

The Durbin Family

The Legend

Thomas Durbin migrated, perhaps from the West Indies, to Ann Arundel County, Maryland prior to 1676, and moved to Baltimore County, where he died, prior to 1720.

On June 30, 1688, 350 acres of land was surveyed for Thomas Durbin in Baltimore County. This land was on the north side of the Potapsco River near Druid Hills Park.

Christopher, an apparent son of Thomas Durbin, named in his will his oldest son, Thomas, his youngest son, Christopher, and his wife, Mary. (Baltimore County wills, part II, page 235, Oct. 23, 1709 - Nov. 28, 1709.) Other possible children of Christopher and Mary are William, Samuel, Elizabeth and James.

While most of the Durbins remained in Baltimore County, one branch moved to Harford County, near the Pennsylvania State line, and another moved to Carroll County near Westminster.

Samuel Durbin, parentage unknown (could be the son of Christopher) supposedly migrated from England to near Westminster in 1698.

In 1767 a William Durbin and his seven brothers built a stone house by Samuel's original log house, and three or four generations of Durbins lived in there. This stone house is standing to this day, and is used as the clubhouse for a golf course. At one time it was a Methodist shrine, and it stands near the Strawbridge house, which was made a shrine in 1940. The Durbins and the Strawbridge family were neighbors, and good friends. Robert Strawbridge was the first American Methodist circuit rider and did much to further the Methodist religion in America. It is said that the early Durbins were Methodists and that Francis Ashbury, first Methodist Bishop in America, visited them in the stone home for the purpose of conducting services. Robert Strawbridge also held church services in the stone house.

If the Samuel Durbin whose sons built the stone house is the same Samuel Durbin who was married to Ann Logsdon, and Samuel and Ann did have eight sons, I doubt if the family was Methodist. William is said to have welcomed Bishop Ashbury into his home at least thirty times for the purpose of holding church services.

Catholics were more or less persecuted for their religion in early Maryland, and could not hold public office. The sons usually followed the religion of the father, and the daughters followed the religion of the mother. It is very possible that some of Samuel's sons were Methodist, while others were Catholic. We do know that Christopher, son of Samuel Durbin and Ann Logsdon, a pioneer settler of Madison County, was a devout Catholic.

Some of the Durbins who came into Kentucky in the 1880's were either not Catholic or they soon lost their religion because of the scarcity of priests to attend to their needs.

There are interesting stories and traditions handed down in every family, but the most interesting one I've heard concerning the Durbin family is the connection of the City of Baltimore, Maryland with one of the earliest Durbins.

It seems a few years ago one of the Durbins was doing research in Baltimore, and he ran across a document which indicated that a Durbin had owned all of the land on which the City was built. For some reason this Durbin had become angry with his children and did not want any of them to have any of his estate. He leased all his lands to someone for 99 years with the stipulation that after that time the land was to return to his descendants, since all his children would have died before the 99 years had passed. In the ensuing 99 years the Durbins moved out, and the people who had use of the land apparently forgot the deal, or simply ignored it.

The person finding the document in Baltimore contacted a lawyer with the idea of reclaiming the Durbin lands for the Durbin family, but was told that since so much time had passed, and since Baltimore was so built up, it would be impossible to get a court to issue a favorable verdict. So there the matter stands; the City of Baltimore belongs to every Durbin living today.

James R. Virden of Versailles, Ohio, contributed another interesting story of the Durbin family.

Hayden D. Durbin migrated from England to Virginia Colony in 1712 in the company of William Barker, a French Basque. The Durbin family and the Barker family were early settlers of Kentucky, and the town of Covington is the result of their subdividing and colonizing efforts. Some of the descendants of the two families, who intermarried, still live in that vicinity. It is said that these two families owned the entire County of Estill, purchasing it for 12½ cents per acre.

John Frank Durbin, of Estill County, was married twice, and was the father of thirteen children by each wife, seven sons and six daughters by Sally Ann Wagers, and six sons and seven daughters by Julia Mahon. All of these children lived to adulthood, and all were married.

Pius Durbin, sons of John Frank Durbin, was married to Margaret Bonker, and they appeared on the census of Estill County in 1850:

Pius Durbin	30
Margaret	27
William	9

William Barker, son of Pius Durbin and Margaret Bonker, wife's name unknown, lived eight miles from Covington, and devoted his attention to farming and stock raising. He died in 1917 at the age of 78. His wife, still living in 1933, was 92. There were also four sons and four daughters surviving in 1933.

The family moved to King City, Missouri and bought land on the Comstock Purchase, year not known. Pius James Durbin, the main character in this sketch, was still a young man at this time. Pius James lived at home until he was twenty-one, then went to Kansas, then Nebraska, and finally to Colorado, where he engaged in the livery and stage coach business. He was in business for over twenty years at Denver, Colorado Springs, and Cripple Creek. James Pius then went to Minnesota for a while, then returned to Colorado and, when in his 40's, migrated to Vernon, California.

James Pius raised Duroc Jersey hogs, on a garbage contract, one year having 36,000 hogs. He was also the president of the Red Hog Livestock and Immunizing Co. of Phoenix, Arizona. He owned some 20,000 acres of land in Orange and Los Angeles Counties. He was a Democrat and a member of the Catholic Church.

James Pius Durbin was married to Anna Majer on July 23, 1902, in Colorado. They were the parents of two children, Adeline Nellie and William Amos. Both children were dead by 1933.

"Colonel Pius James Durbin, a resident of Vernon, Los Angeles County, is one of Southern California's most picturesque and interesting characters. He has become known as an extensive land owner, public spirited citizen, and community developer of the Vernon manufacturing district, and, at one time, gained distinction as the largest hog raiser in the United States. He was an expert and nationally known veterinarian and horse breeder. He was an intimate and life long friend of W.F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) and in his later life spent one month per year with the Wild West Show.

"Colonel Durbin was born in Estill County, Ky., April 25, 1866, son of William Barker Durbin, and grandson of Pius Durbin, both of whom were born on the same farm."

Mrs. Florence Durbin Cole, relation to Pius James Durbin not known, copied this record at the Oxford Library, October 3, 1945. At that time, Mr. Durbin had died but Mrs. Durbin was still living at 5961 Rita, Huntington Park.

One of Col. Durbin's grandmothers lived to the age of 103. She died in King City, Missouri, and was buried at Cameron, Missouri.

I have read several histories of early Kentucky, and have never found the names of Hayden Durbin and William Barker. If they were the founders of Covington, Kentucky, and owned the entire County of Estill, it seems they would have been mentioned. I have my doubts also about Hayden Durbin and William Barker coming to America in 1712, although it is entirely possible that some of the Durbins were coming here that late. Welsh, in his history of the Durbin family, never mentioned Hayden Durbin, but he was concerned with the Durbin family of Maryland and the descendants who came to Kentucky in the 1780's. Although I did not mention it in the preceding sketch, Hayden D. Durbin is supposed to be the father of John Frank. The sketch copied in the Oxford Library mentioned only Frank Durbin. James R. Virden said he thought Pius Durbin's father was John, so I combined the two names making John Frank.

Ancestry of the Durbin Family of Kentucky

Samuel Durbin, parentage unknown, was married to Ann, daughter of William Logsdon and Honor O'Flynn, at Saint Thomas Church at Owings Mills, Maryland, July 4, 1723.

This marriage is also recorded at St. Paul Catholic Church in Baltimore, Maryland.

Samuel Durbin is the patriarch of most, if not all, of the Durbins of Kentucky, and especially those Durbins who have lived in Edmonson, Grayson, Hardin, Breckinridge and Meade Counties.

Samuel's will, dated September 19, 1752, named none of his children. It is assumed he died soon after the September date. Ann's will, dated July 8, 1770, was probated in Frederick County, Maryland, and named all of her children:

Sarah, born September 19, 1724.

William, born January 4, 1726.

Samuel, born January 29, 1727.

Ann, born circa 1730.

Thomas, born July 13, 1732.

John, born circa 1734.

Margaret, born July 11, 1736.

Nicholas, born circa 1738.

Mary, born circa 1740.

Christopher, born July 13, 1741.

Edward, born circa 1743.

Benjamin, born March 30, 1748.

Honor, born circa 1750.

Of these thirteen children, at least four were pioneer settlers of Kentucky. John came in between 1775 and 1780; Thomas, Christopher and Edward came in circa 1788.

Birth dates for the children were supplied by James R. Virden of Versailles, Ohio, and R. Ross Durbin of St. Louis, Missouri.

John, son of Samuel Durbin and Ann Logsdon, was married to Ann, daughter of Thomas Logsdon and _____, in Maryland, circa 1762.

John Durbin, according to James Virden of Versailles, Ohio, was the first Durbin in Kentucky, arriving with Daniel Boone in 1775, and was one of the axmen who blazed the Wilderness Trail.

James Virden has been researching the Durbin and Logsdon families for over twenty-five years. He has given me a great deal of good information on the early families, and most of it has checked out when I tried to verify it. The information on John Durbin, however, does not check out. In the Filson Club in Louisville, I found a book on the Hayes family which contains a list of the men with Boone in 1775. William Hayes and William Bush (Captain Billy Bush) are mentioned, but John Durbin is not. This list was compiled by a researcher for the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.).

According to James Virden, John and Ann had a daughter, Mary, in Pennsylvania in 1775 and, according to the census of Richland County, Illinois in 1850, another daughter in Kentucky in 1780. This second daughter was Nancy, or Annie, and she was my great-great-grandmother. She was married to Valentine Simons, in Barren County, February 8, 1803. John Durbin, then, came to Kentucky between 1775 and 1780, and settled in an area near to Harrodsburg or Boonesboro. He was killed in Harrodsburg in 1797, according to James Virden.

Ann and her son, Austin (or Agustin) were on the tax list of Madison County in 1797 and 1799. Since a part of the family was already living in Barren County, Ann and Austin moved there in 1800, Ann dying the same year. Austin Durbin was on the tax list of Barren County in 1800.

We probably will never know the children of John Durbin and Ann Logsdon, but surely the following named is a part of their family. Information comes from James Virden, R. Ross Durbin of St. Louis, Missouri, William Jesse Durbin's books and other sources, including my own research.

1. John, known as Stumpy John because he was so short and had frostbitten feet, was married to Elizabeth, daughter of George Oller and Prudence Logsdon, in Madison County, April 19, 1792.

Stumpy John moved to Hardin County, in the area of present Hart County, as early as 1802. He lived on a road between Cub Run and Houchin's Ferry. In the Court Order books of Hardin County is this notation, "ordered that the road be widened to thirty feet wide from Roundstone Creek to John Durbin's on Dog Creek". This road had first been made in 1798 "wide enough for a man and a horse".

Circa 1812, John and family moved to the area of Cape Girardeau, Louisiana (now Missouri), but because of earthquakes and unhealthy conditions moved back to Grayson County about 1814. The area to which John moved back was in present Edmonson County, and probably in the Sunfish region. It is believed that Elizabeth died circa 1826/1827, and in 1828 John left Kentucky for Illinois.

According to the History of Illinois, John migrated to Illinois in 1828, taking his sons John Z., Josephus and Leonard. He settled on Bear Creek and died there in 1832. Bear Creek became a Durbin settlement in Illinois.

Children of Stumpy John Durbin and Elizabeth Oller

- A. Patience, was married to Solomon D. Meeds, son of William.
- B. Simon, died as a child.
- C. Nancy, died as a child.
- D. Jacob, died at age five.
- E. Thomas, was married to Susan, thought to be the daughter of Isaac Johnson and Mary (Polly) Simons (probably Isaac's sister). This marriage was in Kentucky circa 1815. Thomas followed his father to Illinois.
- F. Lucy, died as a child.
- G. John Z., was the first person to marry in Christian County, Illinois. He was a fine hunter and a good farmer, according to the History of Christian County. He was married first to Levina Day, second to Nancy, daughter of Peter Logsdon and Honor Simons. In 1850 he was living in Dubuque, Iowa, and in his household there was also Christopher K. Durbin, Louis Simons and some others from the Clark County, Missouri area. (See 1850 census in John Simons, Jr. Family Section.)
- H. Mary, died as a child.
- I. Mathew, was married to Elizabeth, daughter of Peter Logsdon and Honor Simons.
- J. Elizabeth, was married to Phillip E., son of Joseph Durbin and Elizabeth Logsdon.

- K. Edwin G., was married to Honor, daughter of Isaac Johnson and Polly Simons.
- L. Prudence died as a child.
- M. George, no information.
- N. Josephus, was married to Elizabeth, daughter of Squire Richard Simpson, July 10, 1839, in Christian County, Illinois. Josephus was married second to Mrs. Margaret Logsdon Burtle, a widow, November 20, 1870, and third to Mrs. Sarah Hinkle Painter, a widow, no date.
- O. Leonard, was married to Mary Catherine, daughter of James M. Logsdon, May 16, 1840.

On the census of Wright County, Missouri, 1870:

Leonard Durbin	50, born in Ky.
Mary	44, born in Ky.
Nancy	15, born in Ill.
Phillip	12, born in Ill.
Leonard	9, born in Ill.
Elizabeth	5, born in Ill.
Michael	1, born in Ill.

Jesse Durbin knew and talked to Leonard, and Leonard related to Jesse how Stumpy John and wife had lost two children, Prudence and Lucy, while at Cape Girardeau, within an hour of each other.

The first real settlement of Bear Creek, in Illinois, started in 1829. Esquire Joseph P. Durbin, Nathaniel Painter, and Old Grandfather Durbin migrated on one ox wagon and oxen. Old Grandfather Durbin is believed to be Joseph Durbin, Sr., Joseph P.'s father.

- 2. Honor, daughter of John Durbin and Ann Logsdon, was married to Joshua Brown.

Joshua Brown had been in the same Revolutionary War Company as Edward Logsdon and John Simons. All are believed to have migrated to Kentucky. Joshua and Honor lived in Hardin County, and may or may not have gone to Illinois.

3. Susan, daughter of John Durbin and Ann Logsdon, was married to Joseph Logsdon, parentage unknown.
4. Thomas, son of John Durbin and Ann Logsdon, is believed to have never married. It is thought he migrated to Illinois in 1832/1833. In September, 1835, Phillip E. Durbin was allowed \$7.50 by the State of Illinois for keeping Thomas Durbin, a pauper. Phillip E. Durbin was married to a niece of Thomas. Phillip E. was allowed \$40.00 for keeping Thomas Durbin in 1835, and since this was the last year a payment was recorded, Thomas is believed to have died in 1835.
5. Druscilla, daughter of John Durbin and Ann Logsdon, was married to a John Reed, in Barren County, circa 1805. They moved to Illinois in 1826.
6. Mary, daughter of John Durbin and Ann Logsdon, born in Pennsylvania circa 1775, is believed to have married a William Turpin and lived in Meade and Breckinridge Counties.
7. Ann, daughter of John Durbin and Ann Logsdon, born in Kentucky circa 1780, was married to Pheltius Valentine Simons, in Barren County, February 8, 1803.

Valentine and Annie are my great-great-grandparents.

8. Austin, or Augustin, son of John Durbin and Ann Logsdon, was on the tax list of Barren County, with his brother Thomas, in 1800, 1801, 1802, 1803 and 1805. It is known that they were taking saltpeter from the Mammoth Cave for gunpowder in those years. Saltpeter was selling for about 17¢ per pound then, but rose to \$1.00 per pound during the War of 1812. The United States could have lost the War had it not been for the saltpeter from Mammoth Cave.

Austin moved to Hardin County in 1806 and there was married to Sarah Richardson, parentage unknown, March 12, 1807.

On the census of Hardin County, 1810:

Austin Durbin

1 male under ten, 1 male under 45,

1 female under 26

Soon after 1810, Austin and family left Hardin County and are believed to have migrated to Mississippi or Louisiana.

According to a book published by the Edmonson County Historical Society in 1986, Austin Durbin and Sarah were members of the Green River Baptist Church which was formed in 1803 at Amos Ferry on Green River in Woodsonville.

In regards to Thomas and Edward, sons of Samuel Durbin and Ann Logsdon, I have done no research on their families. Christopher, the fourth son of Samuel Durbin and Ann Logsdon, is another matter, for he came to Kentucky and it was through him that the Durbin lines came who settled in Madison, Hardin, Hart, Barren, Breckinridge, Meade and, finally, Edmonson Counties.

Christopher Durbin Elder, son of Samuel Durbin and Ann Logsdon, with a family almost grown, came through North Carolina and the Cumberland Gap, and settled in an area on the Kentucky River between Lexington and Richmond in 1788/1789. Christopher was married, but no one has found a record of marriage, and no one knows his wife's name. It is said he was the father of six sons and six daughters, but no one can name the daughters, and there is some discussion about the sons.

A lot of information about the family of Christopher comes from William Jesse Durbin, 1879 - 1974, of Christian County, Illinois. Jesse was never married and spent his lifetime learning about the Durbins and related families. Since he was born in 1879 he knew many of the children of Illinois pioneers, and he talked to everyone and wrote down everything he was told. After his death in 1974, his material was gathered by relatives and compiled into two books. Since Jesse did not get his information from courthouses and the census tracts, some of his information was wrong. Still, his books have given me many good leads, and I have known where to look for much of the information in this book.

According to Jesse Durbin, the six sons of Christopher Durbin Elder are:

- A. Edward Durbin, Sr., born circa 1760 in Maryland, was married to an Elizabeth Porter in 1780.
- B. Thomas Durbin, Sr., was never married. He was living in Madison County as late as 1827, and seems to have gone to Edmonson County after that. It is thought he later went to Illinois, where he died.

C. Phillip S. Durbin, Sr., born July 12, 1781, was married to Lucy, daughter of Edward Logsdon and Polly Brown, in Madison County, Kentucky, August 2, 1800.

Phillip lived in Madison County until 1827, and in that year migrated to Sangamon County, Illinois. In 1829 he moved to Pulaski County, Missouri, and in 1836 moved to Gasconade County, Missouri, where he died. I have no information on his family.

There were three Durbins found on the census of Gasconade County, Missouri, in 1860, "Jakes Paririe" (Prairie):

Phillip S. Durbin	78, born in Maryland
John Durbin	30, born in Ill.
Isabella	30, born in Mo. (Daughter of Joseph Crider)
John A.	7, born in Mo.
Sarah E.	5
Lucy	4
Isabella	2
Frederick	7/12
Christopher Durbin	29, born in Ill.
Elizabeth	29, born in Mo.
Barbara	6
Tobias	1

D. Joseph Durbin, Sr., born circa 1771, was married to Elizabeth, daughter of Edward Logsdon and Polly Brown, November 7, 1789. Joseph was on the tax list of Edmonson County in 1825 and 1826, and was in Sangamon County, Illinois in 1829. Joseph is believed to have died in 1836.

Children of Joseph Durbin, Sr. and Elizabeth Logsdon

1. John M. born circa 1790, was married to Honor, daughter of Joshua Brown on January 29, 1810. John M. and Honor lived in Hardin and Meade Counties.
2. Edward, was married first to a Sattley, second to a Susan Day.

3. Christopher K., born circa 1795, was married to Rachel Willis, in Madison County, August 2, 1814. Christopher K. was in the Sunfish area in 1825, and migrated to Illinois with the others in 1829. He was in Dubuque, Iowa in 1950, living in the household of John Z. Durbin, with one daughter, Nancy, 13.
4. William, born circa 1795, was married first to Elizabeth, daughter of John Logsdon, September 20, 1817. Married second to Druscilla, daughter of Valentine Simons and Anney Durbin, in Montgomery County, Illinois, July 9, 1834. William died in Christian County, Illinois circa 1844.
5. Mary, born circa 1797, was married to Christopher N., son of John J. Durbin and Patience Logsdon, in Madison County, January 15, 1813. Mary and Christopher were first cousins. They migrated to Sunfish with the rest of John J. Durbin's family.
6. Nancy A., born circa 1798, was married to Nathaniel, son of John Painter and Patience Oller, circa 1815. Nancy died before 1828 in Kentucky.
7. Joseph P., known as Squire Joseph, born September 1, 1800, died in Illinois November 8, 1875, was married to Nancy, daughter of William Logsdon and Mary Bradley, circa 1820. (Sally Prior of Washington State says that Nancy, daughter of William Logsdon, was married to a Samuel Brady in Hardin County, November 4, 1828.)

Joseph P. Durbin was a Justice of the Peace in Christian County, Illinois, and performed many of the marriages for couples who migrated from Kentucky to Illinois. Together with Nathaniel Painter (a brother-in-law) and "Old Grandfather Dubrin" (thought to be Joseph Senior), Joseph P. migrated to Illinois in 1829.
8. Margaret, born circa 1802, was married to James M., son of William Logsdon, in Hardin County, circa 1819.
9. Phillip E., born circa 1804/1805, was married to Elizabeth, daughter of Stumpy John Durbin and Elizabeth Oller, no date. Phillip was a well digger in Christian County, Illinois.
10. Sylvester J., born circa 1806, was married to Nancy, daughter of John Painter and Patience Oller after 1828. Nancy was still listed as a Painter in John's will, which was written in 1828.

11. James, born circa 1804/1805, was married first to Rachel, daughter of Solomon Meeds, April 13, 1837, in Montgomery County, Illinois. Married second to Elizabeth Ogden, a widow, November 23, 1854, in Sangamon County, Illinois.
12. Elizabeth, born circa 1810, was married to Elijah, son of Peter Logsdon and Honor Simons, July 24, 1834, in Montgomery County, Illinois.

E. John J. Durbin*.

F. Christopher Durbin, Jr.*

On the census of Hart County, 1850:

George W. Jones	56	
Ruthey	53	
Lucinda	32	
Ruthey R.	20	
Marion F.	18	
Ruthey Fowler	10)
Lucinda Fowler	7) grandchildren
Mary Durbin	94,	born in Penn. 1756

We don't know the connection between the Jones, Fowler and Durbin families, but Mary, born circa 1756, must be connected in some way with the Durbins of Madison County.

Most people agree that Christopher Durbin Elder died in Madison County in 1825. The following, which was found in Richmond, bears out the date:

* These lines will be carried fully in the following pages. Both these sons of Christopher Durbin Elder, pioneer settler of Madison County, lived and died in Sunfish. Almost every Durbin who now lives or has lived in Sunfish since 1830 is a descendant of John J. Durbin.

Agreeable to an order of the Worshipful Court of Madison County, made at their present January term, 1826, appointing the undersigned to inventory and appraise the personal estate of Christopher Durbin, deceased, after first being sworn, proceeded to do the same, and returned the following list of notes due said deceased, being all the estate belonging to said deceased estate, as we are informed by the advisors.

One note unto Samuel Durbin and Joshua Brown for two pounds, date 17th July 1812, and one due 25th December 1815 with credit of \$15.00 paid 10th July 1824.

One note on the same persons for two pounds date 17th July 1812 and due 25th December 1816, one other note on the same persons for ten pounds date 17th July 1812 and due 25th December 1817, one other note on the same persons for ten pounds of the same date, due 25th December 1818, one other note on same persons for ten pounds of same date due 25th December 1821. One other note same persons for \$21.50 of same date due 25th December 1822. All which notes are left in the hands of the administrators of the said deceased.

Given under our hand this 2nd day of January, 1826.

E.L. Shackleford
W.C. Goodlow
Henry B. Hawkins

Madison County Sct.

At a County Court held for Madison County on Monday the 2nd day of January 1826, this inventory and appraisal of the estate of Christopher Durbin, deceased, was returned and ordered to be recorded and the same has been done accordingly. Attested: David Irvin