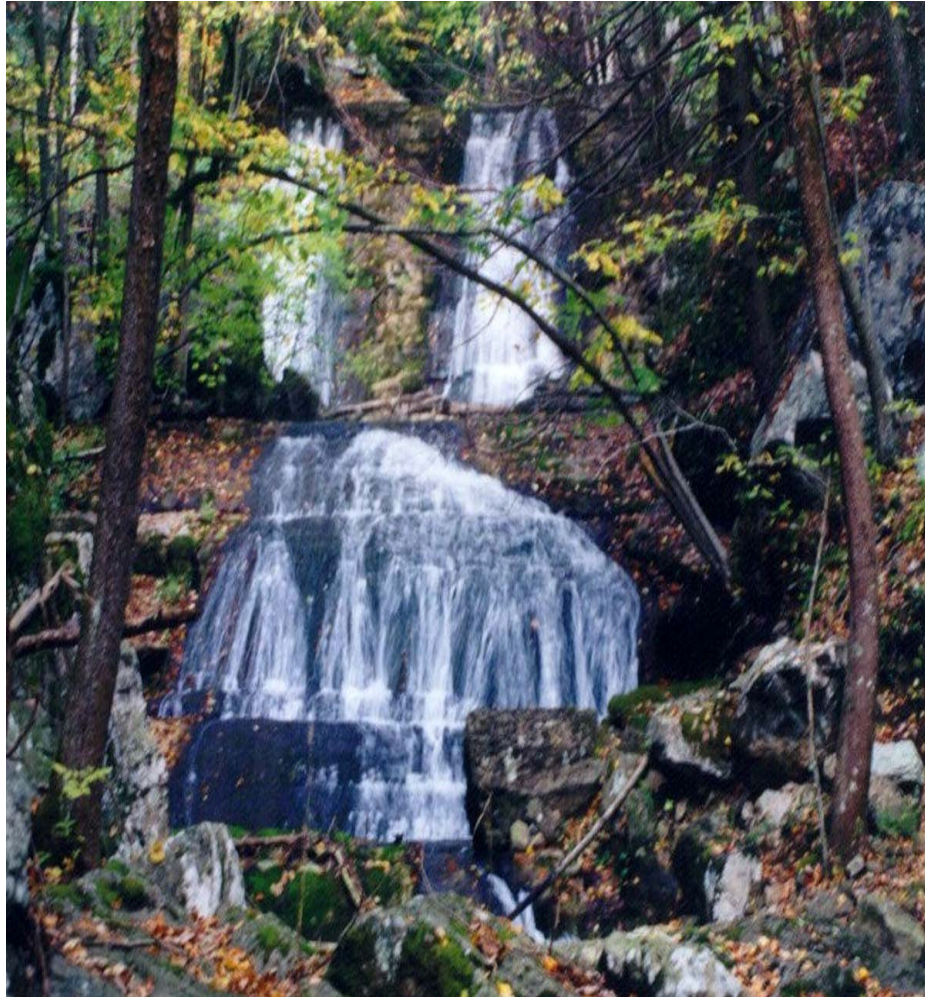


The Brake Family In West Virginia

by Linnie Louisa Brake Cunningham
Parsons, West Virginia
January 21, 1946



From the summit of one of those picturesque mountains which traverse the eastern panhandle of West Virginia, in what is now Hardy County, there emerges from some subterranean fountain, a rivulet of clear, cold water.

At first it is only a wobbly little stream, and lies quietly for a time in the swampy grassy bed into which Mother Nature has so unceremoniously precipitated it. Very soon, however, this little new-born stream begins to show signs of life; it bestirs itself, and slowly and cautiously wriggles toward the brow of the precipice as though seeking a glimpse of the scene below. Apparently satisfied with the view, it at once begins a

headlong descent down the mountain side. Having once started down the steep decline, there is no turning back, so on it goes, gathering momentum with each bound. Wild flowers and ferns nod and beckon as they seek to moisten their foliage in its spray; the wild things of the wood timidly approach its banks, then scurry away to cover, as though giving an invitation to a game of tag or hide-and-seek. But none of these attractions deter this plucky little stream, or swerve it from its one fixed purpose--that of reaching the bottom of the mountain and exploring the wonders of the world into which it so recently has entered. So on and on it goes, leaping and bounding from boulder to boulder, beaten and buffeted, whipped into spray, until at last it plunges into a rocky bed at the foot of the mountain.

Perhaps now in this quiet retreat our battered little stream can be content to stop for a time and furnish a hiding place for the frightened minnow which that barefoot urchin seeks to ensnare; or a cool drink for that thirsty dog which we see approaching; but not so; as though not satisfied with its recent acrobatics, it rushes across the narrow country road, on past the old mill site, the ancient burying ground, across the valley, on, on, until its waters finally mingle with those of the mighty Potomac.

At the foot of the mountain down whose rocky side this stream has made such a noisy descent, there are a few not-too-well-kept dwellings and farm buildings owned and occupied by typical country folk of that region. All save one of those dwellings appear to have been erected within the last half century. No trace of other similar pioneer buildings remain to tell the story of those who braved the danger and privations of that region, and sowed the seeds of civilization at that early day.

The outward appearance of this particular dwelling--a gaunt two-story structure built of hewn logs, indicates that the storms of more than a hundred winters, and the hot sun of as many summers has done their best toward reducing it to those elements from whence it came. And now it stands alone, a mute reminder of another day, seemingly issuing a challenge to those elemental destroyers of its fellows. If inanimate things had been endowed with the power of speech, what stories--what scenes enacted within its walls might this harbinger of the past relate!

Within the memory of those yet living, there stood at the rear of this ancient dwelling, a chimney of huge proportions, built of rough stones evidently gathered from neighboring fields. This chimney, traditions tells us, was part of a fort or stronghold which served as a refuge in times of threatened danger from the Indians. Perhaps upon more than one occasion the terror-stricken inhabitants of the valley had hurried to this refuge, and huddled around the blazing logs, in this same fireplace had cooked their food, and of molten lead had made the bullets with which to defend themselves from the howling savages without. A farm cellar now occupies the site of the legendary fort, and a garden fence has been built of the stones that comprised the chimney.

A few dozen feet from the old log dwelling can still be plainly seen the remains of the millrace to which the aforementioned mountain stream once lent a portion of itself for the purpose of turning the mill wheel. At the bottom of the race, almost covered with earth, there yet lies a big ironbound stone burr which was used in crushing the grain. These, and

the traditions surrounding its memory, are all that remains of the "Old Brake Mill," a-once-busy-and-necessary institution.

Not far from the site of the mill there are yet visible some slight traces of another supposedly necessary institution of that day--the Distillery. This building too, as well as its one-time busy operators, has long since gone the way of all the earth. In its heyday this was a busy place making and dealing out to thirsty souls, that fiery potion which not only drives dull cares away, but hastens that journey from the cradle to the grave.

Across the narrow country road, and within sight of the old log dwelling, enclosed by a few stands of broken and rusted barbed wire, is the family burying ground. A few white and badly weathered gravestones rear their heads above a thick growth of weeds and briars as though standing guard over the remains of those mortals who lie beneath in their last long sleep. The inscriptions on the stones are barely legible. This ancestral "city of the dead" presents indeed a pitiful picture of neglect, and from all appearances, in a few more years the spot will be lost forever to future generations.

And now with this little glimpse of our ancestral home as it appears today, we pass on to those human beings--our ancestors--who lived and carried on in this valley so long ago.

The recorded history of the settlement of the valley of the South Branch of the Potomac is meager and for this reason it has been necessary to depend largely upon the stories and traditions handed down by word of mouth. From notes taken by Washington during his survey of that region in 1748, a settlement had already been established, and the grist mill known later as "Brake's Mill" was at that time owned and operated by one Peter Reed. Just when the Brakes

made their appearance in this valley is not definitely known. It is possible and not at all improbable that the company of German emigrants encountered by Washington during this survey included these people, but this is only conjecture. It is not definitely known how many families were included in these first Brake settlers nor their relation to each other; but the names of John, Jacob, Abram and Isaac were some of the most common.

Among the names that have come down to present day families is that of one Baron Johann von Brecht, or John Brake in English. This personality appears to have occupied a place of considerable prominence in the settlement and was owner or co-owner of the mill so famous in the history of that valley. He is mentioned by as many as two of the historians of that day, but only one incident worthy of note has been recorded. After this he seems to have passed into the realm of the forgotten.

The incident referred to was as follows: It appears that these early Brakes were rank Tories, and at the outbreak of the Revolution, had allied themselves with one Claypole, also a Tory, and caused considerable trouble. It became necessary for Col. Daniel Morgan to march four-hundred of his continentals to the scene of the disturbance to put down the rebellion. It is said that the troops helped themselves to Brake's fat cattle and turned their

hungry horses into his grain fields to eat their fill. As a result of this raid upon the Tory stronghold, all the Brakes except the Baron signed allegiance to the colonial cause (no doubt to save their skins). As for the Baron, it is said that he made his escape and finally returned in disgust to his native soil. At any rate we hear no more of him and his operations in that valley. Down through the generations, however, have come the traditions of the "Old Baron." He was supposed to have been the husband of the woman so brutally murdered by the Indians, and the father of the boy Jacob who was taken into captivity, and also of John, Elizabeth, and Abram, of whom more will be said later.

It was not until about 1943 that documentary evidence came to light which conclusively proved that one known as Jacob Brake Sr. and not John the Baron, was the progenitor of the Brake family in Vest Virginia. These documents are the will of Catherine Stump Brake, second wife of Jacob Sr. whose first wife was killed, and a letter written by Mrs. Laura Jackson Arnold, sister of the famous "Stonewall", excerpts of which follow at this point.

Buckhannon, W. Va. May 17, 1867

Mr. George Jackson,

My esteemed cousin, at this late day, I seat myself to redeem my promise, that of gathering facts of relation to our great grandparents and their offspring. My uncle Jacob Brake, from whom I expected to gather some facts, when I saw him I found his health and mind failing him so much, that I could not rely upon his memory. He directed me to see one Abram W. Brake, a cousin of his, who was the same age of himself, and knew more about the old generation than anyone living. So I was thrown with Mr. Brake and found his mind apparently fresh. I regret that some other pen more able than mine could not write his story. Here is Mr. Brake's statement. "John Jackson and his wife Elizabeth Cummins, came from England and were married in the United States. First they lived on the South Branch of the Potomac, removed to Buckhannon as much as twice during the days of Indian warfare, and was one of the first settlers of this place and lived here until 1781, when the fort was broken up, and they removed to Clarksburg, where he died at the advanced age of perhaps ninety. His widow lived some years after his death, when she died at the home of her daughter Elizabeth, wife of Abraham Brake who lived on Brushy Fork of Elk Creek, four miles from Clarksburg.

George Jackson, (your grandfather) was the oldest son of John Jackson Sr. Your Grandmother was Elizabeth Brake, daughter of Jacob Brake who was a native of Germany. Part of her father's family were born in this country. He (Jacob Brake) married a Miss Nyeswaman for his first wife, and after she had six children,

she was killed by the Indians on the South Branch where she had always lived. Jacob Brake, her husband, some years after her death married Miss Catherine Stump, of the same place, also a German, and he died at an old age at the old homestead. Your grandmother's brother, Abraham Brake, married my aunt Elizabeth Jackson, daughter of the aforementioned John and Elizabeth Cummins Jackson."

(The remainder of Mrs. Jackson's letter, is not included in this manuscript, since it has no further bearing on this story.)

The will of Catherine Brake, which follows, corroborates the statement made by Abram W. Brake, that Jacob Sr. , and not the personage known as the "Baron" was the head of the family.

WILL

In the name of God, Amen. I, Catherine Brake of the County of Hardy being sick and weak in body, but of sound mind and disposing memory for which I thank God and calling to mind the uncertainty of human life and being desirous to dispose of all such worldly estate as it has pleased God to bless me with, I give and bequeath the same in manner following that is to say—

1st--I desire that all the perishable part of ay Estate be immediately sold after my decease and of the monies arising therefrom all my just debts and funeral expense be paid. Should the perishable part of my property prove insufficient for the above purposes, then I desire that my Executors hereafter mentioned pay the same out of m bonded estate.

2nd--After the payment of Debts and funeral expense I give the balance of my Estate, real and personal of whatever kind it may be to my son Michael Brake. To him and his heirs, Executors, administrators and assignor forever that it may not be misunderstood it is not the wish of me, Catherine Brake that the balance of children shall have any part of my estate real or personal as they have not had any trouble in maintaining me since the death of my husband Jacob Brake--and my son Michael has been holy at the expense of nursing me in my last sickness.

And lastly I do hereby constitute and appoint my friend Jones Green and Michael Brake, Executors of my last will and testament hereby revoking all other or former wills or testaments by me heretofore made.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed Seal the (16) Sixteenth day of March in the year of our Lord, (one thousand eight hundred and sixteen) 1816.

Sealed, delivered, published and declared as and for the last Will and Testament of the above named Catherine Brake, in the presence of us-

her
Catherine x Brake (Seal)
mark

Caroline A. Williams
Nancy B. Green
Christiana Pancake

At a court held for Hardy County the 9th day of April, 1816, this last will and testament of Catherine Brake, deceased, was presented in Court, by the Executors herein named and proved by the oaths Caroline A. Williams and Christiana Pancake, two of the witnesses thereto ordered to be recorded, and on the motion of Michael Brake one of the said Executors, Certificate is granted him for obtaining a probate thereof in due form he having taken the oath of an Executor & together with Isaac Dasher his security entered into Bond in the penalty of five hundred dollars conditioned as the Law directs.

Teste: *Ed. Williams* Clk, Court

Catherine mentioned the "other children" in her will, though no record of children other than Michael has been found. Since it is not likely that this reference is to the four step children, who at this time were all settled in homes of their own in Harrison and Upshur Counties, there must have been others. Jacob Brake Sr. died in 1808, and is no doubt buried in the family plot at the old homestead.

At this point, we shall pause in our narrative, to give some recognition unto a settlement of Brakes, which appeared in North Carolina in or near the year 1790. These folk claim to have come from Nansemond County, Virginia, and at that early day their men bore such names as Jacob, Abram and John. There is a tradition that they came to Virginia from somewhere in Europe about the year 1740, and after some years' stay in Nansemond County, pushed farther south into North Carolina and other parts of the Southland. Coupling this tradition with some stories of our West Virginia branch of the family, it is not unlikely that here may have been a general migration from Europe to America about that time. Certain ones may have chosen to go farther south, while others preferred to cross the mountain to the South Branch Valley.

This idea is only conjecture on the part of the writer, and must not be taken as fact until the proper research has been made to substantiate it.

There is also a settlement of Brakes at Rock Cave, Upshur County, who claim that they too hail from Hardy County. However, they are not able to connect their oldest known ancestor with any one of the South Branch heads of families.

Their genealogy begins with James Brake of Hardy County, who married Annie Mumford, a German girl. This couple had sons, Nimrod, See, Cyrus B. and Jacob B. James was accidentally killed while felling a tree on the Buckhannon River, about 1825. His widow married Anson Young. Jacob married Nancy Curry and lived near Rock Cave, West Virginia. He was captured by Confederate soldiers, and died in the southern prison. See Brake married Margaret Curry and lived on White's Camp, a tributary of West Fork of the Monongahela. He had seven children, of whom two were sons, Everett, and James. James was captured

Confederate soldiers along with Jacob Brake, but escaped, came back and moved to Ritchie County. Cyrus married Sarah McAvoy and had eight children, one dying when small. Harriet married Josiah Wymer, Rosanna married Elihu Wymer, Benjamin married Martha Hull, Sarah Frances married Elon Elmer, William H. married Mary Jane Armstrong, Elizabeth married Amos Helmich, Gordon married Eliza Armstrong.

The name is also found in some ancient Dutch records in Albany, New York which indicated that even in Holland, that land of dikes and canals, the name Brake was to be found at the time the Dutch were establishing themselves on Manhattan Island.

Though found in at least three countries in Europe, the name is not common, and may be variously spelled, but in what-so-ever-country it came into being, and whatever may have been its status in the country which gave it birth, it was of sufficient importance as to have had a coat of arms.

However, the arms in use by the West Virginia branch of the family is definitely British, so declares the International Heraldic Institute, Washington, D. C., and was in use in England before the establishment of the College of Arms in 1483. But until such time as we come into more definite knowledge of the matter, we shall continue to claim this as our own.

The following letter received by the writer of this narrative from General Herbert E. J. Brake, of London, is not only interesting in itself, but throws a gleam of light into the shadows, which for decades long past, have hidden from a curious, wondering and in many cases, an anxious progeny, that age-old question, "Whence came I?" Here is the letter in its entirety.

*16 Bark Place
Orme Square
London, W2*

31st July 1927

Dear Madam:

I am sorry I can give you little or no information about my family, as I know its history for four generations only, and have never bothered to trace it further. All that I can tell you definitely, is that the family comes from the West Country Devon and South Somerset where the name is still to be found along-side the Blakes and Drakes who hail from the same part of England.

My great grandfather was a shipbuilder of Plymouth and until about forty years ago, the rope walk in the dockyard was known as "Brake's Walk," it having been his property. His name was, I think William, and he died about 1797, and after his death the government seized his property at Plymouth, as his widow was unable to fulfill the contracts he had entered into. Some of the houses were used for housing French prisoners.

His elder son was drowned when returning from Newfoundland in his own ship, and his second son, William Lenthall Brake, was in the Royal Navy, as was one of his sons, (my uncle). My father was in the Indian army and I in the Royal Artillery.

With regard to the origin of the family, there is an idea that it was German, from the fact that there are two towns in Germany named Brake, from which families derive their titles, of which one in the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg is a park on the river Weser of which the chief industries were ship building and rope making. Whether the Brakes of Plymouth settled there from Germany to carry on a trade they had followed in their own country or whether German extraction was assumed because of their calling, I do not know. I am, however, inclined to believe that they had German connections as my grandfather's guardian, Captain H. B. Alt R. N. was son or grandson of Baron Henry Alt, who came over to England with Queen Charlotte and was her tutor, living for forty years at the Court of St. James.

If this is the case, the family would probably be connected with the Baron John Brake you mentioned, as Oldenburg is not far from Hanover. I have never heard, however, of any members of the family having settled in America. The only connection we have had with the United States has been distinctly of an unfriendly nature.

In 1812 my grandfather in command of the boats H.M.S. Garland captured the Privateer "Poor Sailor."

I'm afraid I cannot tell you how to trace you ancestry. There are lots of people who will provide persons with pedigrees for a consideration, but I have always regarded them as humbugs, but it could undoubtedly be done, only it will involve much research, and on this account I myself have never troubled about doing so, as it would mean a prolonged stay at Plymouth as the starting point, if one tried to trace it one's self. Indeed I think it would have to be entrusted to a professional Genealogist.

The name is not common, and does not occur in any accessible books of reference such as Peers and Baronets, Country Families, etc.

I am sorry I cannot help you more, as I fear you will be disappointed.

*Yours very truly,
Herbert E. J. Brake*

A short sketch of the writer of the preceding letter, General Herbert E. J. Brake, appears in "Who's Who" previous to 1927. This sketch, together with the letter just given contains all that we know of this man, though he was undoubtedly a person of distinction in his country.

From this point our story deals more especially with Jacob Brake Jr., the Indian Captive, and oldest know son of Jacob Sr., though all available information of any others will be given.

The tragedy which resulted in the murder of Mrs. Brake, and it is thought, two of her children also, as well as the capture of the son Jacob, occurred the day before the Battle of the Trough in 1758. The story has been recorded by perhaps two historians of that day, but not in detail. For this reason we have depended for our information largely upon the stories of the boy Jacob himself after his return from captivity. It is regrettable that these accounts are also meager.

It appears that the home was attacked by a small band of Indians and after heroically defending herself and family, it is said, with an ax, she was struck down, with two of her children. Jacob, a lad of almost eleven, was taken into captivity. It is not known in what manner the other three children escaped death. There is a story that when Mrs. Brake became aware of the presence of the savages that she attempted to hide the children in the thicket. One child was tossed over a fence into the thicket and told to be very still and not to cry. This child was saved.

Tied to the belt of the savage who had murdered his mother, and with her bloody scalp dangling before his eyes, the captive boy was made to walk the entire distance of

three hundred miles to the Indian town in northwestern Ohio. When the long three months trek was ended, and their destination reached, which was to be the home of Jacob Brake for more than a decade, preparations were made for the young captive to run the gauntlet. This was the custom of the tribe and a part of the ceremony inducting him into the tribe.

The boys of the village formed themselves into two lines facing each other. Each boy was armed with a stick or other weapon. As Jacob ran between the two lines of boys he was struck with these weapons. He was a swift runner, and did his part so well that he won the admiration of the onlookers, and received no serious hurts.

He made his escape from his tormentors and took refuge in the wigwam of a squaw who protected him, and eventually adopted him as her son to take the place of one of hers who had died.

Jacob had three Indian brothers who became much attached to him and treated him as a real brother. As a matter of fact, he was held in high esteem by all the tribe, and to their credit may it be said of them he was always kindly treated.

However, not all the captive children were so lucky. One day another boy was brought in; after a few days he was sent to look for some horses which had wandered away. He was gone all day with no success. At the end of the third day's unsuccessful search, one of the Indians took him into a thicket and tomahawked him as the boy who would not make a good Indian.

The young men of the tribe were very fond of wrestling; some terrific bouts were indulged in to the great delight of the onlookers, both old and young. Jacob related that upon one occasion their sport well nigh resulted in tragedy. In their struggles to throw each other, the wrestlers came too near the camp fire which had burned down into a heap of coals, when one of them fell backward into the fire. When he clambered to his feet, live coals were sticking to his bare back. He was terribly enraged at his antagonist, and watching his opportunity, he threw his tomahawk at him, which barley missed his head. Just how the quarrel ended was not included in the story.

There were in the camp two or three young white women who had been captured when quite small. They told Jacob that they had no desire to return to their people. They had forgotten their mother tongue, and the manners and customs of the whites, and would rather remain with the Indians than to be subjected to the humiliation of learning the ways of civilization. Many white children were captured during those troublous times, and after growing to maturity with the savages, they preferred to take Indian husbands and wives, and end their days with the Red man.

But Jacob Brake never forgot his people and in order to gain and keep confidence of his captors, he pretended to be reconciled to his fate, all the time on the alert for an opportunity to attempt an escape. He realized that he was far from home, so he bided his time, until a favorable opportunity should present itself.

One day after he had grown to be a large boy, a young Indian from a neighboring camp came to their village and asked that Jacob accompany him to search for three deer which he had wounded and which had escaped into the forest. Jacob's family objected on the grounds that this was a "bad Indian." He overruled their objections saying that he could take care of himself, so they soon were on their way.

They presently came upon the carcasses of two deer which the wolves had killed and partly eaten, and soon found the other one not yet dead. This they killed and began taking off the pelt and cutting up the meat. While at this work Jacob accidentally struck his companion in the eye with a leather thong while he was tying up the meat. The "bad Indian" became enraged and attempted to tomahawk him. Jacob, ever on his guard, had taken the precaution to place his gun against a tree directly behind himself; stepping quickly backward, he seized the gun and pointed it at his assailant, telling him to pick up his share of the venison and go back home and never bother him again. The order was obeyed, and so far as we know that ended the visiting as well as the friendship.

In relating this story, Jacob said if there had been no snow on the ground, in which he could easily have been tracked, he would have shot the Indian and tried to find his way home. As it was he decided to be patient a little longer, before making an attempt to escape.

As has been said Jacob was a swift runner, and also excelled boys of his age in wrestling and other sports. At one time he was challenged by a larger boy to run a race; he accepted the challenge with the boastful remark that he could win with a rail on his shoulder, at which the Indian was highly insulted. It is thought that the race was run with Jacob as the winner.

On one of their raids the Indians brought in some cows which became Jacob's duty to milk. On another occasion a Bible was brought in; seeing Jacob's interest in the Book, it was given to him for his own. What he learned from trying to read it, was the only education he ever received.

During the first few weeks of his captivity, Jacob was closely watched lest he make an attempt to escape. One day he was given an old gun with two charges of powder and told he might go hunting. Before long he brought in a turkey, which pleased his captors greatly. The following day he was given a better gun, this time he reported with a deer; he was now a real hunter and no longer watched so closely.

Little more is known of the life of Jacob Brake during his captivity. He lived the life of the average boy of the tribe, acquiring those inevitable traits and characteristics of the Indian race. His step was light and noiseless, and like the Indian he could pass through the forest and leave no visible trail. To the day of his death he wore the Indian moccasin which he, himself fashioned. He was ever taciturn, and in his old days would sit for hours contentedly smoking his pipe saying nothing to anyone. No doubt this trait of taciturnity was largely the reason that we know no more of his life. He talked very little, unless questioned, and consequently his family failed to learn those things which we today would like to know.

It is also said of him that he was subject to violent fits of anger when provoked; and would fly into a rage and terrorize those around him with threatening epithets in the Indian tongue.

Jacob's first contact with the whites after his captivity was with a fur trader at Fort Pitt, now Pittsburg. He made himself known, and requested that that trader carry a message to his people. Hostility had ceased, and he hoped to be set free from captivity. Unfortunately the message failed to reach its destination, and it was a year or more before he had another opportunity. Then at White Woman's Creek, Ohio, he saw another trader who carried the message to Jacob's family. The trader agreed to go with them as a guide. Plans were made to meet Jacob and members of the tribe at Fort Pitt. Jacob's brother, John was to be one at the fort. He was so impatient to start that they arrived at Fort Pitt nearly one month before the appointed time. Rather than wait, they decided to push on to the Indian village, and it was well that they did so for when they arrived they learned that the next day the men of the tribe expected to leave on their annual hunt to be absent many weeks. However, there was no difficulty in arranging for Jacob's release, and they were soon on their way home. His only regret in leaving was the fact that he had to leave his pony. The animal was quite a distance away, and his people thought it best not to delay, so the precious pony was left behind. He never forgot the disappointment of losing his pet, which he said could pace faster than an ordinary horse could run.

So far as we know the homeward journey was made in safety, and in due time the long lost son and brother was returned to his family.

It is not definitely known when he left Hardy County and took up his residence in Buckhannon, W. Va., but in the year 1781 a certificate was granted to Jacob Brake to include his settlement made there in 1776. This would indicate that he may have come to Buckhannon about the time of the arrival of other South Branch families, near the year 1781.

But sometime after his release from captivity, Jacob was told of an Indian raid near Buckhannon in which two white men were killed. From the description of the Indians, which was given him, he was reasonably certain that his Indian brothers were among the band. He said he could have prevented the killing had he been able to contact the savages.

He married Mary Slaughter, a sister of Jesse Slaughter, about 1785 but we have no further knowledge of her people. The greater part of the lives of this couple was spent in that part of town now known as North Buckhannon, where can still be seen the ruins of the chimney of his cabin.

He died in 1831 and is buried beside his wife in the Heavener Cemetery, not far from the city limits of Buckhannon. A plain marble slab marks the two graves. This marker was erected by his grandchildren, John Reger and Elizabeth Brake Smith, and as a tribute to their grandfather, this significant legend is inscribed, "He was a good man." The homemade coffin enclosing all that was mortal of this unique personality, was taken to its

last resting place in a rough cart drawn by a yoke of oxen, driven by a slave boy, by the name of Dick Howard. Sixty years later, this slave boy, then an old man, related the story to Albert R. Brake, a great grandson of Jacob. In telling the story, he said he did not want to drive the cart, but being a slave he could do nothing but obey. This boy was owned by the Gibson family of Buckhannon, but in his old age he lived in the home of a Mr. Hays of Glenville, W. Va. where he was cared for until his death.

Jacob Brake was a Revolutionary soldier. In 1779 he served as Lieutenant in Captain George Jackson's company of rangers; no further record of his military career is available, though there is an idea that he served throughout the greater part of the war. His knowledge of Indian warfare especially qualified him for the work of an Indian spy. The record of his service is found only in John Cutright's application for a pension, in which he (Cutright) states that he did service under Lieutenant Jacob Brake.

Brake was one of five men who organized the first Baptist church in Buckhannon, and he himself gave the lot upon which the church was built. That was a log structure, and was in use as a house of worship as late as 1853. In 1939, Albert R. Brake, previously mentioned in this narrative, then ninety one years old, erected a marble slab to mark the site of this historic sanctuary.

An interesting story having its origin during the time of Jacob Brake's captivity has come down to us. While living with the Indians he learned of a deposit of copper ore, the whereabouts of which the savages carefully concealed from the whites. After his return to civilization he related what he knew concerning this deposit of copper. A group of enterprising men organized a company, and promising Brake a substantial share in their findings, he was induced to lead them to the spot. When within only a short distance of the mine, his suspicions became aroused as to the integrity of the men and he refused to go further.

No amount of persuasion could induce him to change his mind, and the disappointed adventurers, after searching in vain for the treasure, returned home. It is also related that in later years Brake again made the journey, this time alone, but owing to the changes brought about by civilization, he failed to locate the spot. So far as we know, this copper mine has never again been located.

Jacob Brake, the captive, was the father of five children, two sons, and three daughters. Abram W., the oldest child, was born July 24, 1786. He married Mary Davis, daughter of Josiah and Sophia Jackson Davis. Sophia was the daughter of John and Elizabeth Cummins Jackson, mentioned in the letter of Mrs. Arnold. Being the oldest son, Abram W. received the greater portion of his father's estate, but either from lack of business ability, or from other causes, he died in poverty at an extreme old age. Little information is available at this time, concerning his family and descendent. His wife died early in life. One son, Isaac D., went to Ohio at the beginning of the Civil War and married an Irish girl. They had two daughters. It is also said that in his later life, Isaac D. went up and down the countryside selling dyspepsia medicine and buying furs.

The second son of Jacob Brake the Captive, was John B. who was born in 1782. He Has twice married. His first wife was the daughter of Jacob and Elizabeth Powers Hyre. Jacob Hyre built the first grist mill in the neighborhood of Buckhannon. He was known as "Shaking John." John B. Brake and Rachel Hyre were married in 1813, her parents were married in 1783.

Although John B. Brake received so little of his father's estate, he prospered and became by his own good management, a well-to-do-man. He acquired a sizable farm within the present limits of Buckhannon, upon a portion of which has grown up, what is known as the "Liggett Addition." His home, a large two-story log structure, stood on the site of the present brick residence built by Elsa McVaney. He died in 1875, and he and his two wives are buried in the Heavener Cemetery at Buckhannon.

John B. and Rachel Hyer Brake had the following children, though the order of their birth is not available at this time. Elmore, born February 22nd, 1815, was the oldest child, he died February 8th, 1892. The others were Lemuel, who married Mary Katherine Hyer and became the father of seventeen children. Samantha married Patrick Moran, Jacob married Margaret Jane Probst, Purtamis married William Rood, Ingaby married Jacob Keister in 1860, he later served in the Civil War, but on which side is not known to the writer of this story. Ingaby Brake Keister died November 23rd, 1871, leaving one daughter, Ida. Elizabeth Married Philip Smith; Mahala married Silas Bailey, but lived only a short while after her marriage.

John B. Brake married for his second wife, Sophia Sexton Loomis, widow of John Loomis of French Creek. This most estimable woman was the daughter of Noah Sexton, one of the pioneer of that section. He was a soldier of the Revolutionary War.

To this marriage of John B. Brake and Sophia, there was born one son who was christened Hyer, no doubt in honor of the maiden name of Rachel, the first wife of John B.

Hyer Brake was born April 16th, 1819. In 1859 he was married to Narcissa Bailey, a sister of Silas Bailey, previously mentioned. This estimable couple spent their lives in a comfortable farm home on Mud Lick Run about four miles from Buckhannon. Their latch string was always out to any and all friends and relations, to come and stay as long as convenient. No one asking a favor was ever turned away disappointed. They were staunch and loyal members of the Baptist Church. They had children as follows: Lloyd, born August 21st, 1858, died November 8, 1938, and is buried at McArthur, Ohio. He married Phoebe Ellen Browning, September 19th, 1876, she passed away a few years after her husband, and is buried at Buckhannon. Dora and Mary were daughters of Hyre and Narcissa, and both died young, neither was ever married. Ella married George Whitescarver, and had one daughter. Maud, the youngest, married Harold Rohrbough, a grandson of George and Louisa Brake Rohrbough. The other sons of Hyre Brake were Loomis, Albert, and Arthur. No available data of these sons, except that Paul Brake, a minister in the United Brethern Church is a son of one of these men. Data of the children of Lloyd Brake is meager. The oldest child, Eliza Narcissa, born August 25th, 1877, married a Mr. Snyder in 1902, Bernice married Wilfong, Josie married Rev. C. C. White, a

Presbyterian minister, who had charge of a church in Beloit, Wisconsin. The names of the other children are not known to this writer.

Elmore, oldest son of John B. Brake, married for his first wife, October 1st, 1837, Mary Loomis, daughter of John and Sophia Sexton Loomis, she was born February 22nd, 1822 and died September 2nd, 1848.

An unusual kinship was brought about by the marriages of John B. Brake and his son Elmore. Mary Loomis, who became the bride of Elmore, was a daughter of John and Sophia Sexton Loomis, the second wife of John B. The son Hyre was born to John B. and Sophia was consequently a half brother to both Elmore and his wife, Mary Loomis.

The daughters of Jacob the Captive, were Magdalene, who married Isaac Reger. She, with her husband, is buried on Hacker's Creek. Leah Ann born in 1792, married Abram Reger in 1814. She died March 8th, 1885 and is buried beside her husband in the Heavener Cemetery, near the grave of her parents. Abram Reger was a nephew of Isaac who married Magdalene Brake. The other daughter was Elizabeth, who married Joseph Shreve. These three sisters have many descendants, but definite data of them is not at hand.

John, the second son of Jacob Sr. and a brother of the captive, was born in 1754, and died November 4th, 1838. He is buried at Jackson's Hill, the boyhood home of "Stonewall" Jackson. He was allowed a pension for one year's service in the Revolution as an Indian spy, but his name was dropped, as he could not furnish sufficient proof of such service. The record shows that he served under his brother-in-law George Jackson, Captain John Harris, and Colonel Van Meter, but no dates are given. This record also states that he is the only Brake listed as having served in the war. This statement is contrary to fact, since the three sons of Jacob Sr. are recorded as having rendered such service.

The record of Jacob the Captive, however, is found only in John Cutright's application for his pension, in which he states that he served under Lieutenant Jacob Brake. This affidavit has been accepted by the Daughters of the American Revolution as proof of such service. John Brake married for his first wife, Elizabeth Wetherhold. To this union was born one daughter, Elizabeth, who became the second wife of Colonel Edward Jackson, who was the grandfather of "Stonewall." This Elizabeth should not be confused with her aunt Elizabeth Brake, who married George Jackson.

After the death of his first wife, John Brake married Katherine Shook. Their children were Jacob, born 1785, who in 1815 married Rachel Jackson, born July 8th, 1792, a daughter of Edward and his first wife, Mary Hadden Jackson. Isaac, brother of Jacob married Mary, a sister of Rachel Jackson. Leonard married Mary (Polly) Jackson, August 1st, 1820; she was the daughter of Samuel and his wife Barbara Roger Jackson, therefore, a cousin of the wives of her husband's two brothers. John J. married Frankie Reed (or Reeder). The two daughters of John and Katherine Shook Brake, Polly and Margaret, they married respectively, William and Alexander Morrison.

Elizabeth, the only known daughter of Jacob Brake Sr. and his wife who was killed by the Indians, was born February 22nd, 1757; she wed George Jackson at Moorefield, November 13, 1776. She died in March 1812. Their oldest child was John George, born September 27th, 1777 and died March 28th, 1825. He married Mary Payne, sister of "Dolly" Madison. Mary Payne lived but a short time after her marriage, passing away at Clarksburg, W. Va. Her grave, in the Jackson Cemetery, facing Phillip Street is covered with a marble slab upon which is a long and tender inscription composed by her husband. There is a story that during his term in Congress, John George Jackson met and married the sister of the invincible "Dolly" Payne Madison, and that the wedding took place in the White House. This may or may not be true. At any rate the legend is an interesting side line to the Brake Family story.

John George Jackson married for his second wife, Mary Meigs, and he and his two wives are buried side by side. Other children of George Jackson, were Jacob, born 1785, died 1810. Edward Blackburn, who married Elizabeth Gibbons; William L. who married Harriet Wilson; George Washington, born February 9th, 1791, died August 20th, 1876, married Hetta Taylor. Katherine married Dr. Williams; Sarah married Dr. Seely; Prudence married Elijah Arnold.

There is a statement that George Jackson had fourteen children; if so we have no record of any others. After the death of his wife Elizabeth, in 1812, he married Nancy Adams. It is possible that she had children whose names we do not have.

Abram, the youngest of the four children of Jacob Brake Sr. according to his own statement when applying for his pension, was born about 1765. From other information at hand, this date is incorrect, though it is not now apparent how the mistake originated. The inscription on his tombstone dates his death at 1842, at the age of eighty four. This is apparently more nearly correct, although there is one record which gives the date of his birth as 1750. If this latter date be correct, he would be next to Jacob, the captive in point of years. But until more accurate records are produced, there can be no certainty as to which is correct.

Following the example of his two brothers; Abram became a soldier in the war for independence. The record states that he lived near Moorefield, was drafted into the service, but did not know the year. He marched under Capt. Bernian to Cetrish on the Ohio River, thence to Morgantown, W. Va., back to Moorefield and dismissed. The pension was not allowed as there was insufficient proof of such service as requested by the department of pensions. He stated that his father resided at Buckhannon Fort, and that he visited him there after such service. He married Mary Elizabeth, daughter of John and Elizabeth Cummins Jackson. Thus, Abram Brake and George Jackson exchanged sisters.

Abram and Elizabeth had a large family, and lived in Harrison County, about four miles from Clarksburg. It is regrettable not to have an authentic list of their children, but such has not been available. He is buried in the old Jackson Cemetery, very near the enclosed plot where lie the remains of John and Elizabeth Cummins Jackson, John George and his two wives, the father and sister of the immortal "Stonewall," and others. The burial

place of Elizabeth, the wife of Abram is not known at this time, though it is thought to be somewhere in the middle west.

About the year 1928, Abram Jackson Brake, then an old man, who was born near Clarksburg, but had lived in Indiana since early childhood, visited in Harrison County, searching for relatives he had never known except by hearsay. He was especially anxious to locate the grave of his grandfather, Abram Brake, but not knowing the proper persons to contact, to secure the information, he returned home disappointed and passed away not long thereafter.

Returning to Elmore, the oldest child of John B. and Rachel Hyre Brake, he and his wife, Mary Loomis Brake had four children, two daughters and two sons. The oldest, Martha Elizabeth was born in 1838, and died January 11th, 1886. She married Moses Farnsworth, a widower with several children. Her children were Arrminta (Mittie), James W., Martha Eilizabeth (Bettie), Hattie, Grace and Annie Maud. The Farnsworth home, a large comfortable farm house, is owned and occupied by the only son, known throughout the county as "Jimmy" Farnsworth. This farm house is located on the waters of Leading Creek, near the village of Troy, in Gilmer County. It was in its early day a busy and bustling place. A coal mine on the farm furnished coal for the country far and near. If a customer had to wait for his load of coal, he was always welcomed to sit down to the well-filled table. Or if he was benighted, there was always a room and comfortable bed where he could spend the night. The children all married and reared families. Some of the grandchildren of Moses and Martha Brake Farnsworth, have risen to positions of prominence and distinction; at least two have become well-known and noted surgeons. One is an attorney at law with a large firm in Evanston, Illinois.

The second child of Elmore and Mary Loomis Brake, was Louisa, who was born January 24th, 1842; she married George Rohrbough, and had the following children; Wilbert, Mary, Minnie, Gertrude, Freeman, Elmer, Elsie and Oswald, all of whom married, except Freeman and Elsie. They are all dead except Elsie, and the home on Brushy Fork, less than two miles from Buckhannon has passed into other hands.

The short sketch of the third child of Elmore, which follows, is in the words of Albert, his oldest son, now deceased; George Jefferson Brake, oldest son of Elmore and Mary Loomis Brake, were born May 25th, 1844, on the site of the present Upshur County Fair Grounds. He departed this life November 8th, 1899. At the age of seventeen and one half years, he enlisted in Company B, tenth West Virginia Infantry, and served three years, nine months and four days until the close of the war. At the battle of Winchester he was twice wounded and taken prisoner. By dressing in women's clothing and walking between two colored "mammies" he succeeded in dodging the pickets and getting back to his command. After the close of the war, he went to Gilmer County where he engaged in farming. He was also a licensed minister of the Baptist denomination, and often filled the pulpits of various churches in the county.

He married Mary Belinda Woofter, daughter of John Woofter, one of the pioneer Baptist preachers of West Virginia. To this union was born one child, Belinda May, on June 17th, 1867. His wife Mary Belinda passed away July 28th, 1867. On October 10th, 1867, he was united in marriage to Mary Jane Hall of Ritchie County. To this union was born three sons; Albert Willey, October 11th, 1868; Loomis Newton, January 7th, 1871, and Clarence, May 3rd, 1879. These sons all married and had families.

Mary Jane, second wife of George Brake, was born October 4th, 1841, and departed this life May 14th, 1915.

Albert Rust, youngest of Elmore and Mary Loomis Brake was born February 27th, 1848, and was but an infant of six months when his mother died. His Maternal Grandmother, Sophie Loomis Brake, cared for him until he was three or four years old, when he was taken back to his father, who had again married. Since the houses were almost in sight, it is said that the child had two homes, and kept a beaten path between. When he grew to young manhood he followed his brother to Gilmer County, and became an inmate of that home for seven years.

On February 14th, 1876, he married Susan Josephine Snodgrass, daughter of the Rev. Elisha L. Snodgrass and his wife, Mary Catherine Cox Snodgrass. To this union were born the following children: Linnie Louisa, Elmer Harold, Wilbur Elisha, Hyre Clyde, Laura Alice, Albert Hugh, John McWhorter, Mary Madge, Martha Pearl; a twin brother of Martha Pearl died at the age of two months. The youngest of this family was Genevieve. At the beginning of this year, 1946, all of this large family are living except the mother who passed away September 24th, 1937, the infant already mentioned, and the oldest son, Harold, who met a tragic death by drowning in the Ohio River, September 23rd, 1907. He and his mother are buried side by side in the Heavener Cemetery, Buckhannon, West Virginia.

The five oldest of the children of Albert and Susan (Sue) Brake were born in a little cottage on a farm on the waters of Horn Creek in Gilmer County where their parents began their married life. In the autumn of 1882 this farm was vacated and the family moved to a portion of the Snodgrass farm where the wife and mother had spent her girlhood. This farm is located in both Gilmer and Ritchie Counties, the line running through the farm. Here the other children were born. They attended public school in the village of Auburn, where they later moved.

In 1925 they moved to Brushy Fork, Upshur County near Buckhannon, on part of the old Brake estate where the father had lived until he grew to manhood.

The five daughters, Elmer Harold (Hal) and Hyre Clyde attended schools of higher learning, all but Harold having become teachers. Laura and Clyde have spent many years in the teaching profession, neither of whom is married. Harold was a banker and at the time of his death was connected with the First National Bank of Harrisville, West Virginia.

On November 12th, 1910, the oldest daughter, Linnie, married Chester M.

Cunningham, a merchant of Shinnston. They have one daughter, Martha Genevieve, who has been a teacher of Kindergarten in a suburb of Chicago for several years. On November 12th, 1944 she married Charles L. Hitchcock of Chicago. The Cunninghams lived at Shinnston for ten years, then moved to Clarksburg. From there to Parson, Tucker County, where they still reside.

Wilbur married Lessie Ireland, daughter of Rev. Albert Ireland and granddaughter of Rev. Moore McNeel, a pioneer preacher of West Virginia. Their children are Susan, McNeel, Philip, Wilbur Jr. , Mary and Phillis. All three sons served in World War II. Philip, who was severely wounded, served in the German campaign, and Wilbur Jr. in Italy.

Hugh married Ada Douglas and they have the following children; Wendell, Linn, Virginia, Eugenia, Donald, John, Lois and Neil. They reside in Buckhannon, West Virginia.

John, the youngest, son of Albert and Sue Snodgrass Brake, has lived in Akron, Ohio for many years. He married Lillian Welkenback, a most estimable woman, who died in the summer of 1945. Their children are Charlotte, Joan, John, and William. Both sons and a son-in-law served in World War II. John fought in Germany and William in Africa, Italy and Germany.

Madge, the third daughter, married Adrian Holten Lawson, son of Dr. J. C . Lawson, for many years a physician of Auburn, Ritchie County, West Virginia. They have two sons, Richard and Joseph. Richard, who was a member of the Marine Corps in World War II, served in Hawaii and in the Okinawa Campaign. Their father was a member of the A. E. F. in World War I.

Pearl married Jacob Cosgrove, a gentleman of Irish extraction. They have one daughter, Rachel now of New York City, and a son Lee who served in the Pacific Theater in World War II having been in New Guinea, the Philippines, and Japan.

The youngest of the Albert Brake's family is Genevieve who has been a teacher in Parkersburg, W. Va. for a number of years. She married Don L. Henderson, a son of one of the pioneer families of Williamstown, West Virginia. They have no children.

On February 15th, 1849 Elmore Brake married for his second wife, Harriet Bryan Little, a widow with two children. To this union were born two sons; John Matthew, born Jun 17th, 1853, and Rolandus Clark, born May 5th, 1956.

John Matthew became a brilliant attorney at law, and practiced his profession in Buckhannon for a number of years. He married Miss Malinda Lightburn, and they had one daughter. He died in his late forties and his wife not many years thereafter.

Rolandus Clark, the second son of Elmore and Harriet Brake, was born May 5th, 1953. He lived and died at the old home on Brushy Fork, within hearing of the church bells

of Buckhannon, and where the family had lived since the early spring of 1848. Late in life he married a widow with whom he lived in contentment until his death, which occurred about 1920.

The descendents of Mary Loomis, the first wife of Elmore Brake, may be justly proud of a most illustrious ancestry. Through her Dyer forbears, Mary Loomis gives us a direct line to Ann Hutchinson, the famous religious and social reformer of Colonial days; and far back of Ann, to the noblest of Britain's rulers, Alfred I thence to Charlemagne, King of the Franks, another of Europe's early political and religious reformers.

It may be said and truly so, that we are none the better for this kingly heritage; it may also be said with judgment equally as sound, that we are none the worse. However, it is none the less interesting to know that through our veins, though many times diluted, runs the blood of some of Europe's noblest royalty.

Now our little story of the Brake family, whose beginning was so closely linked with the picturesque waterfall in Hardy County is finished. The foregoing pages contain only the skeleton of what might be told with the concerted efforts of a few people interested in their ancestry. It is regrettable that so few do have that interest.

It is also regrettable that all family lines could not have been more fully carried out; but the work required in securing the data made this impossible. Perhaps those who avail themselves of a copy of this manuscript, may feel the urge and will complete their own family line for the benefit of posterity. It is hoped that in many cases this will be done.

To those who contributed valuable information for the foregoing pages, the writer is grateful; some have passed on four of such persons, Albert W. Brake, of Jane Lew, West Va., L. V. McWhorter, Yakima, Washington, Karl Reger, Morgantown, W. Va., and Alving Brake of Kansas City, Missouri. These were all descendents of Jacob the Captive.

To Beatrice Arnold Giffin of Buchannon, W. Va., and Mrs. E. C. Brake of Petersburg, W. Va., for valuable documentary data, the writer is most appreciative. Last to her aged father, Albert Rust Brake, who soon will enter into his ninety ninth year, she is indebted for those contributions from memory's storehouse.

Linnie Louisa Brake Cunningham
Parsons, West Virginia
January 21st, 1946

Recopied by Jackson Darrell Davis, grandson of Araminta Farnsworth Maxwell and great grandson of Martha Elizabeth Brake Farnsworth.

*Parkersburg, W. Va.
Feb. 1, 1948*

Recopied by Forest Holmes Kayser, son of Hattie Farnsworth Kayser, and

grandson of Martha Elizabeth Brake Farnsworth and Moses Farnsworth.

*1092 N. Leavitt Rd.
Leavittsburg, Ohio
Jan. 29, 1980*

*Transcribed, digitized, and edited for typographical errors by Perry
Fletcher Brake, 5-great grandson of Jacob Brake, Sr.*

*Tacoma, Washington
February, 2004*

