

Harveysburg on Caesar's Creek

Thursday, January 25, 2007

Warner W. Curtis



1869 ~ 1969

Warner W. Curtis was one of the children of [James and Lucy Pinn Curtis](#). His father, **James Curtis** had 29 children all together. He was born on his father's farm on the site of the *Battle of Bull Run* in Virginia.

Warner Curtis entered *Wayland Seminary* in Washington D. C. when he was 22 years old. Without funds and having to work, Warner studied hard he graduated. Following his graduation he married **Miss Georgiana Randolph** (went by both "**Dolly**" and "**Anna**"), became a farmer, a school teacher, NAACP branch president and YMCA night secretary.

A short time before 1910 they purchased a 58 acre farm in Harveysburg, Ohio and raised a variety of crops. He also taught school in the **Black School** in Harveysburg. By 1920 they had moved to Chillicothe, Ohio where he was an orderly in a hospital operating room and served as president of the NAACP branch.

In 1926, **Warner** and **Anna** moved to Cleveland, Ohio. There he worked in the *Cedar YMCA*. In 1941 he became the elevator operator at *Fenn College* and served seven years until he became ill. In his old age he became a noted "*do-gooder*" in his neighborhood, along E. 93rd Street in Cleveland. Neighbors would wake up and find their lawns mowed or their sidewalks cleaned. Sadly, his beloved wife of over fifty years died 1946.

Warner was voted *Man of the Year* in 1965 by the *Karamu Golden Age Club*. A religious man, he never smoked and had only one drink in his long lifetime. He was active in *Mt. Zion Congregational Church* on Magnolia Drive and E. 108th St. He often walked the 2 and a half miles to the church.

In his 79th year he was described as a "*handsome gray haired man, who wears glasses, a moustache, and a goatee somewhat similar to that of Dr. W. E. B. DuBois*" ("*79 Year*

Old Warner W. Curtis Is Gentle Aristocrat of E. 93rd Street" by Simeon Booker, Jr., Cleveland Call & Post, May 7, 1949).

posted by Karen Campbell at [6:29 AM](#) [4 comments](#)

Wednesday, January 24, 2007



James Howison & Letitia Sellers Curtis
"Simms" & "Tish"

Married September 29, 1884 in Warren County, Ohio
(Collection of Elizabeth Curtis Robinson)

James H. Curtis (above) was one of the fifteen children of **James Curtis** and his third wife **Lucy Pinn Curtis**. **James Curtis** was born in Prince William County, Virginia, near Sudley Springs, about 35 miles west from Washington D. C. Five of the children of **James** and **Lucy Pinn Curtis** would settle in southwest Ohio:

- **Josephine Curtis Taylor** of Dayton, Ohio
- **Charles Curtis** of Wilmington, Ohio m. **Eunice Sellers**, daughter of **Jacob** and **Laura Williams Sellers**.
- **James H. Curtis** of Waynesville, Ohio (Crosswick ~ a small town one mile north of Waynesville) m. **Letitia Sellers**, daughter of **Jacob** and **Laura Williams Sellers**.
- **Hampton Curtis** of Xenia, Ohio
- **Warner Curtis** of Harveysburg, Ohio



The Curtis Boys:

*Back Row from Left to Right: **Charles** (Wilmington, Ohio) and **John** (Washington D. C.)*

*Front Row from Left to Right: **James II** (Waynesville, Ohio), **Hampton** (Xenia, Ohio), and **Warner** (Harveysburg, Ohio)*

Other daughters of **James** and **Lucy Pinn Curtis** were:

- **Martha Curtis Jackson** (Syracuse, New York)
- **Fannie Curtis Beckwith** (Clifton Station, Virginia)
- **Rosa Curtis Harris** (Bull run, Virginia)
- **Edmonia Curtis Harris** (Herdon, Virginia)

The father of these children listed above, **James Curtis**, was one of the mulatto children of a slave owner named **Charles Curtis**. He and his brothers and sisters were manumitted by their father on October 6, 1828. These manumitted children then were forced by Virginia law to leave Virginia a one year and a day. Some moved away permanently, while some returned to Virginia to live. One of these was **James Curtis**.

James Curtis' first wife was a slave named **Nancy**. They had several children but the mother and children were sold south to Mississippi.

James Curtis' second wife was another slave named **Margaret**. She and her children were also sold south.

James Curtis' third wife was **Lucy Pinn**, a free woman. They married in 1853. Lucy died in 1879.

James Curtis' fourth wife was **Martha Parker** of Clifton Station, Virginia. She died in 1901.

When the *Civil War* broke out **James Curtis** was living on the road from Manassas, leading to the Bull Run battlefield. This experience was mentioned in his obituary printed in a local newspaper, probably the *Miami Gazette* of Waynesville, Ohio:

*"DEATHS ~ **J. H. Curtis (James H. Curtis)**, of Route 1, received the sad news of the death of his aged father **James Curtis**, who was born at Bull Run, Va., in the year of 1820. He witnessed the great battle of Bull Run. He was living on the road leading from Manassas to the historic Bull Run Battlefield, when the Civil War broke out. He was sitting at the breakfast table when the first shot was fired. He with others went out upon Mount Pone Hill, and throughout the day they watched that bloody conflict where the best blood of a divided Union rushed into battle. He said the conflict was a hard and bloody one. For a while in the afternoon victory seemed on the side of the Union forces, but at the critical moment they looked westward and saw a great army rushing to the field. Then the Union became panic stricken and broke from the field. The next day he looked over the field which was a ghastly sight yet, strewn with the dead and dying. The Second Battle of Bull Run found him at the same place, watching almost a similar disaster. He lived on this farm for 34 consecutive years and in his later years he went to live with his daughter **Rosa Harris** of Bull Run, Va. where he departed this life, January 5, 1914, at the age of 94 years."*

Both **James** and **Lucy Pinn Curtis** are buried in the *Pinn Family Cemetery* in Manassas, Virginia.

The children of **James Howison & Letitia Sellers Curtis**, "**Sim**" & "**Tish**", pictured above were:

- **Hampton W. Curtis**, November 1885 - January 7, 1887
- **Martha Elizabeth Curtis**, b. April 27, 1887. She graduated from *Wilberforce College* in 1809 or 1910.
- **James Otis Curtis**, b. December 7, 1888
- **Nettie Leah Curtis**, b. April 23, 1891
- **John Lemley Curtis**, b. March 5, 1893
- **Martha Geneva Curtis**, b. August 15, 1895
- **Lester Paul Curtis**, b. February 12, 1900
- **Esther Pauline Curtis**, b. November 23, 1904

James H. and **Letitia Sellers Curtis** are buried in the *The Zion Baptist African-American Church* cemetery in Harveysburg, Ohio. Their little boy, **Hampton W. Curtis** is buried beside them.

posted by Karen Campbell at [10:55 AM 2 comments](#)

Thursday, January 04, 2007

THE HARVEYSBURG ACADEMIES & STRIFE OVER ABOLITION

The First *Harveysburg Academy* Founded by Orthodox Friend Dr. *Jesse Harvey* in 1837-38. Husband of [Elizabeth Burgess Harvey Mendenhall](#), the founder of the Harveysburg [Black School](#).

Dr. Jesse Harvey was born November 26th, 1801 in Orange County, North Carolina. He was six when his parents, **Caleb** and **Sarah Towel Harvey** settled near Todd's Fork in Clinton County, Ohio. Being naturally inquisitive and intelligent he decided to learn medicine but encounter some resistance since it was commonly believed at the time that higher education would lead one to be irreligious. However, at the age of 22 he became a student of **Dr. Uriah Farquer** of Wilmington, Ohio. He entered the *Medical College of Ohio*, 1826-7, attained his license to practice and settled in the newly platted village Harveysburg in 1830. He also erected a carding mill at Harveysburg. He was one of the founding members of the *Lebanon Medical Society* in 1837. He was an extremely well read man and was knowledgeable about Law and many scientific subjects. His interest in education lead him to establish the *Harveysburg High School (Academy)* and *Boarding House* in 1837-8. **Dr. Harvey** was also the first person in Warren County, Ohio to take up the mantle of abolition and promote it. His children claim that **Jesse** and **Elizabeth Harvey** were conductors on the *Underground Railroad* in Harveysburg.

"My father (Dr. Jesse Harvey) was the first abolitionist in Clinton and Warren Counties, Ohio, who publicly advocated the abolition of slavery, and became one of the most prominent agents on the URGG in these two counties . . ." (Letter from **William Foster Harvey, M.D.** of Brightwood, Ind., June 6, 1898 to **W. H. Siebert** concerning his father **Jesse Harvey** (Siebert MIC 192, Roll #9, Rox 54, Vol. #, Item 61).

*"My father's house (Dr. Jesse Harvey) in Ohio was a special Depot for all who came and hundreds passed through our town, Harveysburgh, on the route from Cincinnati from **Levi Coffin**, and others, to and by way of our place"* (Letter from **William Foster Harvey** of Brightwood, Indiana, 3-24, 1898 (Siebert MIC 192, Roll #11, Box 59, Vol. #11, Item 26).

Dr. Jesse's two sons, **Thomas B. Harvey** and **William Foster Harvey**, continued in *UGRR* work after they and their families had moved to Indiana (Letter from **William F. Harvey** of Brightwood, Indiana, 3-24, 1898 (Siebert MIC 192, Roll #11, Box 59, Vol. #11, Item 26).

Dr. Jesse Harvey erected the first academy building at the east end of the village and went to considerable expense to furnish it with competent teachers and equipment from the east. He initially paid for the school, which lasted through harsh economic times for eighth or nine years. He taught classes twice a week on history, languages and the natural sciences. Another teacher associated with the first Harveysburg Academy was **Dr. David Burson**, a graduate of *Haverford College*. After the **Harveys** moved out west to work at the *Quaker Shawnee Mission* in July of 1847, **Wilson Hobbs**, **Israel Taylor**, **Oliver Nixon** and **William P. Nixon** taught in the *Academy* which had been relocated into a new building. All the teachers were Orthodox Friends (Quakers).

Dr. Jesse Harvey's school in Harveysburg had been a success during most of its existence.

*"However, aside from financial failure the school succeeded, and **Dr. Harvey** had his dream realized to a great extent. He found help in his studies, indulged his inclinations to help others, and many remain today to testify to the good done during the short time the school existed. In the neighborhoods from which came students, and scattered throughout the States, are good, substantial citizens who remember with pleasure and gratitude the lessons and associations of the school"* (1882 History of Clinton County, Ohio [Chicago: W. H. Beers & Co.], p. 660).

Because of his great interest in the natural sciences, **Dr. Jesse Harvey** also had a botanical garden, a good museum, and specimens of wild animals at his home. He had hoped to improve the mineral and medicinal springs located near Harveysburg, a recreational area known as the [Fifty Springs](#). He was also a conductor on the *Underground Railroad*. Following in his father's footsteps, **Dr. Jesse** was interested in educating Native Americans as well as African Americans and often visited the *Quaker Mission and School for the Shawnee Indians* in Wapakoneta, Ohio. In 1847 **Dr. Jesse** was appointed superintendent of the *Friends School and Farm for the Shawnee Indians* in the Kansas Territory. The entire family moved to Kansas and were involved in this ministry. He died there on May 12, 1848 and was buried in the mission graveyard, see [An Obituary of Dr. Jesse Harvey](#).

Dr. Jesse's efforts with the *Academy* had put him into considerable debt and so after a few years he established a company of 16 local citizens including himself, which was incorporated. The school had an excellent reputation drawing students from all over southwest Ohio, but continuing financial difficulties and strife and arguments over abolition would damage the *Harveysburg Academy* that **Dr. Harvey** founded.

The incorporation of the *Academy*, which initially saved it financially, also, unfortunately, opened up a hornet's nest of conflicting feeling over the integration of the *Academy*. Wanting to accept African-American children, **Dr. Jesse Harvey** at his own expense had established a separate department for black students in the high school. A cadre of Harveysburgers severely criticized him for daring to allow African-Americans in the *Academy* whether segregated into a separate department or not. Later, a group of local radical abolitionists, many of whom were members of the *Congregational/Progressive Friends*, who had split from *Indiana Orthodox Yearly Meeting (Hicksite)*, and were *Underground Railroad* conductors, criticized **Dr. Harvey** for segregating the black pupils from the white ones. Then when he united the blacks and the whites into classes together, many white folk took their children out of the school. The conflict was causing the enrollment in the school to go down drastically. **Dr. Harvey** decided to return to the previous policy of having a separate department for the African-American students. It was his compromise and concession to many of the local people who objected to the social mixing of the races. As we shall see, some of these people were Orthodox Quakers.

Radical Friends like [Valentine Nicholson](#) and other local abolitionists whose anti-slavery ideals were Garrisonian in nature, severely criticized **Dr. Harvey** for his segregation ~ The *Black School* founded in 1831 was segregated and his policy of separating the blacks and whites in the *Harveysburg Academy* reinforced their negative

opinion. Consequently, **Dr. Harvey** was being denounced by both the anti-abolition and/or anti-black people and the radical abolitions, many his co-UGRR conductors.

The conflict over African-American students in the *Academy* came to a head after the **Harveys** had left for Kansas and a much larger group of stockholders (fifty-six in all) built a new building for the *Academy* on the west end of Harveysburg. A highly controversial conflict centered upon the enrollment of an 18 year old girl by the name of **Margaret Campbell** during the principalship of **Wilson Hobbs**. This conflict was so severe that the enrollment of the school radically collapsed.

The black community that lived in and around Harveysburg were upset by the controversy. A black man, who once was a slave, wrote to the "*Anti-Slavery Bugle*" newspaper (February 25, 1848) the following comments on the situation:

*"The abolitionist here, have often expressed strong desire to have the Black Laws of Ohio repealed. They have branded **Dr. Harvey** as anti-abolition, anti-Christian, etc. for putting us in a separate department of the school of which he was proprietor. I do not think they did **Mr. Harvey** injustice by such charge. Well, **Harvey's** school has come to naught! Another Seminary has been reared by those persons who spoke so hard against **Mr. H.** We thought when this building was being erected, an avenue was open through which we could ascend to the great field of intelligence. But, alas! What do we hear? No person that has one drop of African blood in him or her shall be permitted to enter this institution!*

'Why not?' ~ was the question. 'If we admit the person that has one drop , we shall have to admit the one with two; if we admit the one with 2 drops, we shall have to admit the right down negro!' 'What does this prove?' It proves what Liberty Party and Whig abolition is!"

Wilson Hobbs, an Orthodox Quaker and new principal of the *Harveysburg Academy* refused to enroll a young woman, **Margaret Campbell**, into the school because it was suggested that she had some African-American blood.

*"A young lady, **Miss Margaret Campbell** by name, the sister-in-law of **W. L. Keyes** resident in the town, of the most respectable character, made her appearance at the school and entered upon the regular discharge of her duties as a pupil. She is about 18 years of age, well education, of excellent abilities and of refined and tender sensibilities. By the laws of Ohio she is a free white person, and entitled to all the privileges of such, and there is not the slightest indication in her appearance to distinguish her from other young ladies of her age unless it be a fairer complexion"* (*Bugle*, February 25, 1848).

The rumor was that several generations back in her genealogy that she was, on her maternal side, the daughter of a wealthy slaveowner and one of his slaves. The correspondent claims that **Wilson Hobbs** rather crassly through **Margaret** out of the school publicly.

Another letter in the *Bugle* dated March 4, 1848 defended **Wilson Hobbs** actions by explaining that he had not been so cruel and that **Margaret** had been privately told of the boards decision and why she could not enter. However, the offer of home tutoring, instruction, and accompanying books was given her. The correspondent says that fifty out of fifty-six stockholders objected to her entry due to the impurity of her blood. In a letter dated March 10, 1848 in the "*Bugle*", which had been written on February 15, 1848, it was stated that two members of the *Methodist Church* and one member of the *United Brethren Church* in Harveysburg were three of the stockholders who had protested. This reality illustrates that the abolition controversies criss-crossed through all churches and social groups. Consequently, it was not just the Quakers who were at odds with each other over how to respond to slavery and, specifically in this case, how to deal with education for blacks.

Valentine Nicholson, who was a local Harveysburger, an abolitionist and *UGRR* conductor, and member of the radical *Congregational/Progressive Friends*, wrote a very lengthy letter to the *Bugle* on June 2, 1848, explaining efforts made in support of **Margaret Campbell**:

*"The principal teacher at the [Waynesville Academy](#) (a village four miles west of Harveysburg), who, by the way, is one of the first scholars our State affords (This was **Dr. David Burson**, who had moved to Waynesville to teach.), when he came to hear of the ridiculous and cruel treatment which this young lady had received at Harveysburg, expressed a desire to have her attend that institution, (and there being a Board of Trustees belonging to that school, a majority of them were spoken to and gave their full and free consent)."*

Unfortunately, according to **Nicholson**, an Orthodox Friend, who lived just a few miles outside of Waynesville, came to the village and stirred up resistance to **Margaret's** enrollment in the *Waynesville Academy*. **Valentine Nicholson** then in his letter launches into a severe critique of Orthodox Quakerism and its hypocrisy concerning abolition ~ a willingness to promote an anti-slavery agenda but their "*faith*" is not lived "*by works*". He points out that there are now only seven students starting the next term in the *Academy* due to the hypocrisy and immoral behavior of the stockholders.

The Second Harveysburg Academy Founded to be an Integrated Educational Institution

This horrible situation must have been extremely disappointing to **Valentine Nicholson** and another Friend **Isaiah Fallis** who were in the fore front of organizing and building the new *Harveysburg Academy*. They both intended this second *Harveysburg Academy* to be fully integrated. In one of his letters to the editors of the "*Bugle*", **Nicholson** admitted that he had misjudged **Wilson Hobbs**. Shortly before the controversy over **Margaret Campbell** began, the editors of the "*Bugle*" had gone on a tour of southwest Ohio and had visited Harveysburg and the school. One of the editors had told **Nicholson** that **Wilson Hobbs** would be a "*fair weather friend to abolition*" (*Bugle*, March 10, 1848).

According to **Valentine Nicholson's** obituary, this second *Academy* did for a short period of time fulfill its intended mission. However, the obituary does not give any details about the **Margaret Campbell** controversy:

*"The need of a free town hall was at one time apparent to a few philanthropic people at Harveysburg, Ohio. The chief contributors to this movement were **Isaiah Fallis** and **Valentine Nicholson**. They built an academy, with a hall above, which they dedicated to free speech. In school and recitation rooms below there was to be no distinction of color. The tuition was to be the compensation for the teacher. Members of the Society of Friends were instructors. The late **Dr. Wilson Hobbs** was the first, then **Dr. O. W. Nixon** and his brother **William Penn Nixon**, also the late **Israel Taylor** of Indianapolis. The school was a success; the few colored pupils who availed themselves of its privileges became leading citizens in Oberlin and Washington" (Miami-Gazette newspaper of Waynesville, March 30th, 1904).*

In April of 1849 a new incorporation was made for the *Harveysburg School Company*:

*"MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE HARVEYSBURG SCHOOL COMPANY: Pursuant to previous notice, the stockholders of the Harveysburg Seminary met at said building on the 14th day of April 1849 at 2 P.M. for the purpose of organizing and availing themselves to the advantages of a law passed by the Legislature of the State of Ohio, March 10, 1845, authorizing Literary and other Societies to acquire corporate powers without applying to and obtaining letters of incorporation from the Legislature of the State. On motion **Wm. Crow** (a teacher from Illinois who was living directly east of Harveysburg) was called to the chair and **John W. Scroggs** (a physician in Harveysburg) appointed Clerk. The meeting then proceeded to and adopted a constitution and bylaws for the government of the company. On motion it was unanimously resolved that this society shall be called the Harveysburg School Company. The meeting then proceeded in conformity to the requisitions of the constitution to elect the permanent officers of the company which resulted in the election of **R. B. Edwards** for President (a judge), **J. G. Stevenson** (a coachmaker), Clerk, **A. L. Antram** (a merchant in Harveysburg), **Hiram Yeo** (a merchant in Harveysburg), and **J. W. Scroggs**, Trustees. On motion adjourned. **J. W. Scroggs**, Clerk" (This statement of incorporation can be found in the Archives of Probate Court at the Warren County, Ohio Courthouse in Lebanon, Ohio).*

It appears that in the end the radical abolitionists had won the struggle over the school. The above mentioned **J. G. Stevenson** also became the first president of the radical *Anti-Slavery Society for Clinton and Warren Counties*. By 1851, the second *Harveysburg Academy* building was being used freely by abolitionists. On December 19, 1851 it was reported in the *Miami-Visitor* newspaper of Waynesville that on November 30th a meeting was convened in the *Academy* in Harveysburg. The object was to organize an *Anti-Slavery Society for Clinton and Warren Counties*. **J. G. Stevenson** was the Chairman of this meeting and **Valentine Nicholson** was chosen secretary. They advocate the immediate and unconditional emancipation of slaves. The organization included both women and men and African-Americans and white people. The preamble of constitution was signed by: **Dr. A. Brooke, Aaron Harvey, V.**

Nicholson, F. G. Birdsell, Abram Allen, Wm. F. Hilles, J. G. Stevenson, Asa Pratt (African-American), **O. D. Wall** (African-American), **Wm. McCune, J. W. Scroggs, Sarah Allen, J. F. Crew, Lydia W. Vandeburg, Hannah Birdsell, Jane F. Nicholson, Deborah Lafettra, E. F. Varner, Mary B. Birdsell, Caroline Wall** (African-American), **Martha M. Dakin, Elijah Howe, W. H. Birdsell, A. Winslow** (African-American), **Sarah Wall** (African-American), **Jona. A. Ballard, T. D. Ryse, N. Doan, Jesse A. Ballard.**

We know that **Nathan Doan** was the principal teacher at the new *Harveysburg Academy* from the fall of 1851 to March 1852. In the fall of 1852, **Comly Jessop**, became the teacher at the fading second *Harveysburg Academy*. (**Comly** went on to enter medical school and became a physician.)

The *Miami-Visitor* of Waynesville published advertisements for the second *Harveysburg Academy*: October 17, 1851, October 10th, 1851, September 12th, 1851, September 19th, 1851, April 9th, 1852, April 12th, 1852, March 5th, 1852 and September 29th 1852. After 1853, there are no more advertisements in the *Miami-Visitor* for the *Harveysburg Academy*. This is when, presumably, the private high school became a district school.

The first *Harveysburg Academy* was located on East Main Street in a lot in front of the Black School, which **Dr. Jesse Harvey** helped his wife, **Elizabeth Burgess Harvey**, to establish. Although the building was used as *The Zion Baptist African-American Church* for many decades, it is no longer extant.

The second *Harveysburg Academy* was located on West Main Street where the 1886 district school building now stands empty. The second *Harveysburg Academy* building itself is no longer extant.

Sources:

The History of Warren County, Ohio (Chicago: W. H. Beers & Co., 1882), pp. 307, 653-660.

See, "Dr. Jesse Harvey", 1882 History of Warren County, Ohio, Part IV Township Histories, Massie Township by Hon. Thomas M. Wales:

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~ohwarren/Beers/IV/mst/0654.htm>

"*Memories of Long Ago*" by Jane F. (Wales) Nicholson (Originally published in the *Western Star*, Lebanon, Ohio in the December issues of 1885 and published again in the *Miami Gazette*, Waynesville, Ohio ca. 1905), p. 19.

History of Harveysburg and Massie Township by Lucy McCarren (Published by the Harveysburg Historical Society), pp. 3-9.

The Miami-Visitor, July 27th, 1859, "*Fifty Springs Pic-Nic*".

posted by Karen Campbell at [1:33 PM 2 comments](#)

Thursday, December 14, 2006

**AN OBITUARY OF
DR. [JESSE HARVEY](#)
FOUND IN *THE WESTERN FRIEND*
FIFTH-DAY, SIXTH MONTH 1, 1848
CINCINNATI, OHIO**

(Quaker Newspaper Published by Orthodox Friend [Achilles Pugh](#))

The following extract, from a letter from **Richard Mendenhall**, received after our last paper went to press, brings to a large circle of friends and relatives, the sorrowful news of the decease of **JESSE HARVEY**, superintendent of Friends' School, in the Shawnee nation of Indians.

*"Friends' Shawnee School,
Indian Territory, 4th month 12th, 1848.*

*Dear Friend, ACHILLES PUGH,
I write to thee under a very afflicting dispensation. ~ Our friends and Superintendent, **Jesse Harvey**, departed this life this afternoon, at a quarter before two o'clock, having been confined almost entirely to his bed for three months lacking three days. His disease proved to be a dropsy, and latterly had been rapidly progressing, insomuch that his physicians urged that an attempt be made at an early period, to remove him to Ohio. This proposition meeting with his approbation, measures were being taken, for him and his family to set out on the proposed journey, sometime during next week; the two young women who came out with me, and myself having consented to remain in charge at this institution, until other friends could be sent on. But the present dispensation affords a striking instance of the uncertainty of human calculations. During the last three or four days, his strength rapidly failed, and continued to decline until he passed into eternity.*

His family will await the advice of the Committee, whether they return home now, or remain here. If suitable friends can be conveniently found to fill all the places here, they will return home, otherwise they are willing to remain here."

Dr. Jesse Harvey died on May 12th, 1848. His wife [Elizabeth Burgess Harvey](#) and their children stayed on at the *Quaker Shawnee Mission* and continued to superintend with the assistance of **Richard Mendenhall**. There is a small graveyard on the site and there is a marker that simply says, "**Jesse Harvey of Harveysburg**." It is the Indian Cemetery at Nieman Road & 59th Terrace in Shawnee, Johnson County, Kansas. The **Harvey** family stayed the full term of two years at the *Mission*.

Dr. Jesse Harvey was one of, if not the first, abolitionist in Warren County, Ohio. He and his wife, **Elizabeth**, were abolitionists and conductors on the *Under Ground*

Railroad when it was incredibly dangerous to be involved in such work during the early 1830s and on.

posted by Karen Campbell at [8:54 AM](#) [1 comments](#)

Friday, December 08, 2006

John W. Stewart ~ African American Mayor of Harveysburg, Ohio

The Only colored Man in the State Thus Honored ~
A Noted Educator Among the People of His Race

The Western Star of Lebanon, Ohio, July 25, 1907



Prof. J. W. Stewart is the son of **Jackson Stewart** who came to Ohio from Virginia. He was a farmer and a land owner in both Clinton and Warren Counties. He came to this state early in life and was married to **Caroline Jackson** who was also a Virginian and lived in Fayette County, Ohio. They lived for a long time near New Burlington, Ohio. To them eight children were born. Only two are now living. **Charles** who was a teacher for a number of years is now a measurer and lumber inspector in the McDougal cabinet factory in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The subject of this sketch, **Prof. J. W. Stewart** was born in Chester Township, Clinton County, Ohio, July 18, 1843. He worked with his father on the farm until he was 22 years

old. After accumulating quite a little fortune, he and his father engaged in the grocery business in Xenia, Ohio. On April 18, 1866, he was married to **Virginia Singleton** of Harveysburg, the only daughter of **Bushrod** and **Malvina Singleton** ~ ~ **Mr. Singleton** is still living and although 85 years old is well land hearty.

In his manhood, **Mr. Stewart's** opportunity for an education was quite limited, but seeing the need of better schools among his race, he carried his books to the field and while his horses were resting, he began the preparation for the profession of teaching. His wife was an excellent scholar; she often said to him, notwithstanding the valuable assistance she gave him with his studies at night, "*John, you will never be able to teach school.*"

He continued in his studies in this manner, and after he had pursued a short course of study at *Wilberforce University*, he was employed to teach **the colored school** at Harveysburg. This was the first colored school organized in the state of Ohio for colored children. He taught this school for ten consecutive years. It grew so rapidly in interest and numbers that after two years of labor the Board of Education employed an hesitantly to help him with the work. It was in this school that several of his pupils were prepared for teaching. Some of the brainiest men and women of the race received their elementary training in this school.

Early in the fall of 1885 he resigned this position and moved to Topeka, Kansas, with a view to farming, but later became a principal of one of the city schools. Not being very favorably impressed with farm life in Kansas, he returned to Ohio, and resumed teaching in Lebanon, Ohio. The school was soon mixed and the colored teachers were not retained. He was next found as principal of the school in Sabina, Ohio. After teaching in Sabina one year, he was tendered the principalship of the colored school in Wilmington, Ohio. He had charge of this school fourteen consecutive years. It was while principal of this school that he obtained great results from his labors. He raised the school to a high standard of efficiency and prepared a large number of boys and girls for high school, college, and the profession of teaching.

After teaching thirty consecutive years, he again went back to farming, but finding that the long career as a teacher had unfitted him for the work on the farm, he resumed teaching in Harveysburg ~ the very school he had taught almost a quarter of a century ago. He experience a very successful and profitable year's work, and no doubt the coming year will unfold to him results that will be gratifying to himself and the patrons.

Mr. Stewart is public spirited and an urgent worker in all things that tend to the betterment of the communities in which he has lived. In politics and on all public questions he has always been found on the right side. He has acted as judge and clerk of elections in both county and state. He is now the mayor of Harveysburg. **Professor Stewart** has a family of nine children, six of whom have been teachers. Two are now in the mail service.

posted by Karen Campbell at [8:12 AM](#) [2 comments](#)

Monday, October 03, 2005



Elizabeth Burgess Harvey Mendenhall when she lived in Indianapolis
Original photograph in the Quaker Archive ~
Earlham College
Richmond, Indiana

Elizabeth Burgess Harvey Mendenhall

September 22nd, 1801~May 1st, 1888

The founder of the first Black School in Ohio
Harveysburg, Ohio

*This Friend, wife of the late **Dr. (Jesse) Harvey** and daughter of **Bettie Hendricks** and **Thomas Burgess**, is now living in this city (Indianapolis), in the 85th year of her age. The years of her early married life were devoted to teaching the neglected races, Indians as well as Negroes. She, with other Friends, did much to modify the feeling of prejudice against the colored people in the village of Harveysburg. ~ ~ **Jane F. (Wales) Nicholson***

“*Memories of Long Ago*” by **Jane F. (Wales) Nicholson** (Originally published in the *Western Star*, Lebanon, Ohio in the December issues of 1885 and published again in the *Miami~Gazette*, Waynesville, Ohio ca. 1905), p. 20.

Also see,

[THE BLACK SCHOOL IN HARVEYSBURG, OHIO](#), and,
[THE HARVEYSBURG ACADEMIES](#)

Thank you to Thomas Hamm of *Earlham College* for a copy of Elizabeth's photograph.

posted by Karen Campbell at [9:06 AM](#) [4 comments](#)

Thursday, September 29, 2005

Harveysburg Histories:

Before & After the Lake

[Caesar's Creek Valley before Caesar's Creek Lake](#)

"**Historic Harveysburg**" by Miss Winona McDonald (*Souvenir & Home-Coming Edition of The Miami Gazette*, October 1906):

<http://www.mlcook.lib.oh.us/1906%20Harveysburg%20History-Miami%20Gazette.htm>

posted by Karen Campbell at [11:20 AM](#) [5 comments](#)

About Me

[Karen Campbell](#)

Waynesville, Ohio, United States

I am the genealogy librarian at The Mary L. Cook Public Library in Waynesville, Ohio. I am interested in all aspects of our local history but my special interest is in mid-western Quaker history and genealogy. I have authored and compiled some books: *Quaker Education and Miami Valley Institute: A Hicksite Quaker College*, *Murder in Waynesville: The Anderson Tragedy*, *Obituaries and Death Notices found in the Miami-Visitor Weekly Newspaper of Waynesville*, etc., and *Friendly Research: An Introduction to Quaker Genealogical Research*, etc. I feel that the history and legacy of The Society of Friends in this area of Ohio is interesting, significant and edifying. The history of Waynesville, Ohio is a microcosm of American history. Waynesville was a town made up of a diverse group of pioneers and its development paralleled the diversity, the struggles and the growth of the United States. I am also interested in the history and culture of other local towns, villages and hamlets in the area, for example, Harveysburg, Ohio. AND, as you can also tell from my blog, "Conversations with my Cats", I love cats!!

[View my complete profile](#)

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- [Harveysburg Historical Society Contact: Lucy McCarren,513-897-6195](#)
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- [Report on the 2nd Annual Quaker Genealogy Conference](#)
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