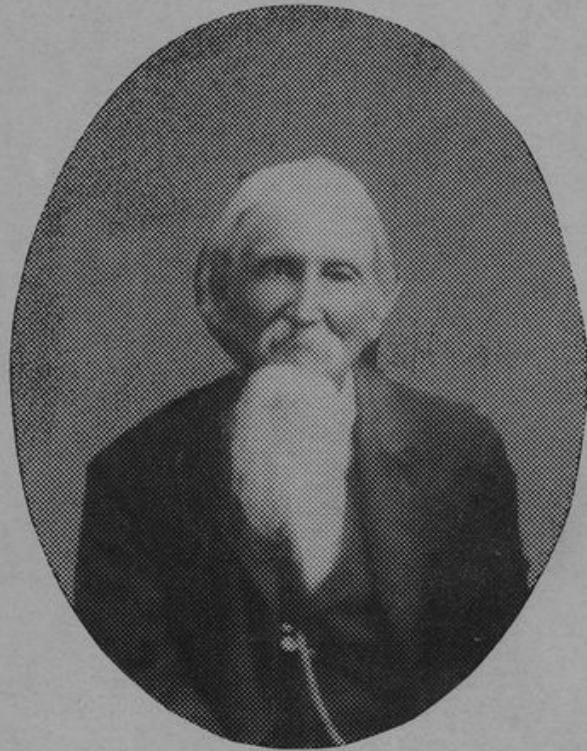


# The Keyser Family



Henry's Children

by Willet Keyser



### THE AUTHOR

Willet Keyser, great-grandson of Henry Keyser, grandson of Preston, and son of William W. Keyser, decided to work on the Keyser genealogy after his retirement from the foreign aid program of the U. S. Government in 1972. Unfortunately, this was after the death of his father and several other older relatives who could have been of much assistance to him on this project.

Collecting the information for this work has involved many miles of travel, as well as much correspondence. In some instances, it was very fruitful and many "new" relatives were discovered. There were also frustrations and blank walls.

Willet is a graduate of the University of Wyoming with both Bachelors and Masters degrees in Animal Production. He and his wife, Leota, spent fifteen years in Afghanistan and Pakistan before retiring on a small lake near Palestine in east Texas. Here they have built their tri-level house, which they now enjoy between trips to visit relatives and friends.

**Willet and Leota Keyser  
Route 1, Box 220B  
Palestine, Texas 75801**

*"The loving kindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, to those who reverence Him; His salvation is to children's children of those who are faithful to His covenant and remember to obey Him."*

*Psalm 103:17,18  
from The Living Bible*

*DEDICATED TO  
MY  
CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN*

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Keyser, Willet  
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## PREFACE

Late in the nineteenth century, Ruby Haskins Ellis wrote the following item for the *Public Ledger* (a newspaper that has since been taken over by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*):

### "WHO ARE YOU? A KEYSER?"

"This surname occurs in almost every country in the world, although each nation has its own peculiar spelling. It originated during the ancient days of Persia with the word "Kisra," meaning emperor, and later spread over the continent of Europe. The Gothic forms were "Thzar," "Tzar," "Sar," and "Sir." The Latin form was "Caesar"; the Russian, "Czar"; and the German, "Kaiser" and "Keyser." As a surname, it is usually spelled "Keyser."

"Dirck Keyser joined the company organized by Francis Daniel Pastorius, of Frankfort, Germany, for the purpose of taking up lands in Germantown, Pa. Dirck Keyser was a manufacturer and dealer in silks and a man of some prominence in Holland, where his family had settled.

The first of the family in the male line of whom certain knowledge exists was Leonard Keyser, of Scharding, Bavaria. It was he who first identified himself with the Reformed Church. The Keyser family lived in Holland for more than a century before emigrating to America. Dirck Keyser came over to Pennsylvania with his son, Peter Dirck, in 1688.

"The arms here shown were found on copper plate in possession of the above family."

The following invitation was issued to all descendants and relatives of Dirck Keyser on August 2, 1888:

"When William Penn visited Holland and Germany, promulgating his doctrines of free religious thought in antagonism to the forms of established churches, he invited all to join him in his settlement in the new country. Accepting his ideas, Francis Daniel Pastorius of Frankfort, Germany, organized a company for taking up land and forming the settlement of Germantown, now part of this city. The Mennonites of Holland and the lower Rhine of Germany joined with him, and among those who came here was Dirck Keyser of Amsterdam. He was a manufacturer of and dealer in all kinds of silk goods, and a man of prominence, but, desiring to worship God in all freedom, he came over with his son, Pieter Dirck Keyser, in 1688. There are many descendants of the family throughout this country and Mexico.

"In commemoration of the arrival here of Dirck Keyser, a bicentennial reunion of his descendants will be held in Germantown (Twenty-Second Ward), Philadelphia, in the old Mennonite Church, on or near the original

ground of said Dirck Keyser, on the 10th day of October next, at 10 A.M. being, according to the present mode of chronological reckoning, the two hundredth anniversary of the day on which he came to the place. It will be a social family gathering on the ground where our common ancestor is buried, and where he built his domicile in the wilderness of the New World. Sketches of the family history will be read, the old family Bible and such other relics as can be obtained will be exhibited.

"A cordial invitation is extended to all descendants of the family to be present and bring with them anything they may have in their possession that will throw any light on the history of the family or indicate its progress.

"Can you be present on the occasion, with any of your immediate connexions of the family? An early answer will greatly oblige the undersigned.

Charles S. Keyser,  
Attorney at Law,  
No. 524 Walnut Street.

Peter Dirck Keyser, M. D.  
No. 1832 Arch Street.

Romaine Keyser,  
Cor. Main & Rittenhouse Streets  
(Germantown), Phila.

Philadelphia, Aug. 2, 1888."

The program for that reunion was as follows:

#### "PROGRAMME.

10 A.M.

Gideon Keyser, the oldest male member of the family, will preside.  
Prayer, by Bishop N. B. Grubb of the First Mennonite Church of Philadelphia.

Hymn, Te Deum Laudamus.

The Family in Amsterdam and Germantown, by Charles S. Keyser

The Homes, Meeting-Houses and Burial-Grounds of the Family, by  
Dr. Peter Dirck Keyser

The Mennonites, and the Martyrdom of Leonhard Keyser, read by  
Julia A. Orum, a descendant of Dirck Keyser

Hymn, Jubilate Deo, Psalm C.

The Levering Line of the Family, by Horatio Gates Jones, a  
descendant of Rosier Levering

The Pannebakker Line of the Family, by Samuel W. Pennypacker,  
LL.D., a descendant of Henry Pennebecker, the first emigrant.

Letters from Absent Members of the Family, read by Romaine Keyser.  
Hymn, Old Hundred.

"A dinner was provided for on the occasion. For this purpose, Dr. Peter Dirck Keyser tendered the use of his summer residence, then vacant, in Germantown;\* a notice, in the following form, was sent to the members of the family:

(Coat of Arms)

The Bicentennial Reunion  
of the  
1688 DESCENDANTS OF DIRCK  
KEYSER 1888  
at Germantown,  
Wednesday, October 10, 1888

---

To the Family:

As there are no hotels in Germantown, a dinner will be served in the afternoon at the summer residence of Dr. P. D. Keyser (Tulpehocken Station, Pennsylvania Railroad), who has placed it, for the day, at the disposal of the committee.

\*The expenditures for the occasion, beyond the sum which remained after the payment for the dinner, were provided by William Keyser of Baltimore, Dr. Peter Dirck Keyser, Charles S. Keyser, Romaine Keyser, and George G. Pierie of Philadelphia."

Charles S. Keyser wrote a report of that reunion in his book, "The Keyser Family, Descendents of Dirck," Philadelphia, 1889, page 16. This book is on microfilm in the Library of Congress, Microfilm Shelf No. 22833, Call No. CS71, K442.

Charles not only tells about the reunion and includes the reports made at the reunion, but lists the names of the 224 people who attended and gives the genealogy from Dirck, who was born in Amsterdam in the 17th century, to 1889.

The reports and prayers are interesting, especially the account of the martyrdom of Leonard Keyser in 1527 for his stand against the Catholic Church. In his report of Keyser emigrations to America, Charles wrote:

"No other man with this surname, as far as we have knowledge, arrived in Pennsylvania prior to the coming of the founder of our family; nor anyone very certainly, for fifty years after his coming, so there is no one living among us, probably, with our name, except in our family, who can trace his line back of 1749. It was as far as the emigration here is concerned a singularly exclusive name; among the list of thirty thousand German, Dutch and Huguenots arriving here since 1688, there were but six with the name and none prior to 1749; Leonard Keyser, September 26, 1749; Joh. George Keyser, 1750, Johan Jacob Keyser, 1752, Andreas Keyser, 1753, who might be one of our family returning from a voyage, as also Johannes, 1757, and Philip Keyser, 1773."

Charles Keyser mentions Pennsylvania only. Doubtlessly, there were many other Keyser immigrants. I learned in Luray, Virginia, that a Charley Keyser emigrated from Germany in 1750. There is no way of connecting our common ancestor, William Keyser of Bath and Hanover Counties, Virginia, with any one emigrant. However, James F. Keyser in his sketch, The Genealogy of the Keyser Family from Colonial Days to the Present, indicates that his great-grandfather "immigrated to the Virginia Colony." If this was the case, he would be a descendant from neither of the previous immigrants.

William's deposition in which he applied for a pension gives the place of his enlistment, his age at the time of the deposition, but no information about his parents or his birth. He could well be a descendant of the Dirck Keyser family, but there is no way of proving it.

*APOLOGY:*

*I am aware that there will be mistakes, and I hope that as you discover them you will make note of them, and send the corrections and additions along to me so they may be included in any subsequent edition that might be published.*

*-- Editor*



## INTRODUCTION

One of my first cousins, Roy Jones, started research on Keyser genealogy in the early 1960's which served to whet my appetite. Since I worked in Asia until 1972, I had little opportunity to get involved with genealogy. My father, who was a bundle of information about our relatives, passed away in 1966, so that source of information was gone when I finally decided I would work up a genealogy. It was surprising how many relatives who had lived in the area where Dad's family grew up had died within a year or two of the time I started my research.

Mary Keysor Meyer wrote a book in 1957 entitled The Keyser-Keysor Cousins, in which she gives the information she had gathered up to that time on the family that dates back to 1755. This is as far back as she or anyone I know of has been able to get documented information on our line. Mrs. Meyer's book is in the Historical Societies' Libraries in Philadelphia and Baltimore and on microfilm at the Genealogy Library in Salt Lake City. Anyone who has access to an LDS genealogy library may have that library borrow the microfilm from Salt Lake City so that it can be viewed on a local projector.

Mrs. Meyer's introduction to her book is so interesting that I have taken the liberty (with her permission) to reproduce it here:

"I was raised on a legend. It was a wonderful legend and it was a part of me before I could actually remember. But as romantic as it may sound and the pride we may take in it, the tale of my great-great grandmother, a full-blooded Indian, clutching her youngest son to her breast with one hand; and with the other driving a yoke of oxen; accompanied by two faithful slaves; beating her way through the wilderness that was southern Ohio in the early 1800's, is in fact only a legend.

Of course, all legends have in them the elements of truth. It is important to remember that in the beginning, they were truth. It is in the telling and retelling — father to son — the very old to the very young — that over the period of years we have the family legend.

But ours was not the only branch of the family to have a similar legend. Among the papers of James Fleming Keyser (7.11) who was born in 1841 and who lived in West Virginia, was found a short sketch of the family in which he, too, states that his great grandmother was a full-blooded Indian. This sketch was sent to the author by Mrs. George I. Keyser of Williamson, W. Va., a daughter-in-law of the late James Fleming Keyser, and is given in full below:

'My great-grandfather emigrated to the Virginia Colony at an early date. The name is German, but whether he came directly from Germany or some other European country is not known. The name is properly pronounced Ki-zer (with a long i), which we have corrupted to Kee-Zer.

'My great-grandfather was a squaw man – in other words, he married an Indian woman. Hence, my grandfather was half Indian. I never saw him, he having died before I could remember, but I have had descriptions of him by my father and uncles which show conclusively his Indian origin.

'He was tall, straight as an arrow; very active; could, from a standing start, in three leaps cover thirty-six feet; dark complexion, straight hair – black as a raven; eyes dark and piercing.

'He served as a private soldier in the Revolutionary War, after which he migrated from Northampton Co., Va., which lies east of the Chesapeake Bay south of Maryland to Bath Co., Va., where he preempted a tract of land in the vicinity of the Virginia Hot Springs and settled for life.

'My grandmother's maiden name was Sneed (Sneed). They had born to them eight children who were reared to manhood and womanhood. The five sons were: William, James, Fleming (my father), John or Jack as he was familiarly known, and Christopher. The three daughters were Sarah, Bettie, and Kate.

'Two sons and a daughter moved to the Big Sandy Valley in Kentucky at an early age. Jack settled in the Big Sandy five miles from Cattletsburg, Ky. Christopher settled on Beech Fork of Twelve Pole Creek in W. V. Kate married Roland L. Burns, an eminent lawyer in Cattletsburg, Ky. The others remained in the vicinity of Virginia where born, married and raised large families.'

"Here again we have the legend of the Indian ancestress. But the two women referred to were separated by two generations in age and could not have been living in the same place.

"In a second branch of the family we hear more about Indians. This legend concerns a sister (or daughter) of the first William Keyser, who was captured by Indians as a child. She was ransomed and returned to her people, but had been in captivity so long that she found it difficult to again conform to the ways of the White people, so returned to the Indians. There may well be some basis for this legend as during the middle part of the 1700's, Indians were yet raiding the settlements of central Virginia.

"In yet another branch of the family, we have another Indian legend. This comes from the older descendants of John (Jack) Keyser who settled in Ky. They assert that we do have Indian ancestry, but are not too certain just where it came into the family. They do say, however, that

it is their understanding that there were several marriages between the Keyser, Roff or Rolfe, and Swann families and the descent was from Pocahontas.

"It is, of course, a known fact that John Rolfe married Pocahontas and had a son, John, born in England. The son, John Rolfe, returned to Virginia to live and there married Jane Poythress who bore him a daughter, Jane, who married Col. Robert Bolling. Mary Bolling, daughter of Col. Robert and Jane Bolling, married Col. John Fleming.

"As the name Fleming is used in several generations of the Keyser family as a given name, it has been my thought that there may be a possibility that our Indian ancestry does in truth come from Pocahontas. But to date, this has not been proved – it is only a theory.

"On an historical marker near Lewistown, Logan Co., Ohio, is this inscription: 'A few feet south stood the log Indian Council house. Capt. John Lewis, Shawnee Chief for whom the village was named, lived 88 feet southeast with Polly Keyser, his white drudge.'

"This Polly Keyser, according to a survey taken in 1800 by Major Galloway, was at this time in 'advanced years'; was the mother of two half-breed daughters – and had been captured as a child near Lexington, Ky.

"Could it be that this Polly Keyser was a member of our family? Or was it that some chance remark concerning her many, many years ago was misconstrued and she next appeared in the family legend? Could it be that we really had an Indian ancestress living in Virginia in the early 1700's?

"I am inclined to believe that we do carry Indian blood in our veins, although I have been unable to prove such to be a fact, to date. I have talked with many members of the family concerning this heritage, and one and all conclude the discussion by pointing out that one of the strong characteristics of the Keyser-Keysor family is their high cheekbones – a characteristic long attributed to the American Indian. They also like to point out that we Keysers-Keysors are a family with predominantly black, straight and stubborn hair and very dark eyes – more Indian characteristics.

"The real truth, whatever it is, may never be known, the facts having been lost when so many records in Virginia were destroyed during the Civil War. I would like to believe it is true, for I and many of our family take a great deal of pride in the thought of an Indian ancestress. But whatever the facts, I am grateful for the legend for it held a promise and led me along strange paths, and without it, I might not have pursued the matter further."

---

*(Mrs. Robert D. (Charlotte) Burns, Ashland, Kentucky, whose husband is a descendant of William and Kesiah's Catherine, states: "I know that, in this branch of the family, 'William' is called 'Indian Bill.'" Ed.)*

"I have searched numerous dusty courthouse records dating back prior to the Revolution and newspapers yellow with time. I have visited cemeteries, consulted the Federal censuses in Washington, D.C. I have done research in many libraries, read countless books, joined Historical and Genealogical Societies, subscribed to several magazines and newspapers devoted to genealogy. I made a 2000-mile trip through Michigan and Ohio in 1950. In 1952, I went to Hot Springs, Va., and then again in 1956.

"I have written hundreds of letters to courthouses, libraries, and individuals. I have talked to numerous people and asked a great many questions — many of them personal. I trust I have offended no one, that is not my purpose. I have gathered a great deal of data on both the living and deceased members of the family. In most instances, my data can be substantiated through legal records. A larger portion of the data was furnished by the individuals themselves. Another portion of the material found herein was copied from family Bibles, cemetery inscriptions and old county histories. I have attempted to secure accurate records in all instances.

"I would like to thank all those "cousins" who shared their family records. My gratitude to Mrs. Arnold Keyser of Covington, Va. will be everlasting. I knocked at her door, a stranger in a strange state and was welcomed without hesitation as 'family.' Our thanks also go to Alvin Foster of Huntington, W.V.a, who furnished us with the records of Jack and Christopher Keyser of Wayne and Cabell Co., W. Va. Another 'cousin' who merits a 'thank you' is Gaylor Liles of Forest, Ohio, whom I contacted by chance, after seeing his picture in the Country Gentleman. Mrs. Mary Brackney Casey, of Belle Center, Ohio, and Edgar Morriss, publisher and general manager of the Springfield (O.) Daily News and The Sun contributed much to the Morris history, the former also helped with the Keysors. Our many thanks also go to the Reverend Norman Flythe, pastor of the Methodist Church at Hot Springs, Va., who, although not a member of the Keyser family, furnished many records of the family in his area.

"Some other cousins showed a remarkable apathy and lack of interest. It is for this reason that data on certain families is incomplete or missing altogether, that might otherwise have been included. We make no apology for ourselves as we have contacted every known member of the family and invited them — even begged them — to participate by furnishing data for this, their family history.

"In addition to the Keyser-Keysor genealogy, I have included a brief synopsis of the genealogy of the Morris and Faler families, who were closely connected to the Keyzers by several marriages.

"For the benefit of those cousins wishing to trace a certain pedigree, a word of explanation concerning the method of enumeration. Each person is assigned a number indicating the number of generations removed from the ancestor, William Keyser 1st. For example, let us take a number -- 463. This number would indicate that this person would be 3 generations removed from the first William. These same numbers would also indicate that No. 463 was the 3rd child of his father, who was the 6th child of his parent, who in turn was the 4th child of the first William Keyser. In case a child is the 10th, 11th, 12th, etc., child of his parent, such numbers will be set off by decimals, thus, 463.11.

"As work of this type is almost impossible to present without some errors, I do hope you will bear with me and forgive any errors, mechanical or otherwise. I attempted to do as thorough and accurate a work as possible. I urge each and every cousin who acquires a copy of this book to record additions as time goes by. By so doing, our children and grandchildren may know their family genealogy.

"The author of this work would appreciate a copy of any additions you may make, and any corrections you have to make.

1957      Mary Keysor Meyer  
            R.F.D. 1  
            Cazenovia, New York 13035."

**Mrs. Meyer lives in Maryland now and works at a Genealogical Society Library in Baltimore.**

**Like Mrs. Meyer, I have travelled extensively, visited, written letters, pleaded, begged for information and received much, and I, also, have found much apathy on the part of some relatives. There are, therefore, many blank places and probably many errors. I would like for this book to be more complete. More time and travel would no doubt yield more information, but it has been dragging on now for three years. Some people are probably thinking, 'are you going to write it or not?' So we are keeping the door open for information as long as we can and at the same time preparing for publication.**

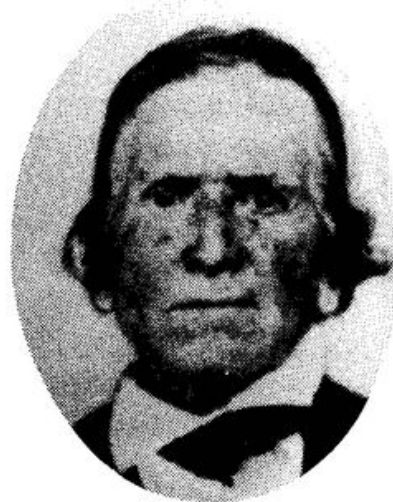
**My wife, Leota, has been with me in all of our travels and assisted with the research in many courthouses and newspaper office archives. She has spent much time typing for me and deserves and has my deep gratitude. Our son, Eugene, and daughter, Martee, have been along some and assisted with research. Obviously, I am most grateful to Mary Keysor Meyer, as well as to Leon Keyser from Portland, Maine, who told me about Mrs. Meyer's book and loaned me his xeroxed copy. Mr. and Mrs. T. J. (Jack) Byrnes have been a great help, especially with information on**

James Russell's descendants. Joyce Stuart Siepker (granddaughter of Leonard Mitchell - 44) is setting the type for the printer. I am most grateful to her.

Larry D. Davis provided the picture of Christopher Keyser (Mrs. Meyer's No. 5) and Margaret "Peggy" Bloss Keyser, his second wife. (Picture below.)

May 1, 1977

Willet Keyser  
Route 1, Box 220B  
Palestine, Texas 75801



*"PEGGY" BLOSS KEYSER  
and  
CHRISTOPHER "KIT" KEYSER*

## HENRY'S ANCESTRY

William Keyser was said to have been born in Northampton County in Virginia. According to James Fleming Keyser, he was the son of a German emigrant and his Indian wife. The Indian tribe prevalent in that area at that time was the Powahatan tribe, and she may have been a Powahatan Indian. William Keyser is included in the 1782 tax records of Hanover County, Virginia, as having three whites in his household. Subsequent records reveal that his oldest child, Polly, was born January 26, 1782.

Documents dealing with real estate ownership, wills, etc., indicate that William married Kesiah Sneed, but there is no available marriage document. It is interesting that records in the Hanover County Courthouse and the Richmond library reveal that a Keziah Sneed married William Harris on January 9, 1785. This record was taken from a Revolutionary War Pension file in the National Archives and from a Bible record in the Virginia State Library. We found many Sneads in the State Library as well as in Bath County records, but no other Keziah Sneed.

William and Keziah moved to Bath County, Virginia, sometime around 1800. They sold their land in Hanover County in 1788 and bought land in Bath County in 1794.

In Deed Book 1 of Bath County, Virginia, on page 244 is recorded a deed for two lots, Numbers 5 and 48, consisting of one-half acre each. These lots are in the town of Hot Bath "with the privilege to use all the Baths adjoining the said town." Sold by Nathaniel Wilkinson, John Carter Littlepage and John Oliver to William Keizer and John Carter Littlepage. The indenture is dated 9-8, 1795, and states that the parties of the second part bought Tickets Nos. 34 and 35 which entitled them to draw for lots in the Town of Staunton. The drawing was done on July 14, 1794. They drew Lots 5 and 48.

Bath County Deed Book 1 also lists a deed on Page 346 that granted 250 acres of land on the "Northwest side of Warm Springs Mountain and on the waters of the Jackson River" to William Keyser by Richard Mayes on April 11, 1797.

William Keyser also bought 200 acres of land, adjacent to the 250 acres, from Thomas Milhollen on December 10, 1799.

All the deeds like the ones we reproduced from the handwritten record are very tedious to read and so we are including only the one deed. We have photostatic copies of others, and will gladly xerox them for anyone who is interested.

We might draw a conclusion that the baths were the reason for the move from Hanover County to Bath County. From the various deeds we can conclude that his move to Bath County could have been as early

as 1794. However, Fleming was born in Hanover County, January 26, 1794, and David in Hanover County, July 30, 1796, so the move had to occur after July, 1796, and before May, 1799, when James was born in Bath County.

In his deposition, which helped verify William Keyser's death, Robert Brinkley stated that he married William's daughter, Elizabeth, on December 3, 1805, and that the Keyzers moved to Bath County "some three or four years before their marriage."

**Deed from William and Kesiah Keyser to John Bowles:**

*"This INDENTURE maid this 21 day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty eight in the twelve year of the Commonwealth between William Keyser and Kussy his wife of the County of Hannover of the one part and John Bowles, Sr. of the foresaid County of the other part, witnesseth that the same William Keyser and Kuysey his wife for and in consideration of the sum of one hundred pound fifteen shillings (Spacre) to the said William Keyser in hand paid the Receipt of which he doth hereby acknowledge they the said William Keyser and Kuyser his wife have granted bargained and sold and by these presence do give, give Granted Bargained and Sold alien (Enforce) Release and Conform to the said John Bowles his heirs and assigns for ever on Cartain Track or parsel of land laying and being in the County aforesaid on Stony run and joining the lands of John Bowles, Sr. and John Priddy and John Snead, Sr. it being the land given by John Snead, Sr. father to the said John Snead sun. by deed Recorded in the County cort of Hannover containing one hundred and three quarters acres and bounded as follows, to wit Beginning at a sweet gum on the Run thence north 18 pole thence up the Run north 64 west 18 pole thence up the Run north 41 west 10 pole thence north 3 east 20 pole thence north 7 west 18 pole thence north 1 east 18 pole thence north 142 west thence south 83 west 18 pole thence north 85 west 20 pole thence north 6 west 20 pole to Corner Burch on the Run thence South 80 west 24 pole to maples in the old spring brance thence south 26 west 32 pole south 42 west 64 pole thence south 62 west 20 pole to a large corner pine thence due south 62 pole to a small oak thence north 84 east 106 pole to a corner pine and thence north 71 East 70 pole to the beginning together with all houses orchards gardens fences woods ways waters and water courses whatsoever to the same belonging or in any ways appertaining to the same and the Reversion and Reversions Remainders and Remanders Rents Issues and profit of the premeses and all the Estate and all the Estate Right Title Interest Claim and demand whatsoever in law or equity of them the said William Keyser and Kuyser his wife for in and to the said one hundred and three quarters acres of land or any part or parcel thurof*



so have and to hold the said track or parcel of land and prences with the appertanances unto the said John Bowles his heirs and assigns to the onely propper use and behalf of the said John Bowles his heirs and assigns forever the said William Keyser and Kuysy his wife for themselves and their heirs do govenant and grant to and with the said John Bowles his heirs and assign that the said John Bowles his heirs and assigns shall and may have hold use occupy (prescess) and enjoy the said land and promiss with all and singlar the Appertanances unto the same belong without the molestation interuption or denial of them the said William Keyser and Kuyser his wife or their heirs or any purson or persons whatsoever and the said William Keyser and Kuysy his wife doth doth by these presince warrant and defend the said one hundred and three quarter acres of land against the claim of them and their heirs and of all and every other persons or pursons claiming by from or under them to him the said John Bowles and to his heirs and assigns forever. In Witness whereof the said William Keyser and Kuyser his wife have hearuto set their hand and affixt their Seals the day and date as above

Signed and Delivered in the prisince of

John Snead

Wm. Keyser (Seal)

Benjamin Bowles

James H. Marshall

Kezier (her X mark) Keyser (Seal)

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\*Words in ( ) are words that cannot be interpreted from the handwriting of the recorder. The interpretation of the spelling of Keziah's name may not be correct in all cases.

William's declaration in which he applied for a pension is on file in the National Archives. Mary Keyser Meyer reproduced quotes from it in her book. A document in the Historical Society office in Warm Springs, Bath County, Virginia, indicates it is recorded in the Augusta County Courthouse. We were unable to get it from there. Following is Mrs. Meyer's digest of the Declaration:

"Bath Co., Va. 9 Oct. 1832 W3427

"William Keyser, a resident of Bath Co., Va., aged 77 years, (b. 1755), declares that he enlisted at Gloucester (Va.) for three years and served the full term, the time of his enlistment he does not remember.

"He enlisted under Capt. Baytop in the 2nd Va. State Regt. at Gloucester, Va. He marched to Hampton where he was inoculated for smallpox. He then marched to Valley Forge and joined the army of General Washington, at which place he remained

all winter. The next summer he was marched after the British under Col. Charles Dahney, he overtook the British at Monmouth Church and was in an engagement one whole day and lay in arms all night expecting to engage again the next day, but that night the British got on Board their ships.

"He also states he was in a skirmish with the British at Saw Mill River Bridge, near Ft. Montgomery, under the command of Col. Samuel Guess and in that skirmish 28 soldiers and 2 officers were taken by the British.

"He further states he was in another engagement and was in front of the army in taking Stoney Point Fort under the command of General Anthony Wayne, at which engagement Gen. Wayne received a small wound in the temple. And then Col. Fullock took command."

The first pension approved for William Keyser amounted to \$80.00 per annum, to commence on the 4th day of March, 1831. The first payment was made on the 4th of September, 1833, and amounted to \$200.00.

A declaration for pension as a widow of William Keyser was made in Bath County Court by Keziah Keyser on March 9, 1841. It is on microfilm in the National Archives. Following is a digest of the declaration as copied from Mary Keyser Meyer's book:

"Keziah Keyser, a resident of Bath Co. aged 76 years (b. ca 1765), deposed that she is the widow of William Keyser, who was a private soldier in the Revolution and was a pensioner of the U.S. at the time of his death. That she married to the said William Keyser in December 1783 and that her husband died in the early part of December 1837, about three weeks before Christmas."

A document dated 3-9-1841 in Bath County Courthouse indicates that Michael McElwee declared that William Keyser died in McElwee's house in the early part of December 1837. While we were visiting the Historical Society in Warm Springs in the summer of 1976, we found a listing of "Old Houses." Among them was the McElwee house. Our search for it revealed, from a descendant of the last owner, that it had been torn down in 1946.

William's will is recorded in Bath County Deed Book 4, page 396.

*IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN*

*I, William Keyser, Sen., of the State of Virginia, county of Bath, having perfect use of my rational powers, do make an ordain this instrument to be my last will and testament in the manner and form following: that is to say, I give to my son, William Keyser, all my land after his mother's death, to him and his heirs forever.*

*I give to my daughter, Sally Carnes, a negro girl named Mary together with all her increase, to the said Sally Carnes and her heirs, forever. I give to my beloved wife, Kezia Keyser, all my household and kitchen furniture, all my horses, cattle and sheep, which may be found on my place at the time of my death, together with their increase, and I also give to my wife, my negro boy named Armistead and my negro woman named Lucy and my negro girl Adaline, together with the increase of said Lucy and Adaline. I also give my said wife, my wagon and all my farming utensils which may be found on my place at the time of my death. And I hereby privelege and allow said wife to dispose of the aforesaid property herein bequeathed to her, just as she may see cause or think proper at the time of her death.*

*In testimony of the foregoing dispostion of my estate I hereunto attach my name on this 15th day of November, 1834.*

Witnesses: WILLIAM KEYSER (L.S.)  
Francis Crutchfield  
Calvin S. Campbell  
John O. Hunter

*I hereby appoint my friend, George Mayse, Esq., and my son, Fleming Keyser, as executors of this my last Will and Testament, hereby making null and void all other Wills heretofore by me made and acknowledging this and this only (or the above written) to be my last Will and Testament. In testimony of this last part (which is properly a part of my Will), I hereunto attach my name on this 15th day of Nov 1834,*

Witnesses: WILLIAM KEYSER (L.S.)  
Francis Crutchfield Calvin S. Campbell  
John C. Cooper James Gay  
John Hunter Benjamen Thompson

The total appraised value of William's estate, excluding land, was \$975.75. This included \$875.00 for slaves. They were not included in the sale list. The fact that some items sold for 12 1/2 cents and 18 3/4 cents indicates that our monetary system included one-fourth cent pieces in those days. I recall my Dad used to talk about "two bits" which was 25 cents, making "one bit" twelve and one-half cents.

Although Keziah was willed the livestock and household effects, the list of items sold included the following items listed as being sold to her:

large cittle	large oven	pot	small oven	
skillet	tea cittle	bell and hoe	2 pair	
hooks	quill wheel and reel	2 ridels		5.00
contents of	cupboard			1.50
2 beds and	furniture			14.00
one large	spinning wheel			.75
one looking	glass			37½
9 head	sheep			7.00
2 cows				15.00

We have photocopies of all of these documents and will gladly have them reproduced on request.

### KEZIAH'S WILL

#### IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN

*I, Keziah Keyser, of the County of Allegheny and State of Virginia, being of sound mind and memory, doth make this as my last Will and Testament, knowing that it is appointed unto man once to die; I, therefore, will my spirit unto God who gave it and my body to the dust from whence it came, to be buried in a Christian like manner:*

*First. I will my negro woman, Lucy, to be free at my death. Secondly, I will my Grand-daughter, Almira Keyser, daughter of Fleming Keyser, my black girl, Lucy (daughter of the before named Lucy) but the said Lucy is to remain with and live with her Mother, Lucy, till the death of her mother, when she is to go into possession of said Almira. Item: I will my Grand Son, William Keyser my black boy, Andrew, upon the following condition that is: he is to pay to my estate the sum of one hundred and thirty seven and one-half dollars, which amount if paid to my estate, I will to my son John Keyser. I will to my two sons, James Keyser and Christopher Keyser my black boy, Armistead, equally to be divided between them, the boy to be valued and Christopher first to have the priviledge of keeping him by paying the half worth to him to James and provided Christopher fails to do so, then James has the same priviledge of keeping him by paying the half valuation to Christopher. Item: I will my two daughters, Elizabeth Brinkley and Catherine (the*

balance of her name is not known since her marriage) my black girl, Adaline, to be equally divided between them, the girl to be valued and Catherine to have the priviledge of keeping her, by paying to Elizabeth Brinkley the half valuation, and provided she does not, then Elizabeth Brinkley to have the same priviledge of paying to Catherine the half valuation and keeping the girl. Finally, I will all the residue of my property to be sold and equally divided between my following children: Elizabeth Brinkley, my daughter, Catherine; my sons; James, John and Christopher Keyser, to be equally divided between them.

Lastly, I appoint my good friend Lewis G. Mann as my Executor. In witness hereunto set my hand and seal this 9th day of December 1846.

Teste:	Archibald J. Mann	her
	Andrew K. Kincaid	KEZIAH X KEYSER
	Matthew T. Mays	mark

The children of William and Kesiah Keyser were:

1. Polly Keyser b. 1-26-1782
2. John Keyser b. 10-10-1784
3. William Keyser, Jr. b. 11-20-1785
4. Elizabeth Keyser b. 10-13-1787
5. Christopher Columbus Keyser b. 5-30-1789  
d. in Wayne Co., West Virginia in 1865  
Christopher (Kit) married Francis J. Jones in Bath County  
3-26-1812. Married by Jeremiah Burns.

Larry Davis of King of Prussia, Pa. provided the following information from court records of Bath County, Virginia, relative to the marriage of Christopher (Kit) Keyser and Francis J. Jones:

#### "MARRIAGE BOND

"Know all Men by These Presents that we, Christopher Keyser and Thomas Stonestreet, are held and firmly bound unto James Barbour, Esquire, Governor of Virginia, in the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars for the use of the Commonwealth, to which payment will and truly be made to the said Governor or his successors, we bind ourselves, our heirs jointly and severally firmly by these presents, sealed with our seals and dated this 26th day of March, 1812.

"The conditions of the above obligation is such that whereso there is intended to be had and solemnized a marriage between the above named Christopher Keyser and Francis J. Jones of this county.

"Now if there be no lawful cause to obstruct the said marriage, then the above obligation to be void also to remain in full force."

CHRISTOPHER <sup>(His</sup> X KEYSER (seal)  
mark)

THOMAS <sup>(His</sup> X STONESTREET (seal)  
mark)

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"March the 26th, 1812.

To the Clerk of Bath County – please to issue out License for Christopher Keyser and Francis Jones for to be married. I hereby do give from under my hand that I am perfectly satisfied for them to be given."

FRANCIS I. JONES                      HENRY <sup>(His</sup> X JONES  
mark)

THOMAS STONESTREET

RICHARD MORRIS

*Below is listed the genealogy of WILLIAM KEYSER, Revolutionary War veteran, grandfather of our ancestor, HENRY, as taken from Mary Keysor Meyer's book, The Keyser-Keysor Cousins. Henry's genealogy begins on the next page. (Ed.)*

**WILLIAM KEYSER**, born 1755, died Dec. 1837. Married Keziah Snead, born 1765, died Aug. 20, 1848.

- 1 Polly Keyser, born Jan. 26, 1782. Married Robert Silfer, Dec. 3, 1800. Not mentioned in her parents' will. She evidently died young.
- 2 John (Jack) Keyser, born Oct. 10, 1784. Wife's first name Elizabeth. Seven children.
- 3 William Keyser, Jr., born Nov. 20, 1785. Married Rebecca Stowertz Feb. 9, 1827. Five children.
- 4 Elizabeth Keyser, born Oct. 13, 1787. Married Robert Brinkley Dec. 3, 1805. Two children.
- 5 Christopher (Kit) Keyser, born May 30, 1789, died 1865. Married Frances I. Jones, Mar. 26, 1812 by Jeramiah Burns
- 51 **HENRY KEYSER**, born Giles Co., West Va., Jan. 13, 1813
- 5 Christopher (Kit) Keyser (born May 30, 1789) married secondly Margaret (Peggy) Bloss (b. Apr. 28, 1816) by Jeramiah Burns
- 52 Mary Keyser, married Samuel McGinnes
- 53 James P. Keyser, born Sept. 28, 1824. Died Aug. 13, 1882
- 54 Catherine Keyser, born 1840. Married first Beckner and secondly, Mayse.
- 55 Lucinda Keyser, born 1841. Married Dunkle
- 6 Catherine Keyser, born Jan. 26, 1792. Married Rowland Tiernam Burns, son of Jeramiah and Elizabeth Burns. Nine children.
- 7 Fleming Keyser, born Jan. 26, 1794, died Dec. 1865. Married Nancy Morris. Nancy died Apr. 20, 1863. Thirteen children.
- 7 Fleming Keyser (born Jan. 26, 1794) married secondly Margaret C. Walton on Dec. 6, 1863
- 8 David Keyser, born July 30, 1796; died 1825. Married Margaret Morris, born Apr. 5, 1802. Married May 12, 1819. Three children.
- 9 James Keyser, born May 1, 1799. Married Lucinda -----. Five children.
- 10 Sarah (Sally) Keyser, born Sept. 13, 1801. Married Jacob Karnes, born Oct. 4, 1821. Four children.



*Top: (L. to R.) Floyd Keyser, Millard Keyser  
Bottom: (L. to R.) Henry, Christopher, Sam Keyser*



Pictured above is the day bed that was brought from West Virginia with the Keyser family in 1846. It is now owned by Dorothy Fender in Hamburg, Iowa.

The bedspread on the bed was hand-loomed and has been in the family a long time. Mrs. Fender's mother-in-law, Margaret Jane Orr Fender, entered it in the County Fair many years ago and was awarded a blue ribbon on it.

Mabel Day (Miller, NE) remembers that two rocking chairs were brought from West Virginia, also. She thinks they are in the possession of some relative in California. Arnold Parkison of Percival, Iowa, has some old hand-made furniture that has been in the family a long time.





*(The Fremont County Herald, Sidney, Fremont County, Iowa, December 24, 1909.)*

### **FREMONT'S OLDEST CITIZEN DEAD**

Henry Keyser, familiarly known throughout the county as "Grandpa" Keyser, died Tuesday night at the home of Elder S. S. Orr, in the Brightside neighborhood at the remarkable age of 96 years, 11 months, and 6 days. Death can only be attributed to old age, for up to a comparatively short time ago, the old gentleman was hale and hearty and unusually active for one of his years. He is believed to have been the oldest resident of the county at the time of his death.

It is impossible at this time to procure data sufficient to form a fitting history of the life and labors of this venerable centenarian who knew Fremont County long before she was a county, but we expect to be able to do so in the next issue.

*(The Fremont County Herald, Sidney, Fremont County, Iowa, January 7, 1910)*

### **BIOGRAPHY OF HENRY KEYSER**

In writing this biographical sketch of the late Henry Keyser of Fremont County, I wish to say that it is done for the enlightenment of his many grandchildren and friends who have never been acquainted with him or his past life as I have known it. Henry Keyser was born early in the nineteenth century, in the Old

Dominion, on January 13, 1813, a short distance from the hot Sulphur Springs, Bath County, Virginia. His father's name was Christopher Keyser, the oldest son of William Keyser, who was said to be of Scotch Irish descent. Christopher Keyser, the father of Henry, married Francis Jones of Bath County, Virginia, and in a short time after Henry was born they moved from Virginia to Greenup County, Kentucky, and settled in the Big Sandy Valley. Henry was 8 months old when they came to the new country and they lived there till Henry was about 12 years old, when his mother died leaving him alone with his father, who took him to Cabell County, Virginia, where he married the second time to Peggy Bloss. They lived at this time on a stream of water called Twelve Pole or one of its tributaries. Here he assisted his father on the farm on Beech Fork in various ways, in cutting away the timber and in rolling logs into heaps and burning them, until he became almost a young man. During this time his father sent him to school to a man whose name was Tommy Knapper who proved to be so cross and ugly to him that he could not learn anything. This so-called instructor gave him a terrible whipping because he did not bow down to some girls who came to visit his school. So he learned nothing at Knapper's school. When about 10 years old he was sent to another teacher by the name of Lafe Blankenship who was about as cross as Knapper, but he could get along with him better. He spent a little while when about 14 in a school taught by Sammy Clark, which was his last school days. The school house stood near where Lavalette is situated on Twelve Pole, Wayne County, West Virginia.

What a meager chance a poor boy had in those days to obtain an education! The stories of ghosts and witches told to the younger people were calculated to make cowards of them, rather than to enlighten them, and they could not hope even for better training under such blighting circumstances. About the time he was 16, he hired to some men by the name of Koontz, who were running a forge to chop wood. This forge was at the mouth of Buffalo Creek some miles from his home. His wages were \$8.00 per month. After he had finished his wood chopping, he returned to his father on Beech Fork with the intention of helping his father on the farm. His hopes were blasted, however, as his life was not pleasant because of the treatment received from his stepmother. He concluded to look for a wife and so on February 18 at Louis Batcher's wedding, he began a courtship with Abigail Clark. He was 17 years old at this time. His courtship was after the manner of courtships in that day and was brought to a close July 1, 1830, by a marriage. He

and his little wife, Abigail (for she was a very small woman) rented a home on which they lived until 1834, when they bought a small farm on the east fork of Camp Creek from Isaac Hatfield, at which place they lived until 1845 when they sold their land to John Bailey. In 1846, near the close of the year, they with their six sons, moved to Andrew County, Missouri, another new country.

We now call the attention of our readers to the wisdom manifested by this couple while yet in their teens. Let it be understood that neither the husband or wife could read, but they believed the gospel and in the same year they were married, in 1830, they became Christians and united with the Methodist Episcopal church and both of them remained true to their convictions as long as they lived.

In the new home in Andrew County, Missouri, on February 23, 1847, their only daughter was born. Selling their 80 acre farm in Andrew County, they moved in March, 1850, with their six sons and daughter, to Fremont County, Iowa. Here they lived and saw the county settled and here they enjoyed the friendship of many friends. Henry Keyser had the misfortune to lose his faithful companion on January 22, 1889, after which he tried life alone, but being of a turn of mind that was not easily controlled, he married the second time. January 2, 1891, Mrs. Martha Alexander became his second wife. Old age had crept on him and after living together a number of years, their friends thought it best they should not try to keep house any longer so broke up housekeeping. She went to California and he remained among his children and grandchildren, which numbered at his death near 250 living souls. Since coming to the State of Iowa, he has made four trips to West Virginia and one to California. He plowed the first furrow in the City of Tabor and has seen 96 years, 11 months, and 6 days pass by as a weaver's shuttle. The children of his youth have become old men. A son and the daughter have been borne to the tomb. He has seen the changes that have taken place during the nineteenth century in the various modes of agriculture. He has had an opportunity of voting for the chief magistrate of the United States 17 times and enjoyed the privilege of voting to the last. He was a nobleman. No man perhaps loved his country more than he, but his stay is over. He seemed anxious to go. He bore his sufferings with fortitude and died at his oldest grand-daughter's on the morning of December 22, 1909. He was borne to the tomb from the home of S. S. Orr and wife, where the body of Henry Keyser will rest with his beloved wife till the morning of the resurrection when they will rise to praise the Father God who gave them their eternal being in His great universe." — S. S. Orr