

A HARBAUGH VALLEY MEMOIR

by WILLIAM KIRACOFE HARBAUGH

1950

The Author Ca. 1895

An Editorial Note

This memoir was written by my father, William Kiracofe Harbaugh (1871-1951), in his seventy-ninth and eightieth years. He died before he could complete it. The text, including misspellings, is just as he wrote it with one exception: the date of the barn has been changed to 1794. I have added a descriptive Table of Contents and an Addendum. Two inferences or assertions drawn from outdated sources warrant comment.

First, it is very doubtful, as the opening paragraph suggests, that the Harbaughs were Scandinavian in origin. They may have been Swiss or Dutch, but the evidence is soft in each case. Conversely, there is hard evidence, not available to my father, that all three Harbaughs who settled in Harbaugh Valley were born in the Palatinate and that their father, Yost, probably was born there. (See on this web site Jost Herbach-Harbaugh from the Gersweilerhof and, especially, the more recent Harbaugh Family, Part I: European Origins.)

Second, the opening statement about “JACOB’S” farm on p. 7 confuses Jacob Sr.’s farm with Jacob Jr.’s farm. The senior Jacob built his farmhouse in the southeastern part of the Valley in the 1760s and lived there until his death in 1818. On Jacob Jr.’s marriage at age 25 in 1788, he gave or sold him a substantial tract of land a mile or so northeast of Sabillasville. This is the farm described in the last passage on p. 7 and the first on p. 8. It came down to Ephraim, grandson of Jacob Jr., in 1856. My partly conjectural reconstruction of events is this:

Shortly before or after his marriage Jacob Jr. built a cabin atop a small hill, at the bottom of which was the “splendid spring” described by my father. (Edwin DeLauter reports that foundation stones were uncovered on the hill top in the 1930s). Sometime later, probably before the barn went up in 1794, Jacob broke his leg carrying water up the hill. This prompted him to build by the spring the thirty by thirty foot log house so lovingly described on p. 8.

Father always said that, although the date of the log house was uncertain, the first modernization occurred in 1814. This is supported by a carved inscription on an attic beam, since covered over. A copy in father’s papers reads: “Rebuilt by Jacob Harbaugh in 1814.” Obviously, the inscription had obviously slipped mind when, in the memoir, he gave 1814 as the date the house’s original construction.. I have always understood that the stone extension, described but not dated in the last three paragraphs on p. 8, was added in 1837.

William Henry Harbaugh
Charlottesville, VA
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P R E F A C E

I, WILLIAM KIRACOFE HARBAUGH, born June 1, 1871, son of EPHRAIM FREDERICK HARBAUGH, of Harbaugh's Valley, Maryland, and HARRIET EYLER, of Eycler's Valley, Maryland, have endeavored, within these pages, to give a brief history of my ancestry on both sides of my family. In attempting this autobiography, I have relied not only upon my own experiences and knowledge, but upon the information obtained through research, collecting data from Media Research Bureau, Washington, D. C., Harbaugh History, Family Bible, Tomb Stones and Hearsay.

In my effort to write an interesting story, I have given a background description of the valley and country surrounding the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains, together with an account of my early childhood, the period of my life as I grew into manhood and remained on the old homestead with my parents and family, and my experiences in later years.

Throughout this article, so that my immediate family ancestry may easily be traced, I have used full capital letters in recording the names.

I have attempted to inject some amusing anecdotes and happenings, so that the reader may observe that life on the farm in a remote mountain district in those primitive days was, despite hardship and inconvenience, both interesting and rewarding.

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The surname, HARBAUGH, of Scandinavian origin, is possibly derived from the baptismal name HARRYSSEL.

It is found in ancient European and early American records in various spellings of Harthbo, Harbo, Harbou, Herbach, Herbaugh, Harboe, Harbogh, Harbach and HARBAUGH.

Families bearing this name were established in early dates in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Saxony, Switzerland and Germany.

Among the earliest records of the name is that of Thure Harthbo, son of Peter Harthbo, who became a bishop in 1350.

The family was enobled in 1440, and in 1492 Jens Penderon Harbo of Denmark held the office of Master of the Seal.

YOST HARBAUGH, my Great, Great, Great Grandfather, came from Switzerland about the year 1736.

He first settled in Maxatawney Township, a valley lying in Berks County, Pennsylvania, midway between Allentown and Reading.

From there, he moved in about the year 1743 to Kreutz Creek, York County, Pennsylvania, in a valley west of the Susquehanna River, near York.

He was twice married and the father of ten children--six to his first wife, and four to his second wife.

The three oldest children were born in Switzerland--George in 1726, Ludwig in 1727, JACOB in 1730.

YOST HARBAUGH was born between 1695 and 1705 and died April 3, 1762. His will, which is recorded in the office of the Register of Wills in York County, Pennsylvania, is dated March 30, 1762.

Leonard Harbaugh, son of YOST by his second wife, ultimately settled in Baltimore, Maryland. He is said to have been a friend of George Washington.

He built the War and Treasury buildings in Washington, D. C., which were destroyed by the British in 1814.

He assisted with carpenter work at the Capital, and built bridges across Rock Creek. He also helped to construct the canal between Washington, D. C., and Cumberland, Maryland.

GEORGE HARBAUGH moved to Harbaugh's Valley, Frederick, County, Maryland, about the year 1760, and settled in the center of the valley one-half mile south-east of Sabillasville. He was later followed by his two brothers, Ludwig and JACOB.

It is with these three elder sons of YOST HARBAUGH -- GEORGE, Ludwig and JACOB -- that we are concerned, as they were the progenitors of all the Harbaugh's of my direct lineage, and gave the new settlement the name of "HARBAUGH'S VALLEY".

The valley is noted for its great natural beauty and fine vistas. It is surrounded by numerous mountains whose peaks have a sea level elevation varying from 1,400 to 1,800 feet or more. It is a section of the East noted for its healthy climate, as well as for its scenic attractions.

As my ancestors were accustomed to living amongst the beautiful historic mountains of their native country, Switzerland, their natural instinct for and love of a rugged terrain prompted them to seek a home of similar surroundings in their adapted country. Thus it was they moved into the valley surmounted by a magnificent part of the famous Blue Ridge Mountains.

In about the year 1760-1761, they settled in a lovely little valley in the northern end of Frederick County, Maryland, its limit bordering on the Mason and Dixon Line.

There were no roads in existence at that time leading from either end of the valley. They had to unload their effects and leave their wagons at the northern end of the valley, conveying their belongings to the place of destination in some other way -- no doubt by sled, or perhaps pack horses and mules.

Their first step in the process of settling was the building of log cabins and clearing and preparing the land for cultivation.

Viands were scarce and of no variety. Their constant diet was hot mush and cold milk for breakfast, and hot milk and cold mush for supper.

The parents were very strict with their children. At meal time the little ones would gather around the table standing. They were not permitted to speak a word until their mother waited upon them and portioned their food, which was eaten from pewter plates.

The children would be served coffee every Sabbath. By this treat they knew that it was Sunday.

A family altar was established in each home. They were very much devoted to their church "Reformed". They attended Apples Church, which is located one mile north of Mechanicstown (now Thurmont) and about seven miles from their home.

They walked or went in carts, carrying their guns and knives in case the Indians would attack them. The path or roadway ran through the mountain ravine parallel to Owens Creek.

JACOBS CHURCH, (Reformed) called the stone church, located in the extreme northern end of the valley where the gap opens up from a road leading into Fountain Dale, an interesting and pretty vale with much fine scenery, was built by JACOB HARBAUGH, my great grandfather. It is at this church the present annual Harbaugh reunion is held each year.

Both, JACOB and his wife (Mary Magdalena Mong) are buried in the graveyard against the hill back of the church.

The Reverend Henry Harbaugh, D.D. -- Theologian, Hymn Writer, Poet and Publisher -- was the great grandson of this JACOB HARBAUGH. He was one of the most inspiring and popular men of the Harbaugh generation and of whom we can feel justly proud.

There stands in front of the farm house in Franklin County, Pa., where Henry was born, an appropriate monument erected to his memory by the Historical Society of the Township and the Reformed Church. The Harbaugh Church (Reformed) nearby, founded by his father, GEORGE HARBAUGH, is an outstanding memorial to his branch of the family.

To give an idea of what an unsettled wilderness lay in all the region at that time, we need only to call to mind that Frederick, Maryland was laid out in 1745, and in 1755 Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, was a small town on the outskirts of civilization.

Indians were roaming the mountains. Only here and there in all the territory of the counties of Frederick and Washington in Maryland, and a small portion of Adams and Franklin in Pennsylvania, were to be seen slight traces of habitation.

HARBAUGH'S VALLEY is about three miles long and from one to one and a half miles in width. It lies in the northern part of Frederick County, Maryland, and a small portion of Adams County, Pennsylvania, between the Catocin and Blue Ridge Mountains.

This valley was little known outside of its immediate vicinity. Many erroneous impressions were formed respecting its character of soil and adaptability for agricultural purposes. Before the Western Maryland Railroad was built, it was practically a sealed book.

At the present time, anyone passing through this valley may be surprised at the elegant farms and their high state of cultivation.

Two streams of water traverse the valley. They unite in a ravine about a quarter of a mile long in the extreme north-eastern end of the valley between two bases of the mountain which are only a few hundred feet apart, forming the stream known as "Friends Creek".

GEORGE HARBAUGH was born February 10, 1726, at Kirschweiler, Germany. He was a member of the German Reformed Church, later transferring his membership to the Moravian Church at Graceham, Maryland.

He was a remarkably large man, very corpulent and of unusual height. It is said he was almost a giant.

He came to his death February 19, 1787, by accidental drowning somewhere in the headwaters of Falls Run, near the foot of what is called Mount Misery. He is buried in a little graveyard on the old homestead farm about half a mile south-east of Sabillasville.

His wife was Catherine Williard - Bender, born December 21, 1721, somewhere in Germany, and came to this country in 1746.

They were married October 4, 1746. She died December 12, 1791. To them were born seven children, three boys and four girls. Their youngest daughter, ANNA REGINA, married JONAS EYLER, my Great Grandfather.

THE EYLERS * COFFMANS * BAKERS

Eyler's Valley, Maryland, is a small valley across the mountain, three miles east of Harbaugh's Valley.

I have no record of the earliest settlement of this valley, other than that JONAS EYLER, my great grand-father on my mother's side of the family, was a son of the ancestor who gave this valley its name.

As near as I can figure it, the valley was settled about the same time as Harbaugh's Valley. It appears the Eylers and the Harbaughs were friends upon arriving in this country.

From that time until the present day, the Eylers and the Harbaughs have intermarried extensively.

JONAS EYLER was born on a ship at sea November 22, 1754, while his parents were on their way to America from Germany. He died in Eyler's Valley April 19, 1825, age 70 years, 5 months, 27 days.

He is the ancestor who assisted in establishing American independence, while acting in the capacity of "Private" member of Captain Nehemiah Stokely's Company in Pennsylvania, during the Revolutionary War.

Regiment on foot (in service of the United States of America), commanded by Colonel Daniel Broadhead. He was in command of Fort Laurens; served seven years. Resigned November 23, 1778.

He married ANNA REGINA HARBAUGH, youngest daughter of GEORGE HARBAUGH, April 24, 1781. She was born February 12, 1759, died Octobrt 6, 1849, at the age of 90 years, 7 months, 26 days.

They both are buried in the Moravian Cemetery at Graceham, Maryland, tomb stones numbers 238 and 399.

They had ten children. Their oldest son GEORGE EYLER, married ELSIE ANN KAUFFMAN, (later changed to Coffman). These were my Grand Parents on my mother's side of the family.

ELSIE ANN was the daughter of George and Elizabeth (Baker) Coffman. I have no record of the birth or death of the Coffmans. They are buried in Strainers graveyard near New Baltimore, Adams County, Pennsylvania.

John Baker and Mary (Fridley) Baker, I have no record of their birth or death. They lived near New Baltimore, Adams County, Pennsylvania.

They had three children: John, Jacob and (ELIZABETH, who married GEORGE COFFMAN). These were my Great Grand-parents on my mother's side of the family.

The records concerning this family were destroyed by an unscrupulous objector to family history.

NOTE:- Jacob Baker remained a bachelor and lived in the old homestead near New Baltimore, Adams County, Pennsylvania.

For several years prior to her marriage, ELSIE ANN COFFMAN, his niece, (My Grandmother) kept house for him. She stated that he very often came home after several weeks' absence, (always traveling on horseback) with his saddle pockets filled with money.

Being very close-mouthed, he never revealed to her any of his business transactions; therefore she was never able to find out where he got his money or what he did with it.

He served in the Revolutionary War, after which he spent most of his time around Philadelphia.

When his niece married GEORGE EYLER and moved to Eyer's Valley, Maryland, she entirely lost track of her Uncle Jacob.

GEORGE EYLER, my Grandfather, born February 6, 1782, died April 10, 1871. Age 89 years, 2 months, 4 days.

ELSIE ANN COFFMAN, my Grandmother, born July 20, 1784, died February 23, 1878. Age ⁹³~~92~~ years, 7 months, 3 days.

They were married April 2, 1811, and resided on a small farm in Eyer's Valley, Frederick County, Maryland. The old homestead is located in the center of the valley near the United Brethren Church, of which they were prominent members.

They had twelve children, of which my mother HARRIET, was the youngest. She was born May 28, 1831.

Most of my aunts and uncles had large families, which meant a large circle of cousins. I had the pleasure of visiting in all of their homes in my early life, and enjoyed the good fellowship that existed between the various families.

There are today a few first cousins left. Many of the second and third cousins are scattered all over the United States. Some of them keep in touch with me, and occasionally pay us a visit.

HARBAUGH'S VALLEY

GEORGE HARBAUGH settled in the center of the valley, Ludwig in the southern part, JACOB in the northern end, -- each taking up an appropriate equal portion of the land.

Parts of the farms were called - Sweet Land, Peace The Best, Jacob's Last Chance, Sugar Tree Valley, Tired Dog, and Mount Olivet.

JACOB HARBAUGH (My great-great Grandfather) was born in Switzerland February 5, 1730, died April 28, 1818.

ANNA MARGARET SCHMIDT, his wife, born April 2, 1740, died March 18, 1803.

They were married April 1, 1761. To them were born 15 children.

In the center of JACOB'S farm, he originally built a small house in one of the meadows, near a spring of water, where the family lived for a number of years.

Later on he built a more substantial house on the top of a steep hill where, at the bottom of the hill, was located a splendid spring of water, over which he built a log springhouse.

Their oldest son JACOB (my great Grandfather) was born March 21, 1763, died December 16, 1842.

MARY MAGDALENA MONG, his wife, was born August 1, 1771, died June 7, 1824.

Upon their marriage in 1788, JACOB, being the oldest son, was allotted the part of the farm containing the farm buildings.

It so happened that, while carrying two pails of water from the spring to the house on top of the steep hill, he fell and broke his leg. The accident was the result of the third house having been built at the foot of the hill near the spring of water.

The new house was built in 1814, and is still standing although considerably improved and modernized at the present time. It is now equipped with electricity, a modern heating system and bathroom facilities. It was in this house that I first saw the light of day.

The house was constructed from a 30 foot square of hewn logs, two and a half stories high, containing eight rooms, a wide hall and stairway on both floors, a large attic, wide porch across the front, and a substantial cellar with a milk trough two feet in width running along two sides of the walls.

At the head of this trough there was an inlet of cool water which filled it to about eight inches, or full enough to store many crooks of milk, which was the only means they had for preserving the milk for the gathering of cream from which butter was made.

On each side of the house there was a built-in chimney containing two fireplaces on each floor for heating purposes. The exterior of the house was weatherboarded and painted a dark brown.

The furniture in the house was all hand-made, constructed mostly of oak, chestnut and cherry wood from the farm.

There were no closets in any of the bed rooms for the storage of clothing. In each room there was a chest of drawers. On the sidewalls of each room, about six feet from the floor, there was a row of carved wooden pegs for the hanging of clothing.

Each member of the family, according to age, was assigned a number of these pegs for wardrobe purposes, with instructions that one child was not to intrude on the allotted space of the other, and that perfect harmony must be maintained among the different members of the family.

Connected with the main house there was built a stone extension, one and a half stories consisting of two rooms used as the kitchen and dining room, and an appropriate porch from which entrance was made to the cellar of the main house. This extension gave the completed house an L shape.

From the kitchen side of the house there was built a large open fireplace, about three by eight feet in size. Built into this fireplace was a small bake-oven, and on the outside along the chimney there was a large bake-oven with the opening on the inside. Both ovens were operated from the fireplace in the kitchen.

To operate these ovens, they had to be fired by filling them with long sticks of wood specially cut. When this wood was sufficiently burned into red coals,

they were raked off into a special opening and dropped down under the ovens. The ovens would then be sufficiently heated for baking, and would be filled with bread in special pans of various sizes, often 12 and 16 loaves, as many pies, and several pans of rolls.

The ovens were then sealed and timed. It took half an hour to bake pies and rolls, and an hour for bread. It was great joy to see the big brown loaves of bread, and the pies and rolls taken from the ovens.

At the bottom of the hill near the house there was built a log work shop with ample storage on the top for extra lumber, tools etc., and an underground cellar for the storage of fruits and vegetables.

Having two large apple orchards, it was necessary to have ample storage for the hundreds of bushels of apples picked every Fall. There were also many bushels of pears and other fruit.

Near this shop, alongside of a large garden, there was built a bee house where hives were kept, which produced many pounds of delicious honey each Summer season.

In the Spring of the year, the overflow of bees of the hive would swarm. About two quarts of the young bees, together with a queen bee as their leader, would leave the hive and in a thick mass fly slowly around the garden until the queen would find a suitable bush to settle on.

She would light on a branch, then all the other bees would settle around her, forming an army as large as a man's head.

They would remain in this position for about an hour, in order to give the farmer time to place them in a hive. The farmer would cover his face with a veil, and his hands with gloves, to prevent being stung, and gently move the bees into the hive.

It was necessary to get the queen bee, which was larger than the other bees, but having a yellow stripe down her back, she was easily detected.

I have many time had the pleasure of hiving a bee, and considered it a lot of fun.

In the front of the house along the public road, there was a cider mill run by horse-power, and a hand press where many hundreds of barrels of cider were made each year. This press was rented out to neighbor farmers who came from many miles around the vally to make cider, very often before daylight in the morning so as to make the most of their time.

Much of the cider was barreled and made into vinegar, after the necessary amount was used to boil apple butter. The apple butter was stored in earthen gallon crocks, and much of it marketed in the towns in which the farmers traded.

A corn crib^b, fruit drying house where much fruit was evaporated each year for home consumption or market, a smoke house where hams, shoulders and slabs of bacon were cured for family use, a chicken coop and hogpen composed the buildings near the house.

The yard surrounding the house and all the other buildings, including the garden, represented about an acre of land, enclosed by a picket fence.

The wing of the house was built of stone, covered with a rough-cast plaster coating, while the main part of the house was painted a dark brown. Most of the other buildings were of frame construction and whitewashed.

In the Spring of each year these buildings and the entire picket fence had to have a complete coat of whitewash, which was made of slacked lime mixed with water to the desired thickness.

Every member of the family was called into service when this whitewashing was being done, so as not to prolong the work too long. It was quite a job, but with a few good whitewash brushes we would get it finished in a few days.

This stark whiteness against a rich setting of luxuriant green trees, shrubbery and grass, made a most beautiful and impressive picture.

About three hundred yards from the house, across the public road, was^(Fig. 4) the barn, built in ~~1792~~ 1794. (Still standing, as of 1951).

The barn was built on a good foundation of native stone, substantially masoned. On each of the walls, between a wide plank barn-floor, there was built a square of approximately 35 foot hewn logs, 40 foot high. Haymows they were called, for the storage of hay for feeding the stock during the Winter season, or when needed.

On each side of the mows there were sheds for the storage of grain, fodder etc.