



THE HARPER FAMILY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 28

SPRING 2023



Harpers in Kentucky - Nantura



Longfellow's gravestone

Part of the Harper Clan left West Virginia in the late 18th century to make their home in Eastern Kentucky. They established horse farms, and bred winning racehorses for much of the 19th century. The graves of several of these winners can still be seen in cemeteries there today.

Patricia Erigero has kindly shared her research on the Harper horses with us. She writes:

John Harper's father settled at Midway, Woodford County, Kentucky, on 2,200 acres of rich grasslands and woods. The Harper family's Nantura Stock Farm, at Spring Station, Kentucky (near Midway), was named for John's foundation mare, Nantura. It became home to several outstanding thoroughbreds of the late 1800s, and the racing greats Longfellow and Ten Broeck. When Frank Harper raised these stone obelisks over the graves of his heroic champions - first for Ten Broeck in 1887, then for Longfellow in 1893 - they became the first stone memorials to mark an equine grave in the state of Kentucky.

Harper had a well-established reputation as a breeder and trainer, dating well back beyond the Civil War. John's reputation as a horseman was so great that if the public got wind of the Harpers betting on their horses, they would stampede to do the same.

Longfellow's dam, Nantura, came to John Harper when she was three years old. A towering presence on the turf and in the breeding shed, the big, blaze-faced Longfellow was the best-known thoroughbred of the latter quarter of the 19th century in the U.S., and was famous far beyond American borders.

Longfellow spent his entire stud career at Nantura, dying, after a year of progressive failure, on the farm where he was born, November 5, 1893, at age 26. His obituaries in newspapers across the country were, in many instances, headlined "A King is Dead."

Ten Broeck (also bred by John Harper) set 6 time records at all distances up to four miles. At age five, Ten Boeck won nine of his ten races, and set the record for a mile at 1:39 ³/₄ - a record that stood for thirteen years.

Shortly before his death, John Harper wrote, "I am about to return to my home in Kentucky, and I may never come East again. I am an old man. I have been a companion of race horses for three score years, and every year I have lived, I learned something...My horses always understand me, and I know just what they asked for. I have bred and owned many good horses, any one of whom, when I trained him for a race, would win if he could, or die in the attempt. They have never deceived me.



Ten Broeck's gravestone

Used with the kind permission of Patricia Erigero, Thoroughbred Heritage, <tbheritage.com>

- continued on page 2

Changes in Our Family Tree



Births:

- Brenton and Morgan Dey added a baby boy to the family - on March 3rd, Henry Chester Dey was born. Henry is the great-grandson of Nela (Harper) Manning.
- Geza Carr and Deirdre Yee have had their second child. Her name is Zoey Lin Carr and she was born on April 8th. Geza is the son of Phillip Carr Jr., grandson of Phillip Bruce Carr, and great-grandson of Georgie (Harper) Carr.
- Hannah Lee Solomon was born on January 22, 2022 in LA, CA to Kate and Paul Solomon. Kate is daughter of Terri Lally, daughter of Myra Ott, daughter of Eva Golightly Corrick, daughter of ELMIRA (12th child of Jacob C. & Susan).
- Elaina Jane Mullenax was born March 19, 2023, the daughter of Joshua & Cassie Mullenax, Great Granddaughter of Danie & the late Janie (Harper) Ours

Marriages

- Brenton Dey was married June 2021 to Morgan Hardy. Brenton is a grandson of Nela (Harper) Manning.
- ALLY Golightly and TOMMY Riggs were married on April 1st and are residing in Frederick, MD. Ally is daughter of Doug Golightly, son of John and grandson of Eva.

Deaths:

- Doris Lee (Harper) Newdeck, of National City, California, passed away on Oct. 2, 2022. She was born May 11, 1926 at Leadmine, WV, and was the last living child of her immediate family (Leo & Mary Harper).
- Tom Harman died on 2/18/22, and his sister, Libby Messerly died on 3/07/22. Their father was Morgan (Dutch) Harman, son of ELMIRA (12th child of Jacob C. & Susan).
- Mary Alice Harman Holmes died on 12/16/22 at the age of 100 years, 4 months, and 16 days. She was daughter of Lester, son of ELMIRA (12th child of Jacob C. & Susan).
- Oris Dale Harper, 86, son of Dillon Emory Harper, died March 11, 2023. He lived in Fort Defiance, Virginia.
- John "Jack" Douglass Corrick died April 2, 2023 at his home in Calabash, NC. (His sister, Myra, writes, "I am now the last of the Golightly/Corrick "kids." When Mom and Leo married, John was in Grade 2,

me in Grade 6 and Jack in Grade 9. Guess all in the family know that made us sister and brothers. Jack was already 2nd cousin to John and me as our Grandmothers were HARPER sisters."

Celebrations

- Brian Michael Ott, graduated from University of Colorado as an architect and is currently employed as such in Denver. He is son of Bob and Lisa Ott. Bob is son of Myra Ott.
- Don Harman celebrated his 90th birthday on October 1st with a party given by his daughters, Donna and Debbie; it was attended by many relatives.

- Harpers in Kentucky - Nantura (continued from page 1)

Unless they met a better horse, they always won... I have made them my companions, and have obtained the pleasure of my life from the association. My horse Longfellow will never race again, because he has met with an accident that will prevent it; but not only was he the best and gamest race-horse that I ever owned, but, in my judgment, he was the best race-horse that this or any other country has known. Had he remained sound to the end of the race at Saratoga, he would have made time never dreamed of..." -John Harper, published in *Spirit of the Times*, August 1872

John Harper died two years later, at the age of 73 yrs., in the spring of 1874, never having quite recovered from the accident which cost his beloved Longfellow his racing career. Adding to that sense of loss was the shocking murder of John's elderly brother and sister in 1871. [Next year's Harper Newsletter will carry the story of this horrific event.]

Harper's nephew, Frank B. Harper, inherited the horses and original homestead after John's death - which, by then, consisted of 577 acres of grassland. Prior to the Civil War it had been highly productive cropland. It was well-watered with many ponds fed by springs. The farm included a mile training track used to privately school the Harper's colts and fillies. After he inherited the farm, Frank officially adopted Nantura Stock Farm as the name of the breeding operation, in honor of his uncle's noted mare.

You can read more about Nantura farm and American thoroughbred horses in Woodford County, Kentucky, in the book *Nantura, 1795-1905* by Jonelle Fisher, St. Crispian Press, 2004. Used copies can be purchased at <www.abebooks.com/book-search/title/nantura-1795-1905/>



From the Harper Cemetery Association Board of Directors



March 24, 2023

Greetings - from Stelman E. Harper, President, Board of Directors

Dear Family and Friends:

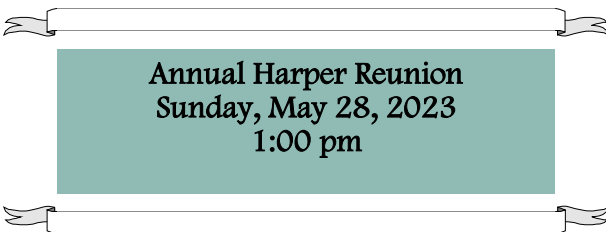
As we continue dealing with some issues with the Covid 19 pandemic and the variants, it looks as if there will still be no restrictions presented for us to consider. Continue being careful in keeping yourselves and others safe. Vaccinations and boosters are continuing to be a strong defense to protect us and others. We have our gatherings in a safe manner. It will be up to you to decide what is safe for you and if you wish to attend.

Please visit our website at www.jacobcharper.org where you will find information that has been posted for your use. John Harper is the web site director. Marsha Fuller provides the newsletter and maintains the information. Danie Ours keeps the family cemetery in great condition which is located further up the road on the farm. We try to maintain it with donations and a perpetual care fund. We encourage donations and bequests to keep the fund growing for future needs. The cemetery is for any Jacob C. Harper descendant and spouses who wish to be buried there.

Our meal will begin at 1:00 pm, on May 28, 2023, after the family photograph and the blessing. It is a covered dish affair with lots of good food. Those attending from far off who do not have means of preparing a dish should not worry about coming. There will be plenty. Please register when you arrive so that we can keep our contacts updated. Those who have email addresses will receive the newsletter and letter electronically. Those not having electronic connections will receive a mailing.

The Board of Directors will meet following the door prize drawings. Anyone wishing to communicate and send donations can mail their donations to our treasurer, Eleanor Nestor, 7936 Dry Fork Road, Hendricks, WV 26271. We thank all of you for your donations and continued interest in our family.

Put this on your calendar and we look forward to seeing you there if the Lord is willing and the situation is stable! Stay well. Any changes and or cancellations will be posted on our web site listed above. Check on the web site or with other members of the family.



If you're in the Harman area on the day before the Reunion (Sat., 1 pm), we could use your help with setting up the picnic tables at the Reunion Pavilion!

Perpetual Care Fund



Mail to: Harper Cemetery Association, 7936 Dry Fork Rd., Hendricks, WV 26271-8016

Name: _____

Street & City: _____

Donation amount: \$ _____



Delvia Harper (dau. of Isom - 8th Child)
with husband Casper Long and son, Russell

Mark Your Calendar for Next Year!
Harper Reunion is *always* the Sunday of
Memorial Day Weekend



To order a copy of
The Harper Family History
send check or money order for \$48 to:

Marsha Fuller
912 Oak Hill Ave.
Hagerstown, MD 21742

"The Harper Family Newsletter"
is published once a year by
The Harper Cemetery Association
7936 Dry Fork Rd., Hendricks, WV 26271-8016
©2023 All Rights Reserved.

Marsha L. Fuller, Editor
912 Oak Hill Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21742
mfuller@fred.net
Harper Family Website: www.jacobcharper.org

To stop receiving this newsletter,
send an email to: mfuller@fred.net
or a postcard to the above address



Harper Cemetery Association
7936 Dry Fork Rd.
Hendricks, WV 26271