Horse Barn

- *General History—pages 1-17;*
- *The Story of Twin Oaks (Perry Farm Park and Durham-Perry Farmstead) from prehistory to the present narrated in the words of the Potawatomi, Durham and Perry family members, and the last tenant farmer Francis DuVoisin—pages 19-31;*
- *Potawatomi and Durham Family's attitude toward Illinois Impending Statehood in 1818—pages 31-37; and*
- *Flags over the Farmstead Quiz—pages 38-39.*

Perry Farm Park and Durham-Perry Farmstead

Bourbonnais Township Park District
459 N Kennedy Drive Bourbonnais, Illinois 60914

The Perry Farm Park officially encompasses 169 acres in total, but the 25 northeastern acres that are inside Kennedy Drive, Perry Street, and the main park drive have been designated as the Durham-Perry Farmstead. Included within the historic farmstead are the: farmhouse, barns, farm buildings, animal pens, gardens, Centennial Orchard, Durham Memorial, and Millennium Garden. The Perry Farm Park and Durham-Perry Farmstead are a part of ongoing preservation efforts by the Bourbonnais Township Park District.

The artifacts of the Perry Farm Park and Durham-Perry Farmstead represent a heritage by Thomas Durham and David Perry. Thomas Durham was a Virginia Quaker who settled with his family on the farm in 1835. Durham's son-in-law was David Perry and he was a Vermont stone mason, lumber mill operator, and farmer.

The Durham-Perry Farmstead was one of the first pioneer settlements in the Kankakee River Valley. Thomas Durham, David Perry,

and Lomira Perry were each significant contributors to the political, educational, and economic institutions of the valley. The farmstead and the Perry Farm Park are vivid reminders to the public of a rich local history.

Facts of Note:

Current Owner: Bourbonnais Township Park District

Original Owner and/or Builder of the Farmstead: Thomas Durham

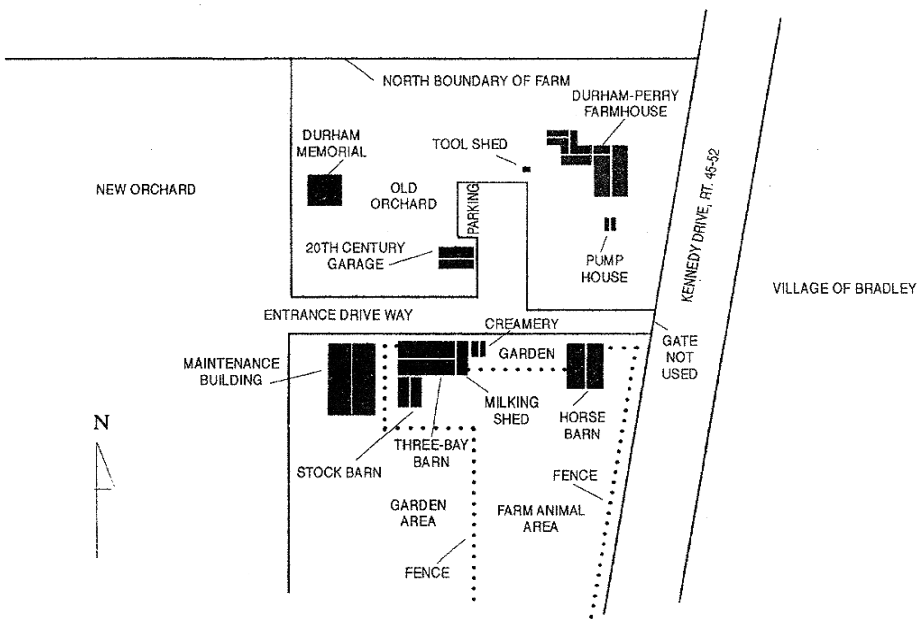
Year the Farmhouse, Three-Bay English Barn, and Horse Barn were built: 1840

Title of the Quilt Block on South Side of Horse Barn: Shutter

Historic Landmark:

- **The State of Illinois and the National Park Service of the United States Department of Interior announced the listing of the Durham-Perry Farmstead in the National Register of Historical Places on March 31, 2006.**
- **The Durham-Perry Farmstead became the third Kankakee County Historic Landmark on February 13, 2013.**

The farmhouse is open during regular business hours of the Bourbonnais Township Park District. The farm buildings are open during special events and during the annual Durham-Perry Farmstead Open House. If the farmstead buildings are closed, informational signs around the park and farmstead encourage self-guided tours of the grounds.



DURHAM-PERRY FARMSTEAD

This plan drawing shows the farmstead as it appears today. Drawing is not to scale. The farmstead occupies only the Kennedy Drive frontage of the 169 acre farm now called the "Perry Farm Park." It is administered by the Bourbonnais Township Park District.

THE DURHAM-PERRY FARMSTEAD

The Farmhouse

The Durham-Perry Farmstead was established in the 1830s by Thomas Durham (1784-1854) making Durham the first non-Native American settler of the property. The original 1830s home likely began as a one and one-half story log cabin but transitioned into an I-shaped English

tidewater style two-story home after improvements in 1840. Thomas Durham and his wife Margaret (c.1796-1882) had twelve children, but some of the children died in infancy. Martha Durham (1826-87), who was one of the twelve children, and her husband David Perry (1806-87) remodeled the I-shaped house after Thomas Durham's death in 1854.

The Perrys purchased the farmstead in 1866. The upper level of the improved 1840s farmhouse contains much of the original woodwork, architectural hardware, and Norfolk door latches. The lower level retains the many features of its 1855 to 1870s remodeling. The structure of the farm house is much like other houses of its day with a stone fireplace, spacious living area, small kitchen and second level. Several artifacts from the late 1800s and early 1900s are on display in the house.

The Three-Bay English Barn

The two barns on the Durham-Perry Farmstead farm were built around 1840 and are believed to be about the same age as the original part of the wood frame farmhouse. One barn is a three-bay English barn (pictured above) and the second one is a horse barn (see page 1). Although several structural changes have been made in the three-bay English barn, the design is typical of barns from the mid-1800s.

Timber frame construction was used to build both barns. The three-bay barn has hand hewn timbers, while mostly hand sawn timbers were used for the horse barn (see web link below). The different materials used indicate that the horse barn was likely built sometime after the English

barn, and timber was used from a nearby mill or another location. Other farm buildings that were built later include the concrete block milk house, white wood frame pump house, red wood framed garage (1922), and red wood framed tool shed.

See:
http://www.reclaimeddesignworks.com/design-inspiration/whats-the-difference-between-rough-sawn-hand-hewn-and-re-sawn-beams/

THE HISTORY OF THE DURHAM-PERRY FARMSTEAD AND THE PERRY FARM PARK

Until 1816, the Illinois Territory was sparsely settled with much of the population living in the southern part of the state. The conclusion of the War of 1812, however, caused Native American Potawatomi of the territory to relinquish claim of large tracts of lands. With these newly available land areas, immigrants began pushing northward from southern areas.

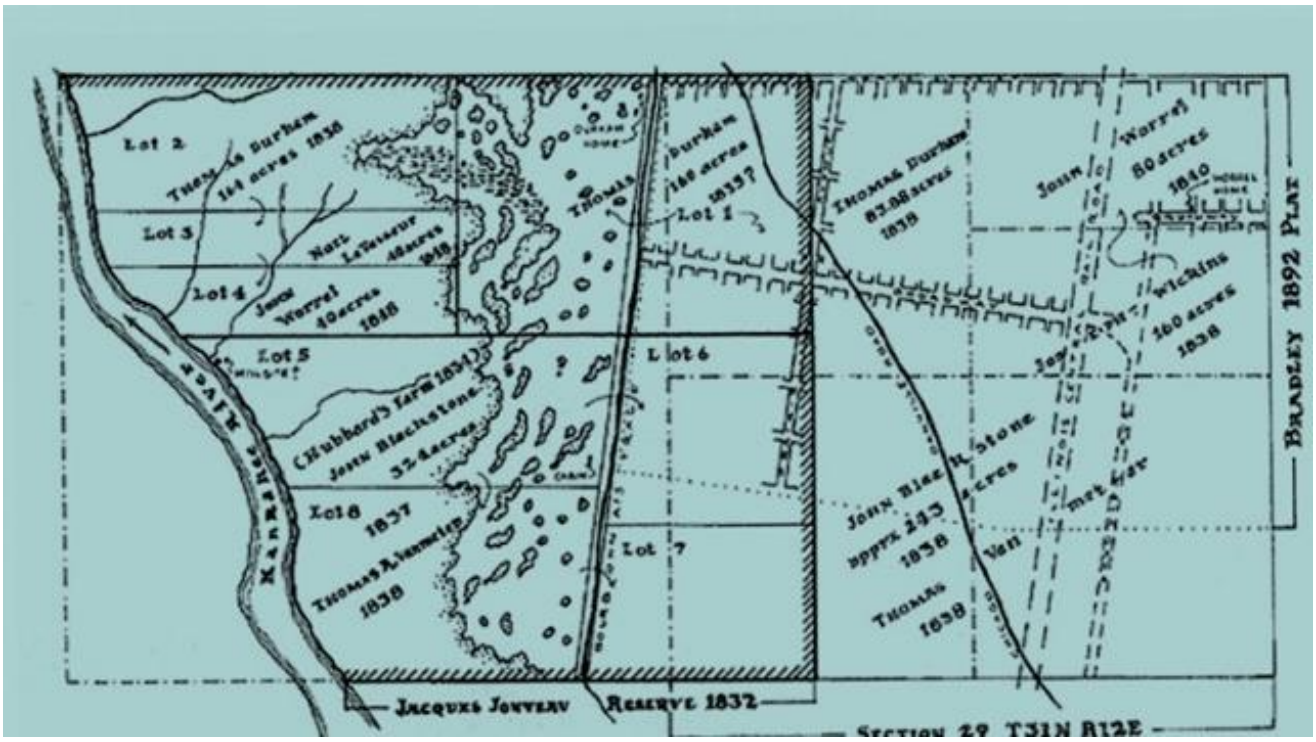
Current Perry Farm Prairie

For Virginia-born Thomas Durham (1784-1854), the urge to move north may have been motivated by his Quaker background and his

dislike of slavery. In the early 1800s, Durham moved his family among various locations from Virginia to Tennessee; then to Terre Haute, Indiana; then to Danville, Illinois; and finally to Bourbonnais Grove, Illinois. On one of his mid-1830s trips between Danville and Chicago, Durham camped at a place called "Twin Oaks" (the current Perry Farm Park). "Twin Oaks" was designated as the name due to two large burr oak trees which stood next to each other. One of the two trees still stands south of the farmhouse adjacent to the west side of what was called the Bourbonnais Road/Trace and southwest of the junction of the Chicago-Danville Road.

Durham was amazed at the beauty of the land between the Bourbonnais Road/Trace, Bourbonnais Creek, and river. As a result of this land discovery, Durham purchased about 160 acres of the Jonveau Reserve known as "Twin Oaks" from Gurdon Hubbard in 1835. The acreage he purchased extended from the prairie on both sides of the Bourbonnais Road/Trace to the wet prairie or marsh located west of the Bourbonnais Road/Trace to the Kankakee River.

Gurdon Saltonstall Hubbard at age 28 in 1830



This map shows the original Jonveau reserve and Durham's ownership of acreage (at top left of map).

In 1838, Durham purchased another 164 acres extending his property 83.88 acres to the east and to the hardwood forest and limestone canyon on the west. The canyon is now commonly known as the "Indian Caves" and is located at the point where the Bourbonnais Creek enters the Kankakee River.

"Indian Caves" on the Perry Farm

View from mouth of Bourbonnais Creek with Indian Caves in background

Northwest view of Kankakee River at the mouth of Bourbonnais Creek

Durham married Margaret "Peggy" (Wyly) Durham (1796-1882) in 1811. When the couple arrived in Bourbonnais Grove with their children, the family was welcomed by the Potawatomi with a wigwam of boughs which served as an early shelter for the family. Durham opened 20 acres for cultivation in 1835 to begin his farming venture.

Restored Prairie at Perry Farm Park

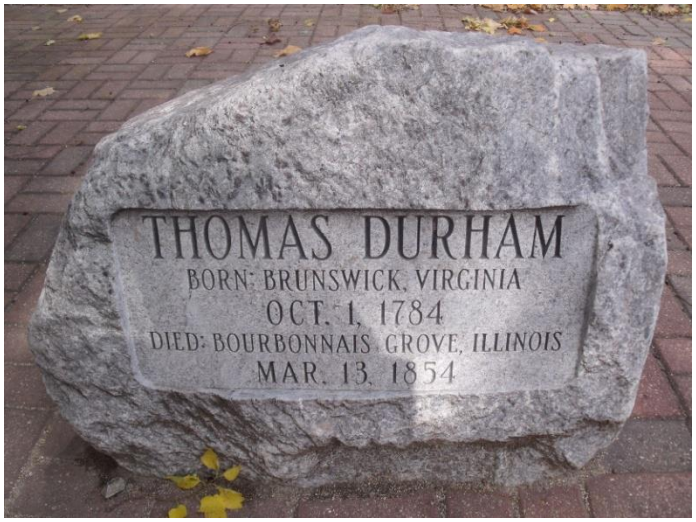
In 1836, parts of Cook and Iroquois Counties became Will County, so the Durham farm became part of the Rock Village Precinct of Will County. Durham was elected Rock Village Precinct commissioner in 1836 for a two year term. During Durham's tenure as a commissioner, a log school house was built in 1837 and was located just north of the junction of the Chicago-Danville Road and Bourbonnais Road/Trace. The log school, a 20' x 20', 1 ½ story building, served students from 1837 to 1848.

Will County Precinct Commissioner Thomas Durham greets students and parents as the log school house opened in 1837 (sketch by Vic Johnson).

Remnants of the log school in current Bourbonnais (moved in 2011)

During his tenure as commissioner, Durham petitioned that the Bourbonnais Road/Trace (now Route 102) become a state road. In 1849, Durham became postmaster of Bourbonnais Grove. He remained in the postmaster position until the 1853 incorporation of Kankakee County.

Thomas Durham died on March 14, 1854 and was buried on the farm. As the first "American-born" settler in Bourbonnais Grove , Durham distinguished himself from the many French-Canadian settlers who were living in Bourbonnais Grove. Thomas Durham is buried on the Perry Farm with a modern grave marker identifying the location.



Thomas Durham's Grave Marker in Millennium Garden on Durham-Perry Farmstead

Durham's sons took over the farm and had various businesses in Kankakee. By 1866, they had fallen into financial difficulty and wanted to sell the farm. Their brother-in-law David Perry surprised them by purchasing the farm with cash. One story claims that David Perry tossed his wallet full of cash on the table and said "I can lend a hand". Perry had married Martha Durham on January 1, 1845 and they resided just east of the Durham farmstead. The Perrys moved into the farm house and took care of Margaret "Peggy" Durham until her death in 1882. David and Martha Perry had four children.

David Perry was a carpenter and stone mason from Vermont and moved to Momence in 1838. He later moved to Bourbonnais Grove in 1840. Perry built a lumber mill and dam on the Kankakee River just upstream from the mouth of Bourbonnais Creek which made local lumber available. Builders would no longer have to travel to Chicago to purchase lumber. David Perry not only farmed, but also served as Kankakee County Treasurer from 1853-59. He died on May 26 1887 at the age of eighty years and left the farm to his wife. When she died six months later, the farm passed to their only surviving child, Alvah (1850-99).

On June 1, 1891, Alvah sold 76 acres of farmland east of the Bourbonnais Road/Trace (Kennedy Drive) to John Hardebeck for the plat of North Kankakee (later renamed Bradley). The last heir to the farm was Alvah Perry's daughter Lomira (1887-1961). In a newsletter article of the

Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society entitled "The Perrys of Bourbonnais Grove", local historian Vic Johnson wrote:

> ***"She graduated from high school in Chicago, and went on to earn a Master of Arts degree and a Ph.D. in History from the University of Chicago. Lomira became a teacher and the Dean of Girls at Kankakee High School. She was a member of the Kankakee Woman's Club, the Coverlet Guild of Kankakee, and the DAR. Upon retirement, Lomira returned to live in Wilmette. In Wilmette, she attended the Hyde Park Baptist Church of Chicago and belonged to the Conference of Club Presidents of Wilmette. At the time of her death [on December 29, 1961] Lomira was the sole surviving member of her family. . . Lomira's will left in trust to the Illinois Department of Conservation the farm that had been the home of the Durhams and Perrys for some 125 years"*** (*Le Journal du Village*, Winter 2009, 5).

After Lomira's death, tenant farmer Francis DuVoisin occupied the house until the 1980s. Lomira's Last Will and Testament left the farm in trust to the Illinois Department of Conservation. The state of Illinois then awarded the Perry Farm to the Bourbonnais Township Park District in 1988. On March 31, 2006, the state of Illinois and the National Park Service of the U.S. Dept. of Interior announced the listing of the Durham-Perry Farmstead in the National Register of Historic Places.

LOMIRA PERRY'S WISH FOR THE FUTURE

Lomira Perry

Lomira Perry (1886-1961) was the granddaughter of David Perry and the great granddaughter of Thomas Durham. She was the last descendant of her family line and owner of the land once owned by Durham. Lomira had a special vision for the future of the property now known as the Perry Farm and Durham-Perry Farmstead, and her vision eventually became a reality. When the State of Illinois inherited the 169-acre piece of land from Lomira's will upon her death, plans for the property's future were uncertain. The will stipulated that if the State accepted the property, at least 40 acres were to be used for a park and have the name "Perry" in part of its name. Questions then arose from the community such as: "Who would maintain the property?" and "Would it be developed or left in its natural state?" The possibilities were endless, but Ms. Perry had pointed the direction in her will.

The struggle for control of the Perry Farm rose to the surface in the *Daily Journal* (May 9, 1985) article entitled, "There's a Will: Way Sought to Get Perry Project Untracked," that addressed the issue between two different groups. In the article, the Kankakee County Convention and Visitors' Bureau and the Bourbonnais Township expressed opposing ideas for the development of the property. According to this article, "The land was willed to the State [of Illinois] by Lomira Perry to be used as a park and recreational facility, kept in its natural setting with a part to be developed commercially to finance the natural and recreational portions."

Bourbonnais Township feared that the development of the land would over-commercialize the area and make residents unhappy. Township supervisor Larry Power told reporters, "I still have a gut feeling there are people who want it [the Perry Farm] developed commercially, and the residents already said they don't want that."

The future chosen use of the current Perry Farm was uncertain.

Kankakee County Convention and Visitors' Bureau president Doug Neison and executive board member Francis Ciaccio told *The Daily Journal* in the same article, "The Convention and Visitors Association feels strongly that the properly structured setting – let's say an authentic Indian village or French settlement or working farm or a combination – would bring, literally, hundreds of thousands of visitors here."

The Illinois Department of Conservation decided in November of 1985 that it was willing to give the Perry Farm to a new park district representing the Bourbonnais Township area. The declaration was favorable to the township, but the decision was opposed by the Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve (KRVFP), which was formed in 1986 to protect area forest lands in their natural forms. The KRVFP felt that such a development fell under its own jurisdiction because of the plans to have a park district maintain a natural and historic preserve with public recreation space.

The Department of Conservation required a full land usage plan to be submitted for approval before it would transfer ownership to a local governmental body. The KRVFP still had a chance to obtain the land by submitting a better development plan to the Department of Conservation.

Creating only a nature preserve was not what the majority of community residents had in mind by forming a park district. In response

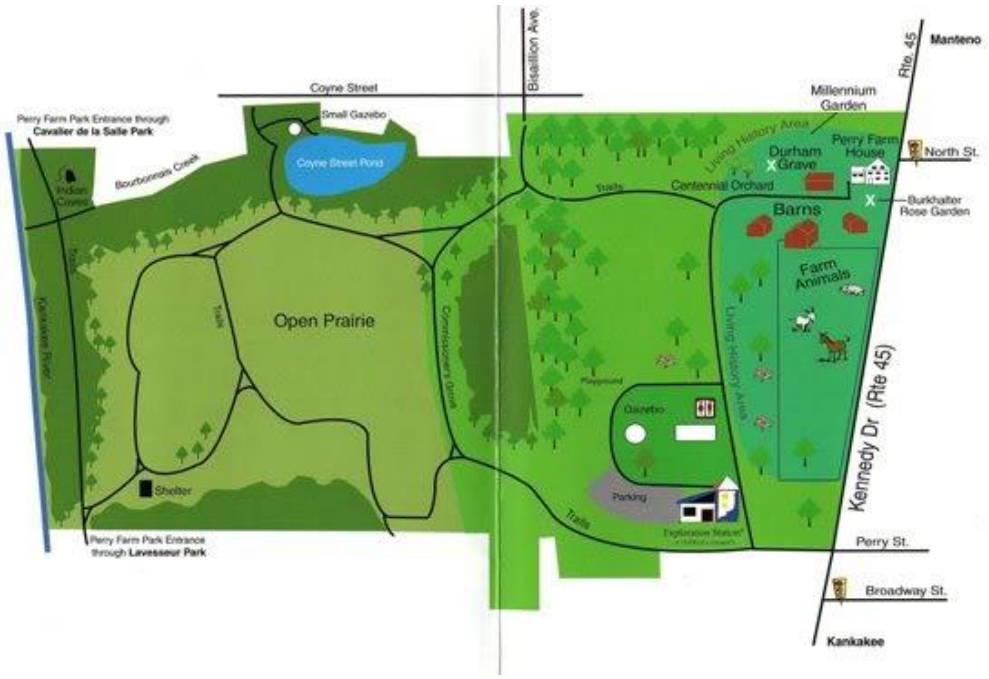
to a *Daily Journal* survey of community desires, the newly created park district (the Bourbonnais Township Park District or BTPD) developed a proposal based on results setting aside a portion of the property as a nature preserve. The BTPD expanded Ms. Perry's wish of forty acres being set aside as a park into plans for the entire 169 acres being used as a park.

Kankakee River near the entrance to the "Indian Caves"

In the *Daily Journal* (March 29, 1987) article, "Can Forest Preserve, Park District Share Perry Farm Future," Illinois Association of Park Districts Executive Director Ted Flickinger said, "They're [a forest preserve and a park district] not designed for the same purposes. A forest preserve is a resource management agency. It's more geared to the preservation of land. They're not into building recreational facilities like a park district [is]." The same article said, "The park district has informed the State that it is committed to protecting, preserving and developing the Perry Farm as a recreation facility consistent with park purposes [and] without any commercialization of the property." The BTPD sought to realize Lomira Perry's dream and to comply with the terms in her will.

After a long struggle, the BTPD was awarded the property by the State of Illinois after being in existence for only a year. Mark Steffan, the Bourbonnais Township attorney, said in an editorial letter of the November 3, 1986 *Daily Journal*, "The Department of Conservation has stated that "the idea of a park district has been studied, and it was felt that

this would be the most feasible method of obtaining the capital and the operational funds necessary to preserve the Perry Farm as open space for recreational use only."



Map of Current Perry Farm Park and Durham-Perry Farmstead

When Lomira Perry died in 1961, she willed lifetime farming rights to Francis DuVoisin. DuVoisin had been a close friend of the Perry family since his family moved to the area in 1924 and the back section of the farmhouse had been DuVoisin's home for 66 years. An agreement was reached with Mr. DuVoisin for the park district to purchase his lifetime estate interest in the property. DuVoisin decided that it was best to think of the Perry Farm's future.

In 1989, the Bourbonnais Township Park District took over title to the property. However, Mr. DuVoisin was still granted the use of "Francis' Garden" on the property near the barns. He and his wife, Anne Marie, could be found working many mornings and his famous hollyhocks could be enjoyed by many visitors to the property.

The park district has met and surpassed its goals for realizing Lomira Perry's vision for the Perry Farm. With trails through beautiful natural scenery near the flowing Kankakee River, the open spaces for recreation, the restored and preserved farm house and barns, the Exploration

Station®...(a children's museum) and a large biological and geological area, one can appreciate the outstanding work made possible by the formation of the park district.

Inside the Horse Barn during annual Durham-Perry Farmstead Open House

THE DURHAM-PERRY FARMHOUSE MUSEUM

The Durham-Perry Farmhouse serves as a museum and visitor's center while also providing classroom and office space for the Bourbonnais Township Park District. Information about park district programs and special events as well as other recreational opportunities and community events is available in the farmhouse. Registrations for park district classes and recreation programs are accepted during office hours.

Kennedy Drive view of the Durham-Perry Farmhouse

PERRY FARM LIVING HISTORY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Bourbonnais Township Park District's Perry Farm Living History Advisory Committee was instrumental in establishing parts of the farmhouse as a museum and pursuing national, state, and county historic landmark status for the farmstead. The Perry Farm Living History Advisory Committee is made up of local residents dedicated to preserving the history of the Perry Farm Park and the Durham-Perry Farmstead. The mission of the Perry Farm Living History Advisory Committee is to educate the public about this historic site. **Anyone interested in joining this advisory committee may call the park district at (815) 933-9905.**

Volunteer contributors to the information and images in this written work include:

Vic Johnson
Perry Farm Living Advisory Committee members Dr. Jim Paul and Daron Kinzinger
Francis DuVoisin (as consultant)

- *The following Story of Twin Oaks (Perry Farm Park and Durham-Perry Farmstead) from prehistory to the present is narrated in the words of the Potawatomi, Durham and Perry family members, and the last tenant farmer Francis DuVoisin.*

The Story of Twin Oaks—in the Words of the Potawatomi of the Year 1834: Prequel (from Prehistory to the Arrival of Thomas Durham)

by Dr. James Paul

During the 100 circles of seasons [1734-1834] before our Potawatomi people met outsider Thomas Durham, our people lived in *Ti-yar-ac-ke* [or *Thea-ti-ki,* "wonderful land"] with its river full of fish. We have many villages in *Ti-yar-ac*-ke, but those of us who first saw Thomas live in the village of Chief Me-she-ke-ten-o. When we saw Thomas at Twin Oaks where two oaks grow side by side, we traded a pony for his tired horse. We later saw Thomas, his squaw Margaret, and their children and built a wigwam of tree branches for them to use until their log cabin was built. We told Thomas and Margaret the story of *Ti-yar-ac-ke* and the land of Twin Oaks, a story that has been told to us by our ancestors.

Ti-yar-ac-ke was once covered by warm and shallow water with hard ridges breaking the surface [coral reefs]. There were many fish and other water creatures. Rocks [fossils] of these creatures can be found in the creek [Bourbonnais Creek] banks, and within 100 paces from the caves at the creek's mouth [Indian Caves]. Underground rock is not far below Twin Oaks. A few openings to [sink] holes exist. They lead to openings made by running water.

An ocean of ice [glacier] once covered and flattened much of *Ti-yar-ac-ke*. One end of the ice ocean broke causing waters [Kankakee Torrent] to make the river and creeks of *Ti-yar-ac-ke*. These waters also made a large openness [prairie] on the sun rise side of the trail now called Bourbonnais Trace [Kennedy Drive], wet lands [prairie or marsh] on the sun set side of Bourbonnais Trace, and open land [prairie] with some trees, and then a line of trees next to the river.

Large creatures [mastadons] lived here during the ocean of ice time [ice ages]. Our ancestors came to *Ti-yar-ac-ke* while hunting these large animals. As the ice ocean slowly melted, the air became

[Elephant-like American mastodons once roamed the land of *Ti-yar-ac-ke* and Twin Oaks--sketch by the author © 2017].

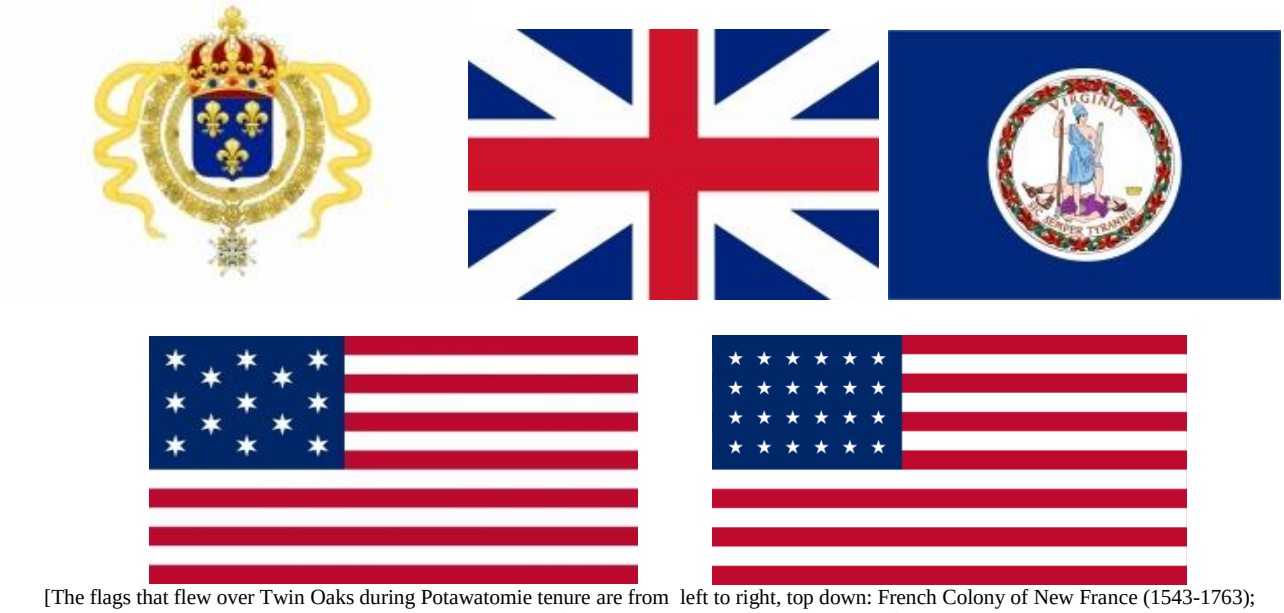
warmer and dryer. Large openness spread across the land. The big animals hunted by our ancestors were no more [the American mastodon became extinct about 10,000 years ago]. Our ancestors hunted, but they also fished, and picked fruits, nuts, berries and seeds of wild grasses. They stayed for short times on high land, and then followed herds of bison, caribou, and deer [these people were Paleolithic or Paleo-Indians].

The warming air and the spread of openness brought a new people. They were hunters who trailed herds of animals on their seasonal wonderings [these people were known as Archaic and lived 8000-1000 B.C.E.]. They built lodging for hot times on wooded areas and spent cold times in rock shelters or large caves like those at the mouth of the Twin Oaks creek [Bourbonnais Creek]. These people hunted and gathered food, yet found time to make many different types of weapons, tools, and trinkets. Later, another people [Woodland] came and built villages, made clay pottery, buried their dead in mounds, and made trinkets and tools. Two thousand circles of seasons ago, another group of ancestors [Mississippian] arrived and built

huge spirit mounds and large villages along the river valleys on the sun set side of *Ti-yar-ac-ke.* Every one of these ancestors [Paleo, Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian] had bands that lived in *Ti-yar-ac-ke*, and on the land of Twin Oaks.

Between 100 and 500 circles of seasons ago [the years1300-1700 in North America are known as Proto-History; the historic or written history period began when Rene Robert Cavelier de LaSalle and his company canoed down the *Ti-yar-ac-ke* River in 1679], our ancestors began to form tribes and occupied agreed upon land. The people in the river valleys toward the setting sun called themselves *Inoca*. The Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Peoria were also *Inoca*. We Potawatomi are not *Inoca* [the French explorers referred to the *Inoca* as the *Illini* or *Illiniwek*]. 130 circles of seasons ago [c. 1700], many of our Potawatomi ancestors lived on both sides of the great lake up-river from *Ti-yar-ac-ke* [in Michigan and Wisconsin], but within 30 circles of seasons ago [c. 1730] one of our Potawatomie tribes found new hunting and planting grounds in *Ti-yar-ac-ke.* The Piankeshaws and the Miamis lived on the sun rise side of *Ti-yar-ac-ke*. Some Mohicans, Inoca, Chippewa, Ottawa, and Miami lived in *Ti-yar-ac-ke* before us.

200 circles of seasons ago [the year 1634], our Potawatomi people met outsiders called *voyageurs* [French travelers] including men in black clothing [Jesuit missionaries]. We liked to trade with them. Over the course of 100 circles of seasons while living in *Ti-yar-ac-ke* [1734-1834], we met outsiders who carried different cloths waving on poles [flags]. They often carried these cloths into battle against each other and sometimes against us.



[The flags that flew over Twin Oaks during Potawatomie tenure are from left to right, top down: French Colony of New France (1543-1763); British Colony: Indian Reserve (1763-1778) and Provence of Quebec (1774-78); Commonwealth of Virginia (1778-87); United States 13 stars (1787-95), and United States 24 stars (1822-36)—with 4 United States flags with 15, 20, 21, and 23 stars in between 1795-1822)].

The men who wore black clothing tried to "baptise" us. Few of us were interested in this strange religion because it went against our culture and beliefs. Eleven circles of seasons ago [1823], near the St. Joseph River on the sun rise side, a new group called "Baptists" came to teach our people reading, writing, farming, and workng inside the home. Some of these "Baptists" thought that we could be saved from the outsiders' bad habits by moving us to the sun set side of the Mississippi River. They told this to their leaders, and those leaders agreed. The outsiders also wanted our land.

After the Black Hawk War ended two circles of seasons ago [1832], the Treaty of Camp Tippecanoe, changed our lives. The treaty was between the outsiders and the chiefs and headmen of the "Potawatomie Tribe of Indians of the Prairie and Kankakee". The treaty gave land to those with Potawatomie blood so they could sell it. Our land is now being sold to

outsiders since we must move to the sun set side of the Mississippi River. *Ti-yar-ac-ke* is now open for outsiders. In return for this land, we are to be given new lands, money, and supplies to help us build new homes. We worry that this money and supplies will be little, or late in arrival, and we will suffer after removal to the lands toward the setting sun. As our bands now begin to leave our homes and villages, our hearts are broken. Squaws cry. Braves and the old people shed tears as they see for the last time their *Ti-yar-ac-ke*, its beauty, its trees along the river, its openness full of game, fur bearing animals, deer, and its clear waters full of fish.

An outsider, Gurdon Hubbard, bought our Twin Oaks. Thomas Durham bought Twin Oaks from Hubbard. We can only hope that Thomas, Margaret, their children, and their children's' children will continue our Potawatomie spirit of loving and caring for Twin Oaks, and tell its story.

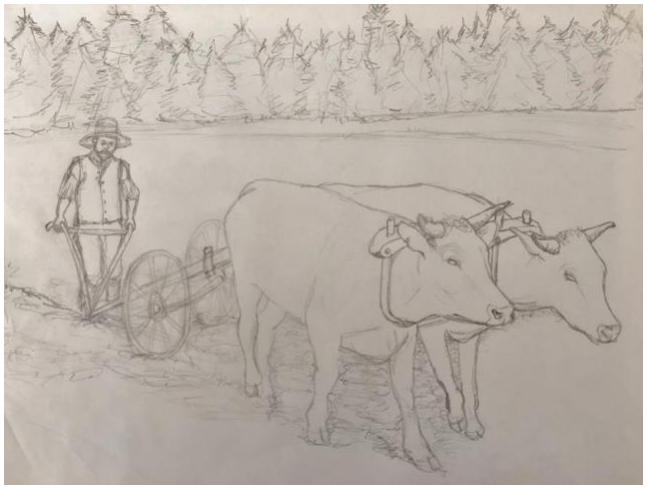
The Story of Twin Oaks—in the Words of Thomas Durham (1784-1854): Part 1

by Dr. James Paul

Good day to thee! When I first laid eyes on Twin Oaks in 1834, I was almost 50 years old, but I knew this was where I wanted to spend the rest of my life. I was amazed at the beauty of the land between the Bourbonnais Trace, Bourbonnais Creek, and Kankakee River. Twin Oaks (two large burr oak trees) was where we camped for the night on our walk from the Quaker settlement of Vermilion Grove, south of Danville, to Chicago. I had been hired by Gurdon Hubbard to build a brick warehouse on the corner of LaSalle and South Water Street in Chicago. Hubbard must have been impressed by the new masonry Vermilion County Court House that I had just finished in Danville. Twin Oaks was located just west of the Chicago to Danville Road—about the midway point or 65 miles south of Chicago—where the road intersected with the Bourbonnais Trace [in later times, the address of my farm house became 459 North Kennedy Drive, Bourbonnais, Illinois, after the Bourbonnais Trace was renamed Kennedy Drive—one of the two Twin Oaks still stands south of the Perry Farm House, the other was diseased and cut down in 1990, but a slice of its 200 year-old trunk is displayed south of the smoke tree behind the Letourneau Home/Museum on the Adrien M. Richard Heritage Preserve Arboretum].

After completing the warehouse in Chicago, I purchased the 160 acres Twin Oaks portion of the Jonveau Reserve from Hubbard who was an agent for the land transfers when the Potawatomi were compelled to move west of the Mississippi. This acreage extended from the prairie on both sides of the Bourbonnais Trace to the wet prairie or marsh located west of the Bourbonnais Trace to the Kankakee River. In 1838, I purchased another 164 acres extending my property 83.88 acres to the east and the hardwood forest and limestone canyon "Indian Caves" to the west where the Bourbonnais Creek enters the Kankakee River.

In 1835, my wife Margaret (1796-1882), who we called Peggy, and I moved our nine children and possessions from Vermilion Grove to Twin Oaks. My family and I were cordially greeted by the resident Potawatomi. They even constructed a wigwam of boughs for us to use until our log cabin was built. Peggy gave birth to three more of our children at Twin Oaks. We were the first Quaker family and first American-born family to settle in French-Canadian Bourbonnais Grove. By the summer of 1835, I was cultivating 40 acres at Twin Oaks.



My team of oxen and I broke open the prairie at Twin Oaks in 1835
(sketch by Christina M. Bradley © 2016).

By 1840, we had constructed a timber framed I-shaped two story "tidewater stack" farm house and three-bay English barn. The horse barn was built shortly thereafter along with chicken coups, granary, corn cribs, and tool sheds.

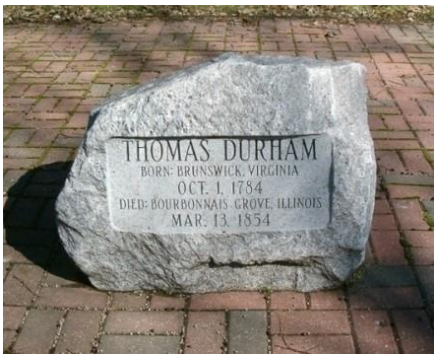
As a Virginia-born individual of Quaker faith, my urge to move north was motivated by my support of abolition and opposition to slavery. In the early 1800s, I moved from Virginia to Eastern Tennessee where I met and married Peggy Wyly in 1811. We then moved to Terre Haute, Indiana; then to Vermillion Grove outside Danville, Illinois; and finally to Bourbonnais Grove, Illinois.

In 1836, parts of Cook and Iroquois Counties became Will County, so my farmstead became part of the Rock Village Precinct of Will County. I was elected Rock Village Precinct commissioner in 1836 for a two year term. During my tenure as a commissioner, a log school house was built in 1837 and was located just north of the junction of the Chicago-Danville Road and Bourbonnais Trace. The log structure, a 20' x 20', 1 ½ story building, was the first Bourbonnais Grove school to serve students from 1837 to 1848. In 1837, I also built the Early Classical Revival brick home of Noel LeVasseur [this home was later demolished in 1885 for the construction of Roy Memorial Chapel on the St. Viator College campus which stood until it burned down in 1906—the site is just north of present-day Olivet Nazarene University's Chapman Hall].

During my tenure as commissioner, I successfully petitioned that the Bourbonnais Trace become a state road [it is now Route 102]. In 1849, I became postmaster of Bourbonnais Grove. I remained in the postmaster position until the 1853 incorporation of Kankakee County. My home was a natural mail and stage coach stop, and my home was known for its rural hospitality. Even my friends who were not family members called me "Uncle Tommy Durham". I died on March 14, 1854 at the age of 69 and am buried at my beloved Twin Oaks with a modern grave marker in the Millennium Garden. Thou are fortunate that my Twin Oaks has been preserved for thee as an historical and recreational site.

The Story of Twin Oaks—in the Words of Marth Durham-Perry (1825-87): Part 2

by Dr. James Paul



Thomas Durham's grave is in the Millennium Garden at the Durham-Perry Farmstead.

I was 28 years old and married with a three-year-old son when my father, Tommy Durham, died on March 14, 1854 at Twin Oaks. His five daughters (Barbara, Artemisia, Arabella, Margaret, and myself—Martha) each received $5.00 from his estate. Our mother, Margaret/Peggy (1796-1882), was the beneficiary of the rest of Twin Oaks. Our four brothers (Harris, Stephen, Gurdon, and Daniel) inherited four equal parts of the farmstead at Twin Oaks, which had grown to 408 acres. Not only was my father's death a traumatic event in 1854, but also in the year before, a major occurrence changed our community.

On July 4, 1853, the Illinois Central Railroad's first train steamed up the ridge of what would soon be the center of a new town: Kankakee. This shifted the local economic community center from agricultural-based Bourbonnais Grove to a newly born commercial center around the Kankakee railroad depot which was built in 1855. Also, the county of Kankakee was established in 1853. The days of the pioneer covered wagon "trains" were drawing to a close.

I was a middle-child, born into the Durham family in Vermillion Grove (south of Danville, Illinois) on August 25, 1825. When I was nine-years-old in 1835, my family moved north to Bourbonnais Grove and settled on my father's newly purchased land at Twin Oaks. We first lived in a log cabin, but by 1840 we had moved into the two story I-shaped frame farm house located west of the Bourbonnais Trace (later Kennedy Drive) and southwest of where the Chicago-to-Danville Road intersected with the trace (later the intersection of Kennedy Drive and North Street). I helped my mother with the women's chores on the farmstead: sewing, quilting, cleaning, washing clothes, gardening, collecting eggs, feeding animals, making butter, preparing food for meals, canning, and cooking. Life on the farmstead was hard, but exhilarating. We watched the covered wagon trains pass by our farm house, sometimes ten to twelve times per day, on their way between the Wabash Valley and Chicago. From a distance, the white canvas-covered wagons, pulled by oxen or horses, looked like a fleet of schooners under sail; therefore we often referred to them as the "prairie schooners." The traffic included stage coaches carrying passengers and mail, herds of cattle, droves of pigs numbering in the 100s, and canvas-covered wagons carrying flour, bacon, fruit, sugar, and timber. After 1853, this prairie freight would be mostly carried by train.

I was barely sixteen years old when I first met David Perry (1807-87) in 1841. It was in that year that David, along with his brother James and friend Thomas Vanmeter, had moved to

Bourbonnais Grove to build a saw mill on the Kankakee River, just south of Bourbonnais Creek. Residents of Bourbonnais Grove could then purchase lumber locally instead from Chicago. The mill was later converted to a grist mill. In 1859, the mill and dam became part of a flour mill when it was moved upstream two miles to the Kankakee area of South West Avenue.

David had been born in Vermont. His father, Lieutenant Nathaniel Green Perry, had participated in the War of 1812 and his grandfather, Captain David Perry, had served in the American Revolution. As a young carpenter in 1834, David moved to the northeastern Illinois pioneer settlement known as Lower Crossing or Westport on the Kankakee River's north bank along the Hubbard Trail. David and Phillip Worchester built the first frame house there; and in 1838, David and Asher Sargent built the first mill on the river at Westport. In 1845, this settlement was incorporated as the town of Momence.

After three years of acquaintance, and then courtship, David and I were married on January 1, 1845—a major holiday in French-Canadian Bourbonnais Grove. We lived in a house on a one-acre farm just south of the junction of the Danville-to-Chicago Road and Bourbonnais Trace (later the Centrue Bank location on South Main Street, Bourbonnais)—across the road from the Twin Oaks' Durham family farm house. David and I had five children, but we grieved the deaths of two daughters, Rowena and Carrie, and one son, David, in infancy; and daughter Mary at age twelve. Our sole surviving son, Alvah (1850-99), was our first-born on June 25, 1850. Before my father, Thomas, died in 1854, he loved holding and playing with his young grandson. In the years 1853-59, my husband served as Kankakee County Treasurer.

During the international financial panic of 1866, my brothers' business ventures in Kankakee were in serious difficulty. They were going to sell their shares of Twin Oaks to make ends meet. When they met in the Twin Oaks' Durham family farm house to discuss selling the farmstead in order to pay off their debts, my husband threw his money belt on the table and said "I can lend a hand!" We paid cash for the farm which was valued at $25,000 in the 1870 Agriculture Census. Our family moved from across the road into the Twin Oaks farm house, began remodeling of the house, and lived there with my mother the rest of our lives.

David, Alvy, Mary, servant Rhoda Hawkins, and I cared for my mother Peggy until her death on March 2, 1882. By 1877, Alvy was working with George H. Andrews in a cattle broker partnership at the Chicago Stock Exchange. George and Sarah Andrews were Kankakee River Valley pioneers who moved to Chicago in 1874. Alvy married their eighteen-year-old daughter, Ida, on May 9, 1877 in Chicago. David and I loved being with our granddaughters Bertha (born on May 29, 1878) and Sarah (born November 18, 1883). David died on May 19, 1887 before our third granddaughter, Lomira, was born on June 11, 1887. I was able to cradle her in my arms before I died on November 14, 1887.

The Story of Twin Oaks—in the Words of Alvah Perry (1850-99): Part 3

by Dr. James Paul

1887 was a memorable year in my family history. My father and mother, David and Martha Perry, died six months apart that year—father died on May 19 and mother died on November 14. Within those six months, my third daughter, Lomira, was born on June 11. I was

thirty-seven years old in 1887 having been born on June 25, 1850 in Bourbonnais Grove. My wife Ida was twenty-nine years old in 1887. She was born in Kankakee on December 29, 1858. My parents died in their beloved Twin Oaks farm house in what was starting to be referred to by locals as Woodland Park (present day Perry Farm Park). Ida and I had just celebrated our tenth year wedding anniversary on May 9, 1887—ten days before my father died. Our two other daughters were Bertha age 9 and Sarah age 4 in 1887. At that time, my family lived in Chicago at 319 Bowen Avenue, Hyde Park where I worked with Ida's father, George Andrews, in a cattle broker partnership—the commission firm of Andrews and Perry—at the Union Stock Yards.


These porcelain portraits depict my father-in-law and mother-in-law,
George and Sarah Andrews. [These artifacts are on display in the Durham-Perry Farmhouse.]

My wife's parents, George and Sarah Andrews, were Kankakee River Valley pioneers who had moved to Kankakee from Indiana in the 1850s. I began to court Ida in Kankakee before her family moved to Chicago in 1874, three years after the Great Chicago Fire. We were married at Hyde Park in Chicago on May 9, 1877. Ida wrote in a family memoir,

> My mother [Sarah] was too young and too energetic to drop out of the activities after my marriage so she took up the study of medicine, being one of the first women to become a physician in Chicago. She received her degree from Hahnemann Medical College. She was raised a Quaker, and when chastised by her parents because of her interest in her brother's study of medicine (because at that time it was most unwomanly to be interested in such subjects, especially anatomy), she decided to accept the ardent [proposal] of her lover, George H. Andrews, and at the age of 16 was married in my father's sister's home—not because her parents did not approve of her choice, but because he was a Baptist. She could not be married in the orthodox Quaker church of the day. No music was allowed in the Quaker home—how things have changed. [George and Sarah were married on January 19, 1851 in LaPorte, Indiana.] I should also mention the fact that my mother helped to establish the first free clinic in Chicago and pioneered also the YWCA work there. She had the joy of being a great success in her profession.

[There is a note on this memoir that in 1871, Hahnemann Medical College of Chicago began to teach women to become doctors in the practice of homeopathic medicine. Ida mentioned this memoir in a meeting of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1934.] The address for George and Sarah Andrews in the 1880 census was 301 Bowen Avenue, Hyde Park, Chicago, just down the street from my Perry family of five.

During my career as a Chicago cattle broker, my family and I visited Twin Oaks in unincorporated Bourbonnais several times a year in the summer and on holidays. As the sole survivor of David and Martha (Durham) Perry's five children, I inherited Twin Oaks upon the death of my parents. When my uncles on the Durham side of my family (mother's brothers)

could no longer help farm Twin Oaks, I hired tenant farmers from 1887 to 1899 to cultivate the land and tend to the livestock. The 1890s saw major changes just east of Twin Oaks.

Just after George R. Letourneau was elected mayor of Kankakee in April 1891 (he had earlier served as the first mayor of Bourbonnais in 1875-76), he had to deal with the May 4 bombshell trumpeted in the *Kankakee Gazette* headline "Hardebeck the Hustler has a Big Scheme in Hand—Nearly One Thousand Acres Under Contract" (Vic Johnson, *An Illustrated Sesquicentennial Reader: Kankakee County, Illinois 1853-2003*, p. 116). North Kankakee was expanding to include many factory and town lot sites.

When Ida and I were about to sell 160.38 acres of Twin Oaks on the east side of Bourbonnais Road [later Kennedy Drive] to Hardebeck in 1891, I found out that I did not have clear title to the farmstead! My father's will indicated that the farmstead ". . . in lieu of dower [a widow's share for life of her husband's estate] all the rents and profits arising from my farm on which I now reside, situated in the town of Bourbonnais, Kankakee County, State of Illinois, containing 355 acres more or less, [will transfer to my wife] during her natural life and at her decease to go to my only son, Alvah Perry." In order to clear up any ambiguities and receive clear title Twin Oaks, I filed an affidavit in 1891 which stated "David Perry and his devisees were in actual possession of said land from the first day of March 1866 to the present time, and they paid taxes yearly on said land during that time." I then received quit claim deeds from my surviving uncles on the Durham side of my family. Accordingly, on June 1, 1891, Ida and I sold 160.38 eastern acres of Twin Oaks to Hardebeck. This acreage was soon incorporated into Hardebeck's plat for the village of North Kankakee, which was renamed Bradley City in 1895 when the David Bradley Manufacturing Company started operation; and then shortened to Bradley in 1896.

The 1890s were boom years in Chicago as well. The World's Columbian Exhibition of 1893 was located in our Hyde Park "back yard". What a dynamic city Chicago had become, and now it was showing itself off to the world.

Even though I was only 48 years old when I died on February 26, 1899, I had a full life. In my final days, I so loved listening to my daughters play their musical instruments. Bertha at age 20 was an accomplished pianist who even performed in Europe. Sarah and Lomira at ages 15 and 11 respectively, were also budding musicians. Our periodic trips to Twin Oaks in Bourbonnais complimented my full family and social life. What more could a person ask for?

The Story of Twin Oaks—in the Words of Lomira Perry (1887-1961): Part 4

by Dr. James Paul

I was the third daughter born to Alvah and Ida Perry on June 11, 1887 in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago. When I was eleven years old, my father died on February 26, 1899 at the age of 48. After his death, my mother, Ida (age 40); my two older sisters, Bertha and Sarah (ages 20 and 15 respectively); my maternal grandmother, Sarah Andrews (age 60) and I lived in our home at 319 Bowen Avenue, Hyde Park, Chicago. My maternal grandfather, George Andrews (who I saw often and loved to play with—he and grandmother lived next door to us) died when I was seven years old on May 29, 1895. I did not know my paternal grandparents,

David and Martha Perry, who died in 1887, the year of my birth. Grandmother Sarah still practiced medicine in 1899. She died two years later on February 25, 1902. In 1899, I was in the fifth grade at Hyde Park Elementary School. Sarah was still attending Hyde Park High School and Bertha had just graduated from that high school. Bertha and Sarah were accomplished musicians.

In 1906, I graduated from the same high school as my sisters; and in 1910, graduated from the University of Chicago with an Associate Degree in Philosophy and a Bachelor Degree in History. I continued to live in Hyde Park with my mother, my sister Sarah, and her husband, Harvey Augustus Bush, who was a fire insurance examiner. On the happy day of June 3, 1908, my two sisters had a double wedding ceremony in Chicago; Sarah wed to Harvey, and Bertha wed to dentist Dr. Daniel Scott. Bertha and Daniel lived in Kankakee at 743 East Locust Street.

While I attended the university, I stayed at Spellman House and was active in the Girls Glee Club and Young Women's Christian League. After graduating from the University of Chicago,

This is my 1909 Girls Glee Club photograph (University of Chicago *Cap and Gown*, 1910, p. 152). I am second from right in second row from bottom.

This is a 1930s photograph of me.

I began my teaching career at Kankakee High School, became Dean of Girls, and lived with my sister Bertha and her husband Dan. I joined the Colonial Coverlet Guild of Kankakee, Kankakee Women's Club, and Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).

My family often stayed at the Twin Oaks farm [presently known as Durham-Perry Farmstead and Perry Farm Park], especially during the summer months. After father died, mother turned over the tending of the land, horses, and cattle to George and Olive Oakes in 1902. Their son was born in that same year, and they named him "Perry" out of fondness for my family and the farm. Additional rooms were added on the west wing of the farm house, both upstairs and downstairs, for the Oakes family to live. Little Perry had five "mothers" when we were all in the house together (his mother, my mother, my two sisters, and me). When we unlocked the door between the tenant and our part of the farm house, Perry could go anywhere. One time I showed him a large firecracker that I kept on a shelf in the kitchen. I said that I would light it on Independence Day. When that day arrived, Perry ran to me. I took the firecracker, pulled the fuse, and candy popped out everywhere. What a laugh we had!

The Oakes family eventually purchased a farm in St. Anne, and in 1918, the William and Hattie Wilken family became our next tenant farmers. They had two children Emma and Arthur.

In 1924, we hired Swiss immigrants, Armand and Yvonne DuVoisin, to care for the farm. Their son Francis was born a year earlier, on March 1, 1923.

In 1920, my mother, Ida, lived for a time in the Village of Wilmette where my sister Sarah and brother-in-law Harvey Bush had moved to 721 Greenwood Avenue. In 1927, my mother at age 69, moved into the Twin Oaks farm house at 309 Vassar Avenue [today 459 North Kennedy Drive]. I stayed with her during the summer months. Mother also took turns—until 1940—living with Sarah and Harvey in Wilmette and Bertha and Dan in Kankakee. However, she wanted to die in the farm house at Twin Oaks (then also referred to as Woodlawn Park). After several months of illness, she died there on Sunday evening August 25, 1940. Her wake and funeral services were held in the farm house before her burial the following Tuesday at Mound Grove Cemetery. Mother was past regent of the Kankakee chapter of the DAR; and member of the Kankakee Women's Club, the Minerva Club, Thursday Thimble Club, Wilmette Women's Club, Conference of Club Presidents, Farm Bureau of Kankakee County, and Hyde Park Baptist Church of Chicago.

In the 1930s, I left Kankakee High School and became a history teacher at Deerfield Shields High School which became Highland Park High School (HPHS) in 1936. While tenured there, I received a Master of Arts Degree from the University of Chicago in 1933. As I taught in Highland Park, and after I retired in 1941, I lived twelve miles away with my sister Sarah and brother-in-law Harvey in Wilmette. Mother lived with us for a while also. However, Twin Oaks was always my summer home. On June 5, 1941, I hosted a Colonial Coverlet Guild (CCG) of America meeting in the farm house. Members brought picnic lunches and a favorite small heirloom to explain.

I became program chairman of the CCG and invited R.E. Kline to speak on "The Eternal Lincoln" on February 10, 1943; and Mrs. Alden Scott Boyer in March 1943 to display and speak on "Aristocracy and Old Lace"—150 year old Parisian lace items. These programs were held in the Wedgewood Room of Marshall Field (Chicago). My retirement social calendar included being a house guest of Mrs. Charles Walgreen (she had spoken at a September1941 CCG meeting) at her Hazelwood estate on the Rock River in Dixon, Illinois from July 11-12, 1953. We house guests assisted Mrs. Walgreen in opening her home and gardens as a benefit to the Abraham Lincoln Memorial Garden at Lake Springfield outside the state capital. I was also the secretary of the Conference of Club Presidents as well as program chairman,

I died on Friday December 29, 1961 at Evanston Hospital at age 74. I was buried in Mound Grove Cemetery on January 2, 1962. Except for Dan [who died on September 5, 1966], I was the sole surviving member of my family. Harvey died in 1938, Sarah on April 22, 1945, and Bertha on September 21, 1960. In my will, I bequeathed the farm—the Twin Oaks home of the Durhams and Perrys for 125 years—in trust to the Illinois Department of Conservation with stipulation that at least 40 acres were to be used for a park and have the name "Perry" in part of its name. I also gave Francis DuVoisin a lifetime right to live on and maintain the farm.

The Story of Twin Oaks—in the Words of Francis DuVoisin (1923-): Part 5

by Dr. James Paul

This is my 1941 high school graduation photograph.

My wife, Anne-Marie, painted this scene about 1965 when a tree grew out of the silo which I had half demolished in 1962.

In this April 2017 photograph, I am sitting next to my mother's sewing machine in the farm house.

I was born in Kankakee on March 1, 1923 to Swiss immigrants, Armand (1894-1993) and Yvonne (1898-1982) DuVoisin. Dad immigrated to Kankakee in 1914 and after learning English, served as a translator under General John J. Pershing during World War I. Dad's brother, Maurice, had a blacksmith shop in Kankakee on East Avenue. He did horseshoeing for the state hospital in Kankakee. Dad brought mother from Switzerland in 1920, and they were married on September 30, 1920. They farmed one mile west of Koerner Airport, and that is where I was born. In 1924, Mrs. Ida Perry came to visit and made an agreement with my dad to start farming her land [formerly known as Twin Oaks].

When I was one year old, my family moved into the tenant rooms of the Perry farm house. My first memory of the Perry family, when I was about five years old, was visiting with Bertha and her husband Dr. Dan Scott. I remember riding the street car to Sunday school in Kankakee. Lomira, and her mother Ida, lived at the farm during June, July, and August. I remember that Lomira and Ida did not like people cutting through their property to get to the Indian Caves. They would often yell at them.

At the age of six, I started to help milk the cows. The milk house was built when I was one or two years old. Our main customer for the milk delivery was the state hospital in Kankakee. The milk was processed there. In the 1920s, my family owned a car-truck with a six foot bed for hauling milk to the market. We had 30 Holstein dairy cows, several working horses of all colors, and about 200 Rhode Island Reds and Plymouth Black chickens. We did not have hogs or sheep. There were cats in the barn. We also had a pet white off-breed dog. Of the 169 acres of the farm, about 110 acres were tillable for hay, alfalfa, oats, wheat, corn, and soy beans. We rotated the crops every year. The rest of the acreage was pasture. I remember the chinch bugs crop destruction of the 1930s. My dad and I tried to keep the bugs off the crops by digging a trench around the fields, but it did not work.

In addition to the present day existing farm house, three bay English barn, horse barn, milk house, pump house, and garage, there were several farm buildings that no longer exist: a silo (demolished in the late1960s) next to the three bay English barn; a 2000 bushel corn crib, built in the early 1900s; a 30' by 15' chicken house west of the garage (it had a door in front between glass windows, and foundation with sand floor—every year I would bring in new sand from the river); a garage built in the 1930s situated between the current garage and chicken house; a 20' by 20' brooder house; a cobb and wood shed (the corn cobs were used to start wood fires or to use in the stove); a 25' by 25' red tool shed with a slanted roof and rolling doors (demolished in 1970s); a creamery next to the horse barn near the defunct cistern; two outhouses (one for the Perry family and one for my family), and a rental house on the south end of the property. We used well water, from the white pump house south of the farm house, until about 1960 when the water became contaminated.

While my father and I did the farm chores and repaired the farm buildings, my mother Yvonne canned, cleaned house, salted meat, prepared our meals, and mended our clothes (with the sewing machine that is now on display in the farm house parlor). My education was in the Bradley school system. I either walked or rode my bike to school. In high school, I went out for football, but after getting hit, decided against it. When I graduated from high school in 1941, I was given a deferment from the draft because I was an only child. In 1949, that deferment ended. The army delayed my enlistment for 90 days so that I could plant our corn crop. I then served for one year in the army during the Korean War in construction of an air field in Yuma, Arizona. We worked at night during the summer as the daytime temperatures reached 120 degrees.

In 1941, my family purchased a John Deere tractor. Before that year, we used horses for plowing. During World War II, we purchased a 1945 Model A John Deere tractor with steel wheels—no rubber tires during the war. Later in 1965, I purchased a 1955 self-propelled John Deere combine and in 1970, another John Deere tractor. When I broke the crank shaft in the tractor, I drove to Wisconsin to buy a used one, and replaced it myself. I had an acetylene welder. Beginning in 1945, I also worked at Roper as a stove repairman, and then as a "tear down man" on the 3:30-12:00 am shift.

On February 23, 1952, I married Anne-Marie Charbon at the First Baptist Church in Kankakee where Bertha played the organ. Over the years we have been graced with three children, five grandchildren, six great grandchildren, two step grandchildren, and three step great grandchildren. My wife and I dug a basement under the farm house, and that became our family and friend party area. Mom and dad lived with us in the farm house until 1952. In the 1960s, I also farmed for Dr. Blatt on 30-40 acres just south of the Perry Farm from what is now the Orthopedics Associates of Kankakee medical building area to the river. That land had much clay and rock—very hard to farm. In the 1970s, I supplemented my farm income by operating a wheel alignment and tire shop with Jim Walters on the corner of Schuyler and Brookmont Avenues.

Lomira died on December 29, 1961 at age 74. She bequeathed the farm in trust to the Illinois Department of Conservation. She also gave me a lifetime right to live on and maintain the farm. Lomira's will stipulated that if the state accepted the property, at least 40 acres were to be used for a park and have "Perry" in part of its name. Questions then arose as to how the property would be maintained and developed. There was concern that if the farm was used as a park and recreational facility, some of the land might be developed commercially to finance the facility. At one point, I believe that some realtors wanted to build a strip mall on the property. Bourbonnais Township leaders feared that the development of the land would over-commercialize the area and make residents unhappy.

The Illinois Department of Conservation decided in November 1985 that it was willing to give the Perry Farm to a new park district representing Bourbonnais Township. The declaration was favorable to the township, but the decision was opposed by the Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve (KRVFP)—both the KRVFP and the Bourbonnais Township Park District (BTPD) were formed in 1986. The BTPD was awarded the property by the State of Illinois in 1988. The BTPD expanded Lomira's wish for a park to include the whole 169 acres.

I agreed to end my lifetime estate interest in the property in 1989 when the BTPD took over title to the property. In 1990, after I had lived in the farm house for 66 years, my wife and I moved. Until recently, I cultivated hollyhocks in my "Francis's Garden" (between the horse and three bay English barns) to greet farmstead visitors. I am so proud of my connection to historical Twin Oaks, presently

known as Perry Farm Park and its 25 acre Durham-Perry Farmstead—which is on the National Register of Historical Places (March 31, 2006) and a Kankakee County Historic Landmark (February 13, 2013).

- *Potawatomi and Durham Family's attitude toward Illinois Impending Statehood in 1818*

April 1818: Potawatomi Apprehensive about Impending Illinois Statehood
By Dr. James F. Paul

Like other Native Americans in the Illinois Territory, the Potawatomi of the Kankakee worried about their fate in the spring of 1818. This was the year that territorial legislators in the capitol at Kaskaskia had set for achieving statehood. In the eight months from April to December 1818, many issues had to be addressed. The legislators' sights were not yet set specifically on the Potawatomi of the Kankakee, but how long would that last?

The Potawatomi way of life and concerns in 1818 will be addressed by Potawatomi descendant and author, Dr. George Godfrey, as he speaks at the Durham-Perry Farmstead Open House (459 N. Kennedy Drive, Bourbonnais) on Saturday May 5, 2018 at 11:00 am. Dr. Godfrey is a Citizen Potawatomi and descendant of Watchekee and Shabonna, local princess (based on her kindness) and chief respectively. He taught biology and ecology at the Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas. He also served as Haskell's vice-president of academic affairs. Later, as a National Program Leader in the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C.,

Dr. George Godfrey, Potawatomi descendant, will speak at the Durham-Perry Farmstead Open House on May 5. Photograph by Sharon Hoogstraten, Chicago.

Dr. Godfrey worked with thirty-one Tribal Colleges and Universities to improve their science and research departments. He has also served as president of the Potawatomi Trail of Death Association. At the Durham-Perry Farmstead Open House, Dr. Godfrey will offer signed copies of his books: *The Indian Marble* (fictional history novel based on the life of Jean Baptiste Bergeron—Citizen Potawatomi and son of Watchekee and Francis Bergeron), *Watchekee (Overseer) Walking in Two Cultures*, and *Once a Grass Widow: Watchekee;s Destiny.*

Nine years before Illinois statehood, the Illinois Territory was formed on April 28, 1809 out of the 1787 Northwest Ordinance's westernmost lands. The territory consisted of today's Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota's east bank of the Mississippi River. President James Madison appointed the Kentuckian aristocratic lawyer, livestock farmer, and slave owner, Ninian Wirt Edwards, Sr. (his son's wife, Elizabeth Porter Todd, was Abraham Lincoln's sister-in-law), as the first Illinois Territory governor. The seat of government was in Kaskaskia on the Mississippi River. By 1812, all tax abiding free white males gained the right to vote. At the first general election in October, Shadrach Bond was sent to the U.S. Congress as the first territorial representative of Illinois; Pierre Menard became president of the Council of Five (one from each county) who assisted the governor; and a six-man House of Representatives was chosen (Howard, 76 and 79).

After the War of 1812, the Native American population of the Illinois Territory remained on the defensive and compelled, more and more every year, to concede white settler ownership of the land. The population centers of the territory were along the rivers with the southern part most densely populated and the northern part—even Chicago—most thinly populated. The population of Chicago—where Jean Baptist Point du Sable (of African descent) and his Potawatomi wife, Kitiwaha, operated a trading post from 1779-1800, and Fort Dearborn was built in 1804—had only a population of 100 in 1830. By late 1818, the population of the territory was estimated at 40,000, the number needed for statehood. However, Robert Howard in *Illinois: A History of the Prairie State* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), stated that "a federal report said Illinois had 34,620 when it was admitted as a state (p. 102).

On November 20, 1817, Daniel Pope Cook, a lawyer who by 1818 became the clerk of the Illinois Territory House of Representatives, editorialized for Illinois statehood in Kaskaskia's *Intelligencer.* By the end of January 1818, the Illinois Territorial legislature and governor endorsed an Illinois statehood bill for the U.S. Congress to consider. The bill passed on April 14 and was signed by President James Monroe on April 18, 1818. The next task for the Illinois Territorial legislature was to write a constitution for the proposed state. The main issue to be addressed in the summer of 1818 would be slavery. Native Americans including the Potawatomi realized that their constitutional rights would be nonexistent. Indian removal was the sentiment of the time. Some Potawatomi had allied in 1811-12—War of 1812—with Tecumseh, his brother the Prophet, and the British when this Native American-British alliance fought against the Indiana and Illinois Territorial military (which promoted white settler advancement into Native American lands). Some Potawatomi had participated in the attack and burning of Fort Dearborn. They had gained the reputation of "known troublemakers" by the Illinois Territory governing officials (Howard, p. 89). The Illinois Territory legislature in 1814, according to

Howard, ". . . obligated itself to pay fifty dollars [equivalent to $800 today] for the death of an Indian who entered a settlement with hostile intent. Civilians who had official permission to send an expedition into Indian country could qualify for a one-hundred-dollar [equivalent of $1600 today] reward for killing an Indian warrior" (Howard, p. 93). With this reputation and reward system, one can understand how the Potawatomi of the Kankakee would be apprehensive about impending Illinois statehood.

May 1818: Quaker Abolitionists Consider Move to Illinois Frontier
By Dr. James Paul, in the Words of Thomas R. Durham (1784-1854)

[Author's note: Illinois entered the union as the 21st state on December 3, 1818. The following account is my interpretation of what frontiersman and Quaker abolitionist Thomas R. Durham might have written in a letter of May 1818. Sixteen years later in 1834, Durham would camp in Bourbonnais Grove at Twin Oaks on his way to Chicago. He fell in love with Twin Oaks and purchased a farmstead there which is today known as Perry Farm Park. The Bourbonnais Township Park District has proclaimed May as "Durham-Perry Farmstead History Month. I will portray Thomas Durham at the farmstead's open house (farm house and barns at Perry Farm Park) on Saturday May 5, 2018 at about 11:45 am after Dr. George Godfrey's presentation of the Potawatomi perspective at 11:00 am. The open house is from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm and includes nineteenth-century farm life demonstrations and tours. It is free and open to the public. I would like to acknowledge local historian Vic Johnson and Durham family member, Robert Durham, for their research and documentation that inspired the following account. For more information about Thomas Durham, see btpd.org/About us/Park History/Perry Farm.]

Dear friends,

Now in May 1818, my brothers Daniel, William, and my sisters, Sarah, Mary, Jane, Ruth, and I, along with our families, are settled north of the Ohio River in south central Indiana at Lick Creek. When I was 22 years old in 1806, we all left our home state of Virginia for eastern Tennessee. Ten years later, our whole family traveled north of the Ohio River to Waynesville, Ohio, then Wayne County, Indiana, and Lick Creek, Indiana where Quakers from North Carolina in 1813 had established a community. Some of us are considering a move further west into the Illinois frontier, but first we and our free Negro family members have to wait to hear news about what the Illinois Territory government in Kaskaskia will decide about the issue of slavery. Those legislators plan to draft an Illinois state constitution during this coming summer of 1818—a constitution that will reveal the proposed new state's laws about slavery.

I was born in Brunswick County, southern Virginia, the eighth of nine children. Two of my siblings died in infancy. My father, Thomas Daniel Madkins Durham (c.1740-94), was born in James City County, Virginia. He purchased land in Lunenburg County, Virginia on June 10, 1764. Two years before, he married my mother, Arabella (Marrow) Madkins Durham (1745-1808). I was born on October 1, 1784, just three years after the commander of the British Army, Lord Cornwallis, surrendered to General George Washington at Yorktown on October 20, 1781. That decisive battle was only a day's ride north from our farm home where I was born. My paternal grandfather's surname was Durham, but when he died, my paternal grandmother married a Madkins. When my brothers, Daniel, William, and I married, we used only the Durham surname.

My father became a Quaker in 1782 at the Blackwater Monthly Meeting, and my mother joined at the same meeting in 1784, the year of my birth. The first Quakers (or Religious Society of Friends) began around 1650 in England, breaking away from the established Church of England. My Quaker tradition emphasized a close relationship with Jesus, reading and studying the Bible, and equality of all people. We emphasize refusal to participate in war, swear oaths, drink alcohol, and enslave others. Therefore, we Quakers supported abolition of slavery, prison reform, social justice, and philanthropic efforts. This was the religious and family environment that I was born into.

In 1782, the year of his Quaker conversion, my father freed our family's slaves. He wrote "I Thomas Durham Madkins being fully persuaded that freedom is the natural right of all mankind . . .[freed] Negroes whom I have held" [From Vic Johnson and Robert Durham's research]. With this proclamation, my father freed Hannah (age 36) and her children Charles (17), Dick (16), Bett (14), Beck (13), Peg (11), Jacob (6), Ben (4), and Ann (3). He reserved the prerogative of acting as guardian over them until the males reached age 21 and the females reached age 18. Father also purchased and freed on November 3, 1792 two near relatives of Hannah: Maria (age 13) and Squire Durham (23). Many of these newly freed individuals took the family name of Durham.

My father died on January 6, 1794 when I was only nine years old. In 1806, our whole Durham family and some of our now free Negro family members migrated across the Blue Ridge Mountains into the Great Smoky Mountains of Blount County in eastern Tennessee where there was subsistence agriculture and few slave owners. We joined the Quaker Newberry Monthly Meeting [Friendsville, Tennessee]. Mother died there on March 2, 1808.

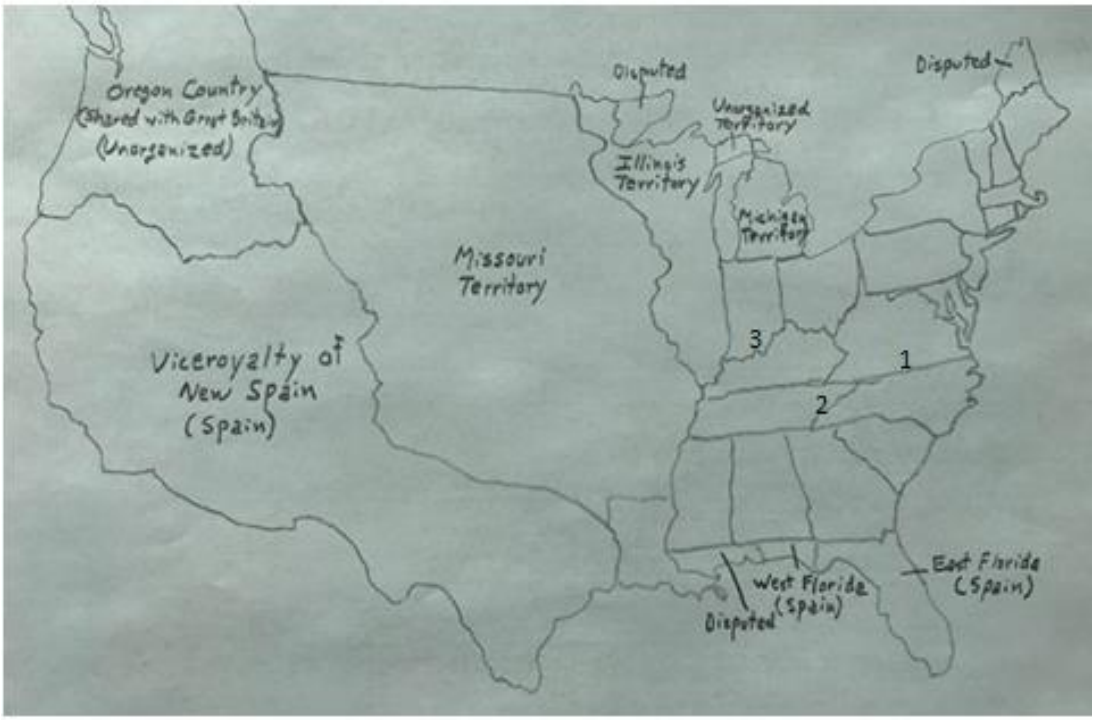
A short while later I fell in love with fifteen-year-old Peggy [Margaret] Wyly. We married on October 17, 1811. James W. was our first born in 1812, followed by Thomas who died in 1816 at age two. Our daughter Barbara was born in 1816. Peggy is currently pregnant with our fourth child.

Our family was encouraged to travel north by the sermon of the Quaker Zachariah Dix which he delivered in 1803 at the Bush River Monthly Meeting in Newberry, North Carolina. He stated:

"O Bush River! Purge thyself. Young men, young women, to you I appeal. The great northwest territory lies over the mountains beyond the Ohio River. It is a wild forest. It is a wilderness. From the wigwams of the savage the smoke still ascends through the boughs of the trees, but it is a fertile land. It is a land forever dedicated to human freedom. There you can make productive fields. There you can make friends with the Red Man. To you I appeal, flee to that land. Shake the dust of human bondage from your feet for your own sake and for the sake of your children's children. This system of human slavery will fall. The cup of its iniquity is well-nigh filled. Go to the Northwest Territory! Look not behind you into this Sodom of human slavery, for the fires of Heaven shall descend upon it and the wrath of the Almighty shall consume it" [springborohistory.org/Quaker migrations/anti-slavery sentiments].

Heeding this command, our family is now in the newly born [1816] state of Indiana. Our Lick Creek community includes a free Negro settlement. This Indiana community is rich in hardwood forest, but some of us keep thinking about a move west of the Wabash River. If the Illinois Territory constitutional assembly abolishes slavery, many of us would like to settle on its fertile prairie. Good day to thee!

Thy faithful servant,
Thomas R. Durham



This map shows the Illinois frontier in 1818. The numbers represent 1—Brunswick County, Virginia, 2—Blount County, Tennessee, and 3—Lick Creek, Indiana. The map was drawn by James Paul ©.

September 1818: Durham Family Upset with First Illinois Constitution

by Dr. James Paul in the Words of Thomas R. Durham (1784-1854)

[**Author's note:** Illinois entered the union as 21st state on December 3, 1818. As Illinois celebrates its bicentennial anniversary this year, it is good to ponder how one local frontier family viewed impending Illinois statehood. The following account is an interpretation of what pioneer and Quaker abolitionist Thomas R. Durham might have written in a letter to friends in September 1818. In 1834, Durham would become the first non-Native American to begin a farmstead on land that today is known as Perry Farm Park.]

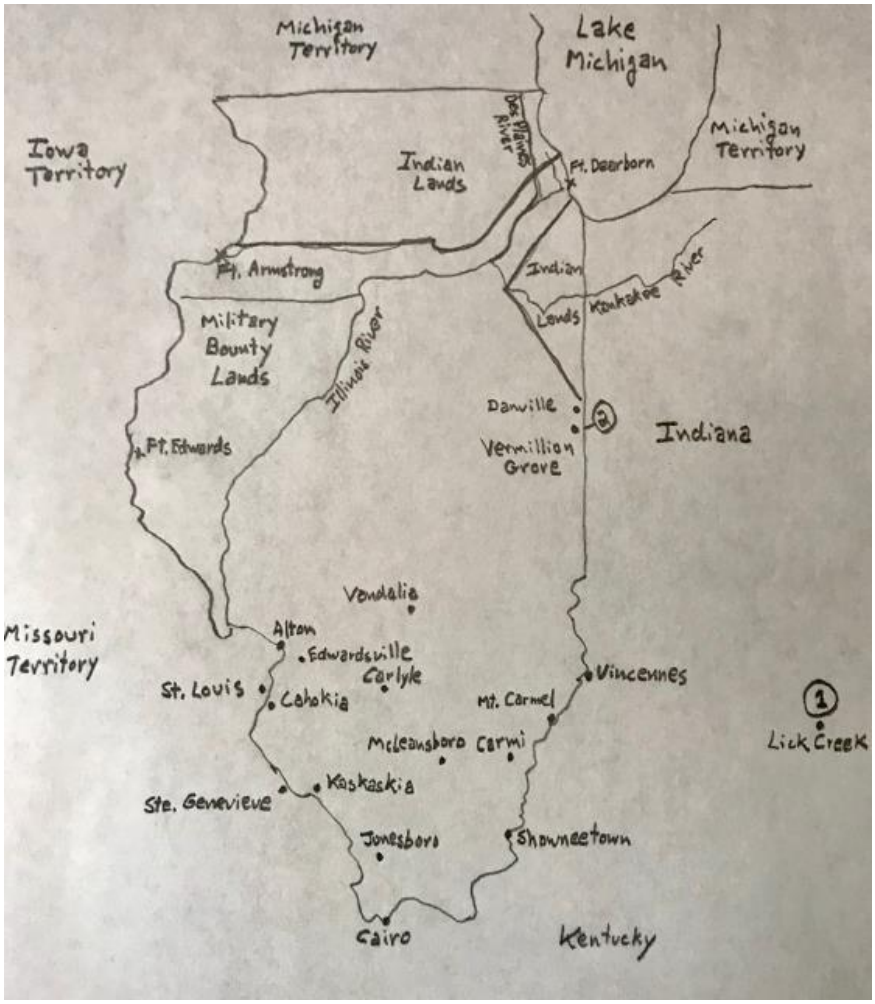
My dear friends,

I hope this letter finds thee enjoying a nice September 1818 day. I will begin my correspondence with our blessed family news. Just a few weeks ago on August 19, 1818, my wife Peggy gave birth to our third living child, Artemacy, in the eastern mountains of Blount County, Tennessee. I was so happy, and could not wait to bring them to our new Durham family home in the integrated settlement of Lick Creek, Indiana where my extended family now resides. Many former slaves also live here. Peggy, the baby, and our other two children—six-year-old James and two-year-old Barbara—are now with us in Lick Creek.

I would like to relate to you now the news about the "Illinois question"— will it be a free or slave state? I was eating dinner with my immediate family and my brothers' and sisters' families when the news from Kaskaskia, capital of the Illinois Territory, arrived. After dinner, I said, "Can thee believe it? The thirty-three Illinois constitutional assembly legislators met for only 21 days from August 3 to 24th **and did not abolish slavery in their proposed new state!** How can we possibly consider a move into a future state of Illinois while such an attitude toward human rights exists? It does not seem that we Quaker abolitionists are destined to move further west."

That evening my family discussed the Illinois slavery issue until bedtime. We questioned how the Illinois territorial legislators could permit slavery when the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 forbade it. I mentioned that the ordinance did allow the French colonials of Ste. Genevieve, Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and other French settlements to retain their slaves in a type of "grandfathering" clause. There persisted an impression that the French slaves had more rights than British colonial or southern U.S. slaves. But "Slavery was slavery!" I exclaimed, and "Morally speaking, how can a questionable French 'gentile' slavery be any better than British or U.S. abusive slavery?" Furthermore, the new August 1818 Illinois Constitution affirmed the practice of long term indentured servitude in which an unfree laborer was bound by contract to work for an employer for a fixed time. Freedom would only come after the contract expired. This meant that the African Americans already living in Illinois Territory could be put under long term indentures. Indentured servants were considered marketable property. The new constitution claimed to forbid the future introduction of slavery—except at the salt springs in Shawneetown, Illinois until 1825 (it took 100 gallons of water to produce 1 bushel of salt). But how reliable is this claim when so many former and present slave owners live in Illinois? The territory is scheduled to hold elections on September 17-19 for governor, lieutenant governor, general assembly, U.S. representative, and two U.S. senators. Former slave owner Shadrach Bond is favored to win the governor's seat. The first lieutenant governor is likely to be Montreal-born Pierre Menard. He was chosen to balance the ticket by attracting Illinois French-speaking voters. Before retiring for the evening, Peggy and I made a decision: we will not move to Illinois until the abolition of slavery in the state is a certainty.

Thou faithful servant,
Thomas R. Durham



In this sketch of Illinois Territory in 1818, note the town/city population centers in the south and sparsely populated areas in the north. In 1818, the Thomas Durham family lived in Lick Creek, Indiana (number 1 circled). In 1825, the family moved to Vermillion Grove (number 2 circled). The first settlement in Vermillion County (where Danville and Vermillion Grove are located) was in 1819 around a salt spring. Sketch by James Paul © 2018.

[End note: In September 1824, a referendum in the Illinois general election for a constitutional convention to draft an amendment **to legalize slavery** was defeated by a vote of 6640 to 4972 (Robert P. Howard, *Illinois: A History of the Prairie State*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972, page 137). **The next year, 1825, the Thomas Durham family moved into Illinois to the Quaker settlement of Vermillion Grove south of Danville**.]

- *Flags over the Farmstead Quiz*

Farmstead History Month Ends with Flag Quiz
By Dr. Jim Paul

Clockwise from upper left: Perry Farm Park lamp post banner (BTPD photo); flags that have flown over the land of Perry Farm Park (BTPD photo); unveiling of new Welcome Sign at Durham-Perry Farmstead Open House on May 5 (left to right—Sandi Sandeno, Jorie Walters, sign artist Christina Bradley, Dr. Jim Paul, Hollice Clark, Anthony Settle, Sharon Richardson, and Frank Cianci,(BTPD photo); and Pottawatomi descendant Dr. George Godfrey speaking about the Pottawatomi perspective in the 1830s during the open house (Linda Koressel photo).

Throughout the month of May, you may have noticed the new banners hanging from the lamp posts along DuVoisin Lane at Perry Farm Park. The banners depict flags (from the years 1543 to the present) on one side and a graphic art depiction [by Christina Bradley] of Thomas Durham plowing with oxen in 1835 on the other side. The BTPD has proclaimed May as Durham-Perry Farmstead History Month, and the Flags over Perry Farm promote thinking about that history. Information about each flag has been featured on the Bourbonnais Township Park District's Facebook pages.

The History Month began with the Durham-Perry Farmstead Open House on Saturday May 5, 2018. About 100 people witnessed the unveiling of a new farmstead Welcome Sign which will soon be placed in a framed outdoor exhibit. Guests were given guided tours and they interacted with 19th century farmstead demonstrators in learning about wool spinning, quilting, fashion designs, children games, washing clothes, butter churning, gardening, horse husbandry, and miniature model of the farmstead. In addition, Dr. George Godfrey explained the Pottawatomi way of life and their relationship with white settlers in the 1830s; Dr. Jim Paul portrayed the life of frontiersman-pioneer Thomas R. Durham (1784-1854); and Francis DuVoisin offered signed copies of his biographical article published in the June 6, 2017 issue of *The Herald.*

To increase your knowledge of the history of the Durham-Perry Farmstead and Perry Farm Park as the History Month ends, please answer the following nine quiz questions about the Flags over Perry Farm pictured above (plus the current 50 star U.S. flag). Each flag is used once as an answer.

1. Which county flag flew at the time of Martha Durham and David Perry's wedding?
2. Which flag flew after Clark's capture of Kaskaskia, Prairie du Rocher, and Cahokia?
3. Which flag did Rene-Robert Cavelier Sieur de La Salle plant on the Kankakee River bank when he and his companions camped on their canoe exploration?
4. Which flag was first flown over the Northwest Territory?
5. Which flag included an attempt to appease the French-Canadians?
6. While living in Lick Creek, Indiana, where did the Quaker Durham family not want to move if slavery was legalized there?
7. Which national flag witnessed the Potawatomi Trail of Death?
8. Which county flag flew when David Perry purchased the farm from the Durham brothers?
9. Which national flag flew over the farm when Francis DuVoisin retired?

For more insights into the above questions, you may review the many signs at the farmstead and go to https://www.btpd.org/btpd/documents/about-us/366-park-history/file

Answers: 1. Will; 2. Virginia; 3. New France; 4. U.S. 13 Stars; 5. British Indian Reserve/Quebec Provence; 6. Illinois; 7. U.S. 24 Stars; 8. Kankakee; 9. U.S. 50 Stars.