

Chapter 4

MORDECAI HARVEY WARNER AND THE GILMORE FAMILY

My grandfather, Mordecai Harvey Warner, born in 1871, grew up in the rural hills of eastern Ohio just ninety-five years after the Declaration of Independence of 1776. He was usually called Harvey or “Harv.” Most of our generation usually heard of or about him as “MH.”

There had been seven generations of Warners in America when my grandfather MH was born. Mordecai Harvey stands near the midpoint in the succession of Warners from those who were involved in the Revolutionary War to those of the present day. His was a time when people were excited; they were building a new country. They knew they needed education. Parents in rural areas began to feel the advantage of the city schools and were demanding better local schools. An idealistic MH determined that he would make his contribution as a teacher.



Mordecai Harvey

Warner

He decided to leave home at a young age for Lebanon, Ohio. Here he attended the National Normal University for the eleven weeks required for his teaching certificate. Tuition was ten dollars. His curriculum was something like, *Instruction in Using the McGuffey Textbooks* and *Virtues and Values of the America People*. As a professional teacher he was to teach moral lessons including kindness to animals, adherence to Christian principles, allegiance to country, good manners, and consideration of others.



While away at school he met several interesting girls. They were attracted to this handsome country boy who held out for the girl back home. MH and Louisa Belle had grown up in the valley. He had first noticed her at school when her family had moved into the valley. They had gotten together for a buggy ride several times before he left for Lebanon.

On the day before MH left he had driven the surrey off the road into the back part of the orchard where he asked her to wait for him while he was away at school. He was smitten with her intelligence, beauty, and charm. This was someone he could trust to live up to his high ideals. Louisa admired the handsome Warner boy and promised to wait for him.

Louisa Belle Gilmore, the girl back home

MH's Handwriting

Maxine (Hayes) Stimmel has MH's handwritten *Grammar Exercise Book*. She said "For Granddad, handwriting was an expression of good character." This copy is part of a page from MH's *Grammar Exercise Book, Containing the Rules of Syntax, Programmes for Parsing, Construction of Nouns and Pronouns*. He wrote April 20, 1892, on the first page when he attended the National Normal University in Lebanon, Ohio. The rules of grammar were to be memorized as exercises like this were written. The first sentence is "The hunters will kill no squirrels today," and is followed by what he determined to be the parts of speech and the rule number that applied. The second sentence is "One who lives for others will find many friends."

The hunters will kill no squirrels to-day
The is an article definite, and limits hunters Rule 1.
Hunters is a noun common third plural masculine
nominative Rule 15 subject of will kill.
Will kill, is a verb, regular, trans. p.p. ~~kill~~ killed killed
active, indicative, ~~present~~ future tense third plu.
agreeing with its subject hunters Rule 9, 9, 9.
No is an adj. pronominal and limits squirrels Rule 1.
Squirrels is a noun common third plural common
Objective object of the verb will kill, Rule 17
One who lives for others will find many friends
One is an adj. ^{pronominal} numeral and limits [persons] Rule 1
Who is a pronoun relative its antecedent is [persons]
with which it agrees in the third sing common
Rule 5 Nominative subject of lives Rule 15
Lives is a verb, reg. intrans. p.p. (lives) indicative
present tense third sing agreeing with its
subject who Rule 9.
Will find is verb, irregular transitive p.p. active, indic.
future, third sing agreeing with its subject [persons] Rule 9

The Gilmore Family

The earliest known ancestor of this family was born in Ireland and came to America at an early date, perhaps about 1750, because of a food shortage. While on the boat bringing them to America a son Thomas was born (1770?). He lived in Pennsylvania and had a son Samuel (1790?). Samuel had a son Thomas (1810?) who migrated to Noble County in Ohio where he married Jane McVicker of Scotch ancestry. Thomas and Jane had a son Samuel, born in 1833, who lived near Woodsfield, Ohio, in the village of Antioch.

Samuel Gilmore was married and had two children. Information about his first wife was not given. Their children were Wesley Gilmore and Sade (Gilmore) Coultas. He apparently lost this wife, and some of the matchmakers in the area made arrangements for him to meet Nancy (Stephens) Rich, a young attractive widow.

Nancy Stephens was born in 1842. She was the daughter of Levi Stephens and Catherine Johnson. Catherine Johnson was the daughter of Nicholace Johnson, born about 1785. Catherine was born in 1812 and married Levi, Sept. 6, 1835.

Nancy Stephens married Andrew Rich November 25, 1860, and he died five years later. A daughter, Ella Rich was born to this first marriage. (Ella later married John B. Howiler.)

Samuel Gilmore and Nancy Stephens Rich were married January 10, 1867. To this union were born two daughters and twins boys that died at birth. Mary Elizabeth Gilmore was born 10-29 ? and later married John William Groves. The main event for our story was the birth of Louisa Belle Gilmore April 17, 1874.

My Aunt Ethel (Warner) Hayes remembers her Grandmother Nancy was known for being very frank. She told about a time when Nancy was at the house in Woodstock when a man came to buy sheep and his wife was invited to the house. The wife was wearing riding britches (this was before women wore pants) and when she sat down she tried to wrap her coat around her legs. Nancy said, "I think I would try to cover them up too." Ethel later said that she had been told she was like her grandmother because sometimes she would speak and then listen. (Does this become an inherited characteristic for any of us?)



*Nancy and Samuel Gilmore
and Louisa Belle*

Nancy became a widow again in 1896 and in her later years she and her daughter, Ella, moved to Frambes Avenue in Columbus, Ohio, where they rented rooms to college students. Her roomers would include some of her grandchildren. My father, his twin brother Roger, and my Uncles Hubert and Hildred stayed in her rooms during part of the time they attended Ohio State. Nancy died in 1929, the year after I was born. She lived for eighty-six years.

Notes:

Ethel remembers that she could not play her grandmother's piano because she had to be very quiet because her roomers were studying. Her grandmother always wore a black or dark dress and always a lace-trimmed bonnet. She had one with no lace that she wore at night.

MH was always a teacher. One of the first things he taught me was how to make a corncob pipe. With his pocket knife he partly hollowed out the center of a piece of corncob and made a hole for the pipe stem. I don't remember what we used for the pipe stem but I think it was just a weed. I walked around with one eye closed as "Popeye the Sailor man." Of course Mom shook her head and did her, "Tsk, tsk, tsk." She did let me blow bubbles with it.

Many of us stood by our grandfather as he blew smoke into a hive of bees and took out a section of honey. Cousin Dorothy (Warner) Stoyer remembered he wore a bee bonnet. For me, the lesson took. I was not afraid of bees. Cousin Maxine (Hayes) Stimmel tells the exact same story. We both have had hives of bees and like comb honey. Many of my first cousins like comb honey, probably because it was one of the few sweets in the home when our parents were growing up. MH would open a hive and send some honey home when they visited him.

It may have been at MH's home that many of us had the first taste of sorghum molasses. It was made by squeezing the sweet juice from the pithy stalk of sorghum grass or sugar cane. It was planted for making sugar or syrup and was also used as fodder. I never learned to evaluate the quality of sorghum from the taste like some of my uncles could.

Aunt Ethel told about a trip to buy some sorghum after she was married. Her grandfather-in-law took them several places. On the first stop he tasted the sorghum and said it was not good because it had a "farewell taste". When they found some good sorghum they bought twenty-five gallons so they could share with her brothers.

A part of MH's story is also about his knowledge of building. He built his house and a barn for his mother-in-law, Nancy Gilmore, when one was destroyed by the 1913 flood. He built a new barn and the first wood silo on his farm in Calais. He rebuilt a large barn in Woodstock, Ohio, and helped design the biggest barn built in Delaware County, including the innovative circular cow barn for feeding a large herd of milk cows. His great-grandson, Mark Warner (18), became an architect, responsible for several buildings in the Boston, Massachusetts, area.

Louisa Belle was a loving and caring person. She was industrious and made a comfortable home for her family. For most of their meals they were seated around a table and ate together. She taught them her manner and values. They were all hard workers. They strove to improve themselves and to make life better for others. They did not use profanity, drink or smoke. Some of them attended the Church of Christ after leaving home but most of them eventually joined her Methodist denomination. Her daughter, Ethel, said, "She was quite a lady. She stood in the background, yet she had her own ideas about things. She was very affectionate."