

A GENEALOGY
OF THE
KELLY FAMILY

—BY—

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The Kelly Family.

The Kelly family is one that has been prominent in many branches, and has had distinguished representatives in South Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas. They have been in the first official positions, and have been people of affluence and social position.

As the name will readily indicate, the family is Celtic Irish, and the tradition in some branches is that they are descended from "Fighting King Kelly." Detail as to the European ancestors is not at hand, and the first American generation begins with Gresham Kelly below.

I. Gresham Kelly, the ancestor of the family, resided in South Carolina, where he lived the life of an opulent planter and slave owner. His landed possessions were extensive. It is not known that he held official position. He gave his children excellent educational advantages, of which they availed themselves. Their subsequent positions in life, and their matrimonial alliances indicate the aristocratic position of the family. He married Jan. 17, 1769, Miss B. Tatum. He d. Oct. 1, 1799; and she d. Aug. 19, 1830.

Children all born probably in S. C.:

- 1 Ann Kelly, b. Jan. 25, 1771; d. March 15, 1807; m. — Cobb.
- 2 James, b. March 23, 1773; d. Nov. 11, 1804.
- 3 Moses, b. Oct. 8 1775. (SEE NO. II BELOW).
- 4 Mary, b. Jan. 25, 1779; d. Nov. 15, 1806; m. — Tarrant.
- 5 Elizabeth, b. Feb. 25, 1781; d. May 16, 1813; m. — Townsend.
- 6 Jane, b. Aug. 6, 1783; d. Nov. 22, 1816; m. — Thomason. They had a dau. Elizabeth Thomason, who m. a Rose, and lived in Columbus, Miss.
- 7 William, b. Sept. 22, 1786. (SEE NO. III BELOW).
- 8 Harriet, b. July 15, 1789; m. Isham Harrison. (SEE NO. IV BELOW).

II. Moses Kelly (son of Gresham) was b. in S. C. Oct. 8, 1775. Here he grew to manhood and was educated. Having married, with his five children, and a number of his relatives and friends from the upper Districts of the Palmetto State, he emigrated about 1816-17 to the Mississippi Territory (now Alabama). He located in Jones' Valley, in what became Blount County. His home was on one of the knolls in the immediate vicinity of the present "Walnut Grove" in South Birmingham. This section having been settled in 1815 (the first settler being "Devil" John Jones, who gave his name to the valley and to the town of Jonesboro), by the time the County of Blount

was formed by the first Territorial Legislature of Alabama, on Feb. 6, 1818, quite a large and thrifty population from South Carolina and Tennessee had spread over its borders. The neighbors of Mr. Kelly in his beautiful valley location were the Brooks, Brown, Hickman, McAdory, Pullen, Prude, Tarrant and Owen families, many of whom have descendants in various parts of the South at the present time.

The County being formed, the establishment of civil order and local government followed. The principal official position in the county organization at this date was the Chief Justice of the Quorum. County affairs were administered by a bench of five justices, known as the "Justices of the Quorum." The office of Chief Justice was a position similar to that subsequently held by the Judge of the County Court, and still later, the Judge of Probate. From the emigrants to all this wide stretch of country from the north boundary of Blount to the southern limits of the present Jefferson (formed in 1819) and from the Warrior to the Cahaba rivers, he was chosen and commissioned Chief Justice. The following is the minute entry of the first court ever held in the county:

"At an Orphan's Court held for Blount County at the house of Maj. Moses Kelly, Jones' Valley, the place designated by law for holding Courts for said county, on Monday the 14th day of September 1818, being the second Monday in said month.

"Present Moses Kelly, John Cochran, Isaac Brown and David Murphree, Justices of the Quorum," etc.

He continued in the position after the formation of Jefferson County until 1821, when he was succeeded by Darby Henley (who later came to Pickens County). Mr. Kelly was a planter, and continued to reside in the County the remainder of his life. During the Creek War, 1813-14, he served with credit under Gen. Andrew Jackson, and his title of Major was doubtless acquired in this service. During his after life he ever maintained a cherished regard for his old military chief, and in the political contests waged in Jefferson was always his doughty partisan.

He married in S. C., Margaret ——. The compiler knows nothing of her antecedents, or where she is buried. Mr. Kelly died at the home of his son Dr. James Kelly, who then resided at what was long known as the "Darby Henley place" (two miles north of Bessemer on valley creek). He is buried in the old grave yard in a stone's throw of the house, and near the banks of the silently flowing stream. A stout sandstone monument marks the grave. He died Jan. 9, 1837.

His children, all born in S. C., were:

- 1 James Kelly, b. Aug. 12, 1800 in Greenville District, S. C.; m. (1) Jane Jordan, b. Dec. 13, 1809; d. Sept. 11, 1838; and (2) Sarah Hardynan. No issue. He and first wife are buried at Cedar Hill Cemetery, Bessemer. He was a practicing physician, and a planter.

- 2 Gershom, (name slightly changed from that of his grand-father) b. Feb. 8, 1803; m. (1) Matilda Brooks, b. 1814, d. Sept. 13, 1838; (2) Eliza Brooks, daught. of Jacob Warren Brooks and Catharine Lacey (daught. of Major Edward Lacey, son of Gen. Edward Lacey, of the Revolution). Mr. Kelly was a planter of ample means, and at one time was a copartner in the commission business at Mobile with John F. Nabers. Mr. Kelly came to Pickens County in the 30s, and continued to reside here until his death April 27, 1850. His home was about three miles from Carrollton on the public road to Pickensville, and the house is still standing. No issue. After his death Mrs Kelly became the wife of Col. Lewis M. Stone, and she now resides at the homestead in Carrollton.
- 3 Nancy, b. —, m. Col. Thomas Adams. They lived and died in Marengo Co., near Linden. Mr. Adams was a man of wealth, owning numbers of slaves, and extensive canebrake plantations. These he lost by the too generous use of his name in the matter of endorsements. He had a number of children. One daught., Rosaline, m. James Wilcox, who was Probate Judge of Jefferson County in 1850.
- 4 Moses Kelly, b. May 21, 1810. (SEE NO. V BELOW).
- 5 Isham Harrison Kelly. (SEE NO VI BELOW).

III. William Kelly (son of Gresham) was b. Sept. 22, 1786. He was the most prominent early member of the family. Admitted to the bar probably in S. C., he early removed to Tenn., where he became one of the judges. About 1818 he came to the rich and populous County of Madison, and located at Huntsville to practice his profession. In 1821 he was elected to Congress, the State at that period being entitled to but one member. He was the second Representative in Congress from Ala. He resigned when he was elected to the U. S. Senate from Ala., in which body he served from Dec. 12, 1822 to March 4, 1825. In 1825 and 1827 he was in the Alabama House of Representatives from Madison Co., serving as speaker at the former session. After an unsuccessful effort to impeach the Judges of the Alabama Supreme Court, he removed to New Orleans, in 1830, where he died Aug. 24, 1834. He was twice married, and had descendants. The following is a character sketch of him by Hon. James E. Saunders, (SETTLERS OF EARLY ALABAMA, p. 293):

"He was a man of fine genius and an able lawyer. There was nothing sophomorean in his style. It was always conversational in tone. When addressing a jury he often left the bar, and leaning on a chair, he talked to them very effectually. He was their great champion, and loved the dear people; but I never observed that he was fond of their society. I have often seen him retire from crowds and amuse himself with a pocket edition of Horace, which he generally carried, and could read with facility. I judge that much of his cynical style had been imbibed from that Roman satirist."

IV. Harriet Kelly (daught. of Gresham) was b. July 15, 1789. In S. C. she married Isham Harrison, son of James Harrison and Elizabeth Hampton, of S. C. "She was a woman of commanding appearance, of superior intellect, and great force of character." Removing to Jones' Valley, he settled near Jonesboro, but later removed to old

Ruhama (the present East Lake), where he occupied the first brick house erected in Jefferson Co. In 1823 he represented this County in the lower house. In 1832 he removed to Noxubee Co., Miss., of which State he remained a citizen until his death.

They had a large family, and their descendants are persons of great worth. Children:

- 1 Eliza Harrison, m. B. W. Earle, a son of Gen. Earle, of S. C.
- 2 Laura, m. William H. Jack, a distinguished lawyer and public man, of Texas.
- 3 James E., m. (1) Mary Evans, daut. of J. Evans; (2) Miss Carter. He was a Brig. Gen. C. S. A. Descendants in Waco, Texas.
- 4 Louisa, m. Dr. Wells A. Thompson, of Waco, Texas.
- 5 John Hampton, d. at 22; grad. of Medical College of University of Penn.
- 6 Isham, m. Julia, daut. of Gov. Whitfield, of Miss.; resided in Columbus; was a Col. in the late War, and was killed at the head of his Regiment at the bloody battle of Harrisburg.
- 7 Richard, m. Mary, daut. of Daniel Ragsdale, of Aberdeen; was a physician; and a Col. C. S. A.
- 8 Thomas, m. Sallie McDonald; resided in Waco, Texas; was a Brig. Gen. of Cavalry, C. S. A.; lawyer.
- 9 William Kelly was a lawyer; d. prior to 1861.
- 10 Harriet Kelly, m. William B., son of James Evans, of Aberdeen.
- 11 Moses Kelly, m. Mary, daut. of Gen. B. M. Bradford, of Aberdeen; was a surgeon in late War; resided at Deer Brook, Miss., where he has descendants.
- 12 Elizabeth Hampton, m. Dr. Thomas Barron, of Marion, Ala., where descendants reside.
- 13 Mary, m. Dr. Matt Clay, of Deer Brook, Miss. She is dead. Dr. Clay still resides at his elegant home.

V. Moses Kelly (son of Moses) was b. May 21, 1810 in S. C. Coming with his parents to Jefferson Co., on Nov. 18, 1828, he married Diza Peeler. He was a farmer, but early took an interest in public affairs. On Aug. 13, 1832 he was commissioned sheriff of the County, an office he held until Aug. 25, 1841. In 1836 he was in the lower house of the Legislature from Jefferson; and in the Senate by successive elections in 1843, 1847, 1851, and 1853. He was elected Probate Judge May 14, 1856, and served until May 5, 1862. During the Mexican War he raised a Company of Volunteers from Jefferson, but they saw no active duty. The old roll of this Company is on file in the office of the Adjutant General of Alabama. He d. Sept. 25, 1865. He and wife are both buried at Elyton, Ala. Mr. Kelly was "a man of practical ways, great influence, popularity, experience and integrity."

Children:

- 1 Gershom, b. 1831; 3rd sgt. in Capt. Burt Martin's Co., 10th Ala. Regt., wounded at Gettysburg, July 2, and d. July 11, 1863.
- 2 James, d. in Jefferson Co.
- 3 Moses, now resides at Lyle Station, Tenn.

VI. Isham Harrison Kelly (son of Moses) graduated at the University of Ala., class of 1834, taking his degree of A. M. He was prepared for the bar, and about 1839, located at Carrollton. Here he practiced his profession with success. His health becoming impaired, he went to Cuba for recuperation. He however, rapidly declined, and

died in the island about 1844. His wife was Elizabeth Herbert, daughter of John Herbert and Harriet Waters. Mr. Herbert was of Lowndes Co., but after his death his widow removed to Tuscaloosa. Later she married J. R. Hawthorn, of Wilcox Co. Mrs. Kelly died about 1847, leaving only two children:

1 John Herbert Kelly, b. March 31, 1840. (SEE NO VII BELOW).

2 Rollin, m. and lives in Mobile.

VII. John Herbert Kelly (son of Isham Harrison Kelly), was b. March 31, 1840, in Carrollton, Ala. Although he never married, and was little known in the Co., as a native son his memory has been honored. Brewer's ALABAMA, p. 502, presents the following appreciative memoir of him:

"Among the gallant dead of the late war Alabamians will remember none with more pride than JOHN HERBERT KELLY. * * * Both his parents died before he was seven years old, and his rearing devolved upon his grand-mother, the wife of Hon. J. R. Hawthorn of Wilcox. At the age of 17 years his relatives, Hons. W. W. Boyce of South Carolina and Phil T. Herbert of California, procured for him a cadetship at West Point. He lacked but a few months of graduating when the State seceded, and he at once went to Montgomery to offer his services. He was appointed a second lieutenant in the regular army, and dispatched to Fort Morgan. With Gen. Hardee he went to Missouri, and was there commissioned major, and placed in command of an Arkansas battalion. He fought at Shiloh, and a month after was promoted to the command of the Eighth Arkansas regiment with the rank of colonel. Participating in the battles of Perryville and Murfreesboro, he was severely wounded at the latter. Furloughed for three weeks, he returned within two. At Chicamauga he commanded a brigade (Fifty-eighth North Carolina, Sixty-fifth Georgia, Fifth Kentucky and Sixty-third Virginia), and lost within an hour 300 out of 852 effective men. Generals Preston, Liddell, and Cleburne then urged his immediate promotion, Gen. C. saying to the secretary of war: "I know no better officer of his grade in the service." Promoted at the early age of twenty-three and a half years, [Nov. 16, 1863] he was assigned to a brigade of Wheeler's division, and soon after was placed over a division—Grigsby's and Wade's brigades. His career thenceforward was signalized by a series of brilliant achievements in that arm of the service. These were ended by his death while leading a charge at Franklin, Tennessee, Aug. 20, 1864. His remains were removed to Mobile in 1866, and there interred.

"Gen. Kelly evinced a natural aptitude and talent for military affairs, and was a brave and efficient officer. Generous and amiable, he endeared himself to his command, and won their confidence and admiration. He died amid the clash and shock of battle, and the State lost no truer son."

