

## **Toliver Craig and his wife Mary (Polly) Hawkins**

The Following article was published in the book, Bryan Station Heroes and Heroines: Being an Historical Sketch of Bryan Station from 1779 to 1932, by Virginia Webb Howard, Commercial Printing Co., Lexington, Ky., 1932:

About 1703 or 1704, a John Craig, in Scotland, married Jane Taliferro. He died shortly after his marriage and his widow started with her two brothers to Spotsylvania County, Virginia. On board the ship, in 1704, or 1705, a son was born to Jane Taliferro Craig and she named him "Taliferro Craig". She died soon after the birth of this child, and so Taliferro Craig, an orphan, grew up in Virginia, with his mother's brothers. The name Taliferro soon came to be called "Toliver" and as Toliver he was known throughout his long and active life.

Toliver Craig married Mary (Polly) Hawkins about 1730 and raised a large family of children. During Toliver Craig's life the new country was in almost constant state of warfare with the Indians, and later with the British. Records at Richmond, Virginia show that Toliver Craig was a Captain of Orange County militia in 1777.

The family of Toliver Craig was intensely religious. Three of his sons became Baptist ministers noted for their zeal. This preaching being contrary to the laws of the Established church in Virginia persecutions began against them. Some members of the family were arrested and kept in jail, but even this failed to stop them from their labors. To escape this situation and live in peace, and for the betterment of their families it was decided that they would all seek new homes in Kentucky.

At this time Toliver Craig was about 77 years old and all of his large family, had married. Some of them had large families of their own. However the entire group of them were firmly united and willing to make the change for the good of all.

A party was sent to select a location for the new home in the wilderness. John Craig, age about 50 years, eldest son of Toliver, was accompanied by his son, Elijah, age 16, and by his brother, Jeremiah Craig, age about 27. The spring of 1780 found them in Kentucky, seeking a suitable spot for their settlement. They visited many places and located various tracts of land before they returned to Virginia with their report. By 1781, a large number of the Craigs had reached Bryan Station, where they took up their abode in the cabins which had been abandoned by the Bryans and other families who had returned to North Carolina. Another part of the Craig family with Rev. Lewis Craig as leader, settled at Gilbert's creek, a few miles east of Lancaster, Garrard County, Kentucky. (See "The Traveling Church" by Ranck).

Living in Bryan Station at the time of the siege in August 1782, we find Toliver Craig about 78 years of age and his wife Polly Hawkins Craig age about 66. Three of their sons, with their families, (Capt. John Craig, Toliver Craig, Jr., and Jeremiah Craig), three daughters with

their families, (Jane Craig Saunders, Elizabeth Craig Cave, Sarah Craig Singleton) were also residents of Bryan Station at the time of the siege. All of these took an active part in the defense of Bryan Station. As there were numerous children in each of the families mentioned, the name "Craig" is found among the defenders more than any other name. It is claimed by the Craig family history that Polly Hawkins Craig, wife of Toliver Craig, Sr., was the oldest woman in the fort and was the first to offer to go for the water. Craig family tradition also claims that she led the procession to and from the spring.

In 1783 Toliver Craig and his wife moved with their son, Capt. John Craig to "Craig's Settlement", on Clear Creek (now in Woodford County). But ten years later, in 1793, when Capt. John Craig again moved, the old couple, Toliver and Polly Hawkins Craig, remained behind. Two years later, in 1795, Toliver Craig died. In 1804 his wife died. They were buried near their home. No record is found of their graves being located or marked. (Much of this information was given by Miss Katherine Craig, lineal descendant and historian, of Grant, Boone County, Ky.)

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The following is a transcription of the will of Toliver Craig from Woodford County, Kentucky Will Book B, p79:

In the name of God Amen I Toliver Craig of Woodford County being in a low State of health but of perfect disposing mind and memory caling to mind the uncertainty of this mortal life, do constitute this my last Will and testament in manner and form Following.

First and principally I recommend my soul to god that gave it, and my body to be entered after my death at the discretion of my Executors hereafter named.

Secondly, and as for the worldly estate the Lord has blest me with I lend two negroes named Warrick & Teanor and a horse & best bed and furniture unto my beloved wife Mary Craig during her natural life and after her death to be equally divided among my children hereafter named as the rest of my estate.

Thirdly I desire that my children all be made Equal with the one thats received the most of my estate that is what it was worth when they received it.

Fourthly I desire that the balance of my estate both real and personal be equally divided between my nine children namely, John Craig, Toliver Craig, Lewis Craig, Joseph Craig, Elijah Craig, Benjamin Craig, Jeremiah Craig, Joice Faulkner and Elizabeth Cave.

Fifthly it is my Will and desire that my above named children make John Sanders and Sarah Singletons part equal with theirs in property at the praise value.

Sixthly It is my desire that my sons John Craig, Toliver Craig, and Lewis Craig do execute this my last will and testament. Witness my hand and seal this fifteen day of December one thousand, seven hundred & ninety.

Toliver Craig (his mark). Teste - John Cooke, Anthony Lindsey, Daniel Baldwin

At a Court held for Woodford County at the Courthouse thereof on Monday the 5th day of August 1799 This last will & testament of Toliver Craig decd. was presented in Court & proved by the oaths of John Cooke, Anthony Lindsey and Daniel Baldwin three subscribing witnesses thereto and was ordered to be recorded. Test - T. Turpin CWC

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