

## *Descendants of Jessie May Harvey and Mason Benjamin Meeks*

### *Generation No. 6.1*

**JESSIE MAY<sup>6</sup> HARVEY** (*Mary Vandervort<sup>5</sup> Hester, Ann Maria<sup>4</sup> Lawhead, Phebe<sup>3</sup> Hibben, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>*) was born 1884, and died March 21, 1951, in Indianapolis, Marion Co., IN. She married **MASON BENJAMIN MEEKS** February 19, 1915, in Danville, Hendricks Co., IN, son of **MASON MEEKS** and **MARY MISSOURI BENNETT**. He was born February 27, 1885 in Eureka, Spencer Co., Indiana, and died March 25, 1932 in Indianapolis, Marion Co., IN.

Children of **JESSIE HARVEY** and **MASON MEEKS** are:

- i. **MARY RACHEL<sup>7</sup> MEEKS**, b. December 16, 1915, Canton, Stark Co., OH; d. November 15, 2001, Wakarsusa, Elkhart Co., IN. She m. **JESSE M. NUSSBAUM**
- ii. **MABEL LOUISE MEEKS**, b. December 12, 1916, NE; d. June 21 1995, Beech Grove, Marion Co., IN. She m. **RUSSELL I. PRITCHETT**, b. July 27, 1914; d. December 01, 2000, Beech Grove, Marion Co., IN.
- iii. **HELEN EUNICE MEEKS**, b. June 24, 1918, Unadilla, Otoe Co., NE; d. January 26, 2004, Wilmington, Clinton Co., OH. She m. **THOMAS CANBY JONES** August 19, 1945, Danville, Hendricks Co., IN; b. September 25, 1921, Japan.
- iv. **MASON HARVEY MEEKS**, b. November 14, 1919, SD; d. May 1978, Spencer, Owen Co., IN. He m. **PATRICIA SUMMERS**.

## *Descendants of Rodney Beecher Harvey and Helen Maria Whittier*

**RODNEY BEECHER<sup>6</sup> HARVEY** (*Mary Vandervort<sup>5</sup> Hester, Ann Maria<sup>4</sup> Lawhead, Phebe<sup>3</sup> Hibben, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>*) was born May 26, 1890 in Monroeville, Allen Co., IN, and died November 04, 1945 in St. Paul, Ramsey Co., MN. He married **HELEN MARIA WHITTIER** June 17, 1916, daughter of **JOHN WHITTIER** and **MARIA HARRIS**. She was born November 23, 1891 in Worcester, Worcester Co., MA, and died April 14, 1962, Bayport, Washington Co., MN.

Children of **RODNEY HARVEY** and **HELEN WHITTIER** are:

- i. **HALE M.<sup>7</sup> HARVEY**, b. April 26, 1919, Takoma Park, MD; d. June 17, 1925.
- ii. **RODNEY BRYCE HARVEY**, b. March 31, 1922. He m. **DOTTIE** (unknown).
- iii. **RHODA BEATRICE HARVEY**, b. April 13, 1925, Stillwater, Washington Co., MN; She m. **LAURENCE MALVERN THORSHEIM** June 19, 1948; b. October 01, 1924, Thompson, Winnebago Co., IA; d. July 20, 1995, Golden, Jefferson Co., CO.
- iv. **HELEN ELIZABETH HARVEY**, b. June 06, 1930. She m. **ARTHUR L. BRUNDAGE**.
- v. **ELEANOR WHITTIER HARVEY**, b. March 02, 1933. She m. **FREDERICK DUERR**.

Revised 07/08

**JESSIE MAY HARVEY 1884 - 1951**  
**and**  
**MASON BENJAMIN MEEKS 1885 - 1932**

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**RODNEY BEECHER HARVEY 1890 - 1945**  
**and**  
**HELEN MARIA WHITTIER 1891 - 1962**

*For years I never knew whether the twilight was the ending of the day or the beginning of the night, and then suddenly one day I understood that this did not matter at all, for time is but a circle, and so there can be no beginning and no ending.  
And this is how I came to know that birth and death are one, and it is neither the coming or the going that is of consequence. What is of consequence is the beauty that one gathers in this interlude called life.<sup>1</sup>*

Winston O. Abbott

Mary Vandervort Hester and Aaron Lawrence Harvey's second child was Jessie May Harvey. She was born in 1884, probably in Clinton County, Ohio.<sup>2</sup> She married Mason Benjamin Meeks.

*[He] was born in Eureka, Indiana, on February 27, 1885, to Mason Hardin Meeks and Mary (Molly) Missouri Bennett Meeks. . . .He married Jessie May Harvey on February 19, 1915, during their Senior year in college. Both Mason and Jessie became ordained ministers for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). They became home front missionaries [During World War I], traveling wherever they were needed within the United States.<sup>3</sup>*

**Jessie and Mason, Ministers, Follow Their Calling In Rural Mid-America**

Their travels took them to Ohio, Nebraska, South Dakota, Minnesota, Michigan and back again to Indiana. Their children were born along the way. Mary Rachel, their first daughter, was born December 16, 1915, apparently in Ohio, for Mason sent copies of photos from Canton, Ohio, to his father in Montana. In one photo Mary Vandervort Harvey is shown holding her granddaughter, Mary Rachel. On the reverse is the following letter written in early 1916.

*Dear Father, since our 1st letter we have had some pictures taken and am sending some of them to you and the children. Mary has been bothered some with the thrush, but seems to be getting along nicely now.  
I had a letter from Minden (Nebraska) yesterday saying that the church had voted unanimously to call us for full time at \$1,000.00 per year and advance us \$100.00 to pay R.R. fare. They said nothing about the \$1,300.00 proposition to Norman, so I guess they will leave that for me to arrange after I get on the field. We will ship our goods about June 1st and if I can borrow \$50.00 for extra fares, we will*

## **THE PHEBE HIBBEN LINE**

*spend a week or so in Indiana and a few days in Iowa. I wish we had money enough to come to Montana for a week. I am going to do some figuring and if I could borrow enough to get us there on, and not run myself in debt too much, I will surely come. Do you suppose that you could arrange to help me borrow \$50.00 out there on our joint note if we should decide to do this? Now don't build many hopes on it if you can, for if it runs us in debt too far by that time, of course, it would be best for us to figure on our vacation time later, when we would be more able. As ever, Mason and family.<sup>4</sup>*

About ten years later, other photographs show Jessie and Mason Meeks and their four children in front of their home in West Concord, Minnesota. Mabel Louise had been born December 12, 1916,<sup>5</sup> and Helen Eunice followed, born June 24, 1918 in Unadilla, Otoe County, Nebraska.<sup>6</sup> A son, Mason Harvey Meeks, was the last child born on November 14, 1919.<sup>7</sup> In 1927, after numerous ministries, Mason and his family returned to the Christian Church in Danville, Hendricks County, Indiana, his last calling. His daughter, Helen Eunice Meeks, wrote:

*Mary V. Hester Harvey's two living sisters came to Ohio City where Uncle Orla [Orlando Harvey] lived the summer we stayed with him after Papa got sick & had to resign as pastor at the Danville Church. One of her sisters was Martha Dustman [Martha Jane Hester]. Grandma called her "Matt." Mama called her "Aunt Matt." The other sister was known as Aunt Ella [Ella Hester] or "Ellie." She had married a man named Nelson. Aunt Ellie was the baby sister. Grandma, who was called "Molly," was the oldest daughter of the family.<sup>8</sup>*

A photograph taken at "Uncle Orla's" home records the three Harvey sisters and a fourth woman, who is believed to be Orla's wife, Edna (Miller) Harvey.<sup>9</sup> Mason Meeks retired in 1930 and, at the age of forty-seven, he died at a hospital in Indianapolis, March 21, 1932. He was buried at the south Danville Christian cemetery.

### **Jessie Provides For Her Children's Education After Mason's Death**

After Mason's prolonged illness and death, Jessie struggled during the Great Depression to house, feed, and educate her children. All four finished high school and graduated from college. Jessie remained in Danville from which a photo sent to her daughter, Mary Rachel Nussbaum, captures a devastating event.

*"The upper story was once my home," wrote Grandma Jessie May Weeks after a tornado ripped the top story off this house in Danville, Indiana on Good Friday in 1948. This picture shows what she found when she got home from teaching school that day. She walked around the ruined house calling for her daughter, Mabel, who had been home sick that day. But Aunt Mabel was no longer there. Mabel got up to take some medicine and saw the ugly sky from the kitchen window. She felt the storm coming and something told her to get out of there. The family had planned to go to the closet under the stairwell in case of a storm emergency because it was a strongly reinforced area of the house and there were no windows. This is where Mabel headed, but she didn't get that far. She crouched behind a studio couch and pulled a quilt over her head. The violence of the storm knocked the glasses off her face, but she survived unscathed. . . .The closet that was to have been the safe place in a storm was filled with bricks from the chimney.<sup>10</sup>*

Jessie then moved to Connersville, Fayette County, Indiana, and taught school in nearby Waterloo for over four years.<sup>11</sup>

*Mrs. Jessie Meeks, 67, Waterloo Teacher, Dies After Surgery. Mrs. Jessie Meeks, 67, teacher of fourth, fifth and sixth grades at Waterloo School since September, 1947, died Wednesday afternoon in St. Vincent Hospital, Indianapolis, after undergoing surgery. She had been taken to the hospital Tuesday night. Mrs. Meeks, the oldest teacher in the county school system and termed by Supt. A. K. Ewing as "one of the best," resided at the home of Mrs. Fred McCombs, 121 East Fourth. The widow of the Rev. Mason Meeks, a Christian Church minister, Mrs. Meeks came here from Danville, Ind., where her husband held his last pastorate. She was a member of Central Christian Church here, and had taught two of the Sunday school classes, the Christian Fellowship and Loyal Women. A graduate of Central Normal, she also had attended Purdue. Survivors are four children, Mrs. Mary Meeks of North Liberty, Ind., Mrs. Mabel Pritchett of Danville, Mrs. Canby Jones of Clinton Corners, N.Y., and Harvey Meeks of Plainfield, Ind.; and five grandchildren. Rites will be at 2 p.m. Saturday in Danville Christian Church.*<sup>12</sup>

Jessie died March 21, 1951 and was buried next to her husband in Danville.



### **Rodney Harvey Becomes A World Renowned Plant Physiologist**

Rodney Beecher Harvey was born May 26, 1890, in Monroeville, Allen County, Indiana. He was the fifth child of Mary Vandervort Hester and Aaron Lawrence Harvey. He received a Ph.C (Pharmaceutical Chemist degree) from Purdue University in 1912, earned a B.S from the University of Michigan in 1915 and a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1918. On June 17, 1916, he married Helen Maria Whittier of Worcester, Massachusetts. His first employment after receiving his Ph.D. was as a plant physiologist with the U.S. Bureau of Plant Industry. Soon thereafter he began his life long career at the University of Minnesota, achieving the rank of Professor of Plant Physiology, Agricultural Botany and Horticulture. Rodney received a John Simon Guggenheim fellowship for study at Oxford University during 1927 and 1928.

*THREE MINNESOTA PROFESSORS GIVEN GUGGENHEIM SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING RESEARCH WORK, Valuable Discovery, Dr. Harvey will go to England, Sweden and Leningrad, Russia. Selection of Dr. Harvey was based on his investigation of low temperature effects on plants, principally at the low temperature station for research in biochemistry and biophysics at Cambridge University, England. He found that ethylene gas will hasten the ripening of fruits and vegetables and his system is in commercial use in Twin City fruit market houses. Injection of less than 40 cents' worth of gas into a carload of green bananas has ripened the fruit within 48 hours. Fruit menaced by frost can be saved by ethylene treatment and placed on the market in good condition. Dr. Harvey has been invited to demonstrate his discovery at the University of Leningrad and at Cambridge university.*<sup>13</sup>

## THE PHEBE HIBBEN LINE

Rodney wrote several books and texts about his field, was active in several professional societies, and received an honorary degree from Purdue University in 1939. During World War II, he was director of the division of microbiology of the General Mills research laboratories.<sup>14</sup>

*Helen was the only daughter of John J. and Maria Harris Whittier, and was born and grew up in Worcester, Mass. Helen attended Mount Holyoke College as a Mary Lyons scholar, was a member of Phi Beta Kappa honor society and graduated in 1915.*<sup>15</sup>

Rodney and Helen had five children: Hale M., born April 26, 1919 in Tacoma Park, Maryland, and died June 17, 1925; Rodney Bryce, born March 31 1922; Rhoda Beatrice, born April 13, 1925 in Stillwater, Washington County, Minnesota; Helen Elizabeth, born June 6, 1930; Eleanor Whittier Harvey, born March 2, 1933.<sup>16</sup>

### Rodney Dies, Helen Prepares Herself For A Career

Rodney Beecher Harvey died suddenly of a heart attack when only fifty-five years old, on November 4, 1945 in St. Paul, Minnesota. At the time, two of their children were in college and two in high school. Not only did Helen see them all through their education, she prepared herself for a teaching and administrative career.

*February 1948 — Helen Whittier Harvey's son Rodney received his M.D. (his fourth degree, the others being B.A., B.S., M.B.) this fall at the U. of Minnesota. He has a research fellowship in medical physiology and will continue working for his Ph.D. at the U. Her daughter Rhoda received her B.A. in medical technology at the U. at the same time and a certificate in X-Ray technology. Helen herself has been getting credits at the U. to insure a Minnesota H.S. teaching certificate. The other two children are not ready for college.*

*August 1949 — Helen Whittier Harvey and two daughters Helen and Eleanor attended the summer session at U. of Minnesota. Helen herself looking toward her master's, daughter Helen doing extra work for her pre-med, and Eleanor getting some extra art and biology. Her daughter Rhoda (Mrs. Thorsheim) is head of the U. Dispensary Laboratory. Son Rodney is an M.D. on the U. Medical School faculty.*

*May 1950 — Helen Whittier Harvey is serving on the State (Minn.) Science Curriculum Committee which is revising the whole secondary school science program for the state—a three year project. She is also chairman of the Education section of the Minnesota Academy of Science.*

*November 1950 — Helen Whittier Harvey received a master of arts this summer at the U. of Minnesota.*<sup>17</sup>

*After her husband's death, Helen Harvey went back to school and obtained a master's degree in science education in 1951 from U. Minn. and authored scientific articles on science education, taught science classes in the local junior and senior high schools, edited a biology textbook, and was instrumental in developing the Junior Academy of Science. She was also an elder and Clerk of Session in the first Presbyterian Church of Stillwater. She married to Ed Schwalen in 1958, and continued to live for a while at the Stillwater farm. . . Sometime soon after Helen's first stroke, she and Ed moved off the farm to Bayport, Minnesota and a developer from Weyerhaeuser Lumber company who*

*lived near the farm called and pressured her and Ed to sell the farm. . . .Helen died in 1962, in Bayport Minn. from another stroke.*<sup>18</sup>

Helen Whittier Harvey died April 14, 1962 and was buried at Stillwater, Minnesota.<sup>19</sup>

**Generation 6.1 End Notes:**

- <sup>1</sup> Winston O. Abbott, "Come Walk Among the Stars."
- <sup>2</sup> Helen Rholeen<sup>8</sup> Thorsheim (Rhoda Beatrice<sup>7</sup> Harvey, Rodney Beecher<sup>6</sup>, *Mary Vandervort<sup>5</sup> Hester, Ann Maria<sup>4</sup> Lawhead, Phebe<sup>3</sup> Hibben, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>*), GEDCOM.
- <sup>3</sup> Home page of Alliene M.<sup>8</sup> Chamberlin (*Mary Rachel<sup>7</sup> Meeks, Jessie May<sup>6</sup> Harvey, Mary Vandervort<sup>5</sup> Hester, Ann Maria<sup>4</sup> Lawhead, Phebe<sup>3</sup> Hibben, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>*), <<http://hometown.aol.com/ceneilla/blab3.html>>.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Social Security Death Index, #308-24-5423, "Mabel L. Pritchett, b. 12 Dec 1916, d. 21 June 1995, last residence - Beech Grove, Marion County, Indiana."
- <sup>6</sup> Timothy H. Jones, "(Helen) Eunice Meeks Jones, June 24, 1918 - January 26, 2004," memorial tribute, February 5, 2004; Social Security Death Index, #308-20-4433, "Eunice M. Jones, b. 24 Jun 1918, d. 26 Jan 2004, last residence - Wilmington, Clinton County, Ohio."
- <sup>7</sup> Social Security Death Index, #315-07-6591, "Mason Meeks, b. 14 Nov 1919, d. May 1978, last residence - Spencer, Owen County, Indiana."
- <sup>8</sup> Helen Eunice<sup>7</sup> Meeks (*Jessie May<sup>6</sup> Harvey, Mary Vandervort<sup>5</sup> Hester, Ann Maria<sup>4</sup> Lawhead, Phebe<sup>3</sup> Hibben, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>*), notes in possession of Helen Rholeen Thorsheim.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., photograph in possession of Helen Eunice<sup>7</sup> Meeks Jones.
- <sup>10</sup> Home page of Alliene M.<sup>8</sup> Chamberlin, [Note 3].
- <sup>11</sup> Helen Eunice<sup>7</sup> Meeks Jones, interview with the author April 17, 2002
- <sup>12</sup> *Connersville News-Examiner*, Connersville, Fayette County, Indiana, March 22, 1951, obituary, page 1.
- <sup>13</sup> *The St. Paul Daily News*, St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota, March 21, 1927.
- <sup>14</sup> *Who Was Who in America 1961-1968*, Chicago, Illinois, (Marquis - Who's Who, Inc.), volume II, pages 239-40.
- <sup>15</sup> Helen Rholeen<sup>8</sup> Thorsheim, [Note 2], family biographies.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., GEDCOM.
- <sup>17</sup> Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, Massachusetts.
- <sup>18</sup> Helen Rholeen<sup>8</sup> Thorsheim, [Note 2], family biographies.
- <sup>19</sup> *Who Was Who in America 1961-1968*, [Note 14].