

# Mumma History

by Aaron Kleplinger Mumma

December 24, 1892

Sing, oh! Muse divine the lay of that race, who were transplanted from the banks of the Rhine into Colonial soil of America.

Count to us the sorrows and difficulties, the peace and prosperity of that race, which now dots the land like the stars of heaven.

Of her, who left the fair German soil to cause the American wilderness to bloom and blossom with her many fruit farms.

Shrouded in mystery is the remote past of this race, but two theories are extant, one that long ago some where in the early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century three Mumma brothers came across from Germany near the boundary of France, and the name is thought to be French instead of German. They settled probably near Baltimore.

One brother returned to Germany and these are thought to be the progenitors of the Mumma race. – This is known as the “Moomaw “ theory. The other “Mumma” theory is that about 1675 Mumma’s emigrated across from Germany and we are about the 7<sup>th</sup> generation. One of these, probably our great, great, great, great, grandmother died on the journey across the ocean.

They settled in Washington Co., Maryland and from them have sprung the numerous race.

The first Mumma of which I have any certain knowledge of is Geo. Mumma, who was born 1721 in West Hempfield Township, Lancaster County, PA. He died in 1786 leaving a family of ten children, two of whose names were Henry and Jacob.

Henry to all probability was our great grandfather, and Jacob was probably the one who was known as “Old Jacob Mumma”, who called himself “Mummy” to which some of his rougher relatives swore he looked like a “Mummy.”

In our great grandfather’s family there were 4 boys and 2 girls, known as Mrs. Barbara Warble, Henry, Joseph, Maria who married Pefley, John and grandfather Jacob.

Of these children, Mrs. Barbara Warble lived in Sharpsburg from whom Kershners of Springfield Ohio, Gordons of Auburn, Ind. and many more sprang.

John was killed near Wheeling Va. by a tree falling on him while cutting wood.

Henry came to Dayton in 1828.

Joseph’s career is unknown.

Jacob the youngest, our grandfather was but a small boy when his father died, but was put out to learn the trade of weaver, and he did the work of what is known as making home spun cloth.

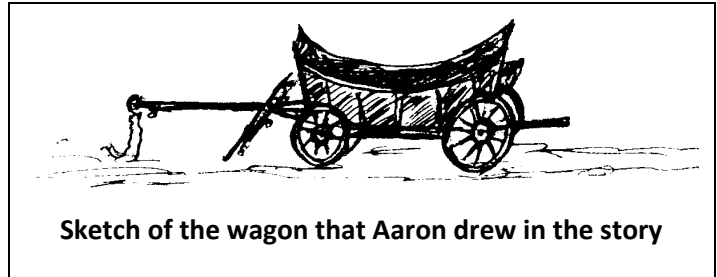
He worked in Sharpsburg, Md. where he was born and where he married Miss Pollie Blessing. He followed his trade here together with the boarding of school teachers, who on Saturdays would try to teach Aunt Mary Ann Bowman to dance, then a girl between 7 and 10 years old.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> day of October, 1827 grandfather together with several other families packed up and in several of the old half moon pioneer wagons started for Dayton, Ohio.

At Wheeling Virginia one family turned back, as they were scared out by the wilds of the then far west.

Crossing the Ohio River they were almost drowned, as the water was so high that it swept wagon and team down the river and nearly upset them.

When safely over, uncle John Mumma, then a lad of 5 or 6 years, would call back to Simon Snyder and say, "Snyder are your drowned?"



At one point along the way where the children were playing at a culvert, they found about a half bushel of counterfeit money. This the men took to the next town, where a show was taking place, they used the money for admittance fee.

At one tavern where they stopped, the inn keeper set the skillet out for the dogs to lick clean, and no water saw the skillet until after the meat had been fried in it the next morning.

Stopping over night where a farmer had just butchered a few hogs, grand father bargained for a half hog to use on the journey, but when casting about in the morning and spying the fresh pork had been hung beneath the hen roost in the chicken house, he concluded he did not want any very badly and left early before daylight.

After traveling in Ohio for a few days, they stopped one night and several free Negroes came to buy grandfather's colored Topsy slave. When he asked her if she would go, she said "No sah, I will stick to Massa, as long as there is a button on his coat."

That night while the men slept in the wagons and the women in the house, the darkies of the community came around like wolves, looked in at the windows, an tried to get the colored girl out. It is needless to say the women were nearly scared to death and lay awake all night longing for the morning.

Morning came but the colored wolves had gone as they loved darkness rather than light.

The wagon train reached Springfield the 28<sup>th</sup> of October having been on the road just four weeks.

Here Jacob Kershner and wife, together with a couple other families stopped. Grand father came on to Dayton.

Just after leaving Springfield they came to a farm house where the landlady had just churned, needing butter they asked what she wanted for several pounds. She said she would not like to take less than 6 cents per pound.

Traveling on farther they came near Mad River where their dogs started up a deer which jumped into the river to swim across, when one of the men shot it and brought it along to Dayton, and give it to Mr. Wolf, probably , big John Wolf's father.

Dayton was then only a village and around the courthouse was a swamp, and the frogs croaked in the evenings, which constituted the only open air concert Dayton possessed at that time.

Grand father rented a two story brick house and placed the loom up stairs and stored many things in the attic. As the windows were out the pigeons came in & roosted all over his goods, when from time to time grandfather & Mr. Snyder would go up there and slaughter pigeons.

From November till the next spring he paid \$60 rent for nearly 5 months.

That same spring the river became very high and all the lower parts of the town were flooded and people boated over what are now the business blocks & streets of Dayton.

The bridge was washed away, great trees came down and battered it off the foundation.

A toll of one cent was charged for crossing the old wooden bridge and because grandfather had so many to go and went so often, he paid his toll by the year.

Barbara Crouse used to pass to and fro, the tollman would call out, "What is the name?" and she would say, "Mumma" and go on.

Sometime during the winter of '27 or '28 grandfather bought our old homestead, 53 acres of Jess Wamplers uncle and paid \$300.00 for it. There was a blacksmith shop on it, across from what used to be Seybolds tenet house in the cherry orchard. This was operated by a man named Cook.

A little one roomed log house stood near the ditch at the end of the grape patch, into this grandfather moved sometime in March of 1828. He built a small out house for the loom and here he and Mr. Snyder carried on their trade in home spun. In this "old log house", father and aunt Catharine Ullerich were born. They lived here about five years then bought what is now the Platt farm and moved there.

This little log house was rented several times. Mr. John Puterbaugh and aunt Mary Ann lived there for a number of years after their marriage, using the old weave shop for his blacksmith shop.

By and by, father had grown to be a man in his latter teens and with saddle and spur he roamed the country in search of a fair damsel.

He found one who on the John Thompsons farm had spent her youth frisking with the lambs of the rolling scenery an who in later life was living where uncle Henry Klepinger now lives. She some forty years ago accepted this sturdy youth and the two went to house keeping in Dayton-view near William St.

They lived there in a large frame house.

Here Geo. F. Was born. Sometime after this event, they moved to our old homestead into the old log house. Here they lived until the new house was built some 10 or 12 years later.

One night some incendiary applied the torch and the once serviceable cabin lay in ashes. Not content with that, fire was carried to some lumber stacked in a corner on the south porch of the new building, but one of the workman with a bucket of water outened the flames. So the criminal could not have gotten far away.

At another time the chimney took fire and threatened the house, about half the goods were carried out of the house & placed under the "old pippin tree," west of the wood house which has long since gone back to mother earth.

In this new house from time to time, the boys kept coming until they counted 7, 8, 9 and 10 and a sister for each of them.

This is history in brief and patched to tie over the dark and obscure places.

From now on you know yourselves and it is needless that the muse should tell, of how they grew, how well, how strong, what tricks, of wet shirts, of brawls, of mad dog sports they played, or "cold soup", of wine and beans, of cheese & molasses well mixed, and on the shoploft to eat and hide-away the tin cup & spoon - of darkey stoning, of Indian graves to unearth, of fireworks, of guns & pistols destruction to snowbirds to make, of skates and fishing rods, of water wheels & ships & dams to build, of winter sports of every sort, and summer not lacking in her share, these and another volume unwritten of the nights spent in the "old vinegar cellar". Last but not least cupid has made a scatterment of them all to parts before unknown, he carries them for a bride.

So they are gone, but we are left, we "four" who greet you here tonight. Bachelors as you know, with no where to go.

But to freeze in the icy world.

Althwarted and vexed;

Yet always perplexed

Whether longer to live so.

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#### **Transcribers notes and background comments.**

This story was transcribed by Douglas Mumma on 8 January 1997 from the original the story written by Aaron Klepinger Mumma over 105 years ago. Doug borrowed this document from the attic of Aaron's daughter, Miriam Zigler who lives in Harlan, Indiana. Since Aaron's grandfather died in 1871, most of the story about the trip from Maryland to Dayton had been passed down to him as stories told to him by his father and uncles. He also learn a lot about the families migration to Ohio when he stay with the Kershner family while he attended Wittenberg College in Springfield, Ohio, while studying for the ministry. As far as the transcriber can determine, the story appears to be quite accurate in most details. It accurately describes this family's journey from Lancaster, PA, to Sharpsburg, Maryland and then to Dayton, Ohio.

As background, Aaron Klepinger Mumma was the 6<sup>th</sup> son of Jacob Hiram Welty Mumma. He had 9 brothers and 1 sister. It is instructive to understand the setting surrounding the writing of this letter. By 1892, Aaron's mother had died (1883) and his father had married (1885) a gypsy woman by the name of Ida Cripen. It is claimed that she was a spiritualist. It was not a happy time and none of the boys liked the new mother-in-law and within one year, Jacob Hiram Welty Mumma was granted a divorce from Ida on the grounds of her "*living*

