

Ayles (Ayles) Gonsers, nee Hensley
ca 1765 - 1850

The name Godsey does not appear in French or British genealogy files — it originated in this country. Finding out how, wasn't easy — except for the writer, no one — at this writing — could care less.

Aboard H.M.S. Richmond, out of London, were a group of Huguenots, fleeing from the religious turmoil in Europe — some were transports. After a voyage of unbelievable hardship (see "Treatise of the Huguenots"), they disembarked on August 15, 1680, at Charles Town, Province of Carolina — a thriving seaport of 200 souls.

Among the survivors were James & Thomas Godfrey, ages 10 & 12, respectively, in custody of a Huguenot family by the name of Anonnette. These boys were the only living sons of Sir Lambert Godfrey, recently ousted from his Judgeship in Westminster — an intrigue & political murder, most foul.

Soon after this date, the names of James & Thomas Godsey appear on Justice of the Peace documents.

from that area. We believe that the "fr" in Godfrey — deliberately or otherwise — was changed to an "s". This was the beginning of a transition period when the English "s", formed like an "f", was converted to its present familiar shape.

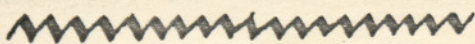
James & Thomas are probably the forbears of all the Godseys in the United States today — they came from a prolific family. (See life of Sir Edmond Godfrey.) Thomas was survived by two sons, John & Thomas Jr. A daughter, Sarah, died in 1742.

Thomas Godsey is buried on a farm near Sandston, Virginia. His headstone, badly deteriorated, appears to read: "Thomas Godsey, born Westminster, England, 1668, died 1749." Month, day, & a few lines — probably eulogy — are not legible.

Epilogue

The intimate details about the lives of James & Thomas Godsey are buried forever — history gives access to generalities. It would be nice to believe that these youngsters came here as starry-eyed idealists, revolting against injustice, bigotry, & mediocrity. Like their Huguenot grandfathers, they were driven from their homes by persecution, torture & killing — they could not go back.

Determined, rough & hopeful, they slowly transformed their portion of the American frontier into a self-sustaining farm, & accepted without protest, an endless procession of miseries, suffering & distress — old as mountains, yet always new.



Thomas Jr., with his wife, Nancy, & four youngsters, settled a few miles south of Cumberland Gap, on the Tennessee River in 1765. He, his wife & the two oldest children, Elizabeth & Blackburn, along with six other settlers, were massacred by Indians in 1769. They were all buried in one grave near Maynardville, which is now flooded by Norris Lake. The two youngest sons, William & Austin were spared, & returned to Buckingham Co., Va.

Scene I. Act II. Five years later.

Six young men — teen agers — were lying prone on a knoll, about 50 yards away, & down wind from where a small band of Indians were camped. Their relative positions gave the boys a 360 degree view. They carried no firearms, but were formidably armed with knives & hatchets.

The youths had been lying in their positions for over 14 hours, disregarding flies & mosquitos.

At dawn, a group of 10 armed braves departed from the camp below — silent as shadows. Several minutes later, from the river, came the vacant hysterical laugh of a loon, given at various intervals. The sequence time was carefully noted by one of the boys, the leader. It was a signal to hit hard, fast, & get away. They had about five minutes to achieve a very exacting chore — there were no second chances.

The six youths acted swiftly with precision. Silently, & as vicious as hungry jungle cats, they moved through the camp, striking & slashing. In less than five minutes it was over, all were dead — old men, women & children — except for a ten year old white girl who was gagged & carried away — she soon understood.

The young men & the girl ran for nearly 24 ^{hours} without stopping before reaching a settlement. It was then they knew their mission was a complete success.

William & Austin Godsey & Five Hensley brothers had rescued Agnes (Duke) Hensley. In doing so, it was necessary to avenge the massacre of their parents, who died on that very spot five years before.

Epilogue

This story came from the Hensley family which turned out some real bloodthirsty Indian fighters.

William & Austin lived or associated with the Hensleys all their lives. Very likely the Hensleys ^{took} the two brothers into their home after the massacre.



William Godsey 1, second son of Thomas Godsey the second, was born 1758, in Buckingham County, Virginia. This was the time & center of the most violent Indian wars in our history.

The typical backwoodsman in those days was a tall, rambored & physically tough individual — William fitted that description. He also had brown wavy hair & fine white teeth. His war record seems to indicate dedication — a volunteer, he. With General Morgan's Rifles — Sixth Va. Regiment of Continental Line — for over 3 years, he was in all their engagements. At the battle of Guilford Courthouse, & Cowpens, he fought with distinction. After Capt. Paterson was killed, Capt Cavil became his C.O.

William's brother Austin, & three Hensley brothers (brothers-in-law) served together in the same outfit. These boys had guts & plenty of opportunities to prove it.

While in the army, William married Agnes
Hensley on January 14, 1779 — ^{she was 16, he 21.} Over a period of 23
years they had at least 11 children: William, Jan. 1780.
Burton, 1782. John, Dec. 1783. Austin, 1788. James,
Aug. 1791. Drury L., 1795. Henry, 1801 & Samuel,
1802. There were also three daughters: Elizabeth,
Sarah & Harriet. Birth dates are not known.

A cooper by trade, William also built log cabins
— accounting for frequent moves. Agnes & William
signed various documents with a mark. They were,
however, considered literate — both could read.

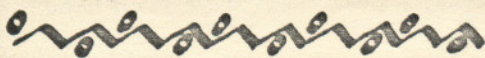
In 1817, crippled & nearly blind, William was
gamely struggling at his trade. The kids were gone
— he & Agnes were alone. He applied for a
veteran's pension. It was necessary to list all his
assets. The inventory — notarized, publicized, in-
spected, checked, doublechecked & sworn to —
included: 3 pots, 1 small oven, 1 skillet, 6 each:

plates, saucers, cups, knives, forks, spoons & one
old woman about his own age. (see Nat. archives)

Epilogue

Very little of the foregoing family history would
be accepted by genealogists — no claim is made
that it should be.

Sources: Lloyd's of London, Tennessee State
Library, National Archives, & many personal
visits to cemeteries over a 20 year period. Talks &
correspondence with many old timers in Mo. brought
information, much of which was measured by the law
of probability. Ninety-year old (1965) Mary Campbell,
Slater, Mo. had a very keen memory. Daughter-in-law
of Sarah Gorsey Campbell, she ^{recalled} much of William.



this country prior to the year 1800 — they are
all blood relatives.

Thomas was born in Westminster,
England, in 1668.

James, brother of Thomas, was born in
Westminster, England, in 1670.

John, son of Thomas, was born in
Charles Town, S.C., in 1730.

Thomas, brother of John, was born in
Chesterfield County, Va., in 1732.

William, son of Thomas, was born in
Buckingham County, Va., in 1768.

John, son of William, was born in
Scott County, Va., in 1783.

Austin, brother of William, was born
in Buckingham County, Va., in 1760.

James, son of Austin, was born in 1791.

Henry, son of William, was born in
Tennessee, in 1800.

Drury L., son of William, was born
North Carolina, in 1801.

On January 8, 1781, Cornwallis tossed in the towel, Americans picked up the prize — freedom, & little else. Economy, we had none — the nation was camping out. D. Boone had carved the Wilderness Road through a ^{solid} mass of hostile Indians. Landbreakers were getting smart — moonshining for a few extra bucks. William Goshen had to soldier one more year, transferring prisoners. At last! home from the war, nine months & 5 minutes later, his second son, Burton, was born — Buckingham Co., Va., Sept. 10, 1782.

After a precarious childhood, in 1800 Burton became a journeyman stonemason — working at this trade until 1863. He had some training in civil engineering — judging by several tricky grading jobs. Many of his buildings & road projects are still being used in Virginia & Missouri.

At Lookout Mt., Tenn., Burton enlisted in Col. Williams' 39th Regiment of Infantry, for the duration

of the War of 1812. Captain Walker was his C.O. Burton lost a leg while in the army. Word of mouth, by members of his family, say it happened at the Battle of New Orleans — this is doubtful. While the records can be in error, they show he enlisted on Dec. 24, 1814 & was discharged April 30, 1815. The Battle of New Orleans ended January 8, 1815.

After leaving the service, Burton & Patience Winn were married — she was 23, he 34. On Sept. 24, 1817, their first child, Burley, was born. Not long after that date, they moved to St. Charles Co., Mo. & settled on the bank of the wide Missouri.

On Oct. 28, 1821, Abner was born. Blackburn was probably born in 1828. He married in 1850, & died in 1854 of consumption — there were 2 children. Sarah & William came in between — no positive dates.

In 1829, with a heavily loaded Conestoga wagon, Burton & his family struck out for Arrow Rock, Mo.,

an orderly & thriving town on the Missouri River. At that time Arrow Rock was the eastern terminus of the Santa Fe Trail. There were unloading facilities & warehouses for storing river boat cargo. During this period, as many as 100 slaves were in the area. Burton, at this time, owned 3 slaves & often rented others. He also had a prominent part in the history of Arrow Rock.

In 1844 a great flood occurred. The Missouri changed its course to 5 miles east — Arrow Rock was no more. Burton purchased 160 acres of farm land about a mile from Lima. Here he built a house of logs & stone — a show place. Four children, & as many as 25 grandchildren lived there at one time — a mule could stand in the fireplace. Here in 1845, his beloved Patience died. She is buried on the ranch. Her headstone, carved of local stone by Burton, was 24" x 10" cut on a 45° bias. On

March 3, 1841 Burton took his 2nd wife, Sarah
Heartless — what happened to her is not known.

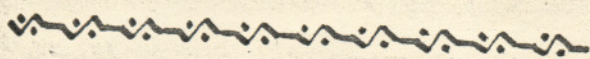
During 1855 & 56, Burton applied for, & was
given, two 80 acre land grants — the wordings are sig-
nificant. He appears to have sold his farm in 1854. On
July 25, 1856, he drew up his last will & testament
— disinheriting the entire family. Delila Burchridge, 36,
was named executrix. One week later, they were mar-
ried — he was 76.

Missouri was a divided state prior to the civil war
— churches, lodges, friends & families were bitterly
opposed on slavery. Burton was a Rebel, thru & thru
— staunch & irrevocable. His two sons, Burley &
Abner, had publicly denounced slavery by the simple
procedure of registering as a Republican — there
you have it.

Burton's grandson, Christopher (son of Abner),
apparently sided in with grandpappy. On Aug. 8,

1862, he married his grandmother-in-law's daughter, Ann — he was 19, she 15. Some titillating in-law nomenclature to ponder.

Burton, brawny, resourceful & self-reliant, was the most independent person in Missouri. A few days before the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect, he ordered his slaves to dig his grave — then they were freed. Later, in the year 1863, he took to his bed & stopped breathing. He is buried by Patience's side. His headstone which he cared at the time of her death, says simply: "B. Gohsey old age."



Ref: Census records of Saline & Carroll Co's. Cemetery records, National Archives, History of Carroll Co., Court-house records, & conversations with old timers in the area in 1954 — nothing is exaggerated. B. Gohsey 1961.