

RALPH AND HELEN (McNELLY) SHIREMAN

The Shireman family came from England, settling in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. My great-great-grandfather, Ami Shireman, moved to Indiana, where my great-grandfather, John Shireman, was born. In 1860 John's family moved to Richland County by oxcart, settling in the Horse and Fancy Creek areas. Later they moved to Richland Center, where John became an apprentice at a harness shop owned by George Starr. Later he opened his own harness shop and also built the "Shireman house of seven gables." This house stood where St. Mary's Church now stands.

One of John's children was my grandfather, Percy Shireman, although I always knew him as P.M. He married Nellie Willis of Little Willow and farmed there for some time. They had seven children: Hattie, Edna, George, Harold, Gerald, Ralph and Robert. When my dad was four years old, P.M. and Grandma moved to Ash Ridge. My dad remembers this as being a long way to drive the cattle and move their belongings in a wagon.

My dad is Ralph Shireman. He married Helen McNelly of Fancy Creek. They moved to one of my grandpa's three farms on Ash Ridge. They have been married for forty-five years and still live on the same farm.

I am the oldest in our family. I married Bruce Perkins in 1959 and moved to Portage, Wisconsin. We have four children. The oldest is Jody, who graduated from the University of Wisconsin and is pursuing law school.

Our only daughter, Robyn, married James Ryan of Ash Ridge. They have two sons, Brandon and Brock. They live near Ekleberry Corners.

Our son, Jaimie, lives and works in Madison. Our youngest son, Joshua, is seven and keeps us young.

Next comes my brother, Ralph (alias Bill). He married Judy Anderson McBain. They have three girls: Rachel, Rochelle and Raquel. He also has three stepchildren: Cheryl Lawrence of New Mexico, and C.J. and Christine at home.

My sister, Cindy, married Evans Illsley of Vermont. They have a large farm in Fonda, New York. They have one daughter, Kari, at home. My sister, Kristi, married Joe Durst of Sextonville. They have one son, Jeremy. Kristi has three stepchildren: Steven of Richland Center and Brenda and Elizabeth at home.

It delights me to know my grandsons are living where my dad and I were raised. What better place than Richland County — where I have so many precious memories.

Submitted by Darlene Perkins