

ARCHIVE RECORD

ARCHIBALD ISON.

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The Great-grandfather of Robert Lee Ison and Isaac Ison was our emigrant ancestor from Virginia to north-eastern Kentucky. "In May, 1779 the Virginia Assembly enacted a law opening Kentucky to general settlement by survey, entry and residence the same year the Grand Assembly passed an act for making and opening a road over the Cumberland Mountains into Kentucky.

This road was opened December 1, 1781, it was through the Clinch settlement by the Cumberland Gap, this was the Wilderness Road over which an unexampled trade of emigrants poured for more than ten years." As early as 1796 some of our Ison kinfolk came from Montgomery County, Virginia to the Cumberland Mountains on a Hunting trip and by 1804 George Gideon Ison moved his family to what is now Letcher County.

Archibald Ison was born 1780 in Virginia (from 1850 census of Lawrence County, Kentucky, age 70 years). His home was Stoney Creek, now Scott County. At the time of his birth it would have been Washington County, Virginia. It is about one (1) mile from Fort Blackmore on the Clinch River near Castlewood. I visited Stoney Creek in 1956 - all the homes are gone but not the large, smooth stones from the creek, they will remain forever and it was rightly named for there were thousands of these stones completely lined both sides and the bottom of the little clear stream as it trickled its' way on and on as rivers flow on forever.. It was a pretty place, the ground was covered with grass and large green trees stood every where and a lonely one-room Schoolhouse, weather beaten and deserted was a few feet from the banks of Stoney Creek. I sat on the stump of a large Maple tree and reminised, stories of those long-ago Pioneers raced through my mind.

I brought from the creek one (1) large, smooth stone and from the clump of trees a piece of hard wood, they are souvenirs in my Museum.

Archibald Ison was the son of John Ison and Lucy or Charles Ison and Jane - strange that after all these years of research that we cannot say for sure but, Southern Records cannot be found, due to pioneer conditions, poor schools and the Civil War when so many Courthouses were burned and the records went up in smoke taking away the names and dates we need so badly today.

Family Tradition give his parents as John Ison, Jr and Lucy----son of John Ison, Sr. and Martha Elizabeth Huff, who was the son of Gideon Ison of Shropshire, England.

The Ison family both in Letcher and Lawrence Counties have the same tradition but, the recent finding of a Will in Scott County, Virginia seems to say that Archibalds parents were Charles and Jane---I am putting a copy of Will in here also, papers of settlement of Jane's Property after both her and Charles were dead.

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Archibald Ison married Mary (Polly) Gilliam in Virginia about 1801. She was the daughter of Martin Gilliam, Sr. They had nine sons and one daughter, viz: Charles, William, Martin, Ira, Isaac, Byrdine, Doctor, Argualus, Isom and Elizabeth Ison. Their 7th son, Doctor was born February 24, 1818 and this was the year that he, Archibald and his two (2) older boys, Charles and William with his brother Charles, started for Kentucky. They took the Wilderness Road, going thru Cumberland Gap, coming into south-east Kentucky. Here he visited Ison kin who came to the state in 1804. The land was pretty well taken up there so Archibald and his party went to the head of the Kentucky River and drifted down to the north-east of the state to what was then Lawrence County. Then, here they cleared a little land, planted some corn and built a small log cabin. When the corn was ready they harvested it and returned to Virginia for their families. The next spring Archibald and some of their neighbors brought their all to Kentucky. Everyone walked except the Mothers and babies.

Doctor Ison always told how he rode in his Mother's lap and she was horseback, from Old Virginia over the Cumberland Mountains to Kentucky when he was one (1) year old, there were no roads then, only trails which was dangerous in many places, even for the pack animals. They brought apple trees, tied to their pack saddles and when the trees were planted in virgin soil, their growth was wonderful. Some grew to forty (40) feet and the last one blew down in the spring of 1935 being one-hundred sixteen (116) years old.

Five (5) settlers came to this part of the state in 1819 their claims were from three (3) to five (5) miles apart. They were: Archibald Ison his land and log cabin was at the forks of the Newcomb River. John Riddle settled on the left-hand fork of Newcomb. William Thompson took up his land on Ruan Creek. James Eldridge settled on right-hand fork of Newcomb River. James Fraley was below the forks of the Newcomb River.

The social gathering place was at the home of Archibald Ison each Saturday afternoon. The menfolk would meet and go hunting. Bear, deer, rabbit, squirrel, coon, opossum, groundhog and pheasants were plentiful and the streams were full of the finest fish-by evening the men would bring in their game. Then, Sunday morning all the families would come and what a day of Social events, all would enjoy together. The ladies doing the cooking and the men had their drinks of whisky and brandy---big dinner, music and dancing. Charley Gilliam and Henry Buckner were the best fiddlers in all the country around. Later, William Gilliam was the fiddler and his sister Judith was the best dancer.

The story is told of Archibald going hunting one day and for some reason he did not want his dog to go so, he tied him short and left him at home. Soon, he found and shot a large buck deer, it fell as if dead then jumped up and fiercely attack him. Archibald had no time or distance to fight the deer. So, for protection he took refuge behind a large tree, the deer immediately charged, knocking bark off the trunk then came the game of merry-go-round as he circled its' large trunk, followed at his heels was the angry deer. It was getting mighty dangerous and not at all funny when here came his faithful hunting dog, he hand chewed the rope into and now saved the life of his master. Archibald was forever grateful.

The first school was near his home, he gave the land and helped build the log Schoolhouse furnished with split log seats and puncheon-floor, large fireplace, completely across one end. The open water well was lined with beautiful cut stones and today (1958) that well still stands being all that is left of the Pioneer Schoolhouse. But, it reminds us that our ancestors were hungry for knowledge and did not want their children to grow up in ignorance but the country was too new to furnish teachers who could teach so the learning was meager. I think all of his children could read enough to get comfort from the Bible and that was about the only book they had for many years. Occasionally a back dated newspaper found its way into that far away hilly country and how eagerly its contents were devoured by every family for miles around. Later, the most famous textbooks were McGuffey's Readers, they were dearly loved by both teachers and pupils. The old Elementary Blue-backed Spelling book even came before McGuffey's.

Archibald had many large tracts of land in Morgan & Lawrence Counties, the first we find recorded on Land Grant Records in Oct. 26, 1822, then again on Sept. 16, 1827 and another one in 1835 this was signed by Gov. James T. Morehead, he took up 140 acres on Dec. 22, 1865 in Morgan County on this, Grant was placed the State Seal it was made of paper and fastened to the Grant with a red sealing wax. His last tract of land was taken up four (4) years before Elliott County was created from parts of Morgan, Lawrence & Carter Counties under the act as passed by the Legislature, April 1, 1869. As was previously stated, Archibald had nine (9) sons and all came with him to Kentucky. They married there and each one took up large tracts of land and built homes, raised big families so when Elliott County was formed the Ison family owned almost every foot of land in that county and some in the Old counties of Floyd, Morgan, Carter & Lawrence. Elliott County was named for John M. Elliott, he was then Judge of the Court of Appeals, and had also come from the Clinch River section in Scott County, Virginia.

Charles Ison - 1st son of Archibald & Mary Gilliam Ison born 1802, Scott County, Virginia. Married Lucinda (Lucy) daughter of Archibald Day, he took a Grant of Land in what is now Carter County, Kentucky, near Grayson where he built his home and they had eight (8) children--Henry, George, Joshua, Elizabeth, Lucinda, Ulsa, Nancy and Annie.

William Ison - 2nd son married Hettie Hamilton daughter of Edward Hamilton, his land was on Paint Creek in Morgan County, Kentucky. They had nine (9) children---Isaac, Archibald, Isom, Ira, Mary Ann, Hamilton, Elizabeth, Lucinda and William.

Martin Ison - 3rd son, married Nancy Sparks daughter of Robert Sparks. He had land and home on the right fork of the Newcomb River, three miles from the forks, in Elliott County. They had nine (9) children, namely--Charles, William, Joshua, Byrdine, Ruben, Martin, Sidney, Nancy and Grace.

Ira Ison - 4th son, married Zina Sparks daughter of Levi Sparks and Sally Lyons. Their land was on the left hand fork of Little Sandy River, just seven (7) miles from Sandy Hook, Elliott County. Their children were ten (10) in number, as follows--Nelson, Argalus, Sarah, Emily, John, Ira, Martin, David, Doctor, and Isaac.

Isaac Ison - 5th son, married Annie Hamilton daughter of Edward Hamilton. He took up land on Paint Creek in Morgan County, Kentucky. The raised a family of seven (7) children, viz.---Doctor, Hamilton, Mary Ann, Susand Jane, Archibald, William and Elliott.

Burdine Ison - 6th son, married Cyntha Hannah daughter of Joseph Hannah & Nancy Hamilton. Their home and land was on Middle fork of Little Sandy River, about five (5) miles east of Isonville, Elliott County, Kentucky. They had nine (9) children, viz.---Doctor, Burdine, Rilda, Archibald, Sythe, Cyntha, Nancy, Martha Jane and Sarah.

✓ Doctor Ison - 7th son, married Elizabeth Fraley daughter of Isaac Fraley & Carherine Shoemaker. Their land was one (1) mile north of his fathers place, near the forks of the Newcomb River in Elliott County, Kentucky. They had ten (10) children, as follows--Anderson, Samuel Briton, Phoebe Jane, Allen, Madison, Aaron, Josephine, Richmone, Hulda and Marion Francis.

Argalus Ison - 8th son, of Archibald & Mary, married Mary Hannah, daughter of Joseph Hannah and Nancy Hamilton. His land was east side of his fathers place near forks of the Newcomb in Elliott County, Kentucky. His children were seven (7) in number--Isabelle (Ibbie), Sarah, Pauline, Susan, Argalus, John M., and Elizabeth.

✓ Isom Ison - 9th son, born April 8, 1823, died June 24, 1880. He married Isabelle Hannah daughter of Joseph Hannah and Nancy Hamilton. Their ten (10) children were---Ebenezer, Nancy, Mary, William, Elizabeth, Spencer, Benjamin, Isabelle, Sarah and Isaac. He hand land in Carter County, Kentucky. And his marriage in on the Carter Records but after the death of his mother, he came to Isonville and lived with his father in the old home place. He cared for his father untill he passed away and his father deeded the home and land to him, Oct. 2nd, 1871 this is the Ison Home that still stands in what is now Isonville, Elliott County, Kentucky.

Elizabeth Ison, the 10th child and only daughter of Archibald & Mary born 1835, died 1881. Married 1st, David Waggoner, son of Adam Waggoner & Hannah Carter, they lived near the mouth of Bruen Creek which empties into the Sandy River in Carter County, Kentucky. Children by her first husband were---Isom, Mary, Daniel, Elizabeth and Archibald Waggoner. Elizabeth married 2nd, Elisha Lewis, son of Nathan Lewis & Judy Steadham. They lived on Spruce Branch near the mouth of Newcomb River, in Elliott County. Their children were Judy, Levina, Rena and Milford Lewis.

ARCHIBALD ISON AND MARY GILLIAM ISON .

DECENDANTS .

Pioneer conditions was not the "Primrose Path." The Indians were still treacherous so, with their guns always at their side each member of the family was to work unitedly together to provide the bare necessities of life. Men, women and children worked in the fields together and at that, food stuff was not so big a problem as shoes, clothing, bedding. All went bare footed in the summer and the long tail shirt was practically all the clothing worn by the men and boys in warm weather, each family had a small bunch of sheep, they shear, washed, corded and spun the wool into yarn then knit stockings for winter wear as well as wove wollen and lincey cloth for shirts, dresses, mens suits, blankets and counterpains or spreads then the flocks of geese and ducks kept them in feather beds and pillows. But, all these took more work than our children of today can imagine or would be willing to do today. The even raised flax this was cut, dried and run through the flax brake then spun into linen cloth from which they wove the Tow clothes or made them, lucky was the man or boy who could boast of a Tow suit or pair of trousers.

Many times I have looked at the picture of George Washington or the signers of "Declaration of Independence" all were dressed in White Breeches and I wondered how in those early days they could have such nice looking white pants, now I know that the were home-made linen Tow Trousers.

The Community Blacksmith shop of those days represented our Garage of today and the Blacksmith set the iron tier to the wheel of the great Preary Scooner as the workers in the Garage fix our rubber car tires today. Archibald seemed to have done very well financially for about thirty years after he came to Kentucky he and his son Isom built a large new home just east of the first little log cabin where the family has been raised. It was made of Yellow, hand hewn, poplar logs, forty-feet long. The house was 40 feet square, two (2) stories high with four (4) large fireplaces, two (2) below and two (2) above with an eight-foot chimney running through the center of the house, there was a twenty-foot porch running across the east end of the house.

This was the home that Mary & Archibald died in, but Mary went away many years before her husband and she was buried in the graveyard of her own choosing, a small plot of land on the south side of the hill some forty (40) rods west of their home, it had been her cotton patch and she asked them to bury her there. We know very little about our Great-Grandmother Mary, but she was large in statue, as many of her kin folk are today. She had blue eyes and must have been a wonderful Mother, to have raised nine (9) stalwart sons and one daughter, who she named Elizabeth, perhaps that was her Mother's name. She must have been a good Doctor and nurse for all her children grew to maturity, married and had large families.

Archibald lived with his youngest son, Isom, for many years after the death of Mary. It was the custom then and still is for the youngest son to care for their parents in their old-age and then the hom was always given to them so, Isom raised his family in the large, new Ison Home that stands today (1958) in Isonville, Elliott County, Kentucky.

The town and Post Office was named, years later, for the early Pioneer, Archibald Ison, who first settled there in 1818. Many years later Isom's children sold the Old Home to Henry Wheeler in 1907. In 1949 Mr. Wheeler took me through the home I climbed the narrow little stairway, the original one, to the upper two large rooms, saw the great fire-place and eight-foot chimney, the original white poplar poles that showed in portion of wall and he gave me a picture of the Old Home, I shall put a copy of it in this book, as it is sacred to me.

We have no definite death date for Archibald Ison, but on the Deed Record in the Courthouse at Sandy Hook, Elliott County I found a deed signed by Archibald Ison giving to his son, Isom, the land and Home place. This was dated Oct. 2, 1871. So, his death would have been after this date, he is buried by the side of Mary, they have no markers, with dates on them. But, large rough stones at each grave. Two other graves are in the little family cemetery a baby named Isaac, son of Isom & Isabelle Hannah Ison. When they were laying the baby away, water run into the grave and Isom said "This is not a fit place to be buried in, but if it is good enough for my Mother, my Father and my child, it is good enough for me". So, Isom was buried there June 25, 1880.

And we come to the close of Archibald Ison's Earth School. He was a good husband, a kind father, a great friend and neighbor and a Wonderful Pioneer ---his earthly body lies in an unmarked grave about forty (4) rods west from his home on the south side of the hill, five rods from the State Highway Kentucky No. 32. But his Spirit lives on in his Heavenly Home with Mary and all the children, each of them left here many years ago. And, his last grand-child, Milford Lewis, died June 12, 1946.

Written by-
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