

John Humphrey
by Jane H. Adams (1)
additions by
Maud McClatchie Odd (2)

Grandfather, John Humphrey, son of William Humphrey and Nancy Stephens, was born 13 February 1824 in Walton County Georgia. John's ancestors were strong, handsome, well built men. Very patriotic, and fearless in defense of their country's righteous principles, John's great (?) grandfather in the revolution, and was made a member of the "Society of Cincinnati", under George Washington. He and his son, William, were given land grants in Rowan County, North Carolina after the war, and moved there from Georgia during the Indian Wars they helped to carry the Indians back to the Reservations in Florida (John D. Humphrey's Book). They had a land grant in Georgia in 1838. John was a fine woodsman noted for his skill with an axe, so he was invited to all building, or "Raising" as they called them. They always furnished liquor at these gatherings and it made him want to fight, so the supposition grew that he was Irish. He was called out in the Spanish Alarm, and served some time on a ship.

It seems that the Murphys and the Humphreys were always friendly. Richard Bradford Humphreys, John's brother, married Meriam Murphy, and they moved to Atlanta where Richard B. had a blacksmith shop. He was a very cultured, educated man. John Humphrey courted, and married Agnes Elmina Murphy, a younger sister of Meriam. They moved to a land grand near Rome, Georgia, Floyd County.

Agnes Elmina came from the wealthy family of Simon Peter Murphy, and Rebecca Harris. She was a talented musician with a fine contralto voice, and played the Zither. She was very well skilled in sewing and weaving. She was also a fine horse back rider, and owned a fine thoroughbred riding horse and rode side saddle. She often took her three little boys on the horse with her, and rode 18 miles to see her mother on the old plantation near Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Besides farming, John Humphrey panned gold along the rivers near his home at the time he was living in Alabama. He moved back to his farm when the Civil War broke out, and the country was divided. He had no slaves and did not believe in slavery, but believed in supporting the South. He enlisted in the Confederate Army. His wife, Elmina, spun the yarn, dyed and wove the cloth, and sewed the uniform by hand. It is said that for every stitch she sewed she shed a tear. His wife was left home with 6 children, 5 boys and 1 girl. The boys tried to run the farm and help her. When Sherman's Army came through the soldiers raided the house, cut open the feather bed, took her silver ware, and keepsakes and killed and ate their only cow in their door yard.

When John came home from the war he was paralyzed with rheumatism from exposure, a tree had fallen on him injuring his back. He was never fully able to walk again, and he felt very bitter because the negroes were turned loose to roam the country with no jobs, and many without food and home. Women and girls were not safe any where. For their protection the men organized the Klu-Klux-Klan, but white renegades - called carpet baggers, followed seeking to take advantage of the people. John Humphrey served as a Judge at these trials to keep law and order. One night a band of horsemen rode into the yard and called out in a loud voice, "Hello There!" Grandfather went to the door and they told him there was a company of Union Soldiers camped on the banks of the Chattanooga River, and no one would be the wiser if they were to

ride over and throw them in. Grandfather refused to give them permission, saying they were banded together to protect their women and children, not to commit acts of crime and violence.

On the 2nd of August 1865 they had a son born whom they named John Wilkes Booth. It is said he received presents from allover the south, and when they went into a store to buy shoes the owner would say, "If they are for John Wilkes Booth, they are free of charge." Of course, the boy grew up to say he was named after the meanest man on earth, and tried to drop everything but John -- his father's name.

The story of Joe and Rebecca watching the soldiers go by in their famous march to the sea is told in her history. She has also related stories of how they used to go to the neighbors place through the dense piney woods, lighting their way with a torch held high over their heads. After the war was over the woods were full of negroes because they had no homes nor masters, and no place to go. Often the Humphrey brothers would come and tell their mother there were some boys out in the woods nearly starving to death and Grandmother would send out food for them to eat.

Their oldest son, Richard, went to Atlanta to live with his Uncle Richard Bradford Humphrey, where he worked in the shop and did odd jobs to pay for his board while he went to high school or academy.

They were visited by Jesse Murphy of Mill Creek, Utah, who was a missionary for the L.D.S. Church. Richard Miles Humphrey, his uncle and aunt R.B.H., and many others were converted and baptized May 3, 1868 in Atlanta, Georgia. Richard went home to tell his family he had joined the Mormons and was going to Utah. His brothers, and friends teased him about getting fifteen wives, etc., but his mother was pleased and made him a fine suit of clothes from some cloth she had in the loom. James Daniel Murphy had sold his property, and paid transportation for 23 people, (relatives) to go to Utah. Richard was to pay for his board by helping with the children, and baggage, and after he came to Utah worked for them to pay back his fare. They came by flat boat on the rivers to Saint Louis, then on the train to Rawlins, Wyoming. Richard M. and Sally walked behind bob sleighs in the tracks made through the deep snow arriving down Echo Canyon, February 2, 1869. They were called the last company of pioneers.

Things did not improve in the south. The old soldiers came for miles around to bring presents for Booth, played cards and drank. It worried Grandmother who was a good Christian Methodist. She made her boys promise never to drink or play cards. Seeing no hope for better times, or conditions, they sold their property and came to Utah to live. Richard drove a team to Salt Lake to meet them. He had rented a house from Brother Lemon, at Mill Creek. This was in March 1871, and in May of the same year they were all baptized into the L.D.S. Church in Mill Creek Ward.

The next year in the winter they had a lot of sickness, but in the spring they moved to a house on the bench. Richard bought a team and with his brother Thomas Griffin, and James Daniel Murphy rented a farm and got along very well until next winter.

The next year they rented 50 acres from the Best family. Richard won a diploma for the best five acres of corn, and other vegetables at the Territorial Fair, in the fall of 1873. (3)

John Humphrey saw many changes and great sorrow the next year, 1874. His wife, Agnes Elmina became ill and died July 22, 1874 (4). She was buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery. The second son (5) married December 21st 1874 and moved to Salina, Sevier County, Utah. Rebecca (6) married 13 April 1874. Richard (7) married May 3, 1875 moving to Salina in 1877, taking his father, John Wilkes Booth with him. Richard had a homestead of 160 acres and

large log house and later worked on the Manti Temple. Learning the rock mason trade, he built a large rock house.

Ellen Humphrey, Griffin's wife, took her baby back to Mill Creek to visit her folks who had had diphtheria and had lost several children. Her baby caught the disease and died, and she buried him by the side of Grandmother Humphrey in the Salt Lake City Cemetery. Returning to Salina she brought the germs of diphtheria, and John Wilkes Booth Humphrey, Joseph Bailey, Ellen's brother, Richard's oldest son, Tate, died and many others were very sick. (8)

Meanwhile, Richard had bought a full cemetery lot in the Old Salina Pioneer Cemetery, when his little girl Nancy died, age ten days old. When Booth and Tate were buried grandfather was so weak and frail he had to be carried by his sons. He said Richard, "Bury me here by Booth as it is too far to haul me back to Salt Lake, and now two children have taken my place by Grandmother so I can't be buried by her any way." Booth died July 20, 1878. Grandfather lived until next June 28, 1879 and was laid to rest by his son Booth. Thomas Griffin Humphrey, William Bird Humphrey and Richard Miles Humphrey are all buried close by and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren

REFERENCE: From diary and History of Humphrey Family by Richard Miles Humphrey who loved his Father dearly.

Notes:

1 Jane Humphrey Adams is the daughter of Richard Humphrey, the oldest child of John Humphrey and Anges Elmina Humphrey.

2 Maud McClatchie Odd is a daughter of Rebecca Humphrey Murphy McClatchie, the only daughter of John Humphrey and Anges Elmina Murphy Humphrey.

3 In the history, "Biography of Thomas Griffin Humphrey", by Joseph William Humphrey, son of Thomas Griffin Humphrey, there is a different version of this story. It goes as follows: "They [the Humphrey Family] rented a farm as a family unit that year, and the next. In 1873 Griffin was on his own, he had a wonderful garden, and five acres of the finest corn in Utah. His brother Richard suggested that he enter his corn in the Territorial Fair in Salt Lake. Richard took the corn in and entered it for him, supposedly, but it turned out that he entered it in his own name, and he brought out the judges and showed them Griffin's corn patch as his own. Richard received a prize on his brother's corn and other vegetables, and he also became a member of the territorial fair organization. In fairness to Richard, I will say that he no doubt did a lot of work with the fair that year, and that perhaps exhibitors had to offer their exhibits in person. All the neighbors, and relatives knew of the deception, and while Griff did not have too much to say, the others, especially Ellen, Griffin's wife, brought the matter up after her marriage, and Uncle Richard never liked her because of that. "

4 According to a Family Group Sheet prepared by Edith S. Clinger, Agnes Elmina Murphy Humphrey died 22 July 1875.

5 Thomas Griffin Humphrey married Ellen Maria Bailey 21 December 1874.

6 Rebecca Jane Humphrey married John Joseph Pledger Murphy 13 April 1874

7 Richard Miles Humphrey married Nancy PuElla Murphy 3 May 1875.

8 This statement can not be true. The death dates are spread too far apart to have come from the same exposure to diphtheria. George Brown Bailey, Ellen's father, lost seven children to diphtheria from 26 January 1878 to 24 February 1878 in Mill Creek, Utah. An eighth child, Joseph Hyrum Bailey died of diphtheria 30 July 1878 in Salina, Utah. Ellen's son, George John Humphrey, died 17 June 1878. John Wilkes Booth Humphrey did not die until a year later, 26 June 1879.