

# The Autobiography of William T. Harvey

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I was born in Spartanburg District, South Carolina, Nov. 1, 1826. My father's name was John Harvey. My mother's name was Elizabeth Bryant, and from this union they raised nine girls and four boys, as follows, from memory, not record: Nancy, Moses, Missouri, Polly, Louiza (sic.), Henry, Melissa, Emiline, Wm. T. Harvey, Firinity (or Franettie?), Altimira, Jane and Tolleson.

Grandfather Bryant's name was Rubin (sic.). Grandmother Bryant I don't remember. I was at Grandpa Harvey's funeral--was so small, [I] don't remember his name. [Records show it was John Harvey.]

I remember Uncle Alfred Bryant and his wife Aunt Polly. Uncle Thomas Bryant, Uncle David Bryant, Uncle James Bryant and wife. Uncle Ely Bryant and wife, Uncle John Bryant and wife, Uncle Berryman Bryant and wife, Uncle Wright Kirby and Aunt Sarah Harvey Kirby, Uncle Hal Harvey and wife, Uncle Josphe Harvey and wife.

All the relatives referred to except Uncle Alfred's and Uncle Wright's lived in South Carolina. They lived in Tennessee.

In 1836, my brother Moses [Harvey] married Miss Nancy Stone, and they, with his father-in-law's family, moved out to Carrol County, from a distance of 500 miles . All travel those days was by team, and of course more or less correspondence followed. In the fall following, Moses [Harvey] came back to visit and to assist Father in selling out and moving to Tennessee. So the great bulk of our relatives were left in South Carolina. I was ten years old at this time, 1836. I lived with my parents until 1850.

At this time there was great excitement over the discoverey of gold in California in 1849. Dr. (Berryman) Bryant from Memphis, Tenn. In company of 25, had crossed through Mexico to California in a pack train. Bryant opened a Hospital in Sacramento city and later in the fall, he cam back by way of Panama, and came to Father's to visit us and to get me to come to California across the plains the next Spring.

His plan was to pay the way of 50 men to California for one half of what they would earn the first year here in California. He said if I would get two messes, 6 men to a mess, that it would not cost me anything, so I agreed to his offer and had the men engaged long before time to start,-- could have had twice the number.

Finally he notified me when his party would be at Hickman, Kentucky. Hickman is a Steamer landing on the Mississippi [River] below St. Louis; so when we met he gave me a purse of \$1,000.00 and sent a man with me. He told me to go among the farmers and buy all the mules I could with the money. We took the leaders of our 4 and 6 mule teams. He said they would be in St. Louis, but when we got to St. Louis, I got a letter telling me to come to St. Joseph.

We had 12 mules on the steamer and there was such a rush to California, the captain of the steamer said he would take passengers for St. Jb., so he landed us safe. Bryant was well pleased. Some of the mules were worth \$500.00 a span in Sacramento city.

Arrived in Sacramento city the 12th of August, 1850, to learn the sad news that my Father had died suddenly a few days after my leaving home. For the first four years in California, I mined, teamed and kept hotel.

Then I met a beautiful young brunette lady just in off of the plains, with her mother, brothers and sister. Her father [had] died on the plains. Her name was Jane P. Walker--from Independence, Missouri. We married in Contracosta County, Calif. On Jan. 1, 1854 and next New Year she was buried from Quick Consumption,--[she] left a sweet little girl one month old, with its grandmother. It lived and grew fine, but at 9 months died suddenly from Spinal Meningitis.

In 1858, I met Nettie's mother and we were married in 1859. Mrs. Hannah Lawrence Harvey lived until 1879, when she died from a long lingering siege of dropsy. We had three children, Edward E. Harvey, Mrs. Nettie Modie and Mrs. Wm. F. Harvey.

In 1881, I was married to Mrs. Elizabeth Polk of Indianapolis, Indiana. She lived to 1902, died in Salinas City from pneumonia. We had one son, Walter Tolleson Harvey. He died at seven years from spinal meningitis.

In retrospect of my past life, I don't claim perfection, but my wish is to do as I would like to be done by. I am glad to think and know that I never wronged anyone wilfully and knowingly with intent. If I have an enemy, I don't know it, and I may have very few friends, yet I rejoice in the great sacrificial atonement made for salvation of the human race. I have great hope of the joys that await faithful Christians. God is not slack concerning his promises, but commandeth all men everywhere to repent and be saved.

Mrs. Nettie Harvey Modie and Charles C. Modie raised two children Ethel and Edna Zyl Modie. Ethel met an accident when she was about 12 years old. She fell from a buggy and struck her head on the hard pavement of the street. The results was her death in 1903. And Edna--what can I say about the dear sweet girl? As she is my only grandchild, it puts her in a class by herself. Oh, how I would have loved to have had the two sisters for grandchildren. But God works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform. While there are thousands of highly gifted and accomplished women in this city, dear Edna seems to me to stand out without a pier (sic.), sole and alone and how my heart goes out for her safety and welfare.

(Signed) Wm. T. Harvey

Editor's Note: William T. Harvey died in Los Angeles, California on August 30, 1915 at the home of his daughter, L. Janette Harvey Modie (Mrs. C. C.) who is the "Nettie" above. The typescript from which this was taken, was prepared by Edna Zyl Modie from the handwritten original. A note appended to the text states that Miss Modie was born in 1886 and "has been a resident of Claremont Manor, Claremont, Calif., since Jan. 1, 1955".