

JOHN FARIS
1770 – 1851

John Faris was the eldest son of James and Catherine (Bell) Faris born 10 Jan 1770 in Pennsylvania or West Virginia. His birth is not recorded in any public records that can be found although it is recorded in a family Bibleⁱ (owned by his daughter Sarah). His daughter Mary's death certificate in 1795 Virginia states she was born in "Harson," (Harrison County) and is the earliest placement of John's family in public records according to Ms. Lorance. John was called 'Do-Do' by his family.ⁱⁱ

John's father was killed by Indians somewhere near or along the Ohio River (1778-1779) near Fort Laurens in eastern Ohio. John, his mother and brothers (Humphrey and James) were living in Harrison County, WV at the time. His mother then returned to Fayette county, PA and John was 'given' to an uncle, Joseph Bell, to raise, living in Pennsylvania.

His mother remarried David Shelby and they had three children (Rees, Eli and Mary Shelby). In 1795, Catherine and her husband David took their three children and her youngest son (James) by her first husband and moved to New Madrid (which is now Missouri). Catherine died there in 1802 and John's half-brother Rees Shelby died in 1808. Rees had never married but had purchased land and at his death, his half-brothers inherited the land in the New Madrid area (located in the Louisiana Purchase which is the state of Missouri now).

11 Dec 1788 John married Jane Watson (b. 4 Oct 1770) and this was recorded in the family Bible. John and Jane had thirteen children and all lived to have families during their parent's lifetimes; they had approximately 96 grand-children and 96 great-grandchildren). John and Jane raised several of their orphaned grand-children. They had as many as five grand-children at one time, of two different families, the parents of three of them dying within a short time of each other of fever. John died 2 Jan 1851 at the age of 81 and Jane died 25 Apr 1850ⁱⁱⁱ, both in Highland County, OH and both buried in the "Faris Cemetery" (Barker Cemetery), in Pricetown, Highland County, OH.^{iv}

Between 1795 and 1797, John supposedly moved his family to Brooke County, VA where his daughter Sarah was born in 1797 according to her death certificate. John purchased property on the border of the Ohio River in Virginia from Jacob Cochran, who's son, Jacob, Jr. later married John's daughter, Mary. The Harrisonville County, VA Titheables List continued to include John through 1800 and his brother Humphrey's name first appears on the Titheables list in 1799. In January of 1801 the Court Minute Book of Harrison County ordered John 'Ferris' to be surveyor of a "Highway" so it's questionable when he moved.

According to "Memorial Sketches" in the James Faris book, a family history was written by Eliza Jane (Pulse) Scott who was married to John's grandson, Daniel Scott. *"There are several errors which are due, no doubt, to time and re-telling, but research confirms the majority of the account."* One such part was while John was a young man in Virginia, he made his first flat-boat, which he placed his produce raised on his farm

and propelled it with poles to Pittsburgh, PA. John made several flat-boats later as there were no steamboats at that time.

“On one of these boats,.....he and his wife and their five daughters, with their household goods, came down the Ohio River to the mouth of Brush Creek, where he was met by his sons with their wagons, from the farm near New Market [Ohio], which he had previously selected and purchased, and had sent his grown sons to, with their wagons and teams.” The majority of John’s family joined him and his sons, Elijah and Beniah in Highland County in about 1815, and a year later John purchased additional acreage making a total of 1,000 acres he owned in Highland County.

“When quite young, and when tools were very scarce, with the aid of his pocket knife and a butcher knife, he (John) made himself a turning lathe, with which he could make numerous things, for both out-of-doors and in. He was a good carpenter, could build houses, make boats, (as has been said) and wagons; and could make all kinds of furniture..... He also made shoes, gunstocks, fiddles and many other things too numerous to mention.”

“He (grandson Daniel Scott) also remembers his making a strong six-horse wagon after he was quite an aged man. In those days,there were no railroads nor turnpikes – nothing but miserably poor mud roads, with occasional corduroy roads made by cutting down saplings along the road and laying them closely together upon it, by which the teams and heavily-loaded wagons would be prevented from sinking so deeply in the mud. As he was an extensive and prosperous farmer, he had a great deal of grain and pork and other produce to be hauled to Cincinnati, and other markets, so when he could no longer use his flatboats, he went to making his strong four-horse and six-horse wagons.....he was considered a master farmer by his acquaintances.....

“He was also a very public-spirited man, always giving liberally of both his time and means to aid in public improvements, for the betterment of roads, school houses and churches. He was a Justice of the Peace for a number of years, and had the respect of all his acquaintances for his upright dealings with all.

“He and his wife were converted in early life and were both members of the Dunkard Church for some years, but after hearing the word expounded by the followers of Alexander Campbell they attached themselves to the Christian Church (in Pricetown) and lived worthy and consistent members of it to the day of their death.

“When grandfather came to Ohio, the State was mostly covered with dense forests, but he made his way through them and selected his own farm and bought large farms for his children, located in different parts of Highland County, each of which after having been cleared and cultivated was considered among the best in the neighborhood in which they were located, proving his sound judgment in the selection of them, when it was certainly a difficult task, nearly all of it being unimproved. He and his sons soon cleared a considerable space off their farm, and built a good, large and commodious housewhich is still standing, and is now owned by one Mr. Vance (1993).

“But wild game was very plentiful. There were even a good many bears, and wolves, and deer, and an occasional panther, and wild cat, was found in the dense woods by which they were surrounded.The oldest sons and sons-in-law have shot deer and

bear on those hills and in those ravines through the now extremely tame looking country around New Market. Small game was so abundant that they could catch quail in traps by the dozens, any night that they would set them. And wild turkeys, ducks, geese, rabbits and squirrels were almost as numerous.....

“It is still a beautiful and very productive farm – not worn-out, as so many good farms have been – for it is said that grand-father was one of the very best of farmers, and knew just how to manage to obtain the largest crops, and at the same time improve his land, instead of running it down until it would become almost utterly worthless, as less intelligent farmers too often do. It is not to be wondered at that every son they raised chose for themselves the pleasant and lucrative occupation of agriculture.”

The 1830 and 1840 census for John show him living in New Market Township, Highland County, OH. The 1850 census lists John living in District #74, New Market township, Highland County, OH at the age of 80 years, occupation of farmer with the value of his real estate at \$5,000 and shows he was born in Pennsylvania. It also lists Humphrey Faris, age 11 and Eliz Faris, age 13, living with him – both are grandchildren.^v

Children of John and Jane:^{vi}

Elijah Faris, 1789-1848, married Mary Miles – 6 Children - settled in Salem Twp @1813

Catherine Faris, 1790-1844, married Samuel Swineheart – 7 Children - settled south of Pricetown – 1815 - later moved to Indiana

Beniah Faris, 1793-1843, married Elizabeth Scott – 8 Children - settled near Pricetown @1820

Mary Faris, 1795-1869, married Jacob Cochran – 8 Children - settled near New Market @1811

Sarah Faris, 1797-1876, married Abraham Wilkin – 8 Children – settled at Sonner’s Mill in Whiteoak Township

Rachel Faris, 1798-1844, married Daniel Scott – 3 Children – Settled in Salem Twp @1824

James W. Faris, 1800-1830, married Mary Hoop – 3 Children – Settled in Hamer Twp @1822

John Bell Faris, 1802-1837, married Catherine Welty – 8 Children – Settled in Salem Twp @1823

Jesse Faris, 1803-1847, married Nancy Davidson, 11 Children – Settled in Pricetown @1830

Jane Faris, 1805-1886, married Samuel Gibler – 11 Children – Settled in Liberty Twp in 1830

Eli Shelby Faris, 1807-1891, married Lucilla Pulliam – 11 Children – settled in New Market Twp in 1815 and in 1852 moved to Illinois

Andrew Faris, 1809-1850, married Susan Hoop – 8 Children – Settled in Pricetown in 1830

Uriah Thompson Faris, 1811-1880, married Eliza Couch – 7 Children – Settled in Pricetown in 1850

John Faris is my 4X great Uncle on my maternal side; his brother James is my 4X great Grandfather who settled in Missouri.

SideNote: On the 1870 census for Nevin, Salem Twp, Highland County, OH, Uriah Thompson Faris was a neighbor to John Worth Gossett and John Henry Gossett. These two are second cousins, twice removed to my father.

Submitted by Sylvia Roberts Bradfield, Columbia, Missouri. Email: fidpop@yahoo.com
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ⁱ *“James Faris and Catherine (Bell) Faris” Descendants and Family History, 1770-1993*, compiled by Wilma Faris Lorange, 1993, Minneapolis, MN. Library of Congress #93-206840

ⁱⁱ *The County of Highland: A History of Highland County, Ohio*, A.E. Hough, J.W. Klise, Northwestern Historical Association, 1902, Hillsboro (Ohio).

ⁱⁱⁱ Mortality Schedule, District 74, New Market Township, Highland County, OH. Shows place of birth as Virginia and dying of old age. Ancestry.com

^{iv} Find A Grave, www.findagrave.com

^v Ancestry.com

^{vi} *The County of Highland: A History of Highland County, Ohio*, A.E. Hough, J.W. Klise, Northwestern Historical Association, 1902, Hillsboro (Ohio).