

Introductory Remarks (1930)

As I am not accustomed as to the rules and order of a gathering of this kind, and also as my education is very, very limited, and my mental faculties growing weak, my remarks may not be very instructive or interesting.

But I will endeavor to give the facts as near as I possibly can, should I err, You will please not criticize as I am speaking of events, some that transpired more than seventy (70) years ago. So you should not expect one of my age to be accurate in every detail.

We find ourselves together today, first as relatives, second as friends, and third as acquaintances. A festive gathering or reunion. This Festivity, We learn first began to mature at Urban Crest, September 16, 1923, between the Lee and Walker families. On September 21, 1924, the above families met in Greenfield, Ohio fully organized into a Reunion as the Lees and Walkers, with John K. Lee as President and Mrs. Viola Walker Armstrong, as Secretary and Treasurer; and have met annually since, today being the seventh annual reunion.

So today, we think it appropriate to note the origin of the principals of this organization and their ancestors for among their ancestors were men and women worthy of mention and imitation.

I am not able, neither will time permit me to give the full history of these families so I will begin by saying something of the ancestors of the Lees of today, as I am more acquainted with them, and distantly related, and came from the adjoining county in Virginia, sometime in the 1840's. One Thacker Webb of Orange County, Virginia by will freed all his slaves and in his will made provision that his slaves should be taken to a non slave holding state and that homes should be purchased for them. This was done in accordance to the Webb Will and Testimony, this included several families. viz Webb, Carters, Bells, Harrisons, Lees, Halls and perhaps others, and all of this colony of ex-slaves settled in Franklin Township, Jackson County, Ohio, about seven miles south east of Jackson, and all of the above names have passed out of time. Many lived to a ripe old age, several lived to be more than (100)-one hundred years old.

The family of Lees, referred to as principals in this organization are descendants of Kendall Lee and wife. Kendall Lee and wife had two sons viz, Benjamin and John M. Lee. The last named was father of John K. Lee, the first President of this organization and also the father of the present President R. C. Lee and grandfather of the Secretary and Treasurer Mrs. Viola Walker Armstrong.

This father John M. Lee, was said to be one among the best steam engineers of his day. Grandfather Kendall was a gospel minister and used to go far and near on horse-back to preach in his day. As I remember there were three daughters, viz: Lorenda, Winny and Hardena, all of the above lived to a ripe old age. Aunt Winny lived to be ___ years, Benjamin, the younger died in Berlin, Ohio.

He was father of a large family. Uncle Frank as he was called, was one of the best carpenters of his day. We often have heard men speak of his work as second to none.

Grandfather Kendall and wife and Uncle Milton as he was called, in time removed to Jackson Township, Jackson County and purchased and settled there about six (6) miles southeast of Richmondale on the farm now owned by J. C. Tanner, where they lived till death called them from time.

Now I will not be able to give very much history of the ancestors of the Walkers of this organization. I came to Jackson County in 1851 at that time there were two families of Walkers. Ancestors of the Walkers of this organization, Jeremiah Walker, Sr. and son Thomas and family.

There were two sons and two daughters, namely Jeremiah Wilson and Louis Henry, the sons and Caroline and Mela, the daughters. The above named were slaves and came to Ohio from Bedford County between 1840 and 1850 and all have passed from time.

The oldest brother J. W. Walker was considered in his day one of the best school teachers and second to none as a gospel minister of his time. This family produced two other ministers, viz, L. C. Walker and J. D. Walker and J. W. Walker and three school teachers from the above family and one minister from the Jeremiah Walker family, namely Elder W. C. Walker. Now time will not permit me to go farther but will conclude that from the family spoken of, several of the descendants after being freed in later years answered their country's call and went back to their native land, fought, bled and died that their kinsmen be freed while the older prayed that time would come that all men might be freed and allowed to worship according to his own mind.

They hoped to make theirs a great and grand country.

Record as presented by

P. H. Taylor - 1930