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JOHN GRAHAM OF VIRGINIA AND KENTUCKY 1765-1835 A CHRONOLOGY

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INTRODUCTION

During the latter part of the sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth century, thousands of men, women and children of Scotch descent and Protestant faith crossed St. Patrick's channel into Northern Ireland to avoid religious persecution. They settled in what is known today as Ulster, in the shore counties of Down, Antrim, Londonderry and Donegal. Presbyterians for the most part, these independently-minded Scotch folk soon found the land, the law and the religious environment of northern Ireland hardly more pleasing than those of their native Scotland, and with a view to improve their economic and religious situation in life, began, during the early part of the eighteenth century, a general movement of emigration to the middle British Colonies of America.

Upon their arrival in the New World they discovered the Puritans in possession of New England, the Quakers seated in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, the Catholics in Maryland and the Episcopalians in tidewater Virginia. The prospect was far from heartening, but they did not turn back. Habituated for generations to the hardships of living in Scotland and Ireland, these stout-hearted Scotch-Irish folk turned their faces to the new lands of the west. Under the urge of a common impulse they moved in an almost continuous stream over the flat lands of New Jersey, through the low hill country of eastern Pennsylvania, and settled themselves in a rich, timbered, well-watered wilderness—the great and the beautiful Valley of Virginia. Here on

the waters of the Shenandoah and the Upper James, at first, and later, farther to the west, on the New, the Clinch, the Holston and the Kentucky, they built up their own gradually expanding and extended community, established their own churches, schools and local self government.

In the back country of Virginia, west of the formidable Blue Ridge, they found, beginning about 1725, that liberty of heart and hand that had been denied them and their fathers for a hundred and fifty years in Scotland and in Ireland. Here on the mid-western frontier of British America, their homes carved from the virgin forest, in the endless shades of which lurked the ever-vengeful and cruel Indian tribes, they prospered in lands and goods, and grew in numbers and strength. Finally their urge to self sufficiency, coupled with the remoteness of their location from the older settlements to the East, led to the establishment of Augusta County, Virginia, in 1738, and the shortly subsequent selection of Staunton as the new county seat. Prestons, Campbells, Smiths, Grahams and numerous other Scottish families had emigrated from the shores of the Clyde to Northern Ireland during the turbulent reigns of the Tudors and the Stuarts. Now these same Scotch families, with a small but important admixture of English, Welsh, Irish and Dutch blood drawn to them by the common ties of love of liberty and land, were settled in their new homes close to the rugged Alleghany front, far removed from the easy impress of the hand of tyranny.

Into this region, onto lands situated on the Calf Pasture River, a tributary of the James, came two brothers from Donegal County, Ireland: John and William Graham with their wives and families about the year 1741. Land was cleared, cabins were built and children were raised. Hard-working, God-fearing, Indian-fighting folk they were; their thoughts, like those of their neighbors, centered upon the preservation and improvement of their homes; their hopes and ambitions, and their aspirations for their children centered upon the rich land reported by all the traders and explorers to lie on western waters in the wilderness of Kentucky. Here on the frontier of Virginia in 1765, John Graham, grandson of William Graham, Sr., the emigrant, was born. Here he spent his partly orphaned boyhood and youth. Here he received a desultory and intermittent education, probably at Liberty Hall, the precursor of Washington and Lee University, while learning the lessons of self-reliance and forti-

tude that only a service on the Virginia Continental line in the Revolutionary War could teach.

Accustomed to the rough life of the frontier, and presumedly at home in the forest, John Graham early turned his eyes to the west. Toward the close of the century, while but a stripling, he found his way over the Pioneer and Wilderness trails of Virginia and Kentucky, and, at a time when most young men are still in school, was marking out land on waters flowing into the Mississippi. In 1787 he entered the Indian-ridden upper Big Sandy country, when barely twenty-two, and assisted in the location of upwards of 100,000 acres for Colonel John Preston. Ten years later, in 1797, a careful and experienced surveyor, he began the first of a long series of land surveys which, before 1830, were to encompass in excess of 150,000 acres on the Big Sandy, Licking and Kentucky rivers. Most of this land, in one form or another, passed through his hands, either for sale or exchange or for permanent investment.

As the years passed, John Graham became the acknowledged leader in the Upper Big Sandy country. In turn he was surveyor, legislator, merchant, banker, landowner, and judge. He was instrumental in the formation of the county of Floyd—in 1799—when it involved in area ten present-day counties of eastern Kentucky. The head of a family of seven children—six of whom were girls—he died in 1835, leaving a will dividing his property, household effects, negroes, farm chattels and a substantial part of his lands among his immediate heirs.* To the countryside he left the remembrance of an unusual character, one that has become during the past century almost legendary.

John Graham was a man possessed of eccentric moods, one exhibiting at times the careful calculation of good business and again the liberality of a great heart. He could run a fifty-mile survey in the wilderness and close it with precision, yet he cared so little for land that he once deeded away a farm for a tune played on a fiddle. In his store he was exact when he exchanged bear and beaver skins for sugar and coffee, yet much of his goods he let out on credit to his less fortunate neighbors, who, in most instances, his ledger shows, never paid him. During his latter years, grown wealthy through the lands he had traded and those

* His will, dated April 19, 1835, is quoted in full in an article entitled "The Will of Judge John Graham, of Floyd County, Kentucky," by W. R. Jillson, published in *The Register* of the Kentucky State Historical Society, Vol. 37, No. 118, January, 1939, pages 78-80.

he had held, he nevertheless maintained the confidence and respect of the countryside and while accepting other honors from the public generally, continued to receive, with evident pleasure, reappointment as the Surveyor of Floyd County to within a few years of his death.

During his lifetime John Graham apparently cared little for public address or conspicuous attainment. A thoroughly competent penman and a master of English composition, he has left practically nothing in the form of letters or writings other than those instruments required by the ownership of real and personal property. Nothing fulsome concerning the life of John Graham appears in the early histories and biographies of Kentucky, but from the fundamental sources of the county court records of Virginia and Kentucky enough has been gleaned to outline the following chronology of his life, to which important data, if discovered, may from time to time be added.

A CHRONOLOGY

1741:—John Graham, Sr., and William Graham, Sr., brothers of Scotch Presbyterian parents, born in Donegal County, Ireland, emigrated with their families to America. After residing in Chester County, Pennsylvania, for a time they settled on the Calf Pasture River, a southwest flowing branch of the North Fork of the James River, in Augusta County, Virginia, about 25 miles northwest of Staunton, and about 4 miles below Deerfield, late in the year 1741 or early in 1742. William Graham, Sr., who had married Jane _____ in Ireland, brought his two sons, Robert Graham and James Graham, with him to Virginia. (Ben. LaBree, MS notes on the Graham Family, also David Graham, *History of the Graham Family*, page 107.)

1742:—David Graham, third son of William Graham, Sr., was born in Augusta County, Virginia, in 1742. Child of Virginia's western frontier, he grew to manhood during the troublesome period of the French and Indian war. In 1765 he became the father of John Graham of Virginia and Kentucky. (Ben. LaBree, MS notes on the Graham Family.)

1749:—William Graham, Sr., husband of Jane _____ Graham and father of the three boys, Robert, James and David Graham, died in Augusta County, Virginia, in April, 1749. On May 17, 1749, John Graham, Sr., brother of William, deceased;

petitioned the Augusta County Court for relief as security for his sister-in-law, Jane Graham, widow of William Graham, Sr. (Augusta County Court Order Book II, page 125.)

Augusta Seminary was founded in 1749 by the Reverend Robert Alexander, a Presbyterian minister and a graduate of Edinburgh University. For twenty years this school was taught by the Reverend John Brown, a graduate of Princeton in the class of 1749. In 1774 The Reverend William Graham, a man of unusual ability and scholarship, but of no close kinship to the subject of this sketch, took charge of this school, which two years later—in 1776—became known as “Liberty Hall” at Lexington, Virginia. Subsequently it was renamed Washington College, and years afterwards its title was again changed to Washington and Lee University. (Lyon G. Tyler, “Education in Colonial Virginia” in Vol. VI, No. 3, *William and Mary College Quarterly*, page 186.)

1751:—Augusta County Court orders James and David Graham, orphans of William Graham, to be bound, May 26, 1751. (Augusta County Court Order Book II, page 580.) Later, on August 29, 1751, the Court appointed John Graham, Sr., their uncle, the guardian of James and David Graham, orphans of William Graham. (Augusta County Court Order Book III, page 46.) John Graham, Sr., accepted and gave bond. (Augusta County Will Book I, page 386.)

1753:—Thomas Witten, Jr., was born January 23, 1753, in Maryland, the son of Thomas Witten, Sr., and Elizabeth Cecil Witten. (James W. Witten, *Dad and His Folks*, page 75.)

1758:—David Graham was a soldier in Captain William Preston's Company of Rangers in the war between Britain and France in 1758. (Virginia Colonial Militia, page 38.)

John Graham, Sr., great uncle of John Graham of Virginia and Kentucky, also served as a soldier in Captain William Preston's Company of Rangers in 1758. (Lyman Chalkley, *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia, 1745-1800*. Vol. 1, page 213.)

1761:—David Graham, now nineteen years of age, chose William Mann as his guardian on February 18, 1761. (Augusta County Court Order Book VI, page 472.)

1762:—On motion of William Mann, guardian of David Graham, Augusta County Court, on November 23, 1762, issued summons to John Graham, Sr., to give an account of his guardianship of David Graham. (Augusta County Court Order Book VII, page 452.)

1764 (?):—David Graham married Jane Armstrong, orphan daughter of James Armstrong, who had been a private in Company No. 1, Augusta County, Virginia, Militia in 1742, under Captain John Smith and Colonel James Patton (Virginia Colonial Militia, page 91), and eleven years later, on March 17, 1753, had qualified as a "Lieutenant of Foot," of the Augusta County, Virginia, Militia. (Augusta County Court Order Book No. III, page 448.)

1765:—*John Graham*, of Virginia and Kentucky, first child of David and Jane Armstrong Graham, was born in Augusta County, Virginia, January 1, 1765. He was named John for his great uncle, John Graham, Sr., the former guardian of his father, David. Later in life he was to become an explorer, land surveyor and outstanding citizen in the upper Big Sandy River Country of Eastern Kentucky. He died in Floyd County, Kentucky, April 20, 1835, aged 70 years. (W. R. Jillson, *The Big Sandy Valley*, page 83.)

1766:—Joseph Graham, second son of David and Jane Armstrong Graham, and younger brother of *John Graham* of Virginia and Kentucky, was born in Augusta County, Virginia. (Ben. LaBree, MS notes on the Graham Family.)

Thomas Witten, Sr., and wife, Elizabeth Cecil Witten, and her brother Samuel Cecil, Sr., and wife, Nancy Witten Cecil, removed with their families from Cecil County, Maryland, to Walker's Creek, Giles County, Southwestern Virginia, in 1766. The Wittens and the Cecils were of English descent, their first American ancestors having emigrated to Maryland with Lord Baltimore in 1634. (William C. Pendleton, *History of Tazewell County and Southwest Virginia, 1748-1920*, pages 57, 401-406.)

1767:—Thomas Witten, Sr., the pioneer and first settler of the Tazewell Country, grandfather of *Rebecca Witten Graham*, built his cabin in 1767 on the Crab Orchard tract, near the now standing Pisgah Methodist Church in Tazewell County, Vir-

ginia. (William C. Pendleton, *History of Tazewell County and Southwest Virginia, 1748-1920*, page 56.)

1768:—David Graham, father of *John Graham* of Virginia and Kentucky, died in Augusta County, Virginia, in February or March, 1768. On March 29, 1768, Jane Armstrong Graham, widow of David Graham, deceased and Joseph Vohub, qualified as administrators of David Graham's estate. (Augusta County Court Order Book XIII, page 78.)

1769:—David Graham's estate appraised June 3, 1769, by John Davis, Archibald Smithers and William Hutchison. (Augusta County Will Book IV, page 412.)

1771:—Jane Armstrong Graham, widow of David Graham, on August 21, 1771, made settlement of the estate of her former husband with William Follin, Uriah Humphreys, Jacob Solomon and others. (Augusta County Will Book IV, page 441.)

Henry, Jacob and Mathias Harman, in 1771, settled a few miles east of the present-day location of Tazewell Court House. (Lewis Preston Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786, etc.*, page 911.) Thomas Witten, Sr., and Thomas Witten, Jr., were already living a few miles to the west. (See year 1767.)

1774:—Thomas Witten, Sr., and son, Thomas Witten, Jr., served in Captain Daniel Smith's Company at the battle of Point Pleasant in October, 1774. (R. G. Thwaites and L. G. Kellogg, *Documentary History of Lord Dunmore's War*, page 303.)

1775:—*John Graham*, orphan son of David and Jane Armstrong Graham, served 157 days in the 8th Virginia Regiment in Captain George Vallandingham's Company on the Continental Line in the Revolutionary War. He was paid £11:15:6. on a payroll, signed by John Campbell, dated October 5, 1775. (Original payroll, Captain George Vallandingham's Company, page 46, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia.)

Rebecca Witten, daughter of Thomas Witten, Jr., was born January 29, 1775, in what was then Washington County, but is now Tazewell County, Virginia. (Graham Family Records.)

1776:—Jane Armstrong Graham, widow of David Graham, and mother of *John Graham*, married Alexander Stuart in 1776. (Augusta County Court Records, Vol. II, page 77.)

1780:—Thomas Witten, Jr., was an ensign in a troop of mounted riflemen from Washington County, Virginia, under Colonel William Campbell at the battle of King's Mountain in the Carolinas in 1780. (Lewis Preston Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786, etc.*, pages 262, 855; also William C. Pendleton, *History of Tazewell County and Southwest Virginia, 1748-1920*, page 379; also, James W. Witten, *Dad and His Folks*, page 75.)

1781:—100 acres of land on the middle Fork of the Holston River was granted on September 1, 1781, to John Graham. As actual settlement on this tract is indicated as of 1770, it is probable that this John Graham of Washington County, Virginia, was a relative, possibly a cousin, of John Graham (1765-1835). (Lewis Preston Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia*, page 1218.)

1781-1785:—Records are lacking to prove it, but about this time John Graham was probably a student at Liberty Hall, the precursor of Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia. His varied and unique accomplishments in life, his writing, accounting, surveying and personal poise attest the fact that he had enjoyed the advantages of higher education. Liberty Hall, originally known as Augusta Seminary, was only 35 miles from Staunton down the valley, and not more than 60 miles from John Graham's birthplace. After completing his preparatory work at Liberty Hall, he may later have spent some time at William and Mary College at Williamstown, as all official county surveyors in Virginia in the eighteenth century were required by law to do.

1782:—Early Jefferson County, Virginia, now Kentucky, land office records, show that John Graham entered 300 acres on Green River, December 14, 1782. It is possible that this is the same John Graham who, in the preceding year, was granted land on Holston, but more likely it was John Graham (1765-1835), as his grandson John Graham Johns has stated that his grandfather Graham came to Kentucky from Augusta County, Virginia, during the period 1780-1785. (Jefferson County, Virginia, Land Entries, Book A, page 227; also W. R. Jillson, *Old Kentucky Entries and Deeds*, The Filson Club Publications No. 34, page 211, also David Graham, *History of the Graham Family*, page 108.)

1784:—*John Graham* enters 1,000 acres of land on a branch of the Red River in Fayette County, Virginia, September 13, 1784. (W. R. Jillson, *Old Kentucky Entries and Deeds*, page 103.)

1786:—William Thompson, Executor of James Patton, deceased, sold in 1786 to *John Graham* for £33:18 a tract of 226 acres of land lying and being in Washington County, Virginia, on the northwest side of Holston River. (Lewis Preston Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia: 1769-1800*, page 1279.)

During 1786 *John Graham* saw nineteen days of active service with the Kentucky Militia on the frontier in troop movements under Captain William Price. Records originally reposing in the office of the Adjutant General of Kentucky attest that *John Graham* was paid £1:10:4 for this service, which was probably against the Chickamauga Indians. (Jouett Taylor Cannon, "Kentucky's Active Militia—1786" in *The Register* of the Kentucky State Historical Society, Vol. 32, No. 100, page 230.)

1787:—*John Preston* and *John Smith* of Montgomery County, Virginia, on February 7, 1787, entered into a contract with *Daniel Harman* and *Charles Skaggs* as for *Mathias Harman* and *Henry Skaggs*, principals, of the Tazewell Country. By the terms of this contract the latter were bound to "find, discover and shew land of good quality to the amount of 100,000 acres in the Big Sandy Valley." The land was entered in accordance with the terms of the contract, March 9, 1787. Later, *John Graham* of Augusta County began and completed the surveying of this very large boundary. (Floyd Circuit Court of Kentucky, Order Book A, page 244, also Kentucky Land Office Records, Frankfort, Kentucky.)

John Graham is said by family tradition to have made his first land explorations and surveys on the Big Sandy River in the vicinity of the present town of Prestonsburg, Kentucky, for *John Preston*, during the year 1787. He may have assisted in entering the *Preston* land with *Mathias Harman* and *Henry Skaggs*, acting as guides. No surveys have been found made by him with dates as early as 1787.

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1787:—John Preston and John Smith of Montgomery County, Virginia, on February 7, 1787, entered into a contract with Daniel Harman and Charles Skaggs as for Mathias Harman and Henry Skaggs, principals, of the Tazewell Country. By the terms of this contract the latter were bound to "find, discover and shew land of good quality to the amount of 100,000 acres in the Big Sandy Valley." The land was entered in accordance with the terms of the contract, March 9, 1787. Later, *John Graham* of Augusta County began and completed the surveying of this very large boundary. (Floyd Circuit Court of Kentucky, Order Book A, page 244, also Kentucky Land Office Records, Frankfort, Kentucky.)

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Lick near Big Paint Creek ten miles from Harman's Station. (W. R. Jillson, *The Big Sandy Valley*, page 671; W. E. Connelley, *The Founding of Harman's Station*, pages 36-77.)

In the fall and winter of the year of 1787-1788, Mathias Harman, Henry Skaggs, James Skaggs and Robert Hawes built the first blockhouse on the Big Sandy River about one-half mile below the mouth of Johns Creek in the bottom of the Levisa Fork of the River. Jennie Wiley escaped from Indians camped at Mud Lick and in the night found her way to Harman's Station and safety. Indians ran the Harman party off and burned the stockade in 1789. Exploration and settlement in the upper Big Sandy ceased for a time. (W. R. Jillson, *The Big Sandy Valley*, page 80.)

John Graham was granted by Virginia on January 10, 1787, 276 acres of land located on the Middle Fork of the Holston River in Washington County. (Lewis Preston Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia: 1769-1800*, page 1218.)

1789:—Vancouver's Station built on the tongue of land between the Levisa and Tug Forks of the Big Sandy. In 1790 this blockhouse was burned, but was rebuilt and reoccupied in 1792. (William Ely, *The Big Sandy Valley*, page 12.)

1790:—Harman's Station was rebuilt and reoccupied in the year 1790. (W. E. Connelley, *The Founding of Harman's Station*, page 77.)

1791:—John Spurlock built the first cabin in 1791 on the John Preston grant within the present town site of Prestonsburg, Kentucky. (W. R. Jillson, *The Big Sandy Valley*, page 81.)

1797:—On May 3, 1797, *John Graham*, then Deputy Surveyor of Mason County, Kentucky, surveyed the original plan of the town of Prestonsburg, on the north and east side of the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River opposite the mouth of Middle Creek under the "direction of Major Andrew Hood, Mathias Harman and Solomon Stratton, agents for the Adventures on Sandy under Col. John Preston's Grant." This plat may be seen on page 66 of Deed Book A in the Floyd County Court Clerk's office at Prestonsburg, Kentucky. At this time, 1797, what is now Floyd County was a part of Mason County, Kentucky.

Later, *John Graham*, Deputy Surveyor of Mason County, Kentucky, completed on June 27, 1797, one of his earliest, if not

his first, large survey, on the Big Sandy River—a boundary of 2,000 acres beginning somewhat below and extending to and above and including the town site of Prestonsburg, which was destined, two years later, to become the seat of Floyd County. This survey was executed for John Preston of Montgomery County. Later, July 7, 1813, as will be seen, it became the property of John Graham by grant issued by Governor Isaac Shelby. (W. R. Jillson, *The Kentucky Land Grants*, The Filson Club Publications No. 33, page 223.)

1797-1820:—Between the years 1797 and 1820 *John Graham* surveyed the greater part, if not all, of the approximately 100,000 acres of land on which John Preston had made entry in Eastern Kentucky. These surveys, including many made for himself, and some for others, included all of the level or bottom land on both sides of the Levisa Fork of Big Sandy River from the mouth of John's Creek to the present site of Elkhorn City. The Graham surveys also encompassed all of the bottoms of John's Creek to the head, all of Main Beaver and both of its forks to the head, Main Shelby Creek and several of its branches, Mud Creek, Middle Creek and Abbott for considerable distances; also much of Carr's Fork, Rockhouse Fork, Boone's Fork, Millstone Creek and the upper 25 miles of the North Fork of the Kentucky River. *John Graham* also made some scattered surveys on the main waters of Tug Fork of Big Sandy and on its tributaries, Rockcastle and Pond Creeks. Records are also available to show that he executed a few surveys of land on Big Blaine in what is now Lawrence County and on the upper waters of Licking in what is now Magoffin County, Kentucky.

John Preston finally made John Smith his attorney-in-fact, after which Smith sold, at the instance of *John Graham*, the Preston land, piece by piece, assigning as attorney for John Preston. In this manner neither Preston nor Graham showed as owners in fee of record, the land being patented boundary by boundary to the purchasers by the State of Kentucky. Transactions of this type involved about half of John Preston's vast group of surveys; the other half Preston assigned, evidently by contractual agreement previously entered into, directly to *John Graham*. It was in this manner that David Morgan, Sr., the father of David Morgan, Jr., the husband of Graham's eldest daughter, Eleanor Graham, became possessed of about 30 or 40

separate tracts on the waters of Big Sandy River, located about and above the mouth of Beaver Creek. (Kentucky Land Office Records and Statement of J. J. Johnson, Assistant State Auditor.)

1798:—Fleming County, the twenty-sixth in order of formation in Kentucky, was erected by the General Assembly out of Mason County in 1798. It was originally so devised as to encompass Floyd County and all of the upper Big Sandy River country. (Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky*, Vol. II, page 230.)

Thomas Brown, Fleming County Tax Commissioner for the Big Sandy district, certified in his list for 1798, the name of *John Graham* for head tax and for the ownership of two horses. No real estate is indicated, probably due to the fact that *John Graham's* extensive purchases of land from John Preston had not yet been patented. (Fleming County, Kentucky, Commissioners' list, 1798: State Historical Society Archives, Frankfort, Kentucky.)

1799:—Tazewell County, Virginia, was founded in 1799 from Russell and Wythe counties, Virginia; Russell in 1786 from Washington, Virginia. (Henry Howe, *Historical Collection of Virginia, etc.*, pages 487 and 463.)

Floyd, the fortieth county in Kentucky, was established by act of the General Assembly approved December 13, 1799, out of parts of Mason, Montgomery and Fleming counties, Kentucky. (William Littell, *The Statute Law of Kentucky*, Vol. II, pages 282-283; W. R. Jillson, *The Big Sandy Valley*, page 145.)

1800:—In accordance with the Act of 1799 establishing Floyd, the magistrates named by Governor Garrard met at the house of James Brown, about three miles below the site of Prestonsburg, on the first Monday in July, 1800, and organized the Court of Floyd County, Kentucky. Prestonsburg, located on *John Graham's* 2,000-acre survey east of the mouth of Middle Creek, was made the county seat and was named for Colonel John Preston. (Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky*, Vol. II, page 236.)

John Graham became the official surveyor of Floyd County, Kentucky, and later had a number of deputy surveyors working for him. He was reappointed by the Floyd County Court in 1810, 1815, 1820 and lastly on November 15, 1830. (M. Hall, *History of Johnson County, Kentucky*, Vol. I, page 487; Kentucky Land Office Records, Frankfort, Kentucky.)

John Graham, in 1800, began keeping a handmade leather-covered ledger book of his business, merchandising and banking accounts. This book records many of his transactions down to 1819. It is now the property of Mrs. Rebecca Harris Dingus, of Prestonsburg, Kentucky.

John Graham was elected and served as Representative of the Floyd County district of Fleming, formerly Mason County, in the Kentucky General Assembly. (Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky*, Vol. II, page 547.)

1801:—*John Graham* was the owner of three tracts of land, one on the Ohio River, one on Quick's Run, and one on Cabin Creek in Mason County, Kentucky, in 1801. These three boundaries totaled 3,450 acres. This land was acquired from John Craig and Richard Graham. (Mason County, Kentucky, Tax List for 1801. Archives Kentucky State Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky.)

1803:—*John Graham* was married to Rebecca Witten, granddaughter of Judge Thomas Witten, Sr., the Pioneer, of Tazewell County, Virginia, February 10, 1803. Graham at this time was 38 years old. The marriage was solemnized, probably, at her father's or grandfather's home, by Judge David Ward of the Tazewell County Court. (John Newton Harman, *Annals of Tazewell County, Virginia*, Vol. I, page 49.)

The parents of Rebecca Witten were Thomas Witten, Jr., and Eleanor Cecil. Through her mother and grandmother, Elizabeth Cecil Witten, she was a direct descendant of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, who for many years was Prime Minister of England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. (W. R. Jillson, "A Sketch of the Life and Times of Rebecca Witten Graham of Floyd County, Kentucky, 1775-1843," in *The Register* of the Kentucky State Historical Society, Vol. 37, No. 119, April, 1939.)

Joseph Patterson, attorney-in-fact for John Walker, of Wythe County, Virginia, conveyed by deed dated 1803, 158 acres of land in Tazewell County, Virginia, to *John Graham*, who, settling on this land with his bride, Rebecca Witten, became a resident of the county. Later, on December 7, 1813, when, as stated in the instrument, he was a resident of Floyd County, Kentucky, he deeded this farm to John Witten, eldest son of Judge Thomas Witten, the Pioneer of Tazewell County, Virginia. (Deeds of Record, Tazewell County, Virginia.)

1804:—Thomas Witten Graham, the first child of *John and Rebecca Witten Graham*, was born January 19, 1804, in Tazewell County. (Graham Family Records.)

John Graham deeded to his son, Thomas Witten Graham, as evidenced in the public records of Tazewell County, in 1804, a negro slave. (Tazewell County Records; Ms Notes of John Jay Johnson.)

1805:—*John Graham* and wife, Rebecca, and infant son, Thomas Witten Graham, removed to Floyd County, Kentucky, settling on the Big Sandy River on his 2,000-acre farm, which he surveyed June 27, 1797. Their first home in Kentucky was a substantial, though not large, house built of hewn logs located close to the river about three miles below the mouth of Beaver Creek near the present hamlet of Emma, Kentucky. (Graham Family Records; also W. R. Jillson, *The Big Sandy Valley*, page 129.)

1806:—Rebecca Graham, second daughter of *John and Rebecca Graham*, was born in Floyd County, Kentucky, August 12, 1806. She died in Floyd County near Prestonsburg, on the homestead given to her by her father, December 26, 1898. (See 1826: Graham Family Records.)

1807:—*John Graham* completed and occupied in 1807 his new dwelling, the first fine house on Big Sandy River in Kentucky. Five years in construction, it contained twelve rooms, and was located about three miles below the mouth of Beaver Creek on his 2,000-acre survey, near the present hamlet of Emma, Kentucky. (Graham Family Records.)

1808:—The court house of Floyd County, Kentucky, a log structure, burned in 1808, destroying all of the early records of the county.

On March 9, 1808, *John Graham* executed the first of 96 separate surveys, a total of 16,667 acres, of which he became the owner as the assignee of John Smith, attorney-in-fact of John Preston. Besides large boundaries, usually contiguous on the Big Sandy and the North Fork of the Kentucky River in what was then Floyd County, these surveys were scattered over many tributary creeks, surveyed, as in case of the river tracts, to cover only the flat or bottom land. The creek lands involved in these

surveys, which were finally completed September 13, 1819, were on: Bull, Shelby, Little Paint, Big Paint, Middle, Newcomb, Brushy, Indian, Beefhide, Trace, Johns, Daniels, Long Fork, Hoods, Quicksand, Elk Fork, Lost Fork, Irishman, Robinson, Island, Abbott, Canan, Prater, Raccoon, Stone Coal, Beaver, Blaine and others. (W. R. Jillson, *The Kentucky Land Grants*, The Filson Club Publications No. 33, pages 178 and 179.)

John Graham was elected Circuit Judge of Floyd County District, State of Kentucky, on June 28, 1808 to 1812. He was re-elected Circuit Judge of the Floyd District in 1814 and served into 1815. (M. Hall, *Johnson County, Kentucky*, Vol. I, page 512.)

John Graham bought by proxy at the tax sale of Alexander Young, Tax Collector of the town of Prestonsburg, Kentucky, on August 15, 1808, the remaining town lot lands of George Bainjay, in default of taxes to the town for the years 1807 and 1808. He paid \$1.34 for four square poles on Main Street. (Floyd County Records, Deed Book A, page 1.)

1810:—*John Graham's* original plan of Prestonsburg, Kentucky, ordered filed and re-recorded in 1810 at the September Term of the Floyd County Court. This action by the court was made necessary because of the burning of the court house and all of the Floyd County records in 1808. (Floyd County Court Orders, 1810.)

1811:—In October, 1811, *John Graham* went to Frankfort, Kentucky, and returned to Prestonsburg, Kentucky, in ten days, as shown on page 185 of his old ledger. He undoubtedly traveled by horseback. Under the caption of "*Partners In Preston's Location*" he entered a debit charge for the expense of this trip of £3., which, converted into United States currency at the then common rate of exchange of \$3.33 to the pound sterling, was about \$10.00. (*John Graham's* original MS ledger, page 185.)

Beginning October 14, 1811, and extending through November, 1813, *John Graham* entered several debits and credits in his ledger on page 177, under the title "*Adventures in John Preston's Grant.*" The debits considerably exceeded the credits. (*John Graham's* original MS ledger, page 177.)

1812:—The original 2,000-acre Preston survey executed by *John Graham* in 1797, which involved the site of Prestonsburg,

Kentucky, was assigned by John Smith, attorney-in-fact for John Preston, to John Graham, on January 10, 1812. It is number 6564 in the Kentucky Land Register's office at Frankfort, Kentucky, and was filed January 13, 1812. This survey was caveated by Michael Montgomery and Robert Young on July 11, 1812. On July 7, 1813, nearly a year later, this caveat was dismissed in favor of the defendant and owner, *John Graham*. The old ledger kept by Judge Graham reveals this legal tilt simply as a charge of 6 shillings per day for 14 days against "Partners in Preston's Location" January 15 and January 20, 1812. (Kentucky Land Office Records; Judge Graham's MS ledger.)

1814:—At a meeting of the Floyd County Court for the September Term, at Prestonsburg, Kentucky, a plat of the Floyd County line as run by *John Graham* was filed and ordered recorded. (Floyd County Court Deed Book, Vol. A, page 66.)

On July 25, 1814, *Judge John Graham* was re-elected Circuit Judge of the Floyd County District, and served until the spring of 1815. (M. Hall, *Johnson County, Kentucky*, Vol. I, page 512.)

1815:—At a meeting of the January Term of the Floyd County Court, Thomas Johns was directed to open a road from the mouth of Ivy Creek to Graham's mill, which was probably located at Haw's Ford of Sandy River near the present village of Dwale, Kentucky. (Floyd County Court Order Book II, page 61.)

At a meeting of the March Term of the Floyd County Court, *John Graham* was directed to appear and show why he conveyed lots in Prestonsburg to John Spurlock after he had conveyed same to the Floyd County Court. (Floyd County Court Order Book II, page 82.)

At a meeting of the May Term of the Floyd County Court, *John Graham* appeared and explained the Spurlock sale as an overlap of lots and streets due to the lack at the time of a definite survey of the boundaries. Graham then proposed to convey to the county, certain lots in Prestonsburg. (Floyd County Order Book II.)

On June 25, 1815, *John Graham* sold to the County of Floyd all of the ground beneath the streets, alleys and court house square in the town of Prestonsburg, for the sum of \$1.00. (W. R. Jillson, *The Big Sandy Valley*, page 82.)

During the year 1815 *John Graham* began a general banking business. Loans ranging from \$10.00 to \$1,000.00 in American money were made from his personal funds. The notes always fell due on Christmas or New Year's day. (W. R. Jillson, *The Big Sandy Valley*, page 129; also *John Graham's* original Ms ledger.)

1818:—At the June Term of the Floyd County Court held at Prestonsburg, Kentucky, in 1818, Thomas Johns, Sr., the father of Thomas P. Johns, Jr., who married *John Graham's* daughter, Elizabeth Graham, appeared and made statement in open court of his services rendered in the Revolutionary war. This deposition, with those of other veterans similarly taken, was ordered certified to the Secretary of War for pensions under the Act of March 18, 1818. (Floyd County Court Order Book III, page 26.) There is no indication or record that *John Graham* ever sought or desired a pension for the services he rendered in the Eighth Virginia Regiment on the Continental Line during the Revolution.

Elizabeth Graham, youngest daughter of *John and Rebecca Graham*, was born in Floyd County, Kentucky, November 21, 1818. She married Thomas P. Johns, 2nd, March 8, 1838, and became the mother of (1) Captain John G. Johns, Sr., who was born in Floyd County, March 3, 1839, and died in Winchester, Kentucky, March 1, 1921; (2) Mary Elizabeth Johns, who was born in 1847 and died July 27, 1911. Elizabeth Graham Johns† died in Floyd County, December 8, 1895. (Graham Family Records; W. R. Jillson, "Early Floyd County Marriage Records, 1803-1860," in *The Register* of the Kentucky State Historical Society, Vol. 25, page 265.)

1825:—Eleanor Graham, eldest daughter of *John and Rebecca Graham*, married David Morgan, Jr., in Floyd County and settled at the mouth of Beaver on Sandy River in 1825. (Graham Family Records; W. R. Jillson, "Early Floyd County Marriage Records, 1803-1860," in *The Register* of the Kentucky State Historical Society, Vol. 26, page 46.)

1826:—Rebecca Graham, third child and second daughter of *John and Rebecca Graham*, married Jacob Mayo in Floyd County

† Elizabeth Graham Johns was the great-grandmother of the writer's wife, Oriole Gormley Jillson, formerly Regent of the Susannah Hart Shelby Chapter of the N.S.D.A.R. of Frankfort, Kentucky.

and settled on the east side of Sandy River about three miles above Prestonsburg, Kentucky, December 14, 1826. (Graham Family Records, also W. R. Jillson, "Early Floyd County Marriage Records, 1803-1860," in *The Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society*, Vol. 26, page 44.)

Jacob Mayo was the first clerk of Floyd County, and served for many years in this capacity. (Floyd County Court Records.)

1827:—Dorothy Graham, fourth child of *John and Rebecca Graham*, married Edwin Trimble and settled in Floyd County near Prestonsburg, July 22, 1827. (Graham Family Records.)

Thomas Witten Graham, son of *John and Rebecca Graham*, was a member of the House of Representatives from Floyd and Pike counties in the General Assembly of Kentucky in 1827. (Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky*, Vol. II, page 237.)

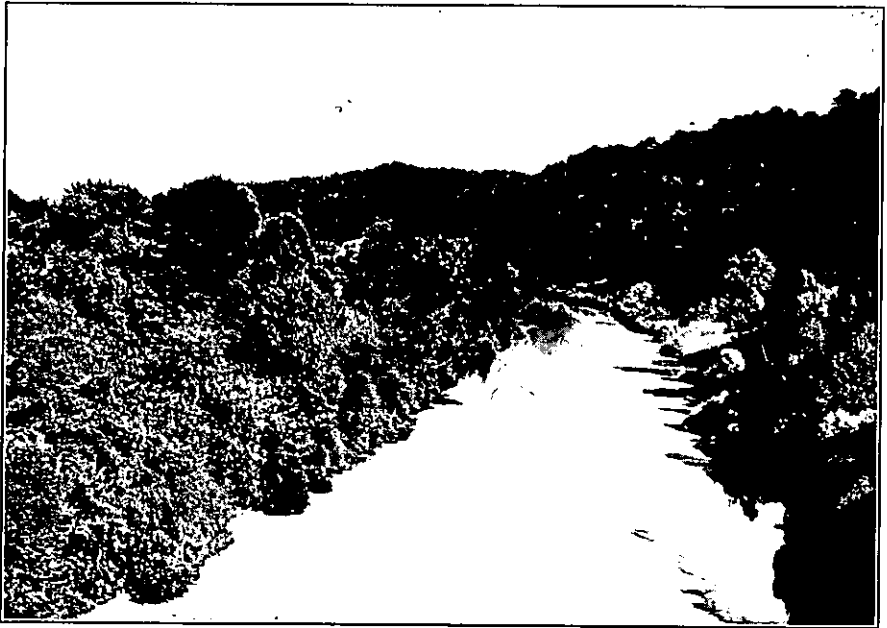
1829:—Thomas Witten Graham, son of *John Graham*, became sheriff of Floyd County, Kentucky, April 5, 1829. He served as sheriff two years, until May 16, 1831. (M. Hall, *History of Johnson County, Kentucky*, Vol. I, page 484.)

1832:—Sophia Graham, fifth child of *John and Rebecca Graham*, married William H. Layne, December 28, 1832, and settled on Sandy River somewhat above the mouth of Beaver Creek. (Graham Family Records; also W. R. Jillson, "Early Floyd County Marriage Records, 1803-1860," in *The Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society*, Vol. 25, page 267.)

1833:—Lieutenant Thomas Witten Graham, only son and oldest child of *John and Rebecca Graham*, died October 23, 1833, at West Liberty, Morgan County, Kentucky, aged 28 years, 9 months and 4 days. His body was returned to Floyd County and he was buried in the Graham family plot on the old homestead just west of the present town of Emma, Kentucky. By his will, the whereabouts of which is unknown, he made his father, *John Graham*, his sole heir and administrator. (Graham Family Records and *John Graham's* will.)



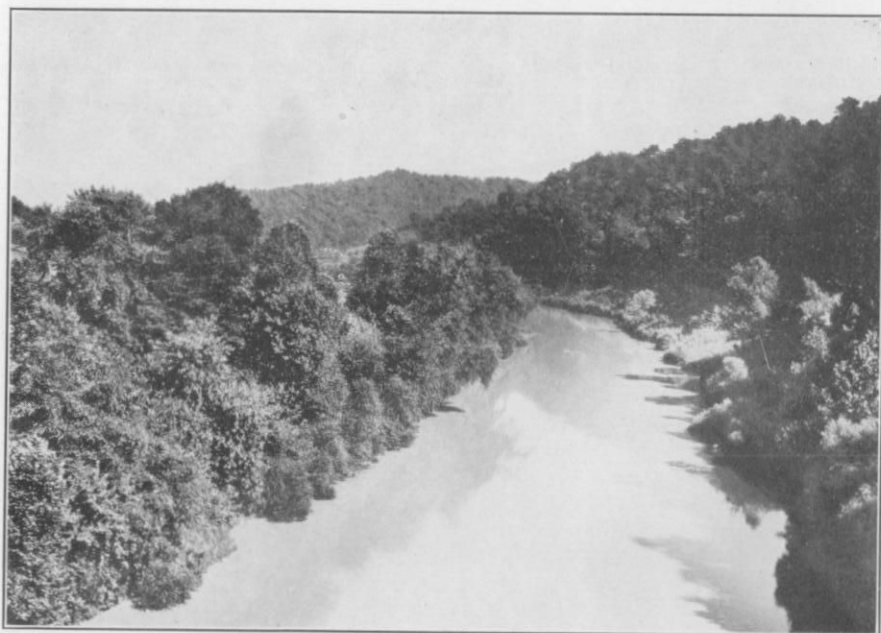
The graves of John Graham, his wife Rebecca Witten Graham and his son Thomas Witten Graham, near Emma, Floyd County, Kentucky



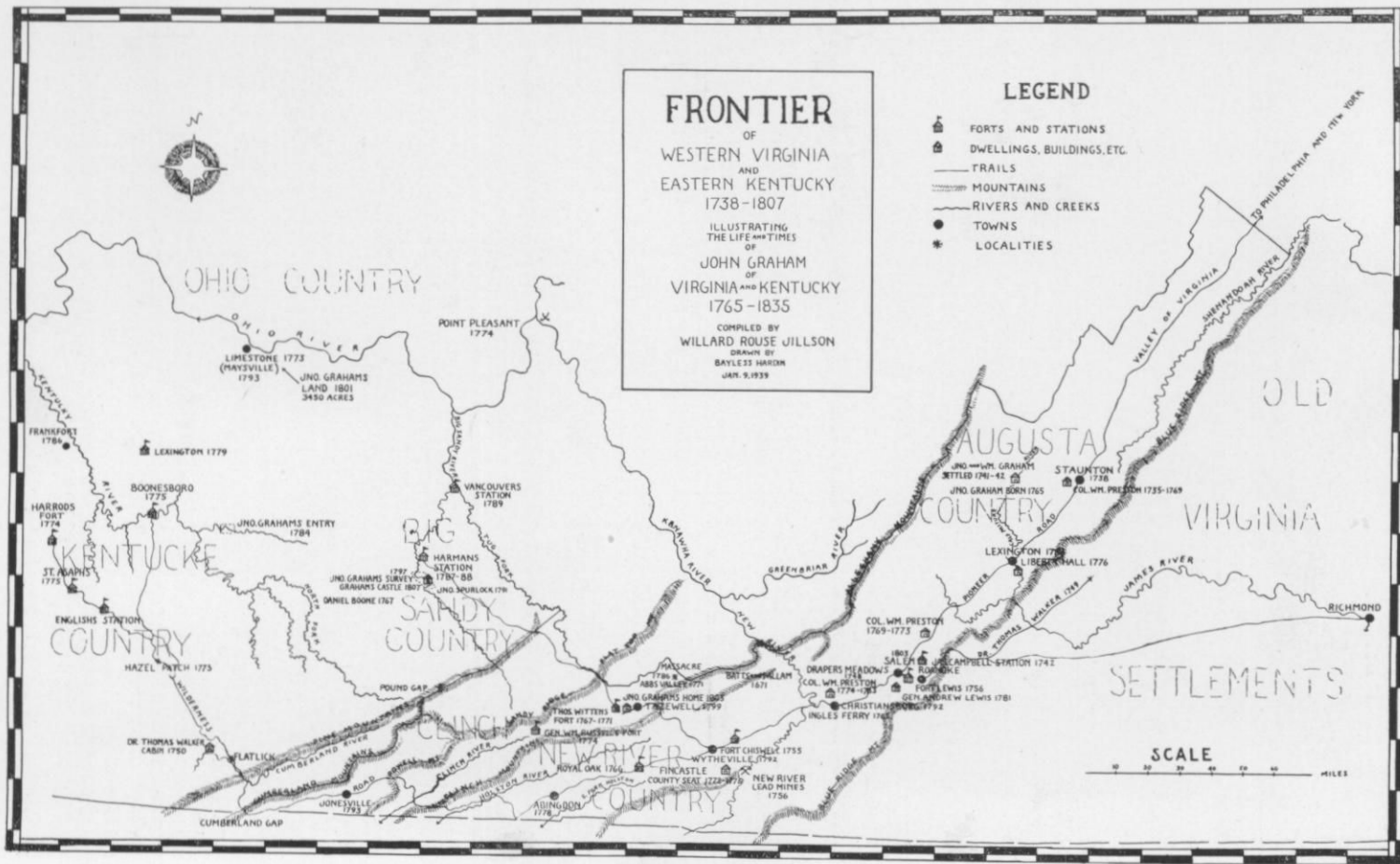
The Levisa Fork of Big Sandy River, as it appeared during the lifetime of John Graham. This view taken by the writer a few miles above Prestonsburg shows a portion of the Anna Mayo farm, formerly an important part of John Graham's 2,000-acre homestead.



The graves of John Graham, his wife Rebecca Witten Graham and his son Thomas Witten Graham, near Emma, Floyd County, Kentucky



The Levisa Fork of Big Sandy River, as it appeared during the lifetime of John Graham. This view taken by the writer a few miles above Prestonsburg shows a portion of the Anna Mayo farm, formerly an important part of John Graham's 2,000-acre homestead.



Map of parts of Virginia and Kentucky illustrating the chronology of John Graham (1765-1835)

1835:—*John Graham* executed his last deed to land in Floyd County on January 12, 1835. (Floyd County, Kentucky, Deed Book, page 16; also page 113.)

John Graham executed his will April 19, 1835. (Floyd County, Kentucky, Wills; also quoted in full by W. R. Jillson, in "The Will of Judge John Graham, of Floyd County, Kentucky," *The Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society*, Vol. 37, No. 108, January, 1939, pages 78-80.)

Judge John Graham, the surveyor, settler and pioneer leader of the Big Sandy River country, died at his home in Floyd County, April 20, 1835. He was 70 years, 3 months and 19 days old. His grave may be seen on his old homestead on a low shady knoll just west of Emma, Kentucky. (Graham Family and Tombstone Records.)

At this time *John Graham's* most distinguished relative, Dr. Christopher Columbus Graham,* was a resident of Mercer County, Kentucky. (William B. Allen, *A History of Kentucky*, pages 299-335.)

Tabitha Graham, sixth child of *John and Rebecca Graham*, was married on June 25, 1835, to John B. Harris. They settled on the lands willed to them by John Graham on Cow and Calf Creeks and Broad Hollow, all of which adjoined the old Graham homestead. (Graham Family Records; also W. R. Jillson, "Early Floyd County Marriage Records, 1803-1860," in *The Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society*, Vol. 25, page 261.)

1836:—On March 15, 1836, Harry Stratton, Thomas Witten and Wilson Mayo filed a bill of appraisement of the personal estate of *John Graham*, deceased, with the Floyd County Court. It showed a value of \$894.55. Among the many items listed was "One surveyor's compass—\$65.00." None of John Graham's

* Dr. Christopher Columbus Graham (1784-1885), the celebrated centenarian of Harrodsburg and Louisville, Kentucky, was a second cousin of *John Graham* (1765-1835) of Virginia and Kentucky in the following manner: Dr. C. C. Graham's father was James Graham, the Kentucky Pioneer, who was with George Rogers Clark in the Northwestern Campaign and finally settled at Worthington's Station near Danville, Kentucky. His father and Dr. C. C. Graham's grandfather was John Graham, Sr., the Scotch-Irish emigrant who settled on the Calf Pasture River in Augusta County, Virginia, with his brother William Graham, Sr., about 1741 or 1742. William Graham, Sr., was the grandfather of *John Graham* of Virginia and Kentucky. A biographical sketch of Dr. C. C. Graham, by Brent Altscheler, appears in *THE FILSON CLUB HISTORY QUARTERLY*, Vol. 7, No. 2, April, 1933, pages 67-87.

many slaves were listed in this bill of appraisement. All of them had been previously given to members of his family or otherwise provided for as freemen. There is neither family nor official record to indicate that John Graham ever sold a slave!

1837:—During the year 1837 ninety-two landowners of Floyd County, Kentucky, stated that all or a part of their lands were purchased from *John Graham*, who had originally patented them. In this manner a check is obtained on a total of 20,408 acres alone which was given in for taxation at a total value of \$71,489.00, or approximately \$3.52 per acre, probably much less than its actual value. In 1837 Floyd County was greatly reduced in area, Pike and other counties having been cut from it in part or in whole. Thousands of acres stated in this list to have been patented by John Preston and others may have been patented by John Graham. It appears at this writing to be quite impossible to check more than a considerable part of all the land in Eastern Kentucky that passed through the hands of *John Graham*. (Floyd County, Kentucky, Tax Commissioners' Book for 1837, certified to the State Auditor of Public Accounts, October 4, 1837, by Jacob Mayo, C.F.C.C.—Archives, Kentucky State Historical Society.)

1843:—Rebecca Witten Graham, widow of *John Graham*, executed her will August 19, 1843. It was attested by James H. Hereford and Morice Mayo. Evidently she was very ill at the time, for she merely signed her name, "Rebecca Graham," by mark. (Floyd County Records—Wills.)

Nine days later Rebecca Witten Graham, wife of the Kentucky pioneer, *John Graham*, died at her home on Big Sandy River above Prestonsburg, August 28, 1843. She was 68 years, 6 months and 29 days old.

On December 22 and 23, 1843, Adam Harman, Thomas Cecil and Samuel P. Davidson, certified under appointment as Commissioners of the Floyd County Court to a bill of appraisement of her estate. Rebecca Graham's grave is on the shady knoll at Emma, beside her son, Thomas Witten Graham, and her husband, *Judge John Graham*. (Graham Family and Tombstone Records; Floyd County Records—Wills.)

JOHN GRAHAM'S PERSONAL ESTATE: We the undersigned hereby certify to the Floyd County Court that the following is the appraisement Bill of the personal estate of John Graham as shown to us by the executors of said John Graham, deceased, this 15th day of March, 1836:

One eight day trap clock.....	\$75.00
One Secretary.....	45.00
Six Windsor chairs.....	06.00
One candle stand.....	1.50
One large table.....	3.00
One small table.....	3.00
One large trunk.....	3.50
Six bottles.....	1.00
Three candlesticks and one pair snuffers.....	1.50
One looking glass.....	1.00
One bureau.....	10.00
One framed looking glass.....	2.00
One bed stead bed & covering.....	18.00
One bedstead bed covering & curtains.....	26.00
One poplar table.....	1.50
Six skin bottomed chairs.....	3.00
One pair andirons.....	1.25
Six painted skin bottomed chairs.....	3.75
One bureau.....	12.00
One turned bed stead.....	9.00
One cradle and small chair.....	1.25
One pair old andirons.....	.50
One bed stead bed & covering.....	18.00
One cupboard & cupboard wan.....	15.00
Three crocks, six plates & one castor.....	2.75
One stone churn.....	.50
One umbrella & one pair saddlebags.....	2.50
Three weeding hoes, One odd spade & One mattock..	2.25
One mattock.....	1.50
Five scyths.....	5.00
One yoke of steers.....	20.00
One brindle cow & calf.....	9.00

One red cow & calf	11.00
Ten head of first choice of steers	70.00
Two Stripper cows	16.00
One 3 year old bull	6.00
One white heifer	6.00
Five yearlings	15.00
One black horse	35.00
One bay filley	40.00
One roan filley	30.00
One bay mare	12.00
One white faced heifer	5.00
Thirty-five head of sheep	35.00
Thirty head of hogs	30.00
One cross cut saw	3.00
One old broad axe . . . . .	.75
One cutting knife . . . . .	.75
Two reap hooks, .75—Three reap hooks \$1.50	2.25
Two augurs 25c—One grind stone 50c . . . . .	.75
One brace, bits & lot of tools	4.00
Two tenon saws	2.00
Three files, 25c—One foot adze 75c	1.00
One iron wedge 50c—One pair steelyards \$1.00	1.50
One handsaw and file	1.00
Two augurs \$1.00—One chisel 25c	1.25
One old lock chain	2.00
One iron square 37½c—One tub 50c . . . . .	.87½
One guage . . . . .	.25
Three plains \$2.00—two hammers \$1.00	3.00
Two little wheels	4.50
One big wheel & reel \$2.00—Wool card 25c	2.25
One chisel and compasses . . . . .	.25
One jointer and English rule . . . . .	.75
One old cutting knife . . . . .	.25
One pair pinchers . . . . .	.25
One surveyors old chain	1.00
One muller and paint grinder	2.00
One man's saddle	8.00
One lot of milk vessels & coffee hull	6.75

One handsaw and hammers. . . . .	.75
One pair hames & chains \$1.00—One pair do 75c. . . .	1.75
One inchauger. . . . .	.37½
Three chisels and two old augers	2.00
One yearling steer & heifer.	6.50
One two year old steer.	6.00
One cow & calf.	10.00
One 4 year old heifer.	9.00
One half bushell. . . . .	.25
One old axe.	1.00
One orphan colt.	5.00
One pair old chairs. . . . .	.75
Two old axes.	1.50
Three old axes.	1.00
One lock chain and Two clevises.	5.00
One frow. . . . .	.75
One shovel.	1.00
Three branding irons. . . . .	.25
Two seives.	1.25
One pair cotton cards 75c—Three coffee pots 75c. . . .	1.50
Two crocks 50c—One water table \$1.25.	1.75
One trunk \$2.00—Two tables \$6.00.	8.00
One churn 50c—One lot of castings \$4.00.	4.50
One large kettle \$3.50c—four pieces of scythes 25c. . . .	3.75
One wagon chain and keg. . . . .	.75
Sundry old irons.	1.00
Five paint kegs and brushes.	1.00
One large churn. . . . .	.25
Sundry articles in milk house.	5.00
One lot of books.	6.00
One lot of do.	5.00
Two pots and one large kettle.	6.75
Eight head of sheep.	8.00
One kettle.	2.00
Three ovens and lids.	6.00
Three piggins and one bucket.	1.50
One ox cart.	25.00
Two ploughs one double tree & single tree.	3.00

One hand mill.....	1.80
One man's addle, one hackle and one old spinning wheel	11.75
One woman's old saddle.....	2.50
One surveyors compass instruments.....	65.00
Sundry old iron at William Laynes.....	2.00

\$894.55

Harry Stratton, Thomas Witten, Wilson Mayo, *Appraisers*

State of Kentucky, County of Floyd, *Sct*

I, H. T. Hill, Clerk of the County Court of the County and State aforesaid, do hereby certify that the foregoing Appraisal Bill of John Graham, date March 15, 1836, is a true and correct copy, as shown by records on file in my office.

Given under my hand, this the 24 day of August, 1921.

H. T. Hill, *Clerk*, by J. Spradlin, *D. C.*