

## *Descendants of Rebecca Jane Hibben and Franklin A. Corwin*

### *Generation No. 4.4*

**REBECCA JANE<sup>4</sup> HIBBEN** (*William<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>*) was born May 31, 1820 in Clinton Co., OH, and died December 25, 1885 in Peru, La Salle Co., IL. She married **FRANKLIN A. CORWIN** August 27, 1839 in Clinton Co., OH, son of **MATTHIAS CORWIN** and **MINERVA BROWN**. He was born January 12, 1818 in Lebanon, Warren Co., OH, and died June 15, 1879 in Peru, La Salle Co., IL.

Children of **REBECCA HIBBEN** and **FRANKLIN CORWIN** are:

- i. **MINERVA<sup>5</sup> CORWIN**, b. 1840, Wilmington, Clinton Co., OH; d. December 14, 1878, Peru, La Salle Co., IL. She m. **GEORGE M. RADCLIFF** May 13, 1863, Cedar Point, La Salle Co., IL; b. January 15, 1828, Wilmington, Clinton Co., OH; d. 1891 in Merced, Merced Co., CA.
- ii. **HIBBEN S. CORWIN**, b. November 18, 1842, Wilmington, Clinton Co., OH; d. July 30, 1911, Spring Valley, Bureau Co., IL. He m. **HELEN M. WRIGHT** February 26, 1867, Mt. Palatine (Hennepin), Putnam Co., IL; b. August 25, 1850, North Sunderland, Franklin Co., MA; d. May 19, 1924, Peru, La Salle Co., IL.
- iii. **SALLY JANE CORWIN**, b. Abt. 1852, Wilmington, Clinton Co., OH; d. 1869.
- iv. **FRANKLIN CORWIN, Jr.**, b. Abt. 1853, Wilmington, Clinton Co., OH; d. 1871.

Revised 10/04, 4/05 & 8/08

**REBECCA JANE HIBBEN 1820 - 1885**  
**and**  
**FRANKLIN A. CORWIN 1818 -1879**

*Thomas Corwin said when he went to that great western convention he thought he knew all about the western country. . . .He says there is as much intelligence and refinement in that place as there is in any of the eastern cities. The improvement is beyond all calculation. Howard Dunland told Papa that he has traveled all through the state of Illinois to every point. He has been to Hennipen and Peru and he believes it is destined to be the greatest state in the union, the report of the men that went to that convention has raised Illinois very much in the estimation of some people. Of course I pay attention to those remarks as I have some dear friends living there.<sup>1</sup>*

Elizabeth McManis Magee Hibben

**The First Half Of Rebecca Jane's Life Is Spent In Wilmington**

A fourth daughter was born to William Hibben and Elizabeth Springer on May 31, 1820, probably in Wilmington, Clinton County, Ohio.<sup>2</sup> Rebecca Jane Hibben's childhood was interspersed with family trauma. When she was just eight years old, her mother died and just a few years later when she was fourteen, her first step mother, Martha McManis, also died. Within the year she had another step mother, Martha's sister Elizabeth, whom she most likely had known for some time. At the age of nineteen she married Franklin A. Corwin. *"This is to certify that on the 27th day of August 1839 Franklin Corwin of Lebanon Warren County and Rebecca Jane Hibben of Wilmington Clinton County were legally joined in marriage by me under my hand this 13th September AD 1939. George McManis."*<sup>3</sup> Franklin and Rebecca had four children, all born in Wilmington. Minerva was born in 1840; Hibben S., in 1842; Sally Jane in about 1852; and Franklin Corwin, Jr., about 1853. The lives of Minerva and Hibben S. Corwin are recorded in Chapter IV, Generation 5.4.

Franklin studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1839. He moved from Lebanon, Warren County, Ohio to Wilmington at the time of his marriage, and practiced law there until 1857. He represented his father-in-law, William Hibben, in several court proceedings<sup>4</sup> and witnessed many of William's deeds. In 1844, he purchased portions of lots #92 and #69 in Wilmington<sup>5</sup> which most likely were his home and office. He was elected to the 45th general assembly of Ohio 1846-47, and was a state senator, 1847-49.<sup>6</sup> In 1853, he purchased fifty-three acres of land on the Cuba Road from William Hibben for \$2,200.<sup>7</sup> This transaction may have been William's gift of a valuable tract of land to Rebecca's family for a price less than its actual value. As noted in other sections, William distributed property to his children prior to his death.

**Rebecca And Franklin Join Wilmington Families In Illinois**

Between 1836 and the mid 1840s, several Wilmington families moved to Bureau County, Illinois.<sup>8</sup> One of them was the son of Elizabeth McManis Magee and Dr. James Washington Magee, William Bostwick Magee,<sup>9</sup> and his wife Mary Jane Harris Magee. Glowing reports of the opportunities in Illinois were probably received in correspondence to Elizabeth and during periodic visits by these persons to Wilmington. Elizabeth was at that time, the third wife of

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William Hibben. These reports were probably shared with the Corwin family, enticing them to move to Peru, La Salle County, Illinois in 1857. There they joined the other families living in Arispe Township, near Princeton, in the adjacent Bureau County.<sup>10</sup>

Franklin practiced law in Peru and was again drawn to politics. He was elected and served in the 24th, 25th and 26th general assemblies of Illinois, acting as its speaker during the last two terms. In 1867, "*Franklin Corwin, of LaSalle, was elected Speaker of the House, over Newton R. Casey, of Pulaski, by a vote of 58 to 24*" and in 1869, "*Franklin Corwin was elected Speaker of the House, over Newton Casey, by a vote of 53 to 23.*"<sup>11</sup> On June 26, 1868, he purchased the *Republican*, a newspaper of Ottawa, Illinois.

*Mr. Cullen sold the office to Franklin Corwin and George M. Radcliffe, of Peru, and the paper was changed to a six column quarto. Mr. Corwin was a nephew of Tom Corwin, the "Wagon Boy of Ohio," a lawyer by profession, and had served in the Legislature of Ohio and Illinois, in the latter as Speaker of the House. Mr. Radcliffe was a son-in-law of Mr. Corwin, and had also been a member of the Legislature. January 1, 1870, Mr. Radcliffe was succeeded by F. M. Sapp, but the firm of Corwin & Sapp was of short duration. Mr. Corwin turned over his interest to Mr. Radcliffe that spring and removed to his former home in Peru.*<sup>12</sup>

*Franklin Corwin removed to Wilmington from Lebanon in 1840. He was elected to the Ohio House of Representatives, and then to the Senate. He removed to Illinois, became a member of the Senate [House of Representatives] of that State, then Speaker of that body, and was subsequently elected to Congress in 1872. He was the nephew of Hon. Thomas Corwin of Lebanon, Ohio. Franklin's father was Hon. Mathias Corwin.*<sup>13</sup>

After selling his interest in the newspaper, Franklin returned to politics. He ran as a Republican and was elected to the 43rd Congress and served in the US House of Representatives March 4, 1873 to March 3, 1875. He was an unsuccessful candidate for reelection in 1874.<sup>14</sup>

Franklin died June 15, 1879, in Peru and was buried in the Peru City Cemetery. The *Tonica News* in the nearby town reprinted an eulogy from the *La Salle Democrat*.<sup>15</sup>

### *Death of Hon. Franklin Corwin*

*The exalted and the lowly, the rich in station, and the poor in rank, fill their allotted spheres, and pass away, leaving behind them the fragrance of noble deeds to perpetuate their memories, or dying as they have lived, unknown and unnoticed. Last Sunday afternoon at 4 o'clock, there died at his residence in Peru, of a disease contracted in the discharge of a long and eminent public service, Hon. Franklin Corwin. Born at Lebanon, Ohio, Jan. 12, 1818, he was admitted to the practice of law in 1838. He was a son of Judge Matthias Corwin, and older brother of Gov. Tom Corwin, who died at an early day. Franklin was brought up in Thomas's family and studied law with him. When but 20 years of age he commenced the practice of law at Indianapolis, because the laws of his native state forbade him to be admitted till he was of age. He was elected as representative in the forty-fifth Ohio state legislature, and was returned to the forty-sixth and forty-seventh general assemblies of that state as senator. He was president of the Cincinnati, Wilmington and Zanesville railroad, from 1850 to 1856. He then removed to Illinois and became a farmer, and was, during the war an active member of the La Salle county board of supervisors. Afterward he was*

*elected as representative in the twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth general assemblies of this state, and was speaker of the house in the legislature; after which, in 1868, he became editor of the Ottawa Republican. Some time subsequent he associated himself with Blanchard & Silver, of Ottawa, in the practice of law. In 1872, he was elected to the forty-third [US] congress, since which time he has been gradually failing in health, though a vigilant observer of state and national affairs down to within a few weeks of his death. Such is a short, though correct, outline of the public career of Hon. Franklin Corwin. Though professedly Republican in politics, he never swerved from the path of rectitude in doing his duty to all, regardless of party, and he thus numbered among the Democrats many warm personal friends. On more than one occasion while representing this state in the legislature, attempt were made to bribe Mr. Corwin, but his honesty of heart was as unbending as the stout oak of the forest, and he spurned the offers with contempt. While ably advocating the interests of his constituents in the legislature, or at home in the bosom of his family, he was the same genial, noble hearted gentleman, a firm friend and an incorruptible statesman. The funeral services were conducted by Rev. A. H. Dean, of Joliet, assisted by Rev. Mr. Bascom, of Peru, and the remains of all that was mortal of the Hon. Franklin Corwin were, last Tuesday, tearfully laid to rest, followed to the grave by throngs of sympathetic friends. God be with him.<sup>16</sup>*

Franklin was only sixty-one years old at the time of his death. It would appear that his death was not anticipated because he died intestate. Rebecca promptly petitioned the La Salle County Court to define and establish the value of Franklin's estate, list his heirs and appoint an administrator.

*The Petition of the undersigned, Rebecca J. Corwin respectfully represents that Franklin Corwin late of the County of LaSalle, aforesaid, departed this life at Peru in said County, on or about the 15th day of June A. D. 1879, leaving no last will and testament as far as your petitioner know [s] or believe [s]. And this Petition further shows that the said Franklin Corwin died, seized and possessed of Real and Personal Estate, consisting chiefly of 40 acres of land in Eden Township worth about \$2000, a house and lot in Peru worth about \$3000 and personal property consisting of House Hold Goods, Library, Farming implements, live stock, notes and accounts, all of said personal estate being estimated to be worth about Five Thousand Dollars. That said deceased left surviving him Rebecca J. Corwin (your petitioner) his widow, and Hibben S. Corwin, his only child and Harry Radcliff, Charlie Radcliff and Corwin Radcliff children of a Minerva Radcliff, a deceased child, his children as heirs. That your petitioner (being a widow of said deceased,) and believing that the said estate should be immediately administered, as well for the proper management of said estate as for the prompt collection of he assets, by virtue of her right under the Statute, she therefore pray that your honor will grant Letters of Administration to Charles Blanchard. . .<sup>17</sup>*

Franklin's personal property was sold at public auction.<sup>18</sup> Rebecca was required to purchase those personal items she desired to retain. From Franklin's extensive library she purchased an encyclopedia for fifty dollars. There was no market for his many legal volumes and

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the sale fell far short of the amount required to pay his debts. In addition he had a mortgage on his home. The administrator petitioned the court to sell real estate.

*Further represents that claims existing at the time of said decedent's death against said Estate are yet to be prosecuted and allowed accounting to about \$10300.00. Further represents that the above does not include interest or costs of administration. And that there is a deficiency in the amount realized and to be realized of the Personal Estate of about \$9155.75, all of which appears from a just and true account of the personal estate and debts of said filed and approved Oct. 15, 1879. Further represents that said Franklin Corwin deceased died seized in fee of the South East quarter of the Southwest quarter of Section Three (3) Township Thirty Two (32) Range One (1) in LaSalle County, Illinois, and Lots 3 & 4 in Block 6 Old Town of Peru (now city) which last described lots are subject to a mortgage of \$1500.00 to Martha E. McPherson. . . . Therefore, in as much as the account to be realized from the personal estate is insufficient to pay the just claims against said Estate, your petitioner prays that on the hearing hereof this Honorable Court will make an order authorizing and empowering your petitioner as administrator aforesaid to sell said above described Real Estate or so much thereof as may be necessary in the manner prescribed by law and that the proceeds of said sale be applied by your petitioner as Administrator aforesaid in the payment of just claims against said Estate. . . .<sup>19</sup>*

Rebecca Jane was recorded in the US Census of 1880 as a widow living with her surviving son, Hibben Corwin, and his family.<sup>20</sup> Three of her children and her husband had predeceased her.

*In noticing the death of Mrs. Corwin last week the La Salle Democrat says: "Mrs. R. J. Corwin, daughter of William Hibben, and beloved mother of H. S. Corwin, editor of the Peru News-Herald, was born at Wilmington, O., May 31, 1820, and was married in 1839 to Hon. Franklin Corwin, where they resided in her native city until 1857, when they came west. Mr. Corwin was an able lawyer and was elected three times a member of the Ohio Legislature. In the spring of 1857 they removed to a farm four miles south of La Salle, where they resided for 11 years. Soon after coming to this country Mr. Corwin was made a member of the board of Supervisors and was continued there for several years, until he was elected to the Illinois legislature, to which he was re-elected and made speaker. In 1872 he was elected to congress and in 1879 he died. Throughout his long career his wife was always a loving, earnest helpmeet. They had four children—two sons and two daughters. The youngest daughter died in 1869; in 1871 the youngest son passed away, and in 1878 the oldest daughter, Mrs. G. M. Radcliffe, died, leaving three children. Since her husband's death Mrs. C. has made her home in Peru, but spent every summer with relatives and friends in Ohio."<sup>21</sup>*

Rebecca Jane's last will and testament reveals the extent of her Hibben family ties and lists many family treasures passed on to her relatives. Witnesses to her will were her neighbors Henry and Augusta Ziesing.

*Third: I give and bequeath to my cousin Libby Hibben [Elizabeth Grier Hibben] of Peoria, Illinois, to my friend Mollie Gooding [neighbor], to my cousin George Hibben of Chicago, Illinois, to my niece Lillie Hibben [Martha Elizabeth Hibben],*

*to Patience Hibben widow of my brother George, to [Sally] Jennie [Hibben] Millikan, to my cousin Carrie Cropper of Lebanon, Ohio, and to my nephew Frank C. Hivling of Xenia, Ohio, and to my sister Mrs. Emeline Von Hartingen, the sum of One Hundred dollars each and I further wish my Executor to pay the expenses of said Jennie Millikan necessarily incurred in attending my funeral. . . Now therefore in accordance therewith I direct my Executor to give my Father's gold watch to my brother Alpheus Hibben and after his death it shall go to his oldest son Frank C. Hibben. My silver card case and desert spoon marked "F.C." he shall give to my niece Lillie Hibben. To Patience Hibben he shall give my gold ring with my initials on the back and filled with my deceased husband's and daughter's hair at her death or should I survive her the said article shall be given to Jennie Millikan. To my son Hibben Corwin he shall give my gold eye-glasses and the picture of his father and silver head cane. . .*<sup>22</sup>

### **Postscript: Rebecca And Franklin Help Raise The Children Of Thomas Entriiken Hibben (1830-1861)**

The US Census of 1870 records that daughters of the deceased Thomas Entriiken Hibben were visiting or living with the Corwins in La Salle County during that summer.<sup>23</sup> Martha Elizabeth Hibben, ‘Lillie,’ and Mary McLean Hibben, ‘Minnie,’ were the Corwin’s nieces. Minnie subsequently married Richard Ziesing who is listed in the US Census of 1880 as living with his parents just three households away from the Hibben Corwin family in Peru.<sup>24</sup> It is assumed Minnie and Richard met while she was resident in the Corwin home.

Mary McLean Hibben is the subject of Chapter IV, Generation 5.5.

### **Generation 4.4 End Notes:**

- <sup>1</sup> Letter to William and Mary Jane Magee, near Princeton, Bureau County, Illinois, from Elizabeth McManis Magee Hibben, October 31, 1847. Thomas Corwin, US Senator from Ohio and uncle of Franklin A. Corwin; Papa, William Hibben, husband of Elizabeth McManis Magee Hibben; Convention held at Chicago, Illinois.
- <sup>2</sup> William Hibben Family Bible, “Rebecca Jane Hibben daughter of William and Elizabeth Hibben, was Born on the thirty first day of May in the Year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty.”
- <sup>3</sup> *Clinton County, Ohio, Court Marriage Records*, volume 3, page 157; George McManis was the brother of Rebecca’s step mothers, Martha and Elizabeth McManis.
- <sup>4</sup> *Clinton County, Ohio, Court House Records, Chancery and Law*, volume 8, page 786.
- <sup>5</sup> *Clinton County, Ohio, Court House Records of Deeds and Mortgages*, volume P, pages 124-25 and 125-26.
- <sup>6</sup> *Who Was Who In America, Historical Volume 1607-1896*, 1963, Chicago, Illinois (Marquis-Who's Who, Incorporated), page 123; Rossiter Johnson, editor, *The Twentieth Century Biographical Dictionary of Notable Americans*, 1904, Boston, Massachusetts, (The Biographical Society).
- <sup>7</sup> *Clinton County, Ohio, Court House Records of Deeds and Mortgages*, volume W, page 576.
- <sup>8</sup> Magee, Radcliff, Cole, Taffe and Sabin are referenced in a series of letters written by Elizabeth McManis Magee Hibben between August 28, 1846 and January 12, 1851.
- <sup>9</sup> First husband of Elizabeth McManis, died May 23, 1823.
- <sup>10</sup> N. Matson, *Map of Bureau County, Illinois, with Sketches of its Early Settlement*, Second Edition 1867, Chicago, Illinois, (Tribune Company, Book and Job Printers); Settlement locations shown, W. B. Magee, G. M. Radcliff, P. Radcliff, Geo. McManis, W. McManis, McManis Mill, and A. Lomax.
- <sup>11</sup> D. W. Lusk, *Eighty Years of Illinois Politics and Politicians, Anecdotes and Incidents, A Succinct History of the State, 1809 - 1889, Third Edition—Revised and Enlarged*, 1889, Springfield, Illinois, pages 202 and 210.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ottawa: Old And New, A Complete History of Ottawa, Illinois, 1823-1914, 1912-1914*, Ottawa, Illinois, (The

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- Republican Times, Publisher), page 34.
- <sup>13</sup> *The Past & Present of La Salle Co., Illinois*, 1877, Chicago, Illinois (H. F. Kett & Co.), page 401.
- <sup>14</sup> Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-Present; <http://bioguide.congress.gov>.
- <sup>15</sup> Copies of Peru, La Salle Co., IL newspapers printed prior to 1904 have been destroyed.
- <sup>16</sup> *Tonica News*, La Salle Co., IL, June 21, 1879, Vol. VI, #16, page 4, column 3.
- <sup>17</sup> Estate files, La Salle County Genealogy Guild, 115 W. Glover St., Ottawa, Illinois. Petition of Rebecca J. Corwin in the matter of the Estate of Franklin Corwin, deceased, for Letters of Administration. To the Hon. Chas. S. Miller, Judge of the County Court of La Salle County, in the State of Illinois, June 19, 1871.
- <sup>18</sup> Estate files, La Salle County Genealogy Guild, [Note 17]. Handbill: "ADMINISTRATOR'S SALE" at Corwin farm, town of Eden, Thursday, July 31, 1879 (farm stock, feed and implements) and at Corwin residence, Peru, Friday, August 1, 1879 (personal property).
- <sup>19</sup> Estate files, La Salle County Genealogy Guild, [Note 17]
- <sup>20</sup> US Census 1880, T9-223, enumeration 85, sheet 24, household 203, District 4, West Street, Peru, La Salle County, Illinois.
- <sup>21</sup> *Tonica News*, [Note 16], Jan. 10, 1885, Vol. XI, #46, page 4, column 3.
- <sup>22</sup> Estate files, La Salle County Genealogy Guild, [Note 17]. Last Will and Testament of Rebecca J. Corwin, January 24, 1884.
- <sup>23</sup> US Census 1870, M593-224, sheet 626, household 68, Peru, La Salle County, Illinois.
- <sup>24</sup> US Census 1880, T9-223, enumeration 85, sheet 24, household 206, District 4, West Street, Peru, La Salle County, Illinois.