

## JOHN CARROLL DORCY and BRIDGET CORR

John Carroll Dorcy was born on Feb. 3, 1859 in Kenockee, St. Clair Co., Michigan. His father was also named John Dorcy as was his grandfather. Both his father and paternal grandfather were born in County Tipperary, Ireland and came to the U.S.



**John Carroll Dorcy and his children. L-R: John, Jr., John, Sr., Sarah, Ed, James, William. Taken about 1912.**

between 1850 and 1860. His mother was Mary Ellen Carroll who was born in Canada. See other chapters in this book for their stories. Also see the chapter "Darcys of Ireland".

John is listed in the 1860 census in Kenockee, a small village in St. Clair County, with his father, mother, and sister, Sarah M. He is one year old.

He was just 7 years old when his father was killed in action at Appomattox, Virginia on Apr. 9, 1865. His father must have thought him quite a little man for he said in his letters to his wife, Mary, that he would bring young John a gun when he came home from the war.

After his father's death at Appomattox his mother, Mary, moved the few miles to Emmett, Michigan to be near her brothers. She and the children, including John Carroll Dorcy, are in the 1870 census in a house adjacent to her brothers, Edward Carroll and John Carroll. John Carroll Dorcy was then 11 years old.

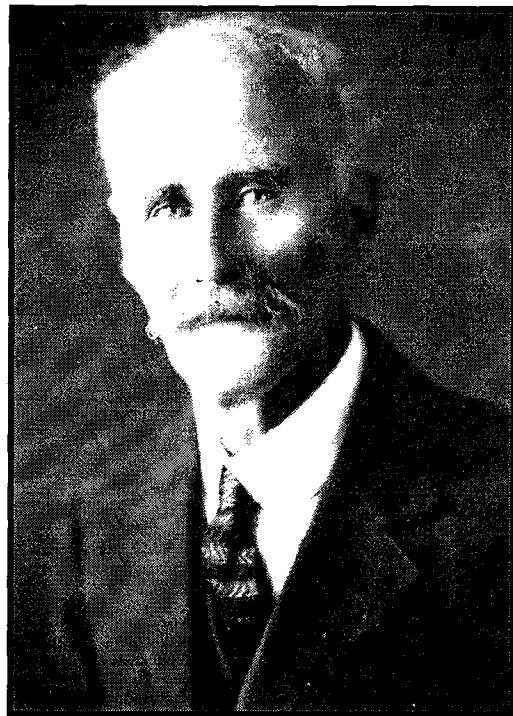
## The Descendants of John Dorcy, Civil War Soldier

We have been unable to trace John's activities for the years between 1870, when he was eleven, and 1885 when he wrote his mother a letter which has survived and is still in possession of the family. We suppose that since he was single, he was moving around a good deal and working in the thriving lumber industry. In the letter written May 31, 1885 from Chippewa Lake, Mecosta County, Michigan to his mother he says that he is well and that he wishes she would answer right away because he has not heard from her for the last two or three months. He says also that he has not seen his brother, James, for about two months but that James is well and working at a place called "Cadalic".

John also wrote a letter to his mother and brother, William on Christmas day 1887. He says he is working in the woods for George Corniel about eight miles from Leily Junction at Corneil's camp. This is in Newago County, Michigan. He speaks of seeing Bridget Corr and says she is well; so we can assume he is actively courting his future wife at this time. There is a story that persists in the family and told by both Alice (Dorcy) Hockett and Sister Mary Jean Dorcy that his brother, William Jeremiah is courting Bridget, and that John is courting Emma Knapp; then at some point they traded sweethearts before they married.

John married Bridget Corr on June 5, 1888 in Big Rapids, Mecosta Co., Michigan, and he continued working in the logging camps sometimes with his brother, James. He was a "White Water Man" and a "Teamster". In those years when the trees were cut they were pushed into some river, lake, or bay for easy transport to a mill. A "White Water Man" runs along on the logs while they are traveling in the water and keeps them from jamming and piling up and keeps them moving. There is a special hook-like tool used for this job called a "cant hook". John Michael Dorcy, son of John Carroll Dorcy, said that his father was the best there ever was at throwing the cant hook and drawing the logs toward him from as far away as 30 feet across the creek or pond, often while he was balanced on a floating log. It was very dangerous, exciting work.

A "Teamster" drives the teams of mules, oxen or horses which move logs and equipment through the woods. The loggers lived in crude camps where the trees were being cut, and only went home to see their families for short visits. John didn't like being away from home so much and he wanted to try farming, so some time after their first child, Sarah, was about seven months old they moved to McHenry, Harrison Co., Mississippi. They applied for a homestead of 160 acres from the U.S. government and they were granted title to the land in September, 1898, homestead certificate number 13351. The land is SW 1/4 of section 17, twp 4 S, range 11 W (St. Stephen's meridian) in what is now Stone County, Mississippi. The homestead papers say they were residents of the land before



**John Carroll Dorcy - 1915**

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April 26, 1892 and had a log house, a barn, chicken house, smoke house and field, total value estimated at about \$150. They had cultivated about four acres for six seasons. There they had four boys and they followed the old family custom of naming the children in order: first girl Sarah, and the boys are named James, then John, then William and Edward. This custom of naming the children such common names has caused no end of difficulty and confusion in tracing the family through the years.

While they were living in Mississippi, Bridget became very homesick and they didn't like the schools. So shortly after Ed was born they decided to move west where they had friends working in the logging camps. They sold the homestead in August of 1906 for \$1200 and went to Oregon. However, work was hard to find, so they kept moving on and settled in Sedro, Washington. They bought or built a home on lot 12 block 9 in the town of Sedro on 6 Jan 1910 for \$125. Woolley was a separate town at the time.

John and his brother, William who lived in Anacortes, visited back and forth occasionally, and William's children always knew him as Uncle Jack. Alice Dorcy, daughter of William, tells the story of her mother, Emma (Knapp) Dorcy sending her out to call the men for dinner. Alice came back in, half afraid, saying she couldn't tell them because they were making funny noises. Later she found out they often spoke Gaelic with each other, laughing and enjoying their companionship. Their mother's native tongue was Gaelic.

John was a kind man, a firm believer that you should never argue politics or religion. He said, "politics & religion are a man's own business." He loved to garden and could make a garden so beautiful people would stop and admire it. He was a precise man and would do his work carefully as when he cut kindling wood. He would cut a few pieces and stop to pile them exactly so. He used a horse and sled to haul things. This devise was called a "stone boat". The kids loved to ride on this boat.

He spent about fifteen years in Bellingham according to his obituary, but we don't know where he was living or working at that time. His son, Edward Owen, and Ed's wife Florence, took care of him for a while before he died. The doctor told Florence that John had "Insipid Diabetes", a kind of water retention disease. He died March 13, 1932 in Sedro Woolley, Washington and was buried in Union Cemetery there after services in St. Mary's Catholic Church.

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### Bridget Mary Teresa Catherine Corr

Bridget came to America from North Ireland in about 1883. She was probably about twenty years old when she emigrated and she apparently came by herself. Her family had lived near Newry, County Down in North Ireland for perhaps two hundred years. Please see the chapter on the Corr Family in Ireland for further information.

When Bridget emigrated, she left the family home called *Clancorra* in the townland of Crobane. Mabel (Corr) McCrink, who has lived at Clancorra for many years and has a wealth of Corr family stories, relates that it was a very sad day when Bridget left Clancorra for the last time. She said her good-byes and went the few miles over to Warrenpoint on Carlingford Lough where she boarded a ship for Liverpool and on to America. Sometimes in those years a wake, called an American Wake, was held for an emigrating member of the family, since it was pretty certain that they would never return. It was a party usually held in the home with much good "crack" (music, dancing, and conversation). It was, of course, a sad affair as well. We don't know if a wake was held for Bridget, but we do know she never returned to her beloved home, Clancorra. Bridget is said to have gone to live with a family named Callahan or perhaps O'Callahan for whom she had worked in Ireland. Catherine (MacAnulty) Corr, Bridget's mother, is said to have sat many an hour in her garden looking down the road hoping to see her daughter returning; but it was not to be. Bridget's father, it is said, never forgave the Callahans for "stealing his Biddy". It nearly broke his heart.



**Bridget Corr, about 1885**

We have found no record of the Callahans or of Bridget prior to her marriage record in Big Rapids, Mecosta County, Michigan, where she married John Carroll Dorcy in 1888. The picture shown here was taken in Big Rapids; but a similar picture was taken in Reed City, a small town near Big Rapids, so we assume that is where she lived for some time prior to her marriage.

An interesting note is her name in the 1900 census in Harrison County, Mississippi. She is listed as "Wiggie". Why the nickname? We haven't a clue! We can find no one who has heard of this and the only possibility that we can come up with is the fact that a small village of some 230 people is close to where the family lived in 1900. Its name - Wiggins! In the 1900 census she states that she has been in the U.S. for seventeen years and has been naturalized. We have been unable to locate naturalization papers for her either in Michigan or Mississippi.

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Some letters Bridget wrote while they lived in Mississippi show us a little about her family's life there. She writes to her mother-in-law in 1894 that

"Johnie is a way from home all the time and he only comes home once in about too months so you see I have everything to see to. We just got our potatoes dug last week we have about 135 bushals..."

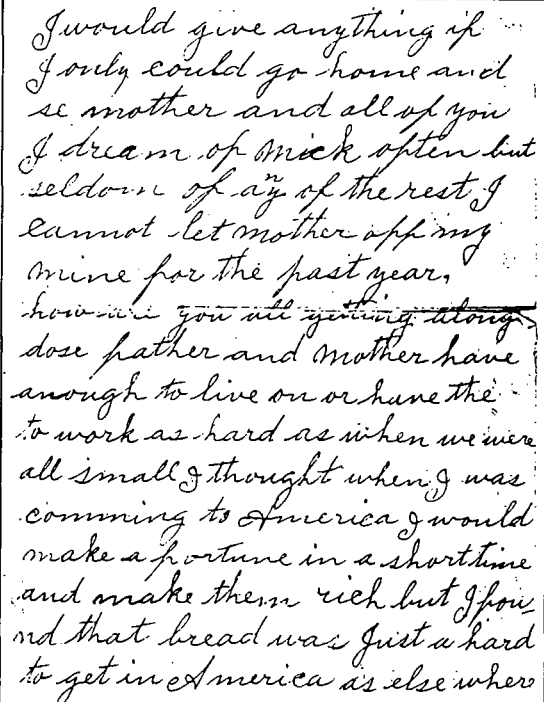
She has two small children by this time, so she must truly be busy! She also relates they have 14 pigs which roam about in the woods and are cheaper to raise there than up north. She also speaks of "proving out the homestead".

In another letter written home to Ireland in 1905 to "Dear little Baby Brother", she reveals her homesickness for her family and perhaps some discouragement. Her "Baby Brother" was Patrick Corr, born about 1877 and the father of Mabel (Corr) McCrink of Clancorra who gave us a copy of the letter. Bridget writes

"I would give anything  
if I only could go home  
and see mother and all  
of you..."

In another part of the same letter she  
said

"I thought when I was  
comming to America I  
would make a fortune in  
a short time and make  
them rich ", (meaning her parents), "but I found out that bread was  
just as hard to get in America as elsewhere".



I would give anything if  
I only could go home and  
see mother and all of you  
I dream of Mick often but  
seldom of any of the rest I  
cannot let mother off my  
mine for the past year,  
~~how are you all getting along~~  
dose father and mother have  
enough to live on or have the  
to work as hard as when we were  
all small I thought when I was  
comming to America I would  
make a fortune in a short time  
and make them rich but I found  
nd that bread was just as hard  
to get in America as else where

She also speaks of trying for three years to sell out, but it is difficult because their place is "so far back no one wants it". As early as 1902 John wrote his mother that he was thinking of moving to the Northwest.

An interesting aside is that in the 1920 census records of Washington, each of her children said that their mother's native language was Irish, but that she could speak and write English.

Bridget died of chronic nephritis (liver disease) Dec. 23, 1912 at her home in Sedro Woolley and is buried in Union Cemetery there. Cost of the funeral service was \$105, and an engraved stone marks the grave of Bridget and John Carroll Dorcy.

## **The Descendants of John Dorcy, Civil War Soldier**

The children of John and Bridget were:

### **Sarah Maria Dorcy**

Sarah Maria was born on 23 April 1889 in Big Rapids, Michigan and her birth is recorded in the county records there. See a separate chapter for Sarah and her family.

### **James Patrick Dorcy**

He was born in 1893 in McHenry, Mississippi. See a separate chapter for his history and information about his family.

### **John Michael Dorcy**

John was born in 1896 in McHenry, Mississippi. See a separate chapter for his history and information about his family..

### **William Thomas Dorcy**

He was born in 1899 in McHenry, Mississippi. See a separate chapter for information about him and his family.

### **Edward Owen Dorcy**

He was born in 1902 in McHenry, Mississippi. See a separate chapter about him and his family.



**John Carroll Dorcy in his garden.**