

## CHAPTER VIII

## WILDERNESS and A CITY

John and Rebecca Titchenal and their family in Fort Smith

Rebecca and her siblings sue their mother for their part of their father's estate

The Cherokee Indians are driven out of Georgia through Fort Smith to Indian Territory

John Titchenal dies young

William Titchenal visits his uncles in Ohio.

1820 -1849

**William Titchenal's** childhood may sound like it was one great adventure, but the stark reality of frontier living was that it was full of hardships and danger. In *The History of Sebastian County*, an early pioneer's life at Belle Point (Fort Smith) is described in a letter written by a neighbor of **John** and **William Titchenal**, John Billingsley:

"We lived in all the luxuries of life the new country could afford, such as buffalo and bear, deer and elk meat and fish and honey. We had pound cake every day, we beat all the meal that we ate in a mortar. If the corn gave out, the substitute was venison, dried by the fire, ground in a mortar and made into small cakes and fried in bear oil. When we could, we traded buffalo meat with the soldiers at the fort for flour, which was a great treat.

We had all things in common, no doctors, no lawyers in those happy days. If any man had a lock on his doors he was looked upon with suspicion. Deer skins were dressed down and made into clothing.

Occasionally a French trader came up river in a canoe and brought domestics, calico and checks, and some earthenware and cutlery. We paid 50 cents a yard for calico, 37 and 1/2 cents for domestics, 40 cents for checks (patterns). I paid \$4.00 for the first set of tea cups I ever owned and very common at that. Two dollars for a small dish and four dollars for a set of knives and forks. We paid in beaver, otter, bear and deer skins and bear oil and beeswax."

We know very little about the early life of **John Titchenal** and his family in Fort Smith, but the early years must have been similar to the life John Billingsley described, (also very much like the life of the pioneer homesteaders in Harrison County, Virginia, described in chapter VI).

Through most of the 1820s, flat boats were used as ferries to cross the Arkansas River and to ship goods to, or from Little Rock. Canoes were the most frequently used method of travel. Gradually, as supplies could be shipped to the Fort Smith area regularly, merchants began to set up shops.

**John** probably farmed his land and was the village blacksmith. He may have also hired out as a teamster now and then. His son, **William**, continued the practice in Texas and California. Even though **John** was only five years old when his grandfather, **Moses**, died in 1796, he remembered the saw mill his grandfather and his father, **David**, had built at the mouth of the Savage River, and the flat boats they built for shipment of goods down the Potomac to Baltimore. He had also worked at the Lumberport lumber mill, building flat boats for shipments on the Monongalia River in Harrison County, Virginia. He probably used this knowledge to build flat boats for shipment of goods down the Arkansas River.

He must have been on hand to greet the first steamboat to reach Fort Smith from Little Rock, the "Robert Thompson." It made the first trip April 10, 1822 with army supplies and took two weeks for the round trip. Later that summer it made three more round trips, then gave up for lack of business. In 1825, the "Spartan" tried to start service again, but got stuck on a sand bar for several months in Fort Smith. In 1826, another boat, the "Superior," made it and started a more or less regular service between Fort Smith and the east. Many steamboats plied the Arkansas River in the 1830's and 1840's, but few made it to the border town until the discovery of gold in California, when Fort Smith became the jumping off point for the warm weather southern route to California.

It wasn't until 1827 that the traffic across the Arkansas River at Fort Smith warranted the building of Weaver's Ferry. **John** may have helped build it. In 1825, the national congress appropriated \$10,000 "to clear the road (Little Rock to Fort Smith) of timber and brush and make it otherwise fit for travel"; \$15,000 more was spent on the road over the next two years, but traffic clung to the river and the road eventually became almost impassable. The soldiers opened roads, of a sort, to Fort Gibson and other army posts. It was not until 1858 that a stage connection was made with a distant point, and not until after the Civil War was there a road fit for stage use north and south. This was the famous Butterfield line of stages. The first telegraph wire in this part of the world was strung in 1860.

With the poor transportation and communication to or from Fort Smith during the first nine or ten years **John** and **Rebecca Titchenal** and family lived there, they must have had a hard time keeping in touch with their families in Virginia and Ohio. At first, the only way to get mail was to send one of the soldiers to Little Rock to pick it up. The round trip took about three weeks. This must have been frustrating to **Rebecca**, as she tried to stay in close touch with her home in Harrison County, Virginia and her brothers in Champagne County, Ohio. Harrison County wasn't much better, as late as 1826 the Clarksburg Enquirer reported western mail arrives every Monday and departs on Thursday, and frequently the mail didn't arrive at all.

Much had happened in Virginia since **Rebecca's** father, **Thomas Harbert, Jr.**, hadn't returned from the trip to Arkansas with a "friend" and was reported to have been killed in an accident. At that time everyone was shocked and suspicious. **Thomas, Jr.** was an excellent woodsman and should have been able to take care of himself. He was respected as a smart and wealthy man and had acquired considerable land both in Virginia and Ohio. Unfortunately he did not anticipate his early death and died without a will.

No one knew who the "friend" was, but the story claims the "friend" murdered **Thomas** to get his money and land. Based on the information turned up in the search of the Harrison and Champaign County Court records, it would seem that Isaac Hagle and Henry Carothers are the only people that fit the descriptions of the potential villains. Isaac Hagle is the only person that fit into **Hannah's** life in a way that permitted him to have an opportunity to control **Hannah's** estate. Henry Carothers <sup>[4]</sup> may have been a friend and even a lawyer. Whatever way Henry Carothers fit into the affairs of **Hannah** and Isaac, he

was very much involved in **Thomas Harbert, Jr.**'s estate settlements and **Hannah**'s affairs, apparently to his advantage.

Lumberport was a small community, It's logical to assume Isaac Hagle and his wife were friends and neighbors with **Thomas** and **Hannah** before **Thomas** died. Isaac's wife died sometime between 1810 & 1818 and Isaac became a widower before **Thomas**' trip and death. Maybe Isaac was the "friend" that took the trip with **Thomas**.

Regardless of who the friend was, the sudden death of her husband would have overwhelmed **Hannah**. The complexities of being the administrator of the estate, taking care of her under-age children, and running the farm and **Thomas Jr.**'s business was too much for **Hannah**.

**Hannah** and **Thomas** had ten children all together. At the time of **Thomas**' death, five of them were over 19 years old, many were married and some of her sons may have been away during the war of 1812 or moved to Ohio; but, four of her children were still under 18 years of age and living at home. (William 17, Mary 13, Vianna 11 and Elijah eight).

**Hannah** probably had been friends with Isaac and his wife before she died. Evidently **Hannah** trusted Isaac and thought he could at least commensurate with her about her loss. He must have told her he would help her with her problems. **Hannah** needed help She didn't know how to get **Thomas**' money and property in usable form so she could support her children and run her farm. Isaac may have helped her and himself "too much."

Much of the information about the **Titchenal** family's life in Fort Smith has been surmised by reading local history books; from information supplied by Tim Haidlen; and, through correspondence with Gerald Forman [a descendant of Sarah Ann (Titchenal) Hackett]. John Luce, or his friend, Bernice Cole (a Fort Smith free-lance writer); John Luce, who died in 1987 was the grandson of Margaret Falconer McKinney, and a great grandson of Mary Ellen (**Titchenal**) Falconer (Mary Ellen was **William**'s older sister and the first of **John** and **Rebecca**'s children to marry).

John Luce was born in Fort Smith and lived there all of his life. He was interested in tracing the **Titchenal**, Falconer, Hackett and Luce family history in Fort Smith. He found and recorded much of the **Titchenal** local history. He believes **John Titchenal**'s first homestead was just west of the old fort, at the intersection of the Arkansas and Poteau Rivers. He helped to get a monument to Sarah Ann Titchenal erected on the presumed site of their home.

Margaret Falconer McKinney, John Luce's grandmother told him her mother's family (the **Titchenals**) had more sympathy for the Indians than they had for many of the military personnel or the camp followers. Margaret thought there must have been

Cherokee blood in the family, which made them sympathetic with the raw deal the Cherokees, Creeks, Osage, Quapaws and the other Indian tribes were getting at the hands of the United States government.

There is no evidence of Cherokee blood in any generation up to **John and Rebecca**. [Although two generations later there would be Cherokee blood in the **Titchenal** family when my father married my mother, **Dora Keith**]. However, several Indian families may have lived on or near their homestead as wards. The 1830 census records list two adults between 16 and 50 years old living with the **Titchenal** family. These may have been Indians.

In order to understand the family's sympathy for the Indians, it helps to understand some the early history of the Indian and United States treaties, and the particular situation in Arkansas and the Indian territory at the time the **Titchenals** lived there.

The conflict between the Indians and the colonists had been difficult since the first colonists arrived. The colonists were consistently breaking treaties with the Indians. The white man always wanted, and took, more of the Indian land.

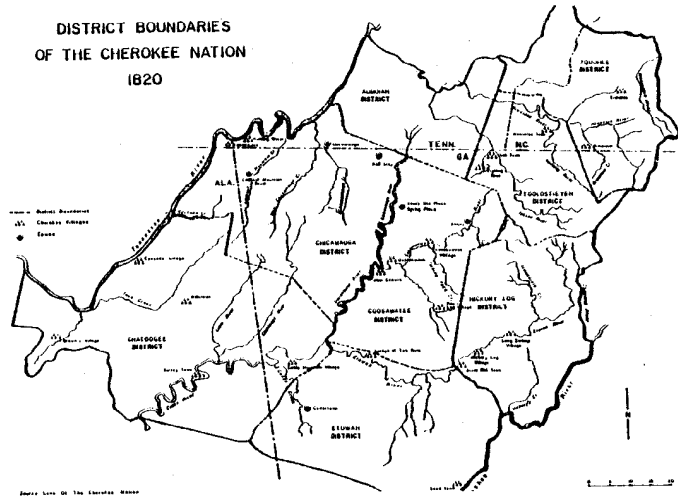


Bureau of American Ethnology

ATTAKULLACULLA, at the far right, and six other Cherokees who accompanied Sir Alexander Cuming to England in 1730.

Excerpts from *The Cherokees* by Grace Steel Woodward;

“Of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians in America the Cherokees were early recognized as the greatest and most civilized. Indeed between 1540 and 1906 they reached a higher peak of civilization than any other North American Indian Tribe. They invented a syllabary and developed an intricate



government, including a system of courts of law. They published their own newspaper in both Cherokee and English and became noted orators and statesmen.

At the beginning, the Cherokee' conquest of civilization was agonizingly slow and uncertain. As war lords of the southern Appalachian Highlands, they were loath to expend their energies elsewhere. But the warlike and willful Cherokees, lingering in the Stone Age by choice at the turn of the eighteenth century, were forced by circumstances to transfer their concentration on war to problems posed by the white man.

To cope with these unwelcome problems, they had to turn from the conquests of war to the conquest of civilization. In doing so the war like Cherokees became civilized and mature.

### **Summed up, the outstanding events that turned the tide of Cherokee history were:**

**1st**, the coming of the Spanish plunderers under Hernando De Soto in 1540.

**2nd**, The treaty with England in 1730, in which... Cherokee lands were ceded to the crown, and made complete submission to the British empire.

**3rd**, The treaty with the new American Republic in 1785, the terms of which, mutual friendship was established and the tomahawk was buried forever.

**4th**, The tragedy of an enforced removal to the West at the hands of the United States government in 1838.

**5th**, The overwhelming misfortunes during the Civil War 1861- 1865

**6th**, The dissolution of tribal bonds in 1906, and fusion into the mass of American citizenship.

Chronologically more than three centuries separate early Cherokee conquistadors of civilization from today's Cherokees. But historically in spirit they are one and the same. They display the same basic character traits: humor, persistence, adaptability, and aggressiveness. [These same character traits and brand of humor has also been inherited by my brother, myself and my children]

For example the late Will Rogers' humor was the same brand of humor employed by his Cherokee ancestors, the Vanns, who inscribed the following epitaph on wooden slag in 1809 in Georgia to mark the grave of James Vann, killed in a shooting fray by his brother-in-law:

Her lies the body of James Vann  
He killed many a white man  
At last by a rifle ball he fell  
And the devils dragged him off to hell.

Humor or "joshing one another" and the "will to win" is as prevalent today among Cherokees as it was in the southern Appalachians two centuries ago.

Of all the Indian tribes, The Cherokee tribe was the most fair and understanding in their negotiations with America, but they still had a long and unfortunate history of treaty problems. They were one of the few Indian tribes that joined with the colonies in fighting against the English, and by making treaties that defined their land boundaries.

The Hopewell treaty in 1775, the first United States and Indian treaty, defined the Cherokee land and called for some Indians and some settlers to move from land within their new respective borders. The Cherokees gave up their land but the settlers would not move from theirs.

The Cherokees brought their grievances to the new United States government as they were told to do. The United States government did nothing. In fact more settlers moved in. Individual fighting broke out again until the Cherokees around Chickamauga laid siege to the Muscle Shoals settlement.

This started a series of atrocities on both sides and almost full scale war when John Sevier of Tennessee and the Franklin County militia burned the Chickamauga Indian town of Hiwassee and assassinated all of the inhabitants.

Washington became president on April 30, 1789. He vowed to attempt to rectify the United States' "disgraceful violation of the Hopewell treaty".

On July 1791 the treaty of Holston was negotiated to end the Cherokee-white conflicts. Affirming perpetual peace between the United States and the Cherokee nation, it not only defined new borders, but provided the U.S. the exclusive right of regulating trade. It forbade inhabitants of the United States to hunt or pass on Cherokee land without a passport. Cherokees committing crimes against the U.S. would be punished by U.S. law. Americans committing crimes against the Cherokees would be punished by Cherokee laws.

Article XIV of the treaty paved the way for the important Cherokee nation 19th century civilization program. It also provided that the United States would assist the Cherokee nation to become herdsmen and cultivators, instead of remaining hunters.

The United States did not follow up quickly with the plows, hoes, cattle and other things promised. Even though 1200 Cherokees and forty chiefs participated in the treaty including the chief of the Chickamaugas.

The lack of follow up by the United States government and the Chickamaugas' need for revenge caused them to start a new reign of terror on the settlers for their atrocities. Eventually the Chickamaugas had to be subdued by force that included John Sevier and Andrew Jackson<sup>[1]</sup>. The peace treaty of Tellico in 1794 ended the rebellion, however raids were continued by Sevier and Jackson's men.

Jackson claimed he had rights to much of the Cherokee lands. In 1795 he had gone to Philadelphia to sell over 80,000 acres of land that was situated on Cherokee lands not open to white settlers as fixed by the treaty of Holston. He was turned down. Jackson, heartily disliking President Washington, suggested his impeachment.

Land speculators like Jackson were one of Washington's gravest problems. Notified by Secretary Knox at the beginning of his term that speculators were paying less than one cent an acre for ill-gained Cherokee land, Washington threatened to send the regular army to the Indian country to uphold the Indians' rights. To avert this, the treaty of Holston was negotiated.

The Cherokees were pleased by the new peace treaty of Tellico with the whites, and tranquility enveloped the Cherokee villages. Instead of war cries, one could now hear the tinkle of bells on Indian ponies, the low mooing of cattle, and the whirring of wheels as the women spun cotton and flax grown by their men.

President Washington's rejection of a third term boded ill for the Cherokees. Never again would they know the kind and just protection of a president whose policy was designed to defend rather than offend the American Indians. In spite of a change of attitude the Cherokees made much progress toward civilization. They established schools, adopted the Christian religion, established a system of courts.... in fact copied the American system of government. They were the only Indian tribe that devised their own alphabet and a written language and published a newspaper.

In 1798 president Adams appointed Salis Dinsmoor to live among the Cherokees and instruct them "in the raising of stock, the cultivation of land, and arts" and also to report on their progress. His report to congress on the great progress made by the Cherokees coincided with a resolution



Cherokee settlements and making life difficult. The "Cherokee West" indians did not try to continue their program of cultural advancement religious progress that they had practiced in the east.

The eastern tribe, however continued to make amazing progress. In fact the ten years from 1817 to 1827 saw 90% of their citizens literate and converted to the Christian religion. These years also saw the writing of a constitution, the formation of a functioning government modeled after the United States, with a supreme court.

They even published their own paper "The Phoenix" in both English and the newly developed Cherokee language. The paper was read in Washington and internationally, and brought attention and sympathy for the Cherokee's fight to keep their nation together on its tribal land in Georgia. Local newspapers all over America quoted from "The Phoenix". Most likely the Fort Smith papers carried these quotes, because of the effort to force the Cherokees to move to Indian territory.

Doubtless, the **Titchenals** had read about the injustice to the Indians at that time. Later, they saw the injustice first hand. The **Titchenal** sympathy for the Indian cause was somewhat ironic when we consider that the ancestors of **John Titchenal** and his wife **Rebecca Harbert** had been fighting and taking Indian land for more than 200 years. At least three had been killed by Indians

The Cherokee people had been inter-marring with the whites for years, principally the Scotch-Irish of North Carolina. Many Cherokee were not full blooded indians and carried such names as;



CHIEF JOHN ROSS, painted shortly after the signing of the Treaty of 1846. Notice the treaty which Ross is holding. From a painting by John Neagle.



JOHN RIDGE

MAJOR RIDGE

Illustrations from the Muriel H. Wright Collection



Ridge, Ross, Lowery, Brown, West, Gist, McClure, Campbell, Keith, etc.

For example their Principal Chief, John Ross was only 1/4 Cherokee. They looked more like

typical Americans than Indians. Many Cherokees spoke fluent English and some were college educated and many dressed in American style clothes. In the words of a contemporary American, they were fair in negotiations and had Christian values, they were tall with fine features, spoke softly, and always with the truth of an unsophisticated child. They naively expected the white man to have the same values.

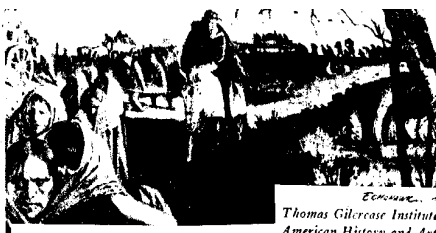
**Famous Cherokee Men**

“Their cultural advancement was interrupted when the United States demanded the Cherokee Indians fight side by side with General Jackson’s troops during the Creek (1813-14) war. It was a war General Jackson had activated as part the plan to move all the eastern Indian tribes to Oklahoma. The Cherokee fought because they thought it would help them with their determination to stay on their land. The Cherokees fought bravely with many heroic deeds. One of the Cherokees ironically saved General Jackson life.

Insensitive to their heroism, Jackson, near the close of the war suggested to president Madison that while the United States troops were still in the field it might be the time to force cessions of all Tennessee lands from both the Chickasaws and Cherokees. President Madison rejected Jackson’s plan.

Between 1808 and 1838 the government’s constant pressure and bribes to Indian chiefs split the Cherokee and other Indian tribes of the south and caused small groups migrate to the Arkansas territory from time to time. Treaty followed treaty and saw the Chickasaw, Creek, Choctaw and more Cherokee to move. This caused The United States government to send troops to keep the peace between the old tribes that had always lived in the west and the new Indians moving in. Finally in 1817 Fort Smith was built to hold troops to prevent a full scale war between the Cherokee and the Osage.

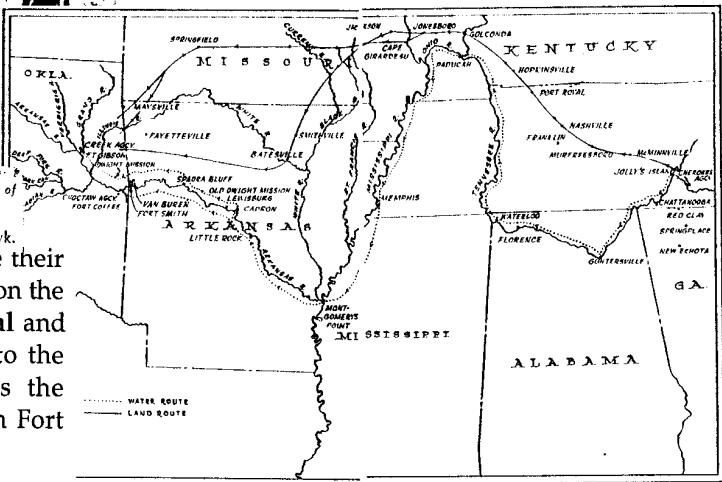
The fight to take the Indian lands in the southern states continued through presidents



Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art

THE TRAIL OF TEARS, interpreted in a painting by Echohawk.

Not only did the Indians lose their homes but thousands of indians died on the trip to Arkansas. Rebecca Titchenal and her family were first hand witness to the end of this trip and the problems the indians faced as they passed through Fort Smith.



The routes taken by the Cherokees during their removal in the west, 1838-39.

Monroe and John Quincy Adams, but when Andrew Jackson became president in 1829, he started an effort to remove them that couldn’t be stopped.

The Cherokee made elegant and admirable pleas to congress and the supreme court to save their land and nation. In 1838 chief justice John Marshal of the supreme court ruled in favor of the Cherokee plea that the Indians had a right to their land. Jackson said, “Let Marshal enforce the ruling.” Jackson then proceeded to send troops to move the Indians out which

finally resulted in the infamous "Trail of Tears" in 1838 and 1839.

**John Titchenal** did not have much time to pursue plans he may have had for his family in Fort Smith, as he died in 1831, eight to ten years after he and **Rebecca** arrived in fort Smith.

We can't be sure of what he did during those years. John had been trained as a stock raiser and farmer, and apprenticed with a blacksmith as boy in Maryland. As a blacksmith by trade, he was, no doubt, the first in Fort Smith. He probably also worked as a farmer and stock raiser, maybe as a teamster, as he had much experience with teams of horses both in Bloomington, Maryland and Clarksburg, Virginia. It is also possible he had an Indian trading post, as he lived close to the border of Indian Territory. Any of these things would have involved him with many people in the community.

Mary Ellen (**Titchenal**) Falconer's daughter, Margaret, told John Luce (her grandson) "a male member of the **Titchenal** family died in a fight with an Indian raiding party on the Massard prairie in 1830." The Massard prairie was not far from Cavanaugh, **John Titchenal's** homestead on what was later Falconer land.

If a male member of the family was killed in 1830, it would have been a son of **John** and **Rebecca**, as **John** died January 16, 1831. It is possible Margaret was mistaken about the date and it was **John** that was killed, or perhaps he was injured in this fight trying to protect his son and died the next January. About that time the army was engaged in what was known as the "White Lightnin' War" with the whiskey runners. Whiskey was the largest trading item with the Indians.

We can only speculate about the actual events and the size of the family after studying the evidence available.

The 1830 Crawford Township census shows 12 people living in **John** and **Rebecca's** family; No slaves or free colored persons were listed. In trying to analyze and identify the people listed in the 1830 census we find:

- ° One female 30 to 40 [**Rebecca** born 1795 would be 35.]
- ° **1st. child**, One female 10 to 15 [Mary Ellen born 1815 would be 15.]
- ° **2nd. child**, One female 5 to 10 [Sarah Ann born 1823 would be 7.]
- ° **3rd. and 4th. child**, Two males under five [David born 1826 would be 2] and [John born 1828 would be 4.]
- ° Zero males 5 to 10 years
- ° **5th. and 6th. child** Two males 10 to 15 years [**William** born 1817 would be 13.] (the other male is unknown, but if he was **John** and **Rebecca's** child he would have had to have been born in Virginia, Missouri or Arkansas from 1818 to 1820, and ten to twelve years old in 1830. (This could have been the Titchenal killed in the fight with the Indians in 1830 after the census was taken,)
- ° One male 15 to 20 years, This male is unknown, but would have had to be born between 1810 and 1815. **John** and **Rebecca** were not married until March 1814. **William** is the second child, so this means this man cannot be a child of **John** and **Rebecca**)
- ° Two males 30 to 40, **John** born in 1791 would have been 39. The other male could not have been a child of **John** and **Rebecca** as he would have had to be born between 1800 to 1790.

- ° One male 40 to 50, This male is also unknown, but could not have been a child of **John & Rebecca** and would have had to be born from 1780 to 1790.
- ° **7th. child**, Susan Eliza was not born until November 1830, so was not counted in the census of June 1, 1830.

Later, about 1880, **William Titchenal** said, in his California biography, that he was the *second of nine* children. His sister, Sarah Ann (Titchenal) Hackett, said she was the *one of seven* children but she might not have been aware of the two earlier children that may have died as babies before she was born in 1823.

The 1830 census accounts for seven of the nine children **William** said were in his family, and three unknown men, who could have been boarders, relatives, friends or Indians, living with them as wards. The two missing children **William** spoke about would have had to have been born and died before 1830 in Virginia, Missouri or Arkansas.<sup>[4]</sup>

The old fort had been abandoned in 1824, but in 1830 preparations were started to facilitate the removal of the Choctaws from Mississippi to their new home. Captain John B. Clark was sent to see that the buildings at the post were repaired so that Belle Point could be used as depot for provisions the government was obligated to issue the emigrating Indians. When he reached Fort Smith, Captain Clark was distressed at what he saw. The buildings were in very poor condition. The floors, doors, and windows were destroyed and logs torn out of the body of most of the barracks. The sills and bottom logs were all decaying rapidly and many buildings were sinking into the ground. The roofs were falling in on many buildings.

Clark planned to raze some of the buildings and to repair the others. He used local labor (which probably included **John Titchenal**) and a detail of troops from Fort Gibson. The winter of 1830-31 was unusually severe. Clark had to supply cattle for slaughter, as fresh meat was scarce because the weather had taken a heavy toll on the local herds. Corn was also scarce in Arkansas. He had to secure several thousand bushels from Cherokee farmers. Besides collecting subsistence stores for the major Choctaw emigration depot at Fort Smith, 7000 Indians were to be transported by steamboats and were expected to arrive by the autumn of 1831. Clark also had the duty of stocking intermediate supply points at the Post of Arkansas and Camp Poe near Little Rock.

Some Indians were stricken with cholera on the way. This caused great fear in the settlements along the Arkansas river. Over a thousand Indians were exposed to the disease, but only sixteen died.

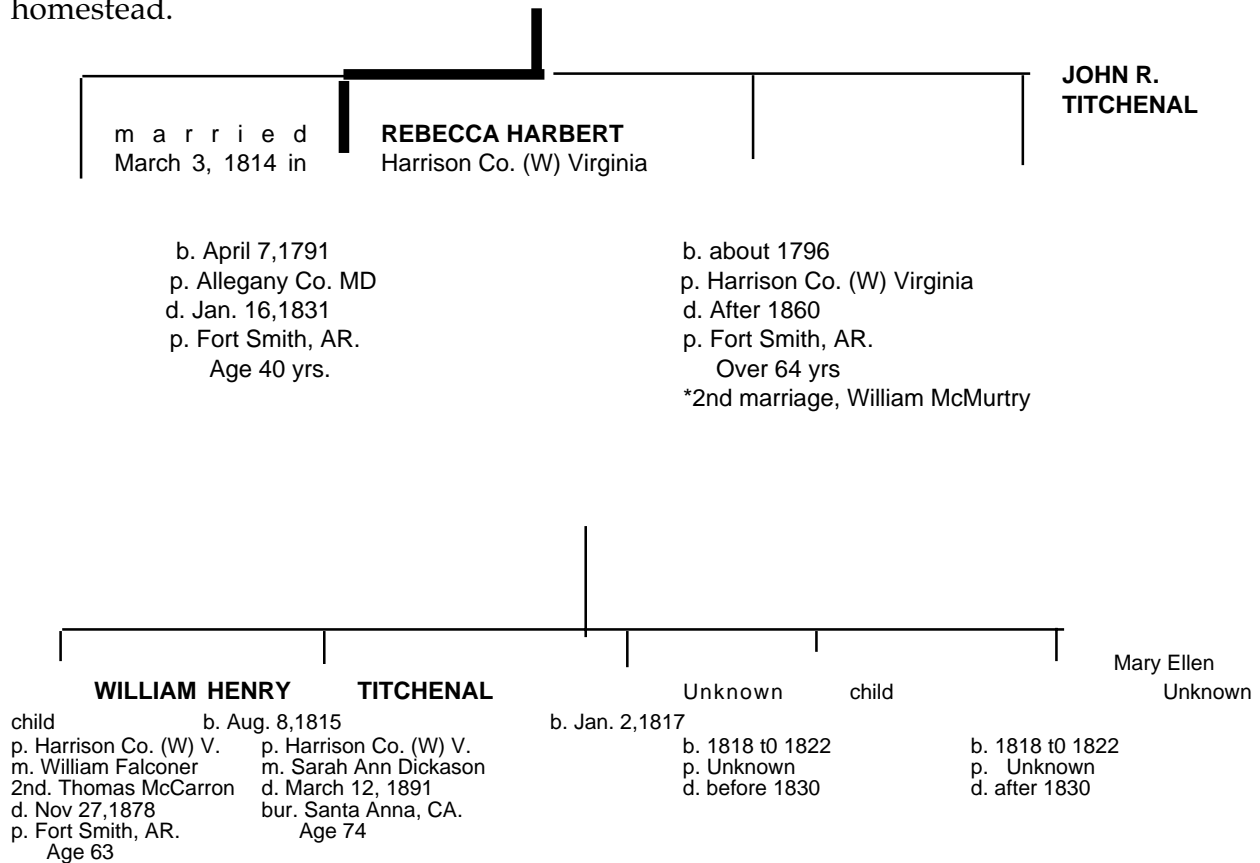
Knowing many Indians would have cash from the sale of improvements on their Mississippi land or from commutation payments, traders planned to meet them at the landings with piles of blankets, baubles, and trinkets. Tavern keepers solicited their patronage with rounds of free drinks. This finally led to the so called "White Lightnin'

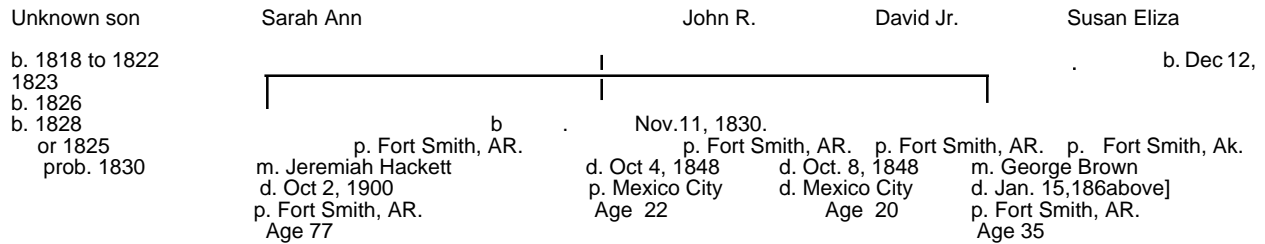
War” to stop the supply of liquor to the Indians.

Heavy rains in January of 1831 caused the rivers to rise, flooding the adjacent land and maybe some of **John’s** land. It would seem **John** and his family were exposed to many difficulties the winter **John** died. **John** may have used his horses to help in the rebuilding of the fort and gotten hurt in an accident, or hurt in fighting the flood, or got infected with cholera, or some other illness, because of the severe winter.

Regardless of how **John** died, it was devastating to **Rebecca** and her young family. She evidently had just lost her eleven (or twelve) year old son the year before, now was alone with Susan Eliza, only two months old and six other young children in a sparsely settled frontier country. Mary Ellen was sixteen, **William** was fourteen, Sarah Ann was eight, John was about five and David three. **William**, as the oldest son, tried to run his father’s blacksmith shop, and farm as well as stock raising. Maybe he had the help of the three unknown men.

There was a memorable flood in 1833 which devastated the area and wiped out all the farm land close to the river. This may have included the **Rebecca Titchenal** homestead.





**2nd Marriage**

Rebecca (Harbert) Titchenal — William Harvey McMurtry  
About 1836, Fort Smith, AR.

James McMurtry  
b. Ca. 1837

Samuel McMurtry  
b. Ca 1839

Thomas H. McMurtry  
b. 1840-41  
m. Martha J. Brashears

Rebecca separated from William McMurtry about 1849, the children stayed with her. William McMurtry died about 185?. His first wife and two children (whom he had never divorced) came back from Missouri and calmed her home. She lost the home. Jeremiah Hackett became guardian of the three Rebecca McMurtry boys July 1855.

Rebecca lived with her daughter Sarah Ann Hackett in the 1850 census. She lived with her daughter Susan Eliza Brown in the 1860 census. Susan Eliza died in 1865, while her husband George was away at war. Rebecca may have stayed to take care of her grandchildren until her death, or George returned, or Rebecca may have lived with her daughter Sarah Ann Hackett again.

William said in his autobiography that he was the second of nine children. No record of three of these children have been found. The 1830 census show seven children (four boys and three girls) living with Rebecca and John. Susan Eliza was not born until November of 1830. That would make eight. One child could have died before 1830. No trace of three children that would have been born between 1818 and 1822 or 1825 and died before 1830 has ever been found. Actually Rebecca had twelve children, counting the three boys with William McMurtry.

**Rebecca's** oldest daughter, Mary Ellen, met William Falconer in 1834 and her life changed forever. She married him in 1835, and this marriage was to have a great influence on all of the **Titchenal** family. Even though **Rebecca** was happy for her daughter's marriage, she had been dependent upon her daughter's help. The coming loss of that help, and the immensity of all **Rebecca's** other problems may have overwhelmed her and prompted her remarriage.

William McMurtry had moved into the area in 1830 from Missouri. He courted **Rebecca** after **John** died and she became his wife (or maybe common Law wife) sometime about 1835. She had three more sons with him.

**William Titchenal** turned 21 in February of 1838, and the winter of 1838/9 changed his life considerably. I believe his mother, **Rebecca**, had been corresponding with her brother, Thomas, III, in Champaign County, Ohio, regularly about the problems of settling their father's estate.<sup>[2]</sup>

She probably received an interesting but disturbing letter from him bringing her up to date on the problems with the settlement. He also wrote about a young lady named **Sarah Ann Dickason**, who lived nearby Urbana, Ohio. **Sarah** had planned to get married in May of 1837 to a James Bayless, but they had a falling out before the marriage and she changed her mind.<sup>[2]</sup>

The **Charles** and **Hannah Dickason** family had moved to Champaign county, Ohio in 1811 and were living there even before **Rebecca's** brother, Thomas Harbert, III, and his family moved to Ohio. Thomas had known the **Charles Dickason** family for about 20 years, and **Sarah** all of her life. Thomas thought she would make a good pioneer wife and mother and suggested that his nephew, **William**, come to Urbana for a visit and meet her. At the same time, Thomas thought **William** might be of some help getting action on the lawsuit they had against Henry Carothers (requesting his release to sell some of their father's land in Ohio to pay **Rebecca's** brother Elias' debt to her.

In addition, **Rebecca's** new husband, William McMurtry, had expressed his displeasure with her son, **William**. He said there were too many children at home, **William** should get himself a wife and start his own farm. **Rebecca** decided that this would be a good time for **William** to go to Ohio. If he could break the money loose to pay off the loan, He could keep the money and use it as start to purchase his own property.

So, at his mother's request, **William** traveled to Ohio to visit his mother's relatives and to discuss some of the problems about the settlement of his grandfather, **Thomas, Jr's**, estate and his land in Virginia and Ohio.

As long as he could remember, **William** had been hearing about the problems his mother and her family had trying to get their share of her father's estate. The story was that his grandfather, **Thomas Harbert, Jr.**, had large land holdings in Virginia and Ohio. He also owned slaves and considerable personal property. Twenty years ago, in 1818, he had died "intestate." The events that followed his death turned out to be very suspicious. **William** was anxious to go to learn more and to meet the mysterious **Sarah Ann Dickason**.

He didn't learn the details of all of the transactions until he arrived in Champaign County and talked to his uncle, Thomas. But he did know that his father and mother, **John** and **Rebecca**, had loaned some money to Elias Harbert (her brother) in Virginia on April 17, 1821. (It is not known if they made the loan by mail or if they were back in Virginia from Missouri before going to Arkansas.) Elias Harbert went to

Ohio, then Michigan, where he died (as early as 1822) without a family. Elias' estate was never settled, as it became entangled with the lawsuit **Rebecca** and her siblings filed in Virginia in 1822, against their mother and her new husband, Isaac Hagle, over the settlement of their father's estate.

The debt had not been repaid. It amounted to \$120.00. [\$78.00 plus interest since 1821, about 4% interest for 17 years]. Land could be purchased at that time in Champaign County, Ohio and Arkansas for \$1.25 per acre, a good horse purchased for \$10 to \$40; and hogs or cattle for \$2.00 to \$7.00 a head. This would be equal to almost 100 acres of land [or less land and a horse and starter hogs and cattle].

His mother told him if he could figure out a way to collect the debt owed her, he could keep the money. (Based upon the inflation rate of land over the years, 100 acres might be equal to about \$100,000 in today's [1993] money.) Whatever they thought of the value of the loan at the time, it was significant enough for **William** to spend time collecting. Wages were less than 25¢ a day.

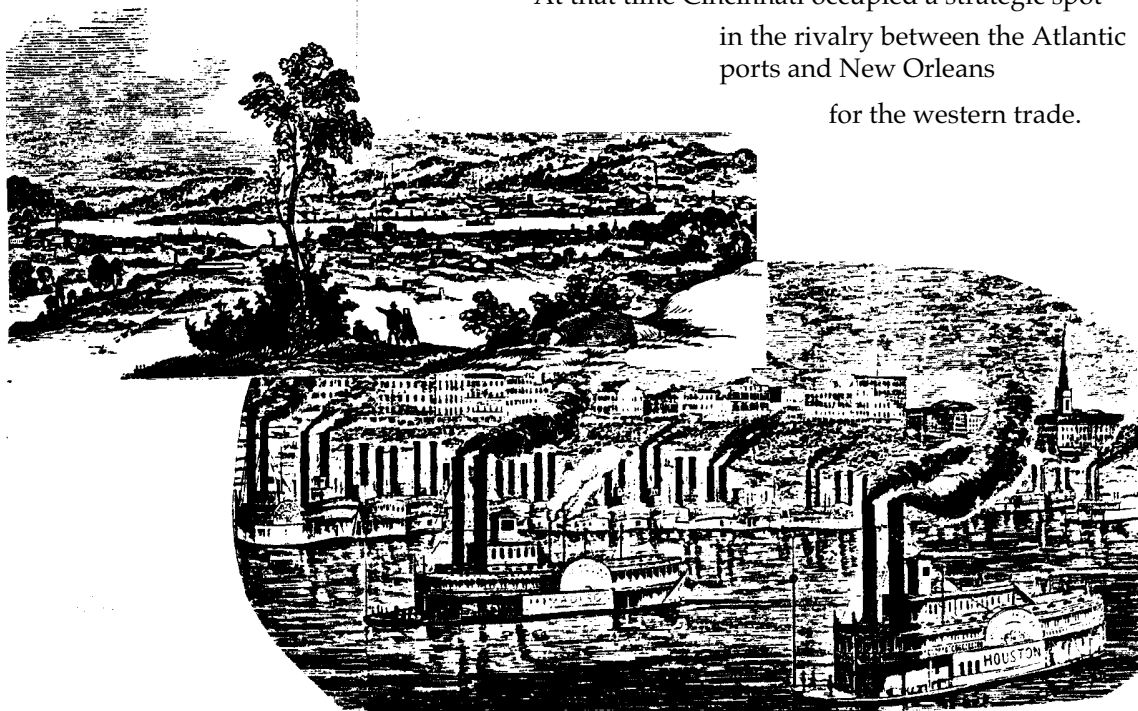
On April 15, 1833, in Champaign County, Ohio, Elias' brothers, Elisha, Elijah, William, and Thomas posted a \$500.00 bond and were appointed administrator of his estate. Elias' estate contained part or all of 600 acres of **Thomas, Jr.'s** land in Licking county. Henry Carothers, in Virginia, was the administrator of Elias' estate, because, **Hannah**, Elias' mother had tried to claim her son's part as well as her own part of her husband's estate. When the brothers were appointed administrators, they may have agreed to have a lawsuit filed by **Rebecca** to force Henry Carothers to let some or all of the 600 acres to be sold to satisfy the debt.

In March 1824, John and **Hannah** Hagle had "bargained and sold" unto Henry Carothers[3] all her rights and title interest and claim in and to the lands of her deceased husband, **Thomas Harbert, Jr.** This probably included the Ohio land. It is possible this is why the Ohio Harbert family thought that Isaac Hagle and Henry Carothers [a friend (s) of **Thomas Jr.**] swindled them out of some of his estate.

Even though the court ordered the land to be sold to pay the debt, no record has been found of the sale. I don't know if **Rebecca** ever received the repayment of her loan. **William Titchenal** may have also made a trip earlier than 1838 to discuss a way to get payment of his mother's debt, since his father had died and his mother was having problems with her new marriage.

It is also probable that **William** planned to look over the prospects of moving to Ohio or to Alton, Illinois while on the trip. **Rebecca** must have been corresponding with her relatives in Illinois, Ohio and Virginia. Letters may not have been satisfactory, as it took two months to get a letter there and back.

At that time Cincinnati occupied a strategic spot  
in the rivalry between the Atlantic  
ports and New Orleans  
for the western trade.



In *The History of Orange County* William said he left Arkansas in 1838 to visit friends in Ohio. Travel would have been a new experience to him. By 1838, steamboat travel had exploded on all the western rivers. He would have taken the steamboat down the Arkansas River, up the Mississippi past Memphis and St. Louis, then up the Ohio past Evansville and Louisville to Cincinnati.

He may have stopped in St. Louis and Alton to visit his uncles, William and Andrew Jackson Titchenal, and their families. They had moved to the St. Louis and Alton area in 1824 and 1836.

William had to have been impressed by the trip. The river was alive with thousands of boats and the cities were crowded and full of activity. At St. Louis, steamboats were lined up along the wharfs, filling the air with smoke and others waited for dock space.

His destination, the “Queen City,” Cincinnati, must have lived in his memory as a special place and perhaps even became the inspiration for his entry into the mercantile business later.

Midway along the great river artery and the gateway to the rich Miami farm country, Cincinnati was a convenient outlet in either direction. One could go down the Ohio to New Orleans or the east coast by way of the Erie canal. By 1839 the steamboat tonnage on the river was over 39,000 tons, nearly half that of the entire British Empire.

The Frenchman, Frances Trollope, in his book, *Domestic Manners of America* in 1832, described Ohioans and Cincinnati as;

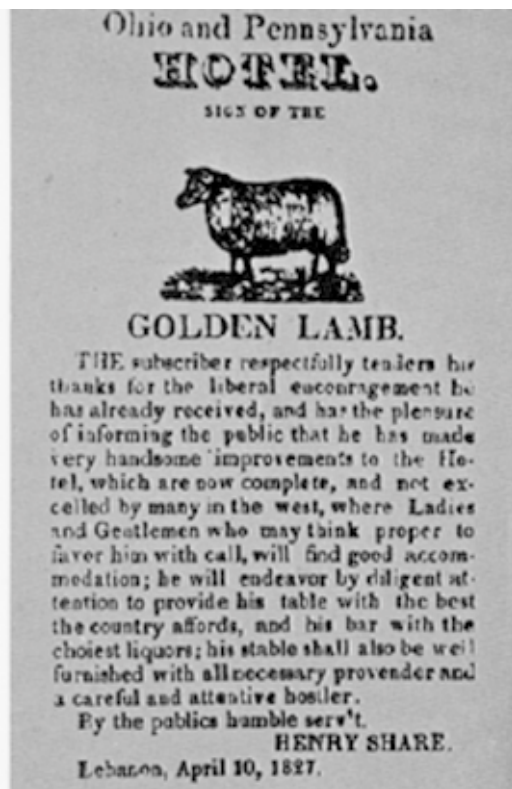
“People without precedence, without traditions, without habits, without dominating ideas even cutting out its institutions, like its roads in the midst of forests .... sure to encounter neither limits nor obstacles.

During the nearly two years that I resided in Cincinnati, or its neighborhood, I neither saw a beggar, nor a man of sufficient fortune to permit his ceasing his efforts to increase it; thus every bee in the hive is actively employed in search of that honey of Hybla, vulgarly called money; neither art, science, learning nor pleasure can seduce them from its pursuit. This unity of purpose, backed by the spirit of enterprise and joined with an acuteness and total absence of probity, where interest is concerned, which might set canny Yorkshire at defiance, may well go far towards obtaining its purpose.”

Trollope could have been describing most American frontier men in Ohio, Missouri, or Arkansas at that time.

Frances Trollope went on to describe Cincinnati:

“Perhaps the most advantageous feature in Cincinnati is its market, which for excellence, and cheapness can hardly, I should think be surpassed in any part of the world, if I except the luxury of fruits, which are very inferior to any I have seen in Europe. There are no Butchers, fishmongers or indeed any shops for eatables, except bakeries as they are called, in the town; every thing must be purchased at markets and to accomplish this the busy housewife must be stirring betimes. or ‘spite of the abundant supply, she will find her hopes of breakfast, dinner, and supper for the day defeated. the market being pretty well over by eight o’clock. Beef is excellent, and the highest price when we were there, four cents (about two-pence) the pound. The mutton was inferior, and so was the veal to the eye, but it ate well, though not very fat; the price was about the same. The poultry was excellent; fowls or full- sized chickens, twelve cents, but much less if bought alive.”



Compared to Fort Smith, **William** must have thought, Cincinnati, its markets and food supplies fantastic. I am sure he didn't have the same complaints as Frances Trollope.

When the boat **William** traveled on steamed into Cincinnati, the wharfs stretched for more than half a mile along the levee. Merchandise was piled high on the landing as far as he could see. He debarked to find a city with over 30,000 inhabitants, building new homes at the rate of 1,500 a year. Three daily newspapers, schools of all kinds, a large public library, two museums of natural history, an art museum and impressive buildings and bridges were also appealing.

He probably journeyed north from Cincinnati to Urbana in Champaign County by horseback. The trail passed through relatively flat rolling hills. Some of the land had been cleared for farms, but it was mostly heavy thick forest at that time. He may have traveled through Lebanon and Springfield on the way. (The Golden Lamb, an inn in Lebanon, is still in operation today. I have eaten there and looked at the old Inn's guest register for **William Titchenal**, but I didn't find it even though some dates were as far back as 1838.)

The trip was about 100 miles and probably took three or four days as **William** was not in a hurry and was interested in looking over the land still, all the while wondering if he should stay in Fort Smith, or try somewhere new. When he got close to Urbana, he was surprised at the size of the farms that spread out every direction from the town. He guessed this was because, Urbana didn't have a large river or Indian Territory on one side to prevent expansion.

He didn't know where to look for his uncle's farm, so, he had to stop at several farms and ask for directions. When he finally found uncle Thomas' farm, it late afternoon.

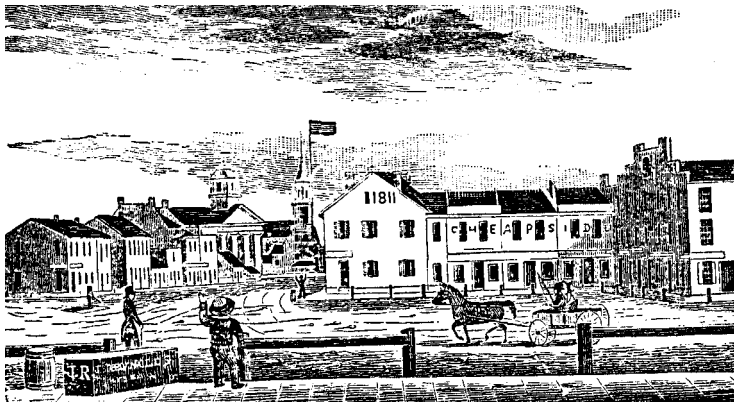
The farm was very large, over 100 acres, maybe 200. He could see several men working in the fields.

He knew uncle Thomas had eight children, three sons who would be young men by now. When the men saw him riding along the property fence, one of them stopped working, and came over to the fence. He greeted **William**, and asked, "are you my nephew, **William Titchenal**?" When **William** nodded yes, he smiled, and said, "I am your uncle Thomas, welcome, we have been expecting you for several days."

He called to his sons working in the field and they spend the rest of the day visiting and getting to know each other. Thomas wanted to know all about his sister **Rebecca**, and wanted to know how she was managing af-husband and after the death of her his father, **John**.

Two near by, in uncle William and their two Elisha and their four sent one of his over for dinner. They all

and were very friendly and warm. By the time, **William** went to bed that night he felt welcome and at home in Champaign County, although his head was swimming with all the new faces and names. He didn't know how he would remember all of them and keep them straight.



other uncles lived Union Township, and aunt Matilda children and uncle aunt Polly and children, Thomas sons to invite them ner and meet **Wil-** came to dinner,

Uncle Thomas had told him earlier, that tomorrow, he would review the events of **William's** grandfather **Thomas Harbert Jr.'s** death and subsequent events ending in a law suit to against their mother **Hannah** and her new husband, Isaac Hagle. After which they would get together with his uncle, Will, and uncle, Elisha, and with their lawyer the next day, and talk about the on-going law suit against, **Hannah** and Isaac, and also his mother, **Rebecca's** pending law suit against himself and his brothers, as administrators of the estate of their brother, Elias.

### Public Square in Urbana, Champaign, County , Ohio about 1835

#### Footnotes for Chapter VIII:

[1] I have not traced the ancestry of **Margaret Jackson**, the wife of **Moses**, and the grandmother of **John Titchenal**. Therefore I do not know if there is a connection between her family and Andrew Jackson. If there was a connection, Andrew Jackson's treatment of Indians would be irritating and ironic for **John Titchenal**. Betty Jones of Globe, Arizona thought Margaret was born in Morris County, New Jersey in 1739. Her father was Joseph Jackson and her mother Margaret Burgess.

[2] While we don't know for certain how my great grandfather **William H. Titchenal** met or knew about his future wife **Sarah Ann Dickason** and his mother may not have asked him to go, or knew about **Sarah** before hand, it is quite likely **William Titchenal** went to Urbana to visit his uncles and discuss some of the family problems with them. The Harberts probably knew **Sarah Ann Dickason** and could have written to **Rebecca** about her. Among other things, **Sarah Ann's** step mother Elizabeth was buried next to several Harbert graves in the Kings Creek Baptists Church cemetery when she died in 1845, which lends credibility to the families knowing one another.

[3] In a possible ironic twist of fate John Titchenal's brother, Daniel Titchenal married Mary Corothers June 4, 1845. She was born in Virginia in 1815, died March 29, 1857. It is not known if the name could have been Carothers and she was relative of Henry Carothers. Possible living descendants of Mary Corothers are: 1/ Geraldine Sarah (Tichnell) Copenhaver, born June 28, 1921 Shinnston. Married Charles Copenhaver, December 13, 1944. 2/ Jesse Lee (Tichnell) McIntire, born January 11, 1929 Shinnston. Married Clarence Dale McIntire

[4] In order to speculate when or where the missing children were born, I have listed all of **John** and **Rebecca's** known children. Using 17 months between children, as many as three children could have been born between **William** 2/1/1817 and Sarah Ann 12/12/1823. The only other possibility is that one child was born in 1824/25 (between Sarah Ann in December 1823 and David born in 1826) and died before 1830.