



Harrogate's Family Tree

by Sonnie Sperati

IN 1883 EVAN BROWN'S WIFE DIED and shortly thereafter he sold property that was to become Harrogate to Francis "Frank" Denny Walker. Evan Brown sold the property on the south side of Southwood Road to Joseph Marvel who before 1883 had sold it to John Speakman (includes the stone house). It is interesting to note that one teeny, tiny, piece at the intersection of Limestone and Southwood Road at this time was in Delaware!

1883 was an important year for Frank. In addition to buying the property, in January of that year, he married Anna Cranston, the daughter of Hannah Kelly and Joseph Cranston. And yes I suppose she was somehow connected with the Cranstons from Cranston Heights fame. Remember Delaware is a really small state!

Frank was the son of Robert Walker and Sarah Denny. He was born 8 January 1848, the fourth of eleven siblings, and grew up on a farm on Limestone Road. As far as I can tell, Frank and Anna never lived in New Garden Township. Census records up through 1920 show him living in Millcreek Hundred on Limestone Road. He died 11 February 1928. Frank and Anna are buried in White Clay Creek Cemetery among many of his relatives. Anna's parents are buried in the Stanton Friends Cemetery. I do not know if this indicates that Anna may have been a Quaker. Frank is not a Quaker but a Presbyterian following in the footsteps of generations of Walkers.

The Walker family of Scots Irish descent is a large one that settled on farms along Limestone Road. Their history can be very confusing due to the use of identical names. There seems to be two distinct families that are probably related in some way but I have not discovered how. One branch was particularly numerous around Little Baltimore area. The other Walker group was vested in the area around the Mermaid Tavern at Pike Creek to the Stanton Delaware area. Francis D. Walker is part of this latter family and I will attempt to place him in this clan.

Before I go any further, I must tell you this story. The Walkers who lived around Brackenville Road and Limestone Road descended from a Walker who had lived for a time in Baltimore. When this family moved into the area, it was necessary to differentiate them from the Mermaid area Walkers. These new Walkers became "The Baltimore Walkers". So . . . wait for it . . . The area around their farms came to be called "Little Baltimore". The road going through it,

of course, acquired the name of Little Baltimore Road. Now back to the Mermaid area Walkers.

Frank's great grandfather was James Walker (1744-1796) who was a carpenter who fought in the Battle of the Brandywine. He and his wife, Ann, were blessed with eight children. One of his sons was Robert (1771-1853), Frank's grandfather.

In the middle of the Linden Knoll Condominiums off of Skyline Drive is an 1835 frame barn built by Robert. After his death, his son Robert (Frank's father) inherited the farm and here he raised his eleven children. Robert died in 1867 and his wife Sarah remained on the farm with her 11 children which included our Frank. The 1870 census lists Frank as head of the household. The farm was valued at \$12,800 or in today's dollars, \$232,422.



I wrote for a past newsletter an article about the Mermaid Tavern. At times in its history it was owned by Walkers. According to the Millcreek Hundred Blog, this was a different Walker family. It seems to be a good assumption the families were related in some way. In any event, in 1895 the brother of Frank Walker, James H. Walker, *did* buy the Mermaid from an Elizabeth Walker his longtime neighbor. The descendants of James H. still own it today.

Anna died in 1921 and in 1923 Frank sold 48 (Harrogate land included) of his 130 acres to Henry and Mary Ewart. I did not trace who at this time owned the other 82 acres.