

## **JOHN HUBBS: WHEN BOYS WERE MEN A 13-YEAR-OLD REVOLUTIONARY WAR SOLDIER**

[The information on the Hubbs family was provided by David Grant and information on the Woolsey-Cornell families was provided by Steve Alsip. Published in the Times Tribune, Nov, 1987, by Carol Pace]

Many people in the Tri-County area [SC] can trace their family line back to a 13 year-old Revolutionary soldier. It all started between December 25-31, 1763, in an area known as Hanging Rock, South Carolina.

John Hubbs was born into a world where childhood was short lived. At age 13, he enlisted as a Private in Captain Carson's Company, Colonel Picken's South Carolina Regiment. Little is known about John Hubbs' war years, but records have been found where he received land grants in South Carolina in consideration for his military service. The earliest record of this kind bears the year 1785.

John stayed in South Carolina long enough to marry and to have two sons, John Hubbs, born in 1790, and William Hubbs, born in 1793.

Both sons followed their father, in later years, to Greene County, Tennessee. The name of John's first wife is not known. But he did state in court records that she had died after the birth of their second child.

While on a trip to the stock market in Greeneville, Tennessee, John Hubbs, a stock driver by vocation, met and married (October 5, 1795) his second wife, Rebecca Woolsey. In 1797, John moved his family to the Raccoon Valley area of Knox County, Tennessee. Most of their eight children were born there.

However, their third child Willis, was born in what is now Orange County, Indiana. What they were doing there is not clear, but they did return to Tennessee soon afterwards.

The children of this second marriage were Stephen (1798-1864), John Jr. (1800-1877), Willis (1801-1881), Joshua (1802-1866), Rutha (1803-?), Sarah 'Sally' (1805-1888), Polly (?), and Rachel (1810-?).

Our local lines are from John's son, Stephen, and daughter, Sarah. Stephen married Elizabeth Terrell and Sarah married Solomon Terrell, Jr. They were the children of Solomon Terrell, Sr (1770-1847), an early Knox County, Kentucky, settler.

Two of John's other children married Woolseys, who were distant cousins of their mother. It is thought that the Terrell and Hubbs families met while John lived for a short time in Knox County, Kentucky.

Rebecca Woolsey Hubbs was a descendant of colonial ancestors. Her parents were Zephaniah Woolsey (1740), who was born in Malborough, New York, and Sarah Woolsey (1747), who was born in New York. Zephaniah and Sarah were no closer than fourth cousins. They were the parents of 12 children, several whom settled in Greene County, Tennessee.

Both Woolseys trace their ancestry back to Rebecca Cornell Woolsey who was born (1629) in County Essex, England, and was the wife of George Woolsey. They lived in what is now the Bronx in New York City. Her parents were Thomas Cornell (1595-1656) and Rebecca Briggs (1600-1673). Old records prove that Thomas Cornell, Jr. was hanged for the murder of his aged mother.

Ezra Cornell, founder of Cornell's University, organizer of Western Union Telegraph Company and whose brother became a governor of New York, was a direct descendant of this

Cornell family. William Woolsey, another direct descendant was the President of Yale from 1846-1871. Rebecca Briggs Cornell's brother was the founder of Newport, Rhode Island.

Returning to John Hubbs - John's children were scattered across eastern Tennessee, southeastern Kentucky, Illinois and Indiana. It has been proven that he kept in touch with all of them. Travel in those days was a long and hard process. It could take weeks to cover a few hundred miles.

John's second wife, Rebecca Woolsey Hubbs was said to have died in childbirth before 1819. John married a widow, Mary Jones, and this marriage produced three sons and one daughter. All of these children stayed in Tennessee. However, this third marriage ended in divorce.

In 1844, while on a visit to his son, John Jr., he became sick and died. John left behind at least 14 children and thousands of descendants. These descendants from every corner of this nation, still today, gather every other year in Tennessee for a family reunion.

Of the several hundred who attend, most of his 14 children are represented by their descendants.

Hubbs was buried in Union County (then Grainger County), Tennessee. If you go from Cumberland Gap to Knoxville, you will pass a sign along the road that reads: *Hubbs Graveyard, Clear Branch*. In a grove of trees, just back from the highway, is a headstone for John Hubbs, Revolutionary War.

John Hubbs filed for pension and received \$20.00 annually, file #26631. Included in the file (84 pages) is the following letter - a good recap of John Hubbs's life and his pension file.

June 6, 1929

*Vivienne Hubbs  
Union City, TN.*

*Madam:*

*I advise you from the papers in the Revolutionary War pension claim, W.1036, it appears that John Hubbs was born between the 25<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 1763, near Hanging Rock, South Carolina.*

*While residing in Edgefield County, South Carolina, he enlisted in 1781, and served six months as a private in Captain James Carson's Company, Colonel Picken's South Carolina Regiment. Prior to this service, he had many short tours, no details given.*

*He moved from Edgefield County, South Carolina, to Knox County, Tennessee, and then to Knox County, Kentucky, where he was living when he was allowed pension on his application executed March 24, 1834.*

*In 1843, he was residing in Grainger County, Tennessee, and stated that "part of his children" were living there but did not give their names.*

*He died September 12, 1844, in Grainger County, Tennessee, at the house of John Hubbs, Junior.*

*The soldier married December 17, 1819, in Grainger County, Tennessee, Mary or Polly Hill; they were both of said Grainger County.*

*She was allowed pension on her application executed September 16, 1853, at which time she was living in Knox County, Tennessee.*

*In 1865, she stated that she was eighty years of age and was living in Knox County, Tennessee, with her son, Hugh Hubbs. In 1869, she was living in Union county, Tennessee.*

*In 1854, it is stated that Mary Hubbs first husband was killed or died at lookout Mountain in the War of 1812. There are no further data in regard to said first husband.*

*Respectfully,*

*Earl D. Church, Commissioner*

**Postscript**

Not included in this letter – In 1843, John Hubbs applied for a change for his pension to be moved from Knox Co, KY to 'eastern Tennessee' (Knox Co). He was then living in Grainger County. The file includes several letters concerning Mary Hubbs' pension. Nothing is mentioned about a divorce between John and Mary Hill Hubbs.