamin Franklin Boone, Cener (Boone) Holcomb's first cousin is among the battle casualties, badly wounded. B. F. Boone had been among Jo Holcomb's close business associates in Fayetteville. Jo was able to assist ministering to him until he died, March 1, 1863. Boone executed a will while in the hospital before his death and named Jo Holcomb executor of his estate.

Personnel Changes

During the heavy mobilization of Northwest Arkansas troops in late 1861, the C. S. Armies were organized into a Trans-Mississippi District. After the Prairie Grove Battle most of the troops were shifted to other parts of Arkansas in defense of Little Rock and along the Mississippi River.

William L. Cabell, a West Point graduate, and a brilliant army officer, resigned his Federal commission and joined the Confederate States' cause when the south seceded. He was on duty with General Van Dorn at Ft. Smith, Arkansas, as CQM to General A. S. Johnston at the time of the Prairie Grove Battle. He was appointed Brigadier General PACS January 20, 1863.

John Crawford was appointed to the staff of Brig. Gen. Cabell as Captain, Assistant Quarter Master April 25, 1863. At this time he was in the Fayetteville area. After the battle for Fayetteville April 18, 1863, Federal troops were ordered to fall back to Springfield. Washington County was then left open to Confederate occupation. During the spring and summer both Federal and Confederate troops were largely drawn off towards Vicksburg.

J. Fenn Reif, takes advantage of the Federal troops leaving the area and aggressively enlists men for the Confederate States Army.

Jo Holcomb leaves the post as Commissary of the Cane Hill Hospital after the death of Benjamin F. Boone. Jo enlists as a private in Co F Gordon's Regiment Arkansas Cavalry, CSA on May 10, 1863. He is immediately detailed as an Assistant Quarter Master Clerk to John Crawford. Crawford has just been elevated to the rank of Major. Jo Holcomb will continue in this position until the end of the War.

Battle Front News

The strategy of the Trans-Mississippi District was to concentrate on the

defense of the eastern part of Arkansas. Following the battle of Prairie Grove, General Hindman sheltered his demoralized army behind the Arkansas River opposite Van Buren and tried to reorganize them. He was still there on December 28, 1862, when General Blount dashed into Van Buren at the head of a small mounted force and hastened the Confederate retreat to Little Rock. The march took place in the middle of January with the troops not clad to withstand the snows and rain of winter. With sickness and desertion, Hindman's army faded away. Lieutenant Pittman was to become very ill but completed the march and returned to service.

There is much action by Arkansas units in Mississippi in the spring of 1863 to protect the control of the Mississippi River.

Lieutenant Evans Atwood, in the 15 Northwest Arkansas Infantry Company A, is captured and taken prisoner in the battle of Bayou Pierre near Port Gibson, Mississippi, May 1, 1863. He was first held at Alton, Illinois, and then taken to Johnson Island, Ohio. Atwood is a good scribe and likes to write so we are indebted to him for insights of his experiences. He gives a graphic description of his capture:

"In attempting to remove one of my wounded comrades from the field, in passing down a defile, the enemy appeared in front, they were already in the rear. And seeing no means of escape, I surrendered. My captors treated me as well as I could expect. They allowed me the privilege of taking my wounded comrade to the hospital, then I was moved five miles to the rear where I found several of my command assembled and closely guarded."

Captain William Henry Holcomb, in the 15th Northwest Arkansas Mounted Infantry Company G, is taken prisoner in a battle at Big Black Ridge, Mississippi, May 17, 1863. He also is confined in prison with Atwood at Johnson Island.

Samuel P. Pittman writes a letter home to Sally from Little Rock, Arkansas, January 27, 1863, concerned about his family's welfare saying, "I had hoped that you and our son could have been spared the hardships of war but instead a bloody battle must be fought almost at your very door, your home used as a hospital and your property destroyed." Still he is optimistic about the future of the cause.

It is July 17th before Sally Pittman receives another letter from Samuel and he confesses that he was very ill at the time he wrote her on January 27. He states that his late report to the officers was well received and they

gave him a certificate to that effect. He writes he will send it to her after he can show it to Colonel Brooks. Two days later, July 19th, he adds a postscript to the letter that his unit is moving to Searcy, Arkansas.

It is evident that the Confederate headquarters are going to be located there in preparation for a thrust to be made by the Union troops. General Steele mounts an expedition against Little Rock on August 1, through August 14, 1863.

Soldiers at Home

Rebecca (Baker) Holcomb is to be caught up in all the turmoil of Northwest Arkansas and she responds in a very courageous way. She endures the hardships, the uncertainty and loneliness, stays loyal to the cause, and gives encouragement to others. She is to maintain the home for her four children and keep the farm producing enough food to survive.

The letters that William Henry Holcomb receives from her that he transcribed into the "little blank book" and preserved, contains much information concerning John Holcombe's family during the war period.

Rebecca is to post her first letter to William Henry on September 28, 1863. It reflects that William had gotten a letter through to her on September 20th concerning his fortunes.

Rebecca related the news that his father had gone to Texas and that his family is all with him except Alpha, Mary, and Martha. She states that Martha is living with her. She also related that John Stafford and Mary have returned from Texas about two weeks ago. They report that the Holcomb(e) family are all well in Texas. She also mentions that she has good health and plenty to eat since he left home.

On November 22, 1863, Rebecca writes William again from Benton County. She is concerned that Lucy Atwood has received letters from Evans, but she hasn't heard from him. However, she relates that she is a much greater distance from town. She states that she is now living on the farm that he bought in Benton County and had moved from their home in Shiloh. Rebecca related that she had lost so much while there and was so badly treated that she couldn't stay. She said the old place was a regular camping ground. (It was about one-fourth mile from the central part of the village of Shiloh.) Her brother, Joshua, is living there and cultivating the land. Other news that she included is that she has plenty of meat and bread till harvest if she can keep it; Steve Bynum (Martha's husband) is with Price; John N. and Mary Stafford have gone to Indiana; she

hasn't heard from his folks since the Staffords returned from Texas; Alpha and Mary have their children; all the rest of William's "connections" are all well; and praying that we may remain in good health so we may all meet again soon.

December 1st 1863, Rebecca is answering a letter from William Henry that she had received on October 31st. In general, she repeats the news of her last letter because of the probability of his not having received it.

January 14th 1864, William H. learns that William Smiley was now in Hempstead County with his command and was well. Alpha Smiley also learned that John Holcombe and Ellen had been to visit her husband before he wrote to her. Although it seemed Dorothy is about the same, the family in Texas is in poor health.

William Henry continues to have communication with Rebecca through the summer of 1864. His last letter is dated June 19 and Rebecca's July 18, 1864. Rebecca is to relate that her brother Joshuaway Baker was taken to Springfield by the Federals. Other news she includes is that Evans Atwood's wife Lucy has moved to Fayetteville to live with Dan Howry, a Union soldier. In one of Rebecca's letters towards the end, she laments that they no longer have any preaching on the Sabbath.

In most of her letters she comments on their children, how they are growing up and how much help they are to her.

Atwood Diary Excerpts

In his diary Evans Atwood writes a paragraph concerning a friend:

On Wednesday the 18th of August 1858 there was a Missionary Baptist Church constituted near R. F. Gliddens Stearn's Sawmill in Red River County, Texas by Rev. T. W. Anderson, Rev. Mr. Potts, and others. On that day, Mr. James A. Whitman was set forth as a licensed Minister of the Gospel and on the following Sabbath (being the 4th Sabbath in August 1858) he delivered his first sermon.

This is an important story as John Holcombe had probably heard of it from Evans himself after he had joined the Baptist Church at Shiloh. It is also documentary that John Holcombe found kindred spirits at his home in exile.

Evans' first letter from his sister Harriet Lichlyter is dated July 19, 1863, from Farmersville, Posey County, Indiana. On September 22, Harriet

writes that they have moved to California, Missouri. Her brother-in-law, John H. Lichlyter, sends an enclosure in it mentioning Rebecca Holcomb, and giving Holcomb(e) family news.

On October 3, John Lichlyter answers a letter from Evans saying, "We are glad to receive your letter and to learn you and your friend Holcombe was well and that the 'feds' were treating you well." He goes on to explain that Evans may not have understood him when he wrote Evans before concerning his wife Lucy who was staying all night at Lovings. "She had come to see us before we left and she wanted a cow. I told her to take one of mine and keep it till I returned. She lives at home..."

October 9, 1863, Harriet again writes to her brother. She suggests that since Evans has not heard from Lucy to write her another letter and mail it to Fayetteville. She cautions him to be careful what he writes in it, as the Feds have a post in Fayetteville.

Central news in this letter is: "Old Johnny Holcombe's (as he is affectionately referred to) house is burned, his family is all in Texas except the girls."

A note in the Evans' diary: "February 9, 1864, about 400 officers (Including myself) were taken out of the prison preparatory to our removal to Point Lookout, Maryland."

Washington—State's Capitol

The people of Arkansas were completely fed up with the then Governor Henry M. Rector, in the 1862 election. While on duty with Confederate armies in Tennessee, Colonel Harris Flanagin was nominated and elected Governor to succeed Rector. Flanagin was still in office when Major General Fredrick Steele defeats General Price's defense of Little Rock September 10, 1863.

The seat of Arkansas State Government and all state archives were transferred to Washington, Hempstead County, to keep them out of the hands of the Federals. General Sterling Price set up the Arkansas headquarters for the Trans-Mississippi District in Camden. The headquarters for the commander, General Kirby Smith was in Shreveport, Louisiana. The west side of the Mississippi was fighting alone now without communication with the Confederate Government in Richmond.

It is said soldiers and Generals were everywhere. General Tom Dockery had his headquarters at the Moss Plantation between Washington and Fulton. General Cabell's headquarters were in

Columbus, with his 3000 men. General Marmaduke was at the Jones Hotel in Washington. General Evander MacNair's headquarters were in his own home in Washington. Old Jo Shelby and his daring raiders were out near Blevins.

General Harris Flanagin, Governor, is living in the Oxley home on the southern edge of Washington.

The remaining Confederate armies of Arkansas awaited the expected Federal campaign to attempt to capture the town in the spring of 1864. They spent the winter trying to survive, and preparing for the next battle that was sure to come.

General Steele began his expedition to capture Washington on March 3, 1864. With superior strategy and heroism, the Confederate forces were able to successfully defend the area and by May 3, 1864, were able to drive Steele's forces back into Little Rock in defeat.

The rest of the year was marked by minor forays and skirmishes throughout Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, and into Missouri.

Isaac Murphy was first appointed Military Governor of Arkansas by President Lincoln. He undertook to establish a government of sorts at Little Rock and asked for the return of the Archives.

The leaders of the State persuaded Governor Flanagin to call a legislature September 22, 1864, to try to restore county and municipal government. Some progress was made but it was not effective.

In 1864 Murphy became governor by an election controlled by the Federals and made overtures to heal the breach. After General Lee's surrender on April 9, Flanagin called Mr. Garland home in March 1865 from the Confederate Senate. Garland made the move to seek open negotiations with General Reynolds, commander of Federal forces in Arkansas, to restore peace and order. Garland made the move, but was refused. Flanagin then delivered the Archives to the Capitol in Little Rock and returned to his home in Arkadelphia early May 1865.

CHAPTER VIII

Staying the Course

1865



The Holcombe family regroups in Arkansas, 1865

End of War

After the defeat of the Federal Army under General Steele in the attempt to capture Washington in 1864, life proved extremely difficult for all the citizens of Arkansas. Despite the efforts of both Governors of the divided State to begin to try to restore some law and order, everyone was beginning to suffer.

Not only were the people in Arkansas under a heavy burden, but the Jay Hawkers were beginning to maraud some of the countryside in Texas.

John Holcombe, who was supposed to be removed from these conditions by being in Red River County, Texas, was touched by an incidence of thievery. A letter from Samuel P. Pittman to his wife Sally Pittman, September 12, 1864, related the story, along with some other desires and hopes. It reads:

I wrote to you by several who I think will get home to come out if you could and think it prudent. Holcomb (Jo) promised to bring you out...If you could get out with anything and get your things taken care of at home. I do not think I would let you go back soon. Cener says if you come out that you and she could keep house. She is going to leave her father as he has such a large family to care for.

I never told you anything about Francin (Sally's prize horse). He was stolen from Holcombe (John) in Texas last May by the Jay Hawkers... He got loose from them and went into a neighborhood where he was known. A gentleman took him up and wrote to Holcombe. When I got the letter I sent after him; he cost me \$400 as Holcombe had offered a reward for him... Major Earle is keeping him for me. I will try to keep him in my sight after this. He is not hurt.

I got a letter from Daniel. I told you he had resigned in the infantry and gone to the cavalry. He got a position as adjutant in the regiment of Cabell's Brigade and likes it very much.

The men in the military units that were organized in Northwest Arkansas in 1861 that are still active now appear to all be in the Washington area.

Some changes are made early in 1864 in the imprisonment of William Henry Holcomb and Evans Atwood at Johnson Island, Sandusky, Ohio. On February 9, 1864, Atwood makes an entry in his diary that they are

preparing to remove him and others to Point Lookout, Maryland. There is a record that he was there when he was finally exchanged in 1865.

William Henry is known to have been transferred to Camp Morton, Indianapolis, Indiana, about the date Atwood was sent to Point Lookout. At Camp Morton he met his first cousin, Silas Mercer Holcomb (son of John's brother, Elihu Holcomb), a Union soldier serving as guard of Confederate prisoners. Through Silas Mercer's influence, William Henry was released by exchange. The actual date of his release is not known but it is assumed to be in late 1864.

General Lee is to surrender to General Grant at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9, 1865. On May 2, 1865, General Kirby Smith, commanding troops west of the Mississippi River, called his Generals together at Marshall, Texas, and they made their decision to lay down their arms. General William L. Cabell is not to surrender until June 2, 1865, in Galveston, Texas, after the War was officially over.

The actual dates of discharge and release of the troops has not been researched for this story. In general many of the men simply went home after the order to lay down arms and no military record exists. However, we can begin to relate their experiences as they return home.

Returning Home

John Holcombe seems to remain in Red River County until late fall of 1865. His son, John Howard, is to marry Rhoda Biass in that County, October 25, 1865. John Howard knew Rhoda in Shiloh before he entered the service in 1861. He is known to walk with a limp in later life, but the cause is not known. It is possible that he was injured in the war and might have joined his parents earlier than the end of the war. It is highly probable that John Howard and Rhoda were to accompany John and Dorothy, their daughter Dorothy, Silas Mercer, and George Washington back to Shiloh. There is some evidence that Ellen and her son had returned to Arkansas at an earlier date. John Howard and Rhoda Holcomb's first child, Cener, was born in Washington County, Arkansas.

The circumstances of William Henry Holcomb's return to Arkansas after his exchange is not known. His local activities when back in Arkansas suggest that he probably arrived home in late 1864. Rebecca was still living in Benton County where William had purchased 240 acres from her family after Joseph Baker was deceased in 1859. It was located in the Pleasant Grove area where her father had been minister of the

Pleasant Grove Baptist Church.

William Smiley rejoins his wife, Alpha, and children back in Shiloh when he is released from service. Also, H. S. (Steve) Bynum rejoins his wife Martha, who has been living with Rebecca throughout the War.

John N. Stafford and Mary, who have been in Indiana, return as the family begins to gather back together. Besides the two daughters, Martha Jane and Amanda Mabel, they now have a son, John Pleasant, born December 4, 1864. John N. Stafford is to be the last war casualty of the family. He died of injuries after being attacked by bushwhackers August 28, 1869.

Samuel P. Pittman, as 1st Lieutenant leading Company K 34 Arkansas Infantry, marches his command to Ft. Smith, Arkansas, and surrenders June 12, 1865. His wife, Sally Pittman had not joined him while he was in south Arkansas while still on duty. Being released, he goes back to Prairie Grove to join his family.

Jo Holcomb did not accompany the Cabell Brigade when it was ordered to Texas just before General Kirby Smith called for cessation of hostilities on May 2, 1865. Since Jo was just attached to the Brigade from another unit, it is doubtful he ever gets a discharge.

Cener had made plans to leave her in-laws' home in Texas during the summer of 1864. It is probable that Jo had her set up in housekeeping in Greenville, Hempstead County, Arkansas, before the War's end. Greenville is about 18 miles from Washington and 6 miles from Nashville, the home of the "Davis Blues." It is evident that Jo Holcomb is well established in Greenville early in 1865.

John Crawford is still with General Cabell when he surrenders the Brigade. He and his family will join Jo Holcomb in 1866.

Daniel Boone, brother of Sally and Cener, is also with the Cabel Brigade in Galveston when General Cabell surrenders. Daniel returns to the Richland Community of Washington County, Arkansas, where he and Mildred (aka Millie) (Dodson) Boone establish their home. Millie is the daughter of Elder Thomas Dodson of Drakes Creek Baptist Church, one of John Holcombe's colleagues. Daniel will serve in the Arkansas State Legislature in the future.

Atwood's Return

Evans Atwood was still imprisoned at Point Lookout, Maryland, at the

end of the War. He was taken to Richmond, Virginia, where he was exchanged for his freedom. A description has been written about his return trip to Shiloh, Washington County, Arkansas, which was said to have taken four months.

At the close of the War, Lt. Evans Atwood was exchanged and freed. He stole a horse, rode as far as it would travel, exchanged it for a fresh one he took from another farm, etc., until he finally reached his home in Shiloh, Arkansas.

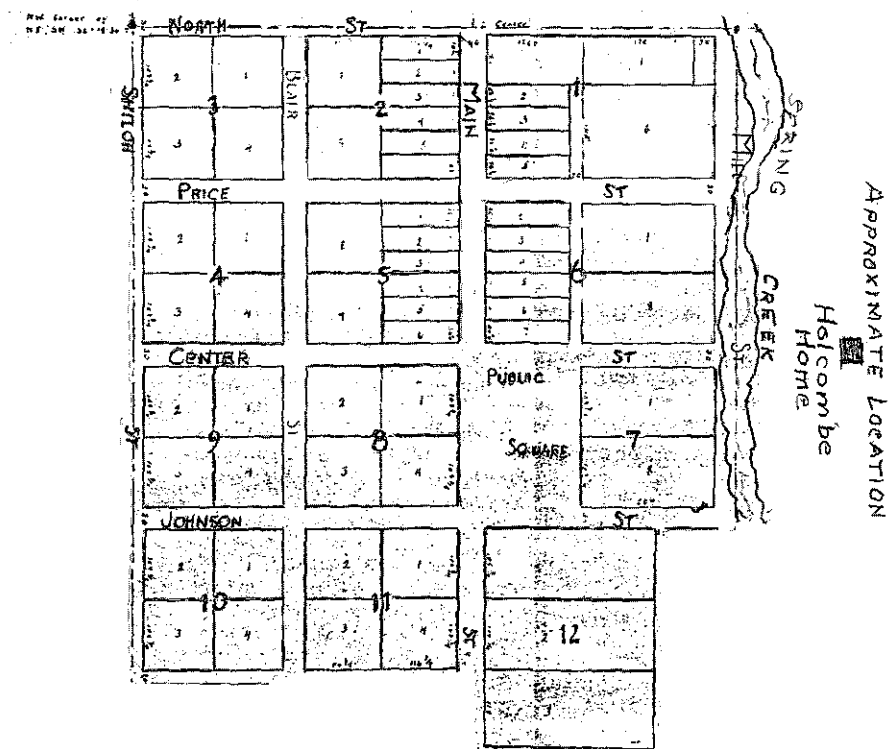
His homecoming was an unhappy one for Lucy had left him for another man, Dan Howry. It is reported that Evans met with Lucy and Howry for a solution to the matter. It was decided that she should leave with Howry. Evans is said to have given Lucy the last stolen horse and she rode out of his life. History tells us that the daughter, Martha Jane, nearly seven years old, remained with her father.

He also faced a second loss. During the War years his son, James Calvin, had died and was buried at the Friendship Church Cemetery east of Shiloh.

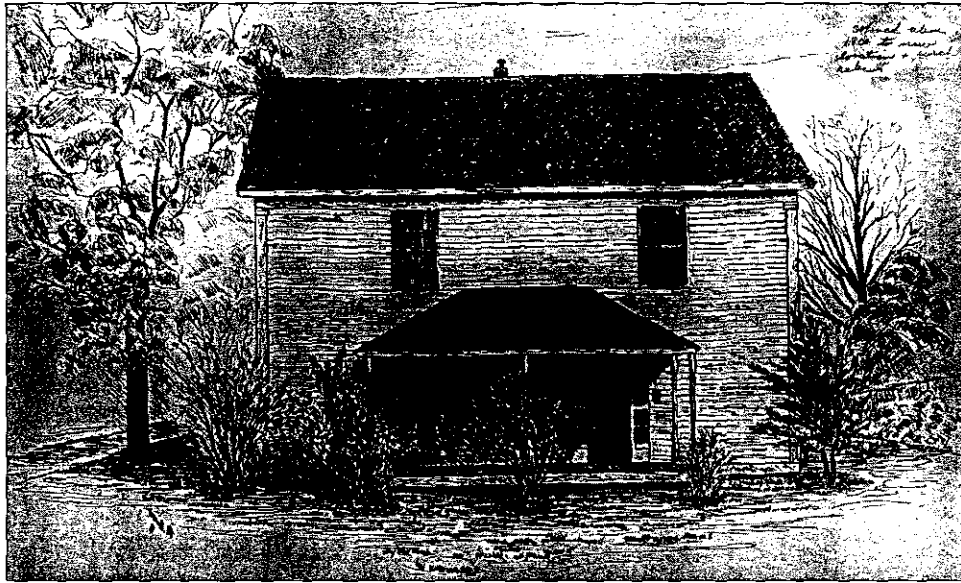
CHAPTER IX

Regaining the Vision

1866-1867



John Holcombe's "Original Plat" of Shiloh, Arkansas



John and Dorothy's new home built in 1868 after the Civil War as it looked after having been moved and the porch partially rebuilt.



Uncle Johnny Holcombe's Everlasting Spring

John Leads Out

John Holcombe is to return to Shiloh to find both his home and the church building burned. Since it is very probable that John Howard and his new bride accompanied the family back to Arkansas, it is speculated that they arrived in Shiloh in very late 1865.

William Henry still had his original property in Shiloh that Rebecca had abandoned to move to Benton County during the War. He and Rebecca sell the Benton County property to her brother, Calvin Baker, the 5th of December 1865. A few days before, November 25, 1865, they had purchased from Calvin 192 acres located two miles east of Shiloh in the Friendship community. This had been the Baker family home before Joseph moved to Pleasant Grove. Calvin had been living in exile in Polk County, Missouri. It is very possible that John and Dorothy make use of William's and Rebecca's property in Shiloh while they build their new house.

Rebuilding the Shiloh Church

John begins at once to gather the surviving members of both his church flocks back together. The first minutes of the Regular Baptist Church of Shiloh after the Civil War read: "The Saturday before the 2nd Lord's Day in April 1866." The business meeting proceeded according to the regular Rules of Decorum. Elder John Holcombe was chosen Moderator for the day and Evans Atwood was appointed as standing Clerk. The church body agreed to continue to hold church meetings as formerly, on the second Saturday and Sabbath of each month.

The original church building had been burned during the War. In the past, members met in homes when they did not have a meeting house. It is supposed that they followed the same practice as the Church regrouped and began making plans for the future. The minutes do not reflect the location, nor those who attended the first meeting. However, it could be expected to have been a sober, yet joyous occasion. There was a very optimistic outlook among the members as they began to settle into a regular meeting routine the next few months.

The August meeting of the Shiloh Church found the body appointing a committee to superintend building a new church house. The committee chosen was Elder J. Holcombe, Hugh Smiley, and Evans Atwood. At the September meeting the Church agreed not to build a log house but a frame house instead. The frame house design was one of 24 x 40 feet, two story

with 12 feet between floors. It was designed for a school house as well as being for their own use. At this September meeting, William H. Holcomb was added to the first building committee. The Church again made provisions for being represented at the annual associational meeting.

Gathering the West Fork Church

John Holcombe met with the West Fork Baptist Church for an initial meeting on the first Saturday of July of the same year. After a worship service, the church received Bro. Hiram Bennett and Sarah Bennett, his wife, by letter. J. Holcombe signed the minutes as Moderator Protem.

This was an encouraging time for the West Fork Community. Their meeting house had also been burned during the War. Evidently agreement was made to begin regular meetings the first weekend in September of 1866 at Mrs. Thomas' house.

John was deprived of the encouragement of his lifelong friend, Reding Putman, for the first time. On September 9, 1865, Reding had finally succumbed to his Black Hawk War injuries, at approximately seventy-three years of age. He had lived to see his beloved nation at peace again.

Members of the West Fork Church met for their first full meeting the first weekend of September 1866 as agreed at Mrs. Thomas'. Elder John Holcombe was chosen Moderator. After routine business, Bro. H. Bennett was elected Clerk of the Church. This was followed by an agreement to build a house for worship at, or near, the place where it had been built before. Stephen Peerson and Hiram Bennett were appointed to attend to the matter. The Church agreed to represent herself in the Association and appointed the Clerk to write the letter. Elder William Ingram, Levi Peerson, and H. Bennett were chosen to bear the letter to the fall Association meeting.

Rebuilding Home

John Holcombe is again facing a new frontier. Although the landscape and surroundings were familiar, the Civil War had forever changed the way of life for everyone. Agrarian communities of log cabins hewn from the forests were to give way to more planned villages with more conveniences.

The Fayetteville Courthouse records had come through the War mostly intact. Land titles had more than one point of registry and were not too difficult to re-establish. Most survey points were still in place and land

was not difficult to reclaim by the returning owners.

The first few months of 1866 were by necessity dedicated to getting their farms back into food production as well as establishing some shelter.

John in considering his options for building his new home, followed the lead of the building committee of the Shiloh Church (of which he was a member) and planned a structure of sawed lumber. He located the building less than 100 yards south from where his first log cabin had stood. It was on the east side of the old road by the Holcomb Spring, called Mill Street.

The new John Holcombe home was a two story structure with four rooms on each floor. The house faced west with a front entryway to the southwest corner room. This room contained a split corner stairway in the southwest corner of that room for access to the second floor. A two-story porch with a slate roof over tin graced the major width of the front of the building. The house was completed in 1868 about the same time as the new school and church meeting house was finished.

Beginning Mineral Springs

Jo and Cener Holcomb made a sizable purchase of land in Sections Eighteen and Nineteen, Township Ten North, Range Twenty-seven West, surrounding the northern and eastern edge of the village of Greenville. Because of late filing of the deed, the actual date of purchase is not available for this writing. The family was well established in that part of Hempstead County by the War's end.

A previous purchase of 260 acres on 25th January, 1866, from Henry H. Hatchet in Sections 17, 18, and 21 would furnish adjacent areas of land for expansion as they launched their project.

The area of Greenville had become the home of some forward looking men in the years before the War. The farmland was very productive and was only a few miles from Nashville, Arkansas, a progressive town center. Jo was attracted to the area because it had not suffered severely from the ravages of the War. Also, Greenville had a good supply of mineral spring water, that was said to have healing powers. With his mercantile business destroyed in Fayetteville, he took advantage of the opportunity to start life anew in helping to develop the village.

Part of his first one hundred seventy-five acres is the North West Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section Nineteen, which he obtained from Elisha Runnels. His next two purchases from C. P. Williams gave Jo

and Cener ownership of most all of the Northeast Quarter of Section Nineteen which would encompass most of the village center as well as its water supply. The deed to the Holcomb's for fifteen acres signed by Mr. Williams also furnishes us with the original place of abode for Jo and Cener. The date of this deed is March 25, 1866, and gives the metes and bounds description along with some exceptions within the tract.

There is the phrase in the deed, "...beginning at a stake fifty feet south of the southwest corner of said Holcomb's shop as it now stands and running thence south...." This places the shop in the extreme southwest corner of the forty acre tract cited above as being purchased from Runnels.

The exceptions withheld in the fifteen acre deed included one acre for a Seminary (Methodist Church) and a Hall (the Masonic Lodge). It also describes around some small lots that Williams had previously sold to Jo on the 1st of January, 1866. These two purchases gave Jo and Cener the impetus to start platting the property into a larger town that they named Mineral Springs. (The town was not officially incorporated until 1879.)

Jo and Cener aggressively began developing a well platted town area and selling property. March 27, 1866, Dr. E. W. McCrary purchased two acres in the northeast corner of the southwest-northeast forty acre tract which would be the corner of Holcomb and McCrary Streets. He moved to Mineral Springs from Center Point and also purchased a lot for an office facing the north side of the Public Square. Sim P. Dillard, an early settler migrating from Laurens County, South Carolina, in 1853, and his family were among the first to populate the town. The original Dillard's General Store still stands facing the north side of the Square and is on the register of historic places. The merchant's store of Holcomb and Crawford could be the building just to the west of Dillards. There was a Dr. Holcomb in Mineral Springs, of no close relationship to Jo Holcomb.

Major John Crawford rejoined his family at Washington upon being paroled after June 2, 1865, and subsequently moved them to Mineral Springs in early 1866. Jo named a major street that paralleled Holcomb Street, "Crawford Street."

A very active Methodist Church, where Jo and Cener were members, stood at the corner of Church and Runnels. The Masonic Lodge stood just to the south of the church. These buildings were on the acre of land originally excepted when Jo bought the 15 acres around them.

Shattered Dreams

Jo and Cener Holcomb were just beginning to have a life together after the War with their now five year old son, William Herbert. Cener was expecting a second child and on June 8, 1867, gave birth to a still-born son. Cener was to survive three more days before she succumbed to the ordeal.

Jo was heartbroken as he had always held her in high esteem. She was known to be a very capable and beautiful woman.

Although Jo had set aside a large tract for a cemetery located on Silas Mercer Street (named for his brother), Cener's grave cannot be found. Maybe future records will reveal it, but it appears that Jo placed his "Queen" in a private grave only to his knowledge.

John's Younger Family

All of the younger John Holcombe family members that had stayed in Texas with him returned to Arkansas in late 1865. Dorothy who has turned twenty-one marries James H. Bynum March 8, 1866, at her parents' home in Shiloh (a researcher states the time to be at four p.m.). It appears to have been a delayed marriage as census and other records give the birth of their first daughter as March 4, 1866.

James and Dorothy Bynum were still living in Washington County, Arkansas, in 1870. They seemed to travel a lot through the years, ending up in Oklahoma as their final home.

Silas Mercer was still living at home or in the Shiloh area when he joins the Shiloh Baptist Church, Saturday night, November 9, 1867. It became a special weekend when William Henry also made a profession of faith at the Sunday morning services the next day.

The best records of Silas Mercer's marriage to Nancy Elizabeth Bingham give the place of marriage as Benton County circa 1867-1868. Nancy was to die giving birth to their son, Porter, probably in 1869. Silas then married Minerva White, November 12, 1870, in the Monitor Community, Washington County, Arkansas.

Silas continues to live in the Shiloh community until after 1874. He later migrates to Big Sandy, Upshur County, Texas, with his wife and children. He is to contact his nephew, William H. Holcomb II, by letter in 1922, lamenting that only he and Dorothy are left of his brothers and sisters.

George Washington Holcomb, John's youngest child to survive, joins the Shiloh Church February 12, 1870. In the Census taken in September of

1870, he is living in the Cane Hill Township, Washington County, Arkansas, P.O. Boonesboro, with W. B. Welch, 41, Physician from Kentucky and Laura Welch, 40 from Alabama. G. W. Holcomb is stated as 19, but his 20th birthday was August 14, 1870.

George W. practiced surgery extensively at Milford, Texas. While there he married Laura Martha Knox April 25, 1875, who was born in Clinton, Missouri, May 7, 1852. He moved his practice to Clinton, Laura's hometown, where they were to live the rest of their lives. George W. passed away September 8, 1898, but Laura lived until July 13, 1938.

Celebrating Good Times

As John Holcombe was enjoying the maturing years of his younger family, he was being very active in the renewal of his community. The membership of the Church was growing, even including the two additional male members of his family, Silas Mercer and William Henry.

William Henry had been very active as a visiting member and had taken responsibility before asking for membership. The Church then recognized his contributions by electing him for Deacon, ordaining him May 19, 1868.

August of 1868 saw the completion of the school/church building. John Pierson, David Savage, and William Henry Holcomb were elected trustees for the deed and church house.

There are always folk tales about the bells that graced the new church and the one following it. It is said that John Holcombe was riding on a steamboat one day on the Red River in Texas and chanced to notice the bell being used on the boat. He expressed a desire to purchase the bell to the Captain, explaining that he needed it for a church that he was planning to build in Northwest Arkansas. The Captain rejected the offer, politely explaining that he could not sell the bell at any price. However, when John reached his destination, he found the bell neatly packed among his possessions. Apparently the good-hearted boat Captain did not wish to make a scene by refusing payment for the bell, but wanted to have it used by a little church.

This bell was mounted in the bell tower when the church was completed. I'm sure its ringing was a joyous sound on that day.

Post-war Financing

The books recording property deeds in early post-war days give us

some insight into the financial woes experienced by people as they again start-up their lives around Shiloh. Probate Court records of Washington County give a more complete accounting of some of the distress and the three accounts below will recite some of John Holcombe's participation in trying to give some relief as well as the consequences of doing so.

Deed Book P, page 545, records a purchase of land in Sections Six and One in Township Seventeen North, Ranges Twenty nine and Thirty West respectively, sold at auction as ordered by the Probate Court. The grantor was the Washington County Sheriff, James W. Carney with John Holcombe being the highest bidder, and grantee.

On February 24, 1866, James L. Carlile, a legally active Justice of Peace of Washington County awarded John Holcombe and A. G. Smith, plaintiffs, eighty-three dollars and sixty-nine cents (\$83.69) from Dan Howry, defendant, for his debt and all costs. The same day John Holcombe was awarded twenty-six dollars and eighty-one cents (\$26.81) for debt damages besides suit costs. The 3rd day of March, 1866, the same Justice awarded Nancy Graham one hundred dollars (\$100) besides costs from the same defendant. The June 22-25, 1866, session of Probate Court ordered the sale of defendant's land at auction by the County Sheriff to pay his incurred debts.

Book Q, page 108, records the sale of the above lands on the 19th of February 1867, by John Holcombe to J. B. Logan. The indenture on the 121.1 acres was for the full purchase amount for a term of two years.

On July 25, 1869, John Holcombe appears to assist Lucy M. Coon in purchasing from him Block #2 of the original plat of Shiloh, naming the corner of Price and Seymore Street.

Family Business Matters

The 1867 tax assessment records show that John Holcombe and his family own or control the greater part of the village Shiloh and the surrounding area. Before the War, John's son, Elihu, had filed for several land patents but had subsequently transferred most of them to other members of his family. The 1867 and following years do not list any local property assessed in his name. The first known transfer of property by him was the East Half of the Southwest Quarter of Section Twenty-seven, Township Eighteen North, Range Thirty West, to Francis Marion Smiley and his second wife Sarah Ann (Reed) Smiley in 1852. The family of Elmyra (White) Holcomb, Elihu's first wife, owned other property in the area and would

take up some of the land. Before leaving the area for Louisiana, Elihu homesteaded more land in Sections Thirty-four of Township Eighteen and Three and Four of Township Seventeen, all of Range Thirty. This latter land was apparently transferred to his father as the 1867 assessments are in John Holcombe's name.

Elihu Holcomb, his wife and family are enrolled in the 1870 Census of Natchitoches, Louisiana, in his household. In 1873, Elmyra Holcomb pays taxes in this area in her own name. Elihu and Elmyra have been divorced by this time. Elihu Holcomb is later found living in Limestone, Texas.

Sarah Ann (Reed) Smiley sells her property in section Twenty-seven near Shiloh and also moves to Limestone, Texas. She is to marry Elihu Holcomb, but they also were to divorce later.

Jo Holcomb is busily engaged in the Mineral Springs project with Cener in 1867 and does not have any land in the Shiloh area listed in his name at this time.

John and William Henry realize the need to coordinate their land activities to make best use of their property in the new era that was being ushered in after the War. On the 28th day of February 1867, William Henry Holcomb gives his father, John Holcombe, complete and full power of attorney over all of his legal and business affairs. This appears to be a move to facilitate the best development of their intermingled properties.

Original Plat

The title "Original Plat" is so named to distinguish the area for legal mapping and location purposes. John Holcombe needed to more accurately describe small land tracts in the village of Shiloh to facilitate orderly sales of new home sites to individuals over a wider area than heretofore.

The description below is the footnote attached to a larger plat of 1881 and amended in 1884 which describes in full how the new village "original plat" of Shiloh is legally laid out in Washington County Court Records (Plat #4-21).

This is to certify that (Shiloh inserted for 1868 date) is located in the Southwest Quarter of Section Thirty-six, Township Eighteen North, Range Thirty West and has for a beginning point the Northwest Corner of the Northeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of the said Section Thirty-six; Running thence south with the west line of said Northeast Quarter of the Southwest

Quarter for the center of Shiloh Street which is 15 feet west of Blocks 3, 4, 9, and 10; and also running from the beginning point 50 rods east to the Northeast corner of said town for the center of Hale Avenue which is 15 feet north of Blocks 1, 2, and 3; and that on the 14th of July, 1868, Blocks Number 1 through Number 12 were surveyed and laid out as designated on the plat as required by law and for the benefit of John Holcombe by William Mitchell (then) the surveyor of the County of Washington.

John Holcombe's new plat will re-establish the original corners of the tracts as described by W. D. Quinton between Main Street, North Street, Holcomb (Johnson Road) and Mill Street (Missouri or Stage Coach Road) of 1843. The 50 rods wide will extend from Shiloh Street to Spring Creek. It will not include the property where John has built his new home. (Note: The land east of Spring Creek is incorporated into a new plat later called Holcomb's Addition by Jo Holcomb).

The first sale of land within the plat (as recorded) was to William M. Blakely April 10, 1867, which would later be designated lots 1 through 8 of Block 6. The deed description carries the metes and bounds description in feet from a point, as laid out in the Shiloh Village. John then sold all of Block 2 to Lucy M. Coon July 25, 1869, as now platted in the original plat.

Jo Perseveres

Jo Holcomb continues working to keep the fledgling town of Mineral Springs growing after the death of Cener.

Major John Crawford, Jo's Commanding Officer of the War, had moved his family to the area of Mineral Springs early in the year of 1866. He became a partner with Jo Holcomb in selling goods in the mercantile business soon after he arrived. Jo had the comfort of a long-time close friend to support him in his period of grief in the fall of 1867.

Jo and Cener had been active together in the Methodist Church since their marriage. Jo had been a member since an early age although he was raised in a Baptist family background. He had also been an active member of the Masonic Lodge since his youth. After Cener's death, Jo had these organizations to support him as he busily gave attention to the town's development.

William Herbert was just five and one-half years old when his mother, Cener Holcomb, died. He was the sole heir of his mother's estate which

existed as a first mortgage on the farm home of Samuel and Sally (Boone) Pittman at Prairie Grove, Arkansas. The mortgage is released as paid in full May 15, 1868. Herbert then participated in the Hempstead County project with his father, Jo Holcomb as his guardian.

Right-of-way Legalities

A deed was filed in Hempstead County, Arkansas, Book U, page 514, by Jo Holcomb and others to John Crawford and reads as follows:

For the consideration of the sum of One dollar, as well as for other valuable consideration we do hereby give grant sell and relinquish unto John Crawford for the use and benefit of the Town of Mineral Springs in the County of Hempstead and State of Arkansas and the public generally all our interest or claim in and to all or any portion of the streets alleys Public Squares or grounds laid out for the use of Masonic Lodge or otherwise marked out for the public good on the Plot of the Town of Mineral Springs we hereby agree that the said streets alleys and squares as mentioned above shall forever be held in trust unto the said John Crawford for him the claims of all persons claiming under us that this deed and relinquishment is made for the benefit of the public and it is hereby understood that the said Public grounds streets alleys etc. as mentioned and laid on the plat of the Town of Mineral Springs as above conveyed but the same must always be kept open and unencumbered free for public highways and other public purposes and shall never be used for any private benefit or controlled by other parties only by any corporation that may be hereafter established.

Witness our seal June 1st 1868

In presence of

R. B. Tyus

M. M. McGuire

A. Douglas

Wm Johnson

Dr. E. W. McCrary & Co

I. C. P. McLendon

J. M. Greathouse

C. P. Williams

John W. Mayar

J. Holcomb

E. W. McCrary

This instrument perpetuated the layout of all public areas Jo had placed in the town plat of Mineral Springs.

Continued Speculation

A public auction of 1,233 acres lying southeast of Mineral Springs with tracts located in Sections Twenty-eight, Thirty-one, Thirty-two, and Thirty-three, Township Ten South, Range Twenty-seven West, is held November 30, 1868. James W. Smith is the public official crying the sale at the courthouse of Hempstead County with Jo Holcomb being the successful bidder. The bulk of the land was grouped approximately two miles south of the plat of Mineral Springs. One hundred twenty acres lay in Sections Four and Five in Township Eleven South. This materially enlarged Jo's holdings in the County.

Jo made a quick sale of 240 acres of the above property in Section 32, on April 2, 1869. He is also successful in making sales of seven more platted tracts by early 1869.

Introduction to Isabelle

Sara Isabelle (Smith) Dupree was the widowed daughter of James W. Smith. The circumstances of Jo Holcomb's introduction to her are not known. However, Isabelle (aka Belle) was a well known person in the areas of the town of Nashville and Washington of Hempstead County.

Mrs. Cener Holcomb along with Miss Amanda Stone, Mrs. T. M. Gunter, Miss Isabelle Moore, Miss Ann Pollard, and Miss Rebecca Stirman presented the Company flag to Company E 1st Regiment Arkansas Confederate Cavalry on October 9, 1861 in Fayetteville, Arkansas. ("The Davis Light Horse").

Similarly, Isabelle Smith, as a beautiful young lady of seventeen, her birthday was January 16, 1844, gave a rousing send off speech and presented the Company flag to the "Hempstead Cavalry" Company H, Second Arkansas Mounted Rifles, as they marched away from Washington in 1861. Isabelle married Thomas C. Dupree December 23, 1863, and they had two children, a daughter Emma B. and a son, James W. Thomas C. Dupree dies circa 1866.

Jo Holcomb at least had the contact with Belle through her father in connection with the land deal in December 1868. Jo and Belle were united in marriage May 20, 1869, at the home of her father in Hempstead County by Rev. F. Holmes.

Planning Their Future

Jo and Belle Holcomb began to liquidate their property as fast as possible in Mineral Springs to begin a new future in Northwest Arkansas.

Their first sale as husband and wife is June 19, 1869. They continue to sell lots in town as well as the larger tracts through the rest of the year and on into 1871. A deed that appears to cover all the property that Jo had purchased as well as any that Belle had in her own right was executed on March 28, 1871. This appears to liquidate their land holdings in Hempstead County.

John Crawford makes his home in Mineral Springs for the next several years. The mercantile partnership that he had with Jo becomes Crawford and Draper in the future.

Returning to Shiloh

The exact details of Jo's return to Shiloh are not known. However, he and Belle experience the birth of their first daughter, Cener Boone Holcomb, May 9, 1870, in Shiloh, Washington County. It is obvious that the couple had to make return trips to Mineral Springs to settle their affairs there.

The 1870 Federal Census enrolls Jo Holcomb as head of a household in the Clear Creek Township, Washington County. Members enrolled are Belle Holcomb, their baby daughter, Cener Boone, Jo's son, William Herbert, Belle's two children, Emma B. and James W. Dupree, and also Belle's brother, Charles Smith. The record places them very near to Jo's father's home if not actually living with him as a separate family.

In an interim period after her marriage, Belle's father passes away. Mrs. Alvancinda Smith, Belle's mother moves to Washington County to spend the rest of her years with her daughter.

CHAPTER X
Triumphal Finish
1868-1876



John Holcombe at his pinnacle

*Shiloh Regular Baptist Church
John Holcombe's Crowning Achievement*



*Building constructed in 1872
Picture of building taken about 1928*

The Trail's Ending

John (Ole Uncle Johnny or Old Johnny) and Dorothy Holcombe are again enjoying their environment of Shiloh. Their new home is back about 200 feet on a beautiful slope facing west, down to Mill Street (the original Old Missouri Road) that follows and crosses the clear waters of Spring Creek. One of the Holcomb Springs is nearby that has furnished water for the community and travelers for decades is still flowing.

The nickname "Old Johnny," as it was affectionately used, was of long usage, back to the Thirties. John was slightly ten years older than Dorothy and soon after they were married she asked him in public, "What on airth are you doing Ole Man?" He was preparing the outside of their log cabin in Illinois for a possible Indian attack. As most frontiersmen, he sported a full beard that is now completely white. His fatherly concern for the welfare of others and energetic leadership made it natural for him to be looked up to by others.

However, John's quick return to Shiloh after the Civil War and his efforts to bring a peaceful life back to his community was anything other than that of an old man. Accepting the change of progress to his community, he adapted to his new frontier.

As John gathered his church communities back together, he encouraged them to have a much broader outlook on ways of living. The log cabin days of yore were disappearing and scattered village communities were becoming small towns. His leadership can first be recognized as he joined with his Shiloh Church congregation in constructing their first new building with planking, or sawed lumber. In like manner, it is to be expected that Dorothy was delighted to have the large frame home in her latter days.

From Village to Town

The platting and recording of the Blocks and Lots of the larger "Original Plat of Shiloh" in 1868 was the beginning of "town." In 1869 John Holcombe quickly began liquidating his outlying farm holdings, but retaining all of his original purchase from William D. Quinton for development. John sold one lot while in the process of development and soon made others available for purchase.

Bennett F. Putman became a figure in the history of Shiloh (later Springdale) in 1869. Bennett was born December 18, 1825, as the seventh child of Reding and Stacy (Combs) Putman. His birthplace was Putman

Township (named for his father), Fulton County, Illinois, where the family lived about a mile from John Holcombe's home at that time. Bennett was slightly over a month younger than Jo Holcomb and they grew up together for their first ten years. Both families moved to Washington County, Arkansas, within a period of three years.

Bennett F. Putman qualified himself as a medical doctor and was to practice medicine in Shiloh. Dr. Putman purchases 275 acres from Jo Holcomb southwest of Shiloh on the 5th of April 1869. The land is located in Sections Two and Thirty-five, Townships 17 and 18 North respectively, Range Thirty West.

Later, on January 8, 1870, Dr. Putman purchases 23 acres from William Henry Holcomb in the Northwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section Thirty-six. This tract was the north part of the 30 acre home site of William Henry when he was first married.

John W. Phillips purchases the remainder of the unsold parts of the above named 40 acres from John Holcombe and William Henry respectively on the same date. Both purchases were made with the intent to plat and subdivide. This was to enlarge upon the "Original Plat" as they were contiguous to it. Some individual homesites were already situated on tracts in the southeast corner of the forty acres.

Major Educational Movement

An article that appeared in the *Weekly Democrat*, September 11, 1869, reporting on a major development in the progress of educational matters for the town of Shiloh, speaks for itself and is quoted in full below.

Shilo, Washington County, Ark.
September 2, 1869

Pursuant to the adjournment of the stockholders of the proposed Shilo High School met for further perfecting their organization. Dr. John G. Shaley was called to the chair, and John W. Phillips was appointed secretary.

On motion of W. H. Holcomb, a committee of three was appointed to draft a plan for building and to ascertain the probable cost, and report the same at the next meeting. The chair appointed the following committee for that purpose: Wm. H. Holcomb, A. G. Smith, and Hugh Smiley.

On motion of Dr. Putman a committee of three was appointed to select a site...The following were appointed: John W. Phillips, Dr. Putman, and A. Lynch...

We are glad to learn that the enterprising citizens of Shilo, Washington County have gone to work to build up a first class school at that place. Shilo will soon become a considerable village, the location is a beautiful one; the water cannot be beat, as it comes from Uncle Johnny Holcombe's everlasting spring, which will supply a good sized town; the country around is settled up with first class industrious honest and hard working farmers and we see no cause why they should not build up a first class school. For the purpose of getting means to build the school house the citizens of Shilo will have a grand mass meeting and picnic on Saturday the 18th inst. Everybody is invited to attend. Major George D. Alexander, Professor Keete and others will address the meeting on the subject of education.

The sequel to this story is the building of the Shiloh Baptist College within the western seven acre area of the land just purchased by Dr. Bennett Putman from William H. Holcomb. The school was financed by the Bentonville Baptist Association that consisted of thirty area churches, one of which was the Liberty Missionary Baptist Church of Shiloh. Lefler and Haney contracted for the brick labor for \$1,800 and Mayes and Son did the carpenter work for \$1,900. The first term was December 1871, with an enrollment of forty pupils who paid \$2.50 per month to attend. The teachers were Reverend L. R. Barnes, Principal; J. R. Adams, Assistant Principal; and Isaac Reed. Subjects taught were spelling, reading, geography, grammar, arithmetic, penmanship, algebra, philosophy, rhetoric, botany, English analysis, with grading on deportment.

The school was to pass through several stages of history until it was torn down and replaced by the present restored Old Central High School building which is listed on the Register of Historic Places. However, the legal survey of the plat of the Putman Addition to Springdale as filed by William Mitchell on the 22nd day of February, 1878, shows the seven acres as College Grounds.

Shiloh to Springdale

The organization of the church at William Graham's in 1840 and the subsequent building of a meeting house began the nucleus of a community. The meeting house built on the property of W. D. Quinton at the intersection of travelways formed a natural small village. The members of the church congregation named their church The Old Regular Baptist Church at Shiloh. Whether the village or the church was first called Shiloh is not

known, but the village as it continued to expand became known as Shiloh.

In continued development of the town, Dr. Putman applied for a post office to be located at Shiloh. Since there was another Shiloh, Arkansas, in Van Buren County, the name was denied. In a search for a new name for the post office, a suggestion came from the wife of one of the town fathers. Mrs. Sarah (Reed) Meek mentioned to her husband, James Meek, that it was a beautiful spring-in-the-dale. (Mrs. Sarah Meek was the widow of John David Reed who located on the Huntsville, later Old Missouri Road, in 1851.) The phrase was shortened to Springdale and was adopted for the town. The credit is sometimes given to Mrs. Meek's daughter, Nannie (Reed) Bench but the Reed descendants give Sarah the credit.

The town officially became Springdale on the 2nd day of May 1872, with the granting of the post office. The post office was opened in Bennett Putman's home located on Lot 1 of Block 10 of the Shiloh Original Plat by John Holcombe. The lot was on the southwest corner of Johnson Street (then known as the Telegraph or Holcomb Road) and Blair Street. The post office remained at this location until 1875 with Putman being the postmaster. Local historian, Bobbie (Byars) Lynch describes the mail service to the area during this era as follows:

"William H. Lovelady became the postmaster in 1876 for one year only. The post office was on the northwest corner of Price and Main Street in a store that Lovelady purchased from James & Margaret (Couch) Goodman, Wm. Henry & Rebecca (Baker) Holcomb, and Henry and Malinda (McGarrah) Hartley in 1870. The mail service of the 1870's was provided by U. E. & E. L. Fisher State Lines which made a circle—north from Fayetteville to Springdale, Bloomington (Lowell today and originally Robinson Cross Roads). Avoca, Pea Ridge, Elkhorn Tavern, Washburn and Pierce City, Mo. The return trip south via Neosho & Pineville, Mo., Cowskin on Elk River, Blake Hotel at Bentonville, Osage Mills, Elm Springs, John Mill, Hewitt's (South of Johnson) and on to Fayetteville. Fisher's fare to Pierce City from Fayetteville cost \$16."

Shiloh Baptist Church Prospers

The completion of the new larger meeting house for the Shiloh Baptist Church in August of 1868 led to renewed spirit for the congregation. Although the official minutes reflect that many letters of dismission were authorized by the Church, it appears in several instances that many of these could be members who had been displaced by the War. A more

active resident membership roll could have been being developed as many new members were joining the Church.

William Henry Holcomb joining the Church in November of 1867 and later being ordained as a Deacon became of great assistance to his father, John. William Henry became the active Church Clerk in December 1867 while the elected Clerk, Evans Atwood, was away from the area of Shiloh.

John Holcombe was also greatly encouraged when his youngest son, George Washington, made his profession of faith and joined the Church, February 12, 1870. Evans Atwood also appears to have returned to Shiloh as he is referred to in the same February minutes. At the June business meeting, Evans is again elected Church Clerk replacing William Henry in that position and becomes very active within the congregation.

The Regular Baptist Church at Shiloh makes a concession to the Missionary Baptist Faith group at their September business meeting in September of 1870. At this meeting they grant the Liberty Missionary Baptists the privilege of holding their regular meetings in the Shiloh meeting house during that fall and winter.

In November the Shiloh Baptist congregation make a decision to sell their meeting house as opportunity offered. They appointed John Quillin, C. Petross, and Evans Atwood as a committee to act as agents for the Church.

The building had been designed and constructed to be used as a school as well as a meeting house. School District # 50 had been using it as a public school since 1868 and was offering to buy the building and lot.

At the Church's regular January 1871 meeting, the committee reports that it had sold the house and that portion of the lot extending out ten feet parallel to the east side of the building. The Church received the report and sanctioned the sale as reported. It also passed a resolution that anyone presenting themselves for membership at the Smith School house would be received. It appears that the Church was making this school house as their meeting place for an interim period. A. G. Smith, William H. Holcomb, and C. Petross were appointed as a committee to draft plans and solicit subscriptions for building a new Church home.

The Building Committee makes intermediate reports of its progress to the Church until the regular June 1871 meeting. At this meeting, the Church empowers the Building Committee to make arrangements with the Masonic Fraternity to build an upper room on the church house for

their special use. The Masonic Fraternity had offered to keep up the repair on the roof as their part of the maintenance of the building. The Church adds Evans Atwood to the Building Committee.

Partnership Meetinghouse

The Building Committee brings a special report to the July 1871 regular meeting of the Church and the subsequent actions taken by the Church reads as follows in the Minutes:

Item A: The Church accepts the propositions of the Missionary Baptist Brethren and the Methodist Brethren who agree to unite with us in building a partnership Meetinghouse. They to furnish one-fourth the means to build the House and to be entitled to one-fourth each of the time to use said house, the Regular Baptists to furnish the balance of the means and be entitled to the rest of the time in the use of the house.

Item B: Curtailed the building committee to two Brethren, A. G. Smith and Evans Atwood who are authorized to make a contract or contracts and agreements in the aforesaid denominations relative to the proper divisions of the time to be set apart for each party and other rules and regulations necessary.

Crowning Achievement

The arrangements made for the means to finance and build a partnership meeting house were the result of negotiation and cooperation of many people. Under the leadership of John Holcombe, the cooperation of the Shiloh Baptist Church with the Liberty Missionary Baptist Church during the fall and winter of 1870 in sharing their meeting house led to the new arrangements.

John's son, Jo Holcomb, was living in Springdale in the spring of 1870. Jo and his family adhered to the Methodist faith. Jo also belonged to the Masonic Order so he no doubt played a large part in bringing the parties together in building the Shiloh church house as a common worshipping place.

The land on which the meeting house was constructed was donated by Elder John Holcombe and his wife, Dorothea. The building was of the same size and design as the second Shiloh Church of 1868 and the new building was completed in 1872.

The bell which topped the new church house was brought to Springdale from Hempstead County by Jo Holcomb in 1870. It was for-

merly used as a plantation bell. The clapper was made from a cannon ball picked up on the Pea Ridge Battlefield and refashioned by J. B. Baggett and R. M. Lichlyter.

The cooperation engendered by the leadership of John Holcombe among the three groups of faith resulting in a common place of worship as well as the Shiloh Church building stands out as a crowning achievement of his many years of dedication to his vocation as a religious leader.

Family Notes

Ellen (Holcomb) Wildes, who had lost her husband during the war years (1862), had been living in Shiloh with her young son, Charles, since the family had returned home. She marries David S. Wagoner about 1869 and they had a daughter, Ella David, born to them June 25, 1870, while they continue to live in Springdale.

John Howard and Rhoda (Biass) Holcomb continued to live in the Shiloh area where their first daughter, Cener, was born October 25, 1868. John Howard presents himself for membership in the Shiloh Church at the August meeting in 1872.

Jo Holcomb became a candidate for Washington County Circuit Clerk in the 1872 elections. This was the year that began the end of "Carpet Bag Rule" after the Civil War. He was elected to the office by a narrow plurality as a Democrat for the 1873-74 term. Jo and Belle purchase a home in Fayetteville May 27, 1873, which was located on Center Street in Block 18. It was on the north side of the street facing the Walker-Stone house where he had boarded as a single man. It is in the same Block to the east of the Ridge house that Jo had once owned.

The new home for Jo and Belle also had an interesting history. A plaque presently mounted on the building reads:

The ante-bellum home was built on land granted to Washington County by an Act of Congress to build a courthouse entitled "An Act for the relief of Fayetteville in the Territory of Arkansas" and signed June 26, 1834 by President Andrew Jackson.

At "Historic Auctions" held July 17, 1837, Lots 6 and 7 upon which the building stands sold to the highest bidder for \$36.

Henry Reiff acquired the title and built the residence the same year. It was used as a commissary by the Confederate Army in

date was close to the completion of the church building.

The 1873 minutes tell us that A. G. Smith and Norman F. Goodrich took alternate duties as Moderator for the Shiloh Church. The traditional electing of delegates to the annual Association meeting for the year placed John Holcombe on the list only as an alternate. This was John's first omission as a full delegate by one of the churches since 1840 at West Fork.

John Loses Companion

Dorothea (Wilbanks) Holcombe, born January 15, 1808, succumbed to the rigors of time at her home, February 17, 1874. She and John Holcombe had been married nearly fifty-one years, when she bore him sixteen children, eleven of whom survived her, all grown. She had been a member of the Baptist Church for forty-five years and had lived in Washington County, Arkansas for thirty-five years.

Dorothea's obituary sums up her life in saying, "She had endeared herself to a large circle of relatives and friends who will sincerely mourn her death."

John was to muster his strength and courage to travel the road to West Fork, to their place of beginning in Arkansas and to fulfill the duties of

Moderator and Pastor April 4, 1874, their second meeting after Dorothea's passing. It is the last meeting of his attendance of the West Fork Baptist Church.

Future for Springdale

The ownership of property around and in the area of the town of Springdale was becoming much more diversified. John Holcombe and William Henry transferred title to several pieces of property through the years 1872 and 1873. They were careful to maintain a consolidated area for the town to expand in. The larger tracts out on the edges of the town center were being purchased with the intention of developing them in the future. However, the platted property was also being purchased, with homes and business houses being built in the town proper.

Jo Holcomb became involved with the sale of Block 11 of the Original Plat, along with some additional land, to trustees of South Methodist Episcopal Church in the fall of 1874 for the future church. Block Eleven would be located on the Northwest corner of Main and Emma Avenue. The Church had previously joined in the building of the joint meeting house with Shiloh Baptists in 1872. It is not clear how Jo had possession of the property at this time as he was later to purchase most of John Holcombe's remaining property October 25, 1875. However, the South Methodist congregation was not to build until 1884.

As John Holcombe became more infirm, he began to help make provisions for more of his children in land sales to them. George Washington Holcomb purchased Blocks 4 and 9 of the Original Plat January 8, 1873.

Mary (Holcomb) Stafford purchased the Northwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter and approximately eight acres off the east side of the Northeast of the Northwest in Section One, Township Seventeen North, Range Thirty West containing about 48 acres. The west eight acres extended the east 40 to cause it to front on the road going south which is now known as Holcomb Street. The purchase took place March 18, 1875.

The next day, March 19, Ellen (Holcomb) Wagoner purchased the East One-half of the Northeast Quarter of the same Section One, Township and Range. The east line of Mary Stafford's property would border with the land her sister Ellen had bought.

Springdale's Growth Planned

Jo Holcomb becomes cooperative with his father in the development of the Springdale area upon his return in 1872. He re-establishes ownership

of some of his former property adjacent to the town proper. He then sold some of the land and held the rest for future growth of the town.

Upon Jo's running for and winning the office of Circuit Clerk of Washington County in 1872, he bought a home and moved to Fayetteville for convenience. He won a second term of office for the years 1875 and 1876. However, not planning to stay in office longer, he again turned his attention to the development of Springdale.

On October 25, 1875, John Holcombe sells to Jo all of his remaining real estate except two tracts to be sold later to other sons. The deed description is extensive and recites a total of approximately 493 acres. This includes John's new frame house of 1868.

Jo and Belle Holcomb sell their home in Fayetteville March 16, 1876, and move back to Springdale. It is assumed that they moved in with Jo's father to support him. Jo becomes very active in bringing Springdale to the stature of an incorporated town.

Jo makes thirty-eight acres available to his brother John Howard in Section Three, Township Seventeen North, Range Twenty-nine West on February 28, 1876. Five days later, John Howard purchases the eighty acres of the East One-half of the Southeast Quarter of Section Thirty-three, Township Eighteen North, Range Twenty-nine West from his father.

On October 4, 1876, John Holcombe is to liquidate the last of his real estate by selling to William Henry Lots 2, 3, 4, 5, in Block One; Lots 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 in Block Six; and Lots 3 and 4 in Block Seven of the Original Plat. The designation of these lots was the same as those laid out by W. D. Quinton in his beginning plat of the village.

William Henry's Future

After William Henry Holcomb was released as a prisoner of war and returned home in late 1864, he and Rebecca were able to begin a very normal life together with their four surviving children: Ellen, Calvin B., John, and William Henry, II. However, John was to die November 9, 1866. They had another son, Thomas Jefferson, born January 14, 1867.

William Henry had been successful in accumulating several land holdings prior to the War and by most standards was fairly well off. He and Rebecca developed a suitable home place early and continued to develop others as circumstances required.

At the gentle urging of Rebecca through the war years to join with her in membership in the Baptist Faith, William Henry was to become inter-

ested in his father's church. When John Holcombe began to revive the Shiloh Church in 1866, William and his war buddy Evans Atwood became two of his strongest supporters. William Henry worked as a visiting member until going forward for full church membership on November 10, 1867. His leadership was recognized by the Shiloh Baptist Church by ordaining him as Deacon May 19, 1868. From this time on, William worked by the side of his father in all of his endeavors, either inside or outside church life.

As the village of Shiloh became Springdale and William had liquidated a large portion of his farming lands, he looked for a new location for his maturing family. He became interested in property five miles west of Springdale lying along and just west of the Elm Springs Road. The property in question had been settled by Lewis Reed around 1850. (Lewis Reed was a brother of John David Reed who purchased land from James Fitzgerald on the Huntsville Road east of Shiloh in 1851.) John B. Henson, Lewis Reed's brother-in-law became guardian of the Reed children after they were orphaned in 1863 when Lewis was killed in the War shortly after his wife had passed away.

John B. Henson petitioned the probate court of Washington County for permission to sell the land at auction for his wards May 1, 1872. The auction took place September 16, 1872, with William Henry being the highest and best bidder. The terms of the sale required down payment of one-fourth of the amount with the balance to be paid in one year at ten percent annual interest. The seller was to furnish a warranty deed upon payment in full by the buyer. John B. Henson was required to post a bond guaranteeing completion of the sale after full payment.

The deed was not delivered and recorded until the 10th day of February, 1876. Whether William Henry had possession of the property before the date of the deed is not known. The property is not assessed for taxes in his name until 1877. Evidently one forty-acre tract of the east side of the Elm Springs Road was traded in the interim. Although it is recited in the deed, it is not on the assessment list in 1877.

The property as assessed consisted of the following areas of approximately 313 acres:

1. The East one-half of the Southwest Quarter of Section Twenty-nine, Township Eighteen North, Range Thirty West.
2. The Northwest Quarter and the North One-half of the

Southwest Quarter except seven acres sold by Lewis Reed out of the South Side of the Northeast 40 acres, in Section Thirty-three of the above Township and Range.

The land became the home places of William Henry I; his son Calvin B. and three of his sons; and his son, William Henry II. These families stabilized the Oak Grove community for many decades.

A Family Estrangement

Silas Mercer became a member of his father's church in 1867 prior to his marriage to Nancy Bingham. After her death in bearing his son, Porter, he married Minerva White in 1870. He and Minerva continued to live in the Shiloh/Springdale area for the next few years. During his years of membership in the Shiloh Church, he held the office of Doorkeeper for a time being appointed at the April 1868 meeting.

At the October 10, 1874, regular meeting of the Shiloh Baptist Church, Silas Mercer is to request the Church to remove the right hand of fellowship from him. This was tantamount to his complete severing himself from the body.

It is known that he moved his family from the area of Springdale soon after this and broke contact with the family for many years. His son, Porter, did re-establish family connections late in the century.

John's Family Settlement

The details of John Holcombe's settlement of his means among his children have to be derived indirectly from the Washington County Courthouse records. John had not made a will and he died intestate. However, the records being referred to are explicit in how he managed his final affairs with his children. It would be several years after his death that such information becomes available. But the look-back, put in context with his dispersion of his property to his children during his latter years, tells us the story.

John's deed furnished to Jo for the purchase of the bulk of his real estate of the town of Springdale contained a lien on the property for \$2000 as part of the consideration for the purchase. A delayed marginal release of the lien dated January 27, 1889, contains a sworn statement by William H. Holcomb. The statement, found in Washington County Deed Book Z, page 60, reads as follows:

I, W. H. Holcomb, one of the heirs under law of John Holcombe, deceased, do state under oath that at sometime in the month of October or November 1876, and before the death of John Holcombe, I was present in making the settlement and division of the estate of said John Holcombe between his children which division was by said heirs, agreed to and accepted as full settlement of their interest in said estate thus satisfying and settling in full the vendors lien mentioned in this deed. This 17th day of January 1889.

W. H. Holcomb

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 17th day of January 1889.

J. P. Scott, Clerk
By Jack Walker, Deputy

This statement was followed by oath by Jo Holcomb:

I, Jo Holcomb, grantee in this deed do state on oath that the statement of W. H. Holcomb is true and the vendors lien herein mentioned has been fully paid off.

Jo Holcomb

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 17th day of January 1889.

J. P. Scott, Clerk
By Jack Walker, Deputy

A single clerical error discovered in the above deed in 1893 clouded the titles of lands being sold. The error was the description of the starting point for a portion of a metes and bounds description. To obtain a clear title, Jo Holcomb had to show the Circuit Court of Washington County that all of the legal heirs of John Holcombe had no proprietary interest in the property.

In the April Term 1894, of Washington County Circuit Court, the Court heard the case of:

Jo Holcomb, Plaintiff	Complaint in Equity
against	
Silas M. Holcomb	
Rueben Smiley and	
the unknown heirs	
of Howard Smiley, deceased	Defendants

The remainder of the family furnished Quit Claim Deeds to Jo Holcomb to present to the Court. A listing of these from the Court Record:

John (Howard) Holcomb	Wm. H. Holcomb
Alpha Smiley	Mary Stafford
E. (Elihu) Holcomb	Martha Bynum
Ellen (Wagoner) Walden	Dora Bynum
George W. Holcomb	

Since the Defendants were unavailable to Jo Holcomb, a judgment in favor of the Complainant by the Court was necessary to change the wording of the deed.

Silas Mercer Holcomb had moved to an unknown location at the time, away from the family.

Rueben Smiley, living in an unknown location and Howard Smiley were the children of Jo's sister, Tabitha (Holcomb) Smiley, deceased.

The judgment in favor of Jo Holcomb only corrected the deed description of land he had legally purchased directly from his father. The willingness of the rest of the family in furnishing quit claim deeds for exhibits in the case further verified the statement made by William Henry of his father's actions in 1876.

Shiloh Church of 1876

John Holcombe's close friend and colleague, Elder A. G. Smith, shepherds the Church as Moderator *Protem* from January through May of 1876. Norman F. Goodrich, who has assisted A. G. Smith in the duties since 1871, continues in the summer and fall months. Evans Atwood, Church Clerk, is supported by William Henry as Church Clerk, *Protem*, at intervals.

The congregation makes a progressive move at their business meeting in the month of July. A resolution was passed that they would request the name "Primitive Baptist" be adopted by the Association this fall.

The recorded minutes do not detail the services of either Saturday or Sunday of their weekend meetings. John was still the official Pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church but it is not known to what extent he was able to preach a sermon throughout the year. However, it would be expected that he would be in attendance of his beloved Church whenever possible. His presence would still be an inspiration because of his dedication to his vocation.

Words of Tribute

Saturday morning, the 9th of December, 1876, a regular Conference date for the Shiloh Church, dawned with the news that its Pastor, Elder John Holcombe, had passed away in the wee hours of the morning.

Arrangements were made quickly to cancel the regular Conference services so that the congregation could pay their respects to their beloved Pastor at his burial services. Elder A. G. Smith would be the closest Brother of the Faith to deliver a eulogy for his colleague. The Holcomb(e) family was greatly honored in that regular Church Conferences had never been cancelled before for such an occasion.

The words that Elder Smith spoke have to be taken from a press release that was published over his name. The one quoted below appears to have been taken directly from his sermon.

IN MEMORY OF JOHN HOLCOMBE

By A. G. Smith

According to dispensation of Providence we were called to witness the death of our aged but very highly esteemed citizen and dearly beloved brother, John Holcombe, who departed this life on Saturday morning, the 9th inst., after three short days confinement to his bed.

Elder Holcombe was a native of South Carolina, and was born December 10, 1797. He emigrated to Kentucky when but a youth, and shortly after to the State of Indiana, where, at the age of 25 years, he married a lady by the name of Dorothy Wilbanks, on the 24th day of July 1823. They becoming one flesh were the parents of 16 children, 11 of whom are surviving, and are noted for their honesty, industry and economy; and to those qualities are added benevolence, soberness and truth. All these, wielded by superior ability, make them ornaments to the best society.

Elder John Holcombe professed a hope in Christ before he was married, and joined the Regular Baptist church in southern Indiana, and in the Salem Association. Afterwards he moved to Fulton County, Illinois, and commenced preaching in the bounds of the Spoon River Association. [In the year 1839] he emigrated to Washington County, Arkansas, was ordained as an Elder, and set apart for the work of the West Fork church of Regular Baptists in the year 1840. In the year 1840 he [helped] constitute the Shiloh Church upon 14 members, and the Lord, through him making his labors efficient, it was increased to 124 members, he being a pastor

from its constitution until his death. Thus he labored in the ministry in the vineyard of the Lord for over 40 years, in season and out of season always abounding in the work of the Lord, preaching some of the time to four churches, riding 80 miles per week, and never asking or ever receiving a single dollar for all his services. Repentance and free salvation through Christ, feeding the sheep and feeding the lambs, and calling on sinners to turn to the Lord, were his delightful themes. He was an able defender of the truth, and was noted for his clear conception of Baptist discipline and Baptist order, and when unhappy differences were looming up he was always called on to repel the gathering storm. He organized many churches, ordained many Elders and baptized a great many persons, while all the time the Lord prospered the labors of his hands in the accumulation of money and goods and gave him a benevolent heart, so that he contributed freely to the erection of churches and school houses, maintaining association and feeding the poor and needy generally. He was admired by all for his integrity, his firmness, and the tenacity that he displayed in contending for and practicing out the doctrine and discipline of the Primitive Baptist, never having belonged to any other organization, never faltering under the pressure of the isms of men.

Thus he lived and thus he died, one day before his 79th years, closed in the triumphs of a living faith; and we say that he fought a good fight, he finished his course, he kept the faith, and is now wearing the crown that is laid up for all them that love His appearing. Let his many acquaintances say that he has gone to shine forth in the kingdom of his Father. Let his brethren say amen, for he has ceased from his labors, and his works follow him. Let his sisters rejoice and be glad, for great is his reward in heaven. Let his children weep not as they would weep for those that have no hope, but let them press onward and upward with unyielding zeal and devotion, until they shall all be gathered Home, and, as one family, sing the new song forever and ever.

The Last Footprint

John Holcombe was laid to rest originally in the small graveyard that was next to the original and second Shiloh church meeting house. He was buried by the side of his late wife, Dorothea Holcombe.

The old Holcomb Cemetery on the west side of town had not been properly planned and maintained and had been abandoned. In later years a larger cemetery was opened in the north part of Springdale named Bluff Cemetery. Some years afterwards, for the city's convenience, the graves

contained in the Shiloh Church location were transferred to Bluff. John and Dorothea's remains were exhumed and re-buried in Bluff among others of the Holcomb(e) clan.

Thus ends the Odyssey of a Nineteenth Century American Pioneer.

Conclusion

The story is more than one about the travels and life of a person. It is a story that personifies the American pioneer settler of the nineteenth century. The men who by their courage, industriousness, faith, and character helped forge the nation that in the true sense of the word we call America. This is the legacy that we inherit from the person of John Holcombe, and others like him. Their lives still live on.

APPENDICES

Appendix A- Charts of the Relationships of Family,
Friends, Acquaintances, and Persons
Affecting the Life of John Holcombe
Mentioned Within each Chapter

Appendix B - Outline Descendant Tree Showing
Children and Grandchildren of John
Holcombe

Charts of Relationships of Family, Friends, Acquaintances,
and Persons Affecting the Life of John Holcombe
Within each Chapter

Chapter I - The South Carolina Start

John's Family

John Holcombe	James Mercer I
+Eleanor (unknown)	+Ann Jones
Joel Holcomb	Silas Mercer
Harmon Holcomb	++Sarah Simmons
Jeremiah Holcomb	Thomas Mercer
+Mary Mercer - - - - -	Mary Mercer
Asa Holcomb	
Benjamin Holcomb	
Hosea Holcomb	
Henry Holcomb	
Enos Holcomb	
Patsy Holcomb	
Jeremiah Holcomb	
John Holcombe	
Elihu Holcomb	
Catherine Holcomb	
Benjamin Holcombe	
Jonathan Holcombe	
Jeremiah Holcombe	

Putman Family Friends

Barnet Putman
Labon Putman
+Elizabeth (Betsy) Young
Daniel Putman
Reding Putman

Chapter II - The Kentucky Trail

John's Immediate Family

Jeremiah Holcomb
+Mary Mercer
Asa Holcomb
Benjamin Holcomb
Hosea Holcomb
+Mary (aka Polly) (Lee) Cook
Eliza Cook
Henry Holcomb
+(unknown) Strickland
Henry Holcomb II

John's Uncles & Cousins

Zacheriah Holcomb
Joel Holcomb
John Holcomb(e)
Harmon Holcomb
Thomas Holcomb
Daniel Holcomb
+Malinda McKinney

John Holcombe's Odyssey

Enos Holcomb	Holcombe Relative
Patsy Holcomb	(Exact relationship unknown)
+Caleb Holcum	
Dempsey Holcomb	Abner Holcomb
Jeremiah Holcomb	William R. Holcomb
John Holcombe	
Elihu Holcomb	
Catherine Holcomb	

Future Related Families

Bennett Combs	
+Dolly (Unknown)	
Verlinda Combs	
+Abraham Duff	Rueben Woolbanks
Jane Combs (?) - - - - -	+Jane Combs
	Dorothea Woolbanks
	William Woolbanks
	Stacy Woolbanks

Close Friends & Fellow Travelers

Barnet Putman	John Barnett
Daniel Putman	J. Hightower
Thomas Putman	Skeltons
Ezekiel Putman	Stricklands
Labon Putman	

Kentucky Civic/Community Leaders

Matthew Lyon	Robert Patterson	William Prince
--------------	------------------	----------------

Chapter III - Pathway to Indiana**John's Ancestral Family**

John Holcombe	
Richard Holcombe III	
Benjamin Holcombe	
+(not named)	
Johnathan Holcomb	
+(not named)	William Sherry
Esther Holcomb - - - - -	+Esther Holcomb
Joseph Holcomb	Green William Sherry

Grimes Holcomb (first cousin
to the above)

John Sherry
+Martha (Reaves) Goodwin
Malinda Goodwin

John, His Brothers & Family

Asa Holcomb	Rev. Alexander Devin
+Lucy Devin - - - - -	Lucy Devin
Alexander Holcomb	+Asa Holcomb
+(unamed)	++John Flenner
Katherine Holcomb	James Devin
+(unknown) Fairbanks	
Benjamin Holcomb	
+Margaret Downey	
++Lydia Patten	
Hosea Holcomb	
+Mary (aka Polly) Cook	
Eliza (aka Nancy) Cook	
Henry Holcomb	
+(unknown) Strickland	First Cousin
Henry II	
Enos Holcomb	John Holcomb
Jeremiah Holcomb	
+Elizabeth (Unknown)	
John Holcombe	Holcombs of Unknown
+Dorothea Woolbanks (aka Wilbanks)	Relationship
Sarah Holcomb	
Elihu Holcomb	Mary Holcomb
+Eliza (aka Nancy) Cook	Tabitha Holcomb

Family of Friends

James Barnet	
+(not named)	
John Barnet	
+(not named)	
Nancy Barnet (RW's 2nd wife)	
+Rueben Wilbanks (aka Woolbanks)	
Thomas Putman	
+(not named)	
John Putman	
Barnet Putman	
+(not named)	
Laban Putman	Dolly Combs
Daniel Putman	Verlinda Combs
+Prudence Skelton	+Abraham Duff
Lavina Putman	Elizabeth Duff
Hazeal Putman	+Elijah Putman

+Isabel Combs	- - - - -	-Isabel Combs
Reding Putman		
+Stacy Combs	- - - - -	-Stacy Combs
Elijah Putman		Rachel Combs
Thomas Putman		+Abraham Dilbach
William Putman		
+Allie Bridges		

Elisha Strickland, Sr.
 +Dycea (unknown)
 Elisha Strickland, Jr.
 +Patsey Sherry
 Mary Strickland (?)
 Elijah Strickland
 Stephen S. Strickland, Sr.
 +Elizabeth Skelton
 Stephn S. Strickland, Jr.
 +Edy Grimes
 Elizabeth Strickland
 +James Combs

Acquaintances & Neighbors of John

David Banta	John Hightower	Tabitha Reaves
Jacob Banta	Alex Johnson	Daniel Reaves
Abigail Birchfield	Henry Manning	William Shaw
Catherine Burchfield	Leah Manning	Sid Shaw
Larkin Burchfield	Joseph Manning	Edy Shelton
James Cockram, Jr.	Polly Miller	James Shelton
Joseph Combs	John Miller	Isaac Strickland
Esquire DePriest	Patsy Peerson	Rebecca Taylor
Abraham Duff		William Taylor

Chapter IV - The Illinois Frontier

John's Immediate Family

John Holcombe
 +Dorothy (aka Dorothea)
 Joseph Holcomb
 William Henry Holcomb
 Tabitha Holcomb
 Elihu II Holcomb
 Alpha Holcomb
 Mary Holcomb

John's Other Relatives

Elihu Holcomb (brother)
 Hosea Holcomb (brother)
 Catherine Holcomb
 Elizabeth Holcomb
 Icypeny Holcomb
 Abner Holcomb (unk. rel.)
 Nancy Holcomb (unk. rel.)
 Sarah Holcomb (unk. rel.)
 Tabitha Holcomb (unk. rel.)

Putman Family Members

Ralph Skelton
 +Mary Skelton
 Prudence (Skelton) (Putman) Keys
 Lavina Putman
 Hazeal Putman
 +Isabel Combs
 ++Mary Baker
 Reding Putman
 +Stacy Combs
 Delila Putman
 +John Rizley
 ++Phebe Stelle
 William Putman
 Elijah Putman

Strickland Family Members

Brothers
 Elisha Strickland, (Jr.)
 +Edy Strickland
 Elijah Strickland
 Cousin
 Stephen S. Strickland (Jr.)

Sherry Family Members

Green William Sherry
 +Delila Ingram
 John Sherry
 +Stacy Woolbanks

Levi Combs Family Members

Dolly Combs
 Verlinda (Combs) Duff
 Levi Combs (?)
 +Sarah Arrington - - - - - Mary Arrington (Mrs. John)
 Ethelburt Arrington - - - - - Sarah Arrington
 +Hannah Pierson

Church Friends of Gibson County, Indiana

Melissa Ashley	Larkin Burchfield	Nancy Duff
Martha Bass	Mary Burchfield	Polly Ann Taylor
William Bass	Mary Combs	Reding Taylor
Abigail Burchfield	Catherine Duff	

Early Settlers & Friends of Illinois

Asiel T. Ball	Hiram Fellows	Absolom Maxwell
Samuel Baughman	John Goforth	James McCan
Tyrun M. Childs	David Haacke	Levi Millard
Landrian Eggers	Seth Hilton	John Miller
Bird W. Ellis	Joseph Ingram	Mary Miller
Levi D. Ellis	Susan Ingram	Priscilla Miller
Jeremiah Farris	William Ingram	John Muier
Joseph B. Farris	John Logan	John Pierson
		Sally Ann Pierson

Various Military Men of the Black Hawk War

Chapter V - Two Beckoning Trails**Holcomb Family Members**

Hosea Holcomb
 Elihu Holcomb
John Holcombe
 +Dorothy Woolbanks - - - - - Dorothy Woolbanks
 Rueben W. Holcomb William Woolbanks (aka Wilbanks)
 +Eliza Ann (Pierson) Wilbanks
 Jane Wilbanks

Sherry Family Relations

Martha (Reaves) (Goodwin) Sherry
 John Sherry (step-son)
 ++Elizabeth Reaves

Other Friends

Larkin Burchfield William Pierson
 Stephen Strickland, Jr. Eliza Ann (Pierson) Wilbanks

Chapter VI - Arkansas Land of Opportunity**John's Family**

Benjamin Holcomb
 Hosea Holcomb
 Henry Holcomb
 Enos Holcomb
 Patsy Holcomb
 +Caleb Holcomb
 Dempsey Holcomb
 Jeremiah Holcomb
John Holcombe
 +Dorothy Wilbanks - - - (brother) - - - - -William Wilbanks
 Joseph (aka Jo) Holcomb* +Eliza Ann Pierson
 +Cener Boone** Joseph Baker
 William Henry Holcomb +Rhoda Baker
 +Rebecca Baker - - - - - Rebecca Baker
 William Holcomb
 Rebecca Holcomb
 Martha Jane Holcomb
 Tabitha Holcomb
 +Francis M. Smiley - - - - - ++Sarah Ann (N.) Reed
 Margaret Smiley

Margaret Smiley
 Rueben Smiley
 John Howard Smiley
 Elihu Holcomb, II
 +Elmira White
 Alpha Holcomb
 +William Smiley
 Mary Holcomb
 +John N. Stafford - - - - - John N. Stafford
 Pleasant Stafford
 +Margaret Reed
 Rueben W. Holcomb
 Martha Holcomb
 +Steve Bynum
 John Howard Holcomb
 Ellen Holcomb
 +Charles Wildes
 Dorothy (aka Dora) Holcomb
 Silas Mercer Holcomb
 George Washington Holcomb
 Catherine Holcomb
 Frances S. Holcomb
 Elihu Holcomb
 Catherine Holcomb

*Jo Holcomb Business Partner: Stephen K. Stone
 Mary Amanda Stone

****Boone**

Polly Boone
 +T. W. Frost
 Sarah (aka Sally) Boone
 Cener Boone
 +Jo Holcomb
 Daniel Boone
 Cousin: Benjamin Franklin Boone

John's Fellow Travelers From Illinois

Joseph Ingram	John Pierson	Reding Putman
Susan Ingram	Martha Pierson	Thomas Putman
William Ingram	Sally Ann Pierson	William Putman
Prudence Keys	George Putman	Green William Sherry
John Miller	James Putman	Edy Strickland
Mary Miller	Lavina Putman	Elisha Strickland
Priscilla Miller	Phebe Putman	Stephen Strickland

Early Settlers, Church and Business Associates

Mathew Arbuckle	Sally Graham	I. T. Pollard
John Arnett	William Graham	William Poston

Evans Atwood	Brother Jackson	William D. Quinton
Simeon Atwood	Jesse Keller	Gilford Ratcliff
John Barnes	F. E. Lacey	John Reed
Eli Bloyd	Brother Lamar	William Robinson
William Bloyd	Grabiell H. Loving	John G. Scarbrough
Thomas Brinson	J. D. Loving	A. G. Smith
John Crawford	W. W. Lucas	Sneeds
Thomas Dodson	John Lynch	J. W. D. Taylor
James Fitzgerald	Mahala Lynch	Dr. Wade
John Fitzgerald, Jr.	William D. Mahuron	Samuel Wheat
Fords	Elizabeth Mayfield	Wolfs
N. F. Goodrich	James Mayfield	John Wood
Berry D. Graham	McGarrahs	Robert Young

Chapter VII - The Civil War Years**John's Family****John Holcombe**

+Dorothy Wilbanks
 Joseph (aka Jo) Holcomb
 +Cener Boone*
 William Herbert Holcomb
 William Henry Holcomb
 +Rebecca (Baker) Holcomb - - - - - (brother) Joshua Baker
 Tabitha Holcomb
 +Francis M. Smiley - - - - - ++Sharh Ann (Norman) Reed
 Elihu II
 Alpha Holcomb
 +William M. Smiley
 Mary Holcomb
 +John N. Stafford
 Martha Jane Stafford
 Amanda Mabel Stafford
 Martha Holcomb
 +Hiram S. (aka Steve) Bynum
 John Howard Holcomb
 Ellen Holcomb
 +Charles E. Wildes
 Charles Wildes, II
 Dorothy Holcomb
 Silas Mercer Holcomb
 George Washington Holcomb

***Cener Boone's Family**

***Cener Boone's Family**

Sarah (aka Sally) Boone	Boone Cousin
+Samuel Pickney Pittman	
Cener Boone	Benjamin Franklin Boone
+Jo Holcomb	
Daniel Boone	

Shiloh Church Friends

William Ingram	Lovings	Jones Pierson	A. G. Smith
Evans Atwood			
+Lucy Jane Roberts - - - - - ++Dan Howry (Union Soldier)			
Martha Jane Atwood			
James Calvin Atwood			
Evans' sister: Harriet (Atwood) Lichlyter			
Harriet's brother-in-law: John H. Lichlyter			

Confederate Sympathizers

Col. Brooks
 Brig. Gen. William L. Cabell
 Maj. John Crawford
 Gen. Thomas Dockery
 F. R. Earle, Pres. Cane Hill
 College & Troop Organizer
 Col. Harris Flanagan, Gov.
 of Arkansas
 Rep. Conf. States, Mr. Garland
 Gen. Herbert
 Col. Thomas C. Hindman
 Capt. A. S. Hutchinson
 Gen. A. S. Johnston
 General (Robert E.) Lee
 Gen. Evander MacNair
 Brig. Gen. Ben McCulloch
 Gen. McIntosh
 Gen. Marmaduke
 Lt. A. Mitchell
 Maj. Quartm. W. M. Montgomery
 Lt. Col. Joseph S. Moon
 General Price
 Ark. Gov. Henry M. Rector
 Recruiter J. Fenn Rieff
 Capt. Americus V. Rieff
 Old Jo Shelby
 Gen. Slack
 Gen. Kirby Smith

Gen. Van Dorn
 Judge David Walker

Union Sympathizers

General Blount
 General Curtis
 Ark. Gov. Isaac Murphy
 General Reynolds
 Maj. Gen. Fredrick Steele

Chapter VIII - Staying the Course**John's Family****John Holcombe**

+Dorothy Wilbanks

Jo Holcomb

+Cener Boone*

William Henry Holcomb

+Rebecca Baker - - - - - (father) Joseph Baker

Tabitha (Holcomb) Smiley

+Francis M. Smiley

Alpha Holcomb

+William M. Smiley

Mary Holcomb

+John N. Stafford

Martha Jane Stafford

Amanda Mabel Stafford

John Pleasant Stafford

Martha Holcomb

+H. Steve Bynum

John Howard Holcomb

+Rhoda Biass

Cener Holcomb

Ellen (Holcomb) Wildes

Dorothy Holcomb

Silas Mercer Holcomb

George Washington Holcomb

***Boone Family Members**

Sally Boone

+Samuel P. Pittman

Cener Boone

+Jo Holcomb

Daniel Boone

+Mildred (aka Millie)
Dodson

Millie's father:

Rev. Thomas Dodson

Elihu Holcomb (I)

+(not mentioned)

Silas Mercer Holcomb

Family and Church Friend

Evans Atwood

+Lucy Atwood - - - - - ++Dan Howry

Martha Jane

James Calvin

Civil War Military Leaders**Coonfederate**

Gen. William L. Cabell,

Maj. John Crawford

Gen. (Robert E.) Lee

Gen. Kirby Smith

Union

Gen. (Ulysses S.) Grant

Gen. (Frederick) Steele

Chapter IX - Regaining the Vision**John's Family****John Holcombe**

+Dorothy Wilbanks

Jo Holcomb

+Cener Boone

William Herbert Holcomb

Infant Holcomb

++Isabelle (Smith)* Dupree**

Cener Boone

William Henry Holcomb

Joseph Baker

+Rebecca Baker - - - - - Rebecca Baker

William Henry II

Calvin Baker

Tabitha Holcomb--deceased

+Francis Marion Smiley - - - - - ++Sarah Ann (Norman) Reed

Elihu Holcomb II

+Elymra White

++Sarah Ann (Norman) (Reed) Smiley

John Howard Holcomb

+Rhoda Biass (New bride)

Dorothy Holcomb

James W. Smith*

+James H. Bynum

+Alvancinda Smith

Silas Mercer Holcomb

Isabelle (aka Belle)

+Nancy Elizabeth Bingham

(Smith) Dupree**

Porter Holcomb

+Thomas C. Dupree

++Minerva White

Emma B. Dupree

George Washington Holcomb

James W. Dupree

+Laura Martha Knox

Charles Smith

Shiloh/West Fork Churches**John's Post-war Financing**

Evans Atwood

William M. Blakely

Hiram Bennett

James L. Carlile

Sarah Bennett

James W. Carney

William Ingram

Lucy M. Coon

Levi Peerson

Nancy Graham

Stephen Peerson

Dan Howry

John Pierson

J. B. Logan

Reding Putman

W. D. Quinton

David Savage

A. G. Smith

Hugh Smiley

Mrs. Thomas

Jo Holcomb's Mineral Springs Associates

Major John Crawford
 Sim P. Dillard
 A. Douglas
 J. M. Greathouse
 Henry H. Hatchet
 Dr. Holcomb
 Wm. Johnson

John W. Mayer
 M. M. McGuire
 Dr. E. W. McCrary
 I. C. P. McLendon
 Elisha Runnels
 R. B. Tyus
 C. P. Williams

Chapter X - Triumphal Finish**John's Family**

John Holcombe (aka Ole Uncle Johnny)

+Dorothea (aka Dorothy) Wilbanks
 Jo Holcomb
 ++Belle (Smith) Dupree
 William Henry Holcomb
 +Rebecca Baker
 Ellen Holcomb
 Calvin B. Holcomb
 John Holcomb
 William Henry II
 Thomas Jefferson Holcomb
 Elihu Holcomb II
 Alpha Holcomb
 +William Matthew Smiley
 Tabitha Holcomb
 +Francis M. Smiley
 Rueben Smiley
 Howard Smiley
 John Howard Holcomb
 +Rhoda Biass
 Cener Holcomb
 Mary (Holcomb) Stafford
 Martha (Holcomb) Bynum
 Ellen Holcomb
 +Charles Wildes
 Charles Wildes
 ++David S. Wagoner
 Ella David Wagoner
 +++Rev. James Walden
 Dora (aka Dorothy) Holcomb
 +James H. Bynum

Putman Family Associations

Reding Putman, Sr.
 +Stacy (Combs) Putman
 Dr. Bennett F. Putman
 ++Phebe Stelle
 Dr. Reding Putman, Jr.

Silas Mercer Holcomb
 +Nancy Bingham
 Porter Holcomb
 ++Minerva White
 George Washington Holcomb

Reed Family Associations

John David Reed
 +Sarah Reed - - - - - (Sarah's ++) James Meek
 Nannie (Reed) Bench
 Lewis Reed - - - - - (brother-in-law) John B. Henson

Church Associates

Evans Atwood
 Hiram Bennett
 Tommie Dodson
 Norman F. Goodrich
 William Ingram
 Stephen Peerson
 Dr. Reding Putman II
 Henry Reiff
 A. G. Smith

Shiloh Community Associates

J. R. Adams
 Evans Atwood
 J. B. Baggett
 Rev. L. R. Barnes
 V. E. & E. L. Fisher
 James Fitzgerald
 James & Margaret Goodman
 Henry & Malinda Hartley
 Leflar & Haney
 R. M. Lichlyter
 William H. Lovelady
 A. Lynch
 Mayes & Son
 William Mitchell
 C. Petross
 John W. Phillips
 Dr. Bennett F. Putman
 John Quillin
 Isaac Reed
 Dr. John G. Shaley
 Hugh Smiley
 A. G. Smith

Outline Descendant Tree Showing Children and Grandchildren of John Holcombe

- 1 John Holcombe b: December 10, 1797 Union County, SC d: December 9, 1876 Springdale, AR
 - +Dorothea Woolbanks b: January 15, 1808 Warren County, KY m: July 24, 1823 Gibson County, IN d: February 17, 1874 Springdale, AR
 - 2 Sarah Holcomb b: April 30, 1824 Gibson Co., IN d: July 30, 1824 Gibson Co., IN
 - 2 Joseph Holcomb b: November 2, 1825 Fulton County, IL d: August 19, 1904 Fayetteville, AR
 - +Cener Boone b: March 14, 1839 Bedford County, TN m: December 12, 1860 Fayetteville, AR d: June 11, 1867 Mineral Springs, AR
 - 3 William Herbert Holcomb b: December 17, 1861 Fayetteville, AR d: December 24, 1893 Fayetteville, AR
 - +Ida Ellace Latimer b: November 20, 1866 Benton County, AR m: December 10, 1885 Springdale, AR d: February 3, 1951 Tulsa, OK
 - 3 Infant Holcomb b: June 8, 1867 Mineral Springs, AR d: June 8, 1867 Mineral Springs, AR
 - *2nd Wife of Joseph Holcomb:
 - +Sarah Isabelle Smith Dupree b: January 16, 1844 Hempstead Co., AR m: May 20, 1869 Hempstead Co., AR d: May 30, 1898 Springdale, AR
 - 3 Cener Boone Holcomb b: May 9, 1870 Springdale, AR d: August 8, 1954 Fayetteville, AR
 - +Edward F. Ellis m: September 4, 1900
 - 3 Robert Bruce Holcomb b: October 1, 1873 Fayetteville, AR d: December 23, 1924 Fayetteville, AR
 - +Mary Crawford b: November 4, 1870 Cane Hill, AR m: June 25, 1901 d: March 12, 1909 Fayetteville, AR
 - *2nd Wife of Robert Bruce Holcomb:
 - +Daisy Young m: July 17, 1912 Fayetteville, AR d: April 21, 1963
 - 3 Jobelle Holcomb b: February 5, 1877 Fayetteville, AR d: July 26, 1962 Fayetteville, AR
 - 3 George Roy Holcomb b: March 24, 1883 d: 1958
 - +Lelia Johnson b: 1893 d: 1939
 - 2 William Henry Holcomb b: October 28, 1827 Fulton Co., IL d: September 22, 1890 Alma, AR
 - +Rebecca Baker b: October 4, 1829 Friendship, TN m: July 30, 1847 Shiloh (Springdale), AR d: March 17, 1904
 - 3 William Holcomb b: May 17, 1849 d: May 17, 1849 Shiloh (Springdale), AR
 - 3 Rebecca Holcomb b: July 20, 1850 Shiloh (Springdale), AR d: July 20, 1850 Shiloh (Springdale), AR
 - 3 Martha Jane Holcomb b: August 18, 1851 d: October 25, 1853

- 3 Ellen Holcomb b: March 25, 1854 d: June 19, 1892
- +Benjamin Franklin Deaver m: October 11, 1874
- 3 Calvin B. Holcomb b: November 7, 1856 d: May 28, 1926 Springdale, AR
- +Margaret Elizabeth Huffmaster b: February 21, 1853 Rogersville, TN m: February 8, 1877 d: April 4, 1923
- 3 John Holcomb b: July 9, 1859 d: August 9, 1866
- 3 William Henry Holcomb II b: October 29, 1861 d: June 22, 1935
- +Mary Augusta Givens b: December 2, 1865 Providence, KY m: October 24, 1883
- 3 Thomas Jefferson Holcomb b: January 14, 1867 d: December 10, 1923 DeWitt, AR
- +Mae Bell Williams m: March 7, 1889
- 2 Tabitha Holcomb b: June 27, 1829 Fulton Co., IL d: January 27, 1852 Shiloh (Springdale), AR
- +Francis Marion Smiley b: August 18, 1825 Bedford County, TN m: July 30, 1846 Shiloh (Springdale), AR d: December 29, 1861 Shiloh (Springdale), AR
- 3 Margaret J. Smiley b: June 11, 1847 Shiloh (Springdale), AR d: July 17, 1948 Shiloh (Springdale), AR
- 3 Margrey J. Smiley b: June 16, 1847 d: June 17, 1848
- 3 Reuben Tillman Smiley b: January 27, 1849 d: 1913
- +Lucinda Jane Sherrod b: April 11, 1848 Washington Co., AR m: September 7, 1870 Washington Co., AR d: March 6, 1922 Limestone, TX
- 3 John Howard Smiley b: November 30, 1851 d: November 24, 1889 Big Hill, Limestone Co., TX
- +Luraney Davis
- 2 Elihu Holcomb b: June 10, 1831 Fulton County, IL d: Aft. 1889 Probably Limestone, TX
- +Elmyra White b: 1831 Lauderdale, AL m: August 23, 1850 Shiloh (Springdale), AR d: Abt. 1873 Nachitoches, LA
- 3 William Holcomb b: 1851-1852
- 3 David Holcomb b: 1853-1854
- 3 Rhoda Holcomb b: 1857-1858
- +Male McQueen
- 3 Dorothy Holcomb b: 1862-1863
- 3 Wilson C. Holcomb b: 1867-1868
- *2nd Wife of Elihu Holcomb:
- +Sarah Ann (Norman) (Reed) Smiley b: February 28, 1853 Bedford County, TN m: 1879 Limestone, TX d: October 3, 1899 Limestone, TX
- 2 Alpha Holcomb b: April 7, 1833 Fulton Co., IL d: November 20, 1910 Bentonville, AR
- +William Matthew Smiley b: January 18, 1833 Bedford County, TN m: December 11, 1853 Shiloh (Springdale), AR d: September 19, 1907 Elm Springs, AR
- 3 Joseph Holcomb Smiley b: October 6, 1854 d: March 16, 1914 Near Springdale, AR
- +Etta Linebarger m: November 8, 1887
- 3 Dorothy Smiley b: December 9, 1856 d: 1923
- +Cyrus (aka Tobe) Stearns m: November 1, 1904

- 3 Tabitha Smiley b: July 2, 1866
- +George Harris m: March 18, 1888
- 3 James Barnett Smiley b: December 18, 1868 d: July 25, 1892
- 3 John Lewis Smiley b: May 24, 1874 d: April 15, 1930
- +Ruth Webster m: June 2, 1894
- 2 Mary Holcomb b: April 28, 1835 Fulton Co, IL or Gibson County, IN d: October 21, 1901 Springdale, AR
- +John N. Stafford b: December 13, 1838 AL m: November 5, 1857 Shiloh (Springdale), AR d: August 29, 1869 Shiloh (Springdale), AR
- 3 Martha Jane Stafford b: August 8, 1859 d: January 18, 1946
- +Lafayette Beasley
- 3 Amanda Mabel Stafford b: February 8, 1862 d: June 20, 1896
- +E. F. Ellis
- 3 John Pleasant Stafford b: December 5, 1868 d: September 24, 1933 Springdale, AR
- +Lena Southwick Claypool b: December 28, 1861 Bowling Green, KY m: November 18, 1888 d: November 20, 1902 Springdale, AR
- 2 Ruben W. Holcomb b: July 4, 1837 d: November 30, 1851
- 2 Martha Holcomb b: April 14, 1839 Gibson Co., IN or Washington Co., AR d: January 31, 1920 Big Sandy, TX
- +Steve Hiram Bynum b: Abt. 1838 m: May 31, 1860 Shiloh (Springdale), AR
- 2 John Howard Holcomb b: June 23, 1841 West Fork, Washington Co., AR d: Abt. 1919 Probably Apache, OK
- +Rhoda Biass b: July 16, 1850 Shiloh (Springdale), AR m: October 15, 1865 KulliTuklo, Red River, TX d: December 12, 1907 Stuart. Hughes, OK
- 3 Cener May Holcomb b: October 25, 1868 d: October 3, 1938
- +Owen Allen Seeds
- 3 Belle Dora Holcomb b: March 16, 1871 Shiloh (Springdale), AR d: October 3, 1941 Springdale, AR
- +James Franklin Lynch
- 3 Stephen Hiram Holcomb b: January 10, 1873 d: March 2, 1913
- +Sydney Elizabeth Ellington (aka Dollie) m: August 18, 1901
- 3 Matilda Bertha (aka Tildy) Holcomb b: July 18, 1875 d: 1938
- +James R. Reeser m: April 7, 1895
- 3 William Thomas Holcomb b: January 3, 1878 Springdale, AR d: September 3, 1960 Springdale, AR
- +Cora Bell Ladd b: September 27, 1870 MO m: February 23, 1899 d: February 26, 1938 Springdale, AR
- 2 Ellen Holcomb b: February 13, 1843 West Fork, Washington Co., AR d: Aft. 1904 Franklin Co., AR
- +Charles Wildes b: Abt. 1842 Rhea County, TN m: Abt. 1861 d: July 6, 1862 Little Rock, AR
- 3 Charles Wildes b: 1861-1862 d: Aft. September 1890
- +Molly Scott

- *2nd Husband of Ellen Holcomb:
 - +David Solomon Wagner (Wagoner) b: 1843 Franklin, TN m: Abt. 1869 Shiloh (Springdale), AR d: Bef. July 26, 1875
 - 3 Ella David Wagner b: June 25, 1870 d: June 7, 1948
 - +John Henry Mansfield
- *3rd Husband of Ellen Holcomb:
 - +Walden (Rev.) James b: Abt. 1843 m: March 17, 1886 Locksburg, AR d: February 28, 1895 Clarksville, AR
- 2 Dorothy Holcomb b: July 2, 1845 Shiloh (Springdale), AR d: 1938
 - +James Henderson Bynum b: March 2, 1845 Tennessee m: March 8, 1866 Shiloh (Springdale), AR d: Aft. 1900
 - 3 Mollie D. Bynum b: March 4, 1866 d: January 20, 1953 CA
 - +James Thomas Clegg m: August 16, 1885 Abilene, TX
 - 3 Martha Emma Bynum b: May 15, 1868 d: July 31, 1950 Talequah, OK
 - +William Henry Henson m: July 29, 1886 Crawford Co, AR
 - 3 George Bynum b: Abt. 1871
 - +Female Johnson
 - 3 Robert Bynum b: Abt. 1873 d: Aft. 1900
 - +Alice M. Unknown
 - 3 Fannie Bynum b: February 1878 d: Aft. 1900
 - 3 John William Bynum b: February 1878 d: Aft. 1900
 - +Cassie E. Watkins
 - 3 Samuel Bynum b: May 1880
 - 3 Ellen S. Bynum b: August 1882 d: Aft. 1900
 - 3 James H Bynum, Jr. b: May 1885 d: Aft. 1900
- 2 Silas Mercer Holcomb b: June 23, 1847 Shiloh (Springdale), AR d: Aft. 1922 Big Sandy, TX
 - +Nancy Elizabeth Bingham b: Abt. 1849 Rhea, TN m: 1866-1867 d: Bef. November 1870
 - 3 Porter Holcomb b: 1868-1869 d: Aft. 1922
- *2nd Wife of Silas Mercer Holcomb:
 - +Minerva White b: December 30, 1841 Monitor Community, east of Shiloh m: November 12, 1870 Shiloh (Springdale), AR
 - 3 Lee Holcomb b: Abt. 1871
 - 3 John Holcomb b: 1874
 - 3 Charles Holcomb b: 1876
- 2 George Washington Holcomb b: August 14, 1850 Shiloh (Springdale), AR d: September 8, 1898 Clinton, MO
 - +Laura Martha Knox m: April 25, 1875 Milford, TX
 - 3 Georgia Holcomb b: April 5, 1876 Milford, TX d: Aft. 1898 St. Louis, MO
 - +George Beatty
- *2nd Husband of Georgia Holcomb:
 - +Howard Esterbrook

..... 3 Benson Holcomb b: Abt. 1878 d: Aft. 1894
..... 3 Leona Holcomb b: Abt. 1881
..... 3 Clara Holcomb b: Abt. 1888
..... +Unknown Rentchler
..... 3 William Holcomb b: Unknown d: Calhoun, MO
.... 2 Catherine Holcomb b: July 15, 1852 d: July 15, 1852
.... 2 Frances S. Holcomb b: August 31, 1853 d: September 15, 1853

About The Author



The author, Herbert Holcomb (on right) studying a family scrapbook with his grandson, Joseph Holcomb

Herbert was born September 30, 1922, in the Oak Grove Community located between the towns of Elm Springs and Springdale. Many descendants of John Holcombe had settled in this area and several continue to live there. After graduation from Springdale High School, Herbert chose to join the Navy to further his education.

Soon afterward the United States was drawn into World War II. Herbert's assignments to various ships and training schools provided him the opportunity to see the world and to gain expertise in the field of electrical engineering.

During one assignment he was stationed near Washington, D. C. where, during his off-duty time, he searched out other Northwest Arkansas natives. Soon he began to spend more time with one of them, Henrietta Kimbrough, who on April 20, 1946, became Mrs. Holcomb.

When his Naval enlistment was completed, they returned to Northwest Arkansas to attend the University of Arkansas. Herbert completed a B.S. in mathematics, an M.S. in education administration, and a B.S. in electrical engineering. The variety of his experience and training provided him the skills to be employed successfully for twenty-five years with Southwest Electric Power Company as an engineer and ten years as an educator: four in public schools and six in Northwest Arkansas Technical Institute, a post-secondary school.

As were his great-great grandfather John, his great grandfather Joseph, and other relatives, Herbert has been fascinated with real estate transactions and development. While a SWEPCO engineer, he designed the relo-

cation of power lines necessary for the opening of Beaver Lake. As a "side-career" he developed two major sub-divisions, one now in the Fayetteville City limits and the other in Gentry, Arkansas. To share his knowledge of the subject he published a pamphlet, "The Use of Land Records In Genealogical Research." This provided the basis for several presentations he made to genealogical societies.

The Holcombs became the parents of three children, two daughters and a son. They used the traditional Holcomb name, John, for their son and he used another, Joseph, for his son. John is now deceased and in his memory the family established the Christian Education Memorial Foundation. The endowment is administered by the Rolling Hills Baptist Church where Herbert and Henrietta are active members, both having served terms as deacons.

Another reminder of the Holcomb support of education is the Fayetteville Public School Board naming Holcomb Elementary School to recognize Henrietta's thirty-four years as an educator.

Since retirement the Holcombs have done research in many sites, tracing the ancestry of Herbert's branch of the Holcomb(e) family to the immigrant from Wales to the New World. This book is an outgrowth of their study and contains many of their findings.