

Since I wrote this essay, another Southwest Missouri branch of the Looney family has been discovered, without anyone's knowing it had been lost. Evidence points to this branch's being descended from Absalom, son of Robert and Elizabeth the Manskers and founder of Ab's Valley in Botetourt County, Virginia. With Miss Mary Elizabeth Looney's assistance, Judith McClung Richardson, Evelyn Looney, and Bettie Hickman have compiled and written *The History of The Looney Family of Greene County, Missouri*, containing an excellent biography of John Looney, Sr., a fine collection of photographs, and valuable incidental information pertinent to early Missouri history, western settlement, and the Civil War.

Of this Looney branch, much could be written. However, space and publishing time permit only a few points and anecdotes.

John Looney, Sr., born September 10, 1774 in Botetourt or Washington County, Virginia to Benjamin and Mary Johnson Looney and reared in Hawkins County, Tennessee where his parents moved in 1782, settled in 1832 between Willard and Cave Springs, Missouri, paying \$200 for 160 acres of land under the preemption act of 1820. His prosperity is marked by his holding ten slaves, five of whom were male, and his burial in an underground crypt constructed of imported stone, with headstone and footstone extending from the bottom of the grave to above ground. After his death in 1839, his personal property—grain, livestock, tools—sold at auction for \$1,052 and his slaves for \$4,696. John's estate was administered by his son Isaac, who with two of his brothers had followed their father from Monroe County, Missouri to settle just east of Walnut Grove, Missouri in 1832 and 1833.

During late winter and spring of 1862, while serving with the Confederate Fifth Missouri Infantry, Company D, one of John's grandsons, William D. Ruyle, wrote a journal in which he records the days leading up to a battle at Corinth, Mississippi and several days following. His cousins Isaac, Jr. and David R. were in the same company. Begin-

ning a retreat on March 4th from Corinth (where cousin Isaac was shot) with three days' rations the company marched through cold winter rains and snow and waded the White River and War Eagle several times, fought the Battle of Elk Horn Tavern, and continued their march to near Van Buren, Arkansas, where they found their first real provisions in thirteen days, and where Isaac died of his wounds and deprivation.

Arthur Looney, grandson of John Looney and eighth child of Isaac and Sarah Matthews Looney, in 1853 at age 15 accompanied a company of men from Greene and Polk Counties through the gold rush of the Wichita Mountains. They found no gold; Arthur's most abiding memory of the events was the death of William Killingsworth who stood up to go stand his turn at watching the livestock; when he pulled his rifle after him by the muzzle, the lock caught on a quilt, the rifle discharged, and William was killed.

One of John's great-granddaughters (via Isaac and Benjamin) Ida Belle married John E. Fite and moved to Idaho. After a visit in 1909 by Ida's sister Mary and brother Jake (Thomas J. ?), John Fite wrote back to Ida's brother John Murphy Looney:

Well Jake and wife came out here last summer...but did not stay long. His wife was very much dissatisfied. It seames that she did not like the country ore the people and I pity the one that liked her. She is so blame ugly she makes the cold chilles run up a fellows back every time he looks at her! Poor Jake. I feel sorry for him.

John Murphy and Nora Robinson Looney's two oldest daughters, Amy, born in 1906, and Henrietta, born in 1909, became musicians and teachers. Amy received a master of arts degree in music from Northwestern University and taught vocal music in Springfield public schools and at Southwest Missouri State University. Henrietta became a teacher of both vocal music and piano. She served as pianist for many years for both the First Baptist Church of Springfield and the Jewish Temple—demonstrating no less religious tolerance than had Robert Looney, that old Quaker from the Isle of Man.

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