

## “Oh, William! Where Have You Brought Me?”

Written and Researched by Jackie Layne Partin  
(Contains a story written by Lou Shook Woodlee)

I asked my friend Kay Curtis who lives in Tracy City, “Why was your street named ‘Reid St.’?” “I don’t know,” she responded. For some time I had been looking for the burial site of Isabell Patton Reid, so when I noticed in the phone book that Kay lived on Reid St., a light bulb came on inside my head. When Isabell grew up, she married James N. Reid and lived in Tracy City. Could this street be in the area where James and Isabell lived? Could some descendant still living in the area be able to help me with the burial sites for James and Isabell? I have a friend, (*we’ll call him “Ralph” for the lack of a better name*), who always asks me, “Who cares? What difference does it make?” Of course, he is just joking because for all of us who research Grundy County history, nothing is insignificant. It takes it all, the births, the deaths, the religions, the murders, the schools, and oh yes, just try telling my granddaughter Jocelyn that “Fancy, the mule” isn’t part of Grundy’s history.

I really, really got excited when Kay said, “There’s an old graveyard up on that hill behind Mrs. Shook’s house.” I could hardly contain my excitement. Maybe finally, I would find the final resting place for “our” Isabell. Later Kay offered to walk up with me and show me the graves. At her request, I dragged an old walking stick out of my car and handed it to her—that was to ward off all those awful, creepy snakes that frequent unkempt graveyards. Off we went to what she called Reid Hill—“**Reid St., Reid Hill**, could the graves be in **Reid Cemetery**?” When we got to the spot where the old road left the main road going up on a high hill, Kaye became less excited; she looked over the weeds and poison ivy and exclaimed, “Maybe we should come back when the weeds and snakes are gone!”

“You stay here; I’ll go up the hill to the graves!” I said, and off I went. She yelled, “You need the stick, not me!” I yelled back to her that I wasn’t afraid of the snakes; it was the poison ivy that made my skin crawl. So up, up I went. When I disappeared from sight, I began to wonder if Kay knew what she was talking about—no stones, no graves until “Eureka!” I spotted some stones on a flat near the top of the hill. There the peaceful dead lay, not caring whether I ever found them or not. They were not bothered by the vinca, briars, bushes and ivy that crawled up and over their stones. At the time, I was not aware that behind the huge white pines that provided cover from the elements for some of the graves, there was a large blue sign placed there by the Grundy County Historical Society. It named the burial site as **Reid Cemetery**. Because I was afraid that Kay might worry about me, I quickly jotted down four names from the lonely

upright stones. I surveyed the area to see if other stones were present, considered how much time and work it would take to clean off the area, pondered the poison ivy issue, prayed the barking dog would have mercy on me, and then down the hill I came.

Just as soon as I fed the names into my computer, the Reid family came alive; this truly was the family for whom I had been searching. After I had done extensive searches throughout the U. S. Census records and written my story on the Reids, I decided that it was factually correct, but it lacked the human touch. Subsequently, I made a trip to the Root Cellar at the Tracy City Library and found a story written in the 1960's by **Lou Shook Woodlee**, a Reid descendant. With permission from another descendant, I insert the story here with editing and added notes by me in italics. It is a wonderful historical account of one family who came to Tracy City in its beginning. **The story begins:**

Grandfather (*William*) Reid and Grandmother were born, reared and married in Paisley, Scotland. I do not know the dates. Grandmother's name was Margaret. Her maiden name was Melvin. I think she had one brother who went away to hunt gold and was never heard from afterwards. Of this, I am not sure. She had a sister named Elizabeth for whom Aunt Libbie (*Elizabeth Reid Sherrill*) was named.

Elizabeth Melvin (*sister to Margaret Melvin Reid*) married a man named (*Andrew*) Grey who was a baker. The Greys moved to this country a few years before Grandfather came and lived in Providence, Rhode Island. Aunt Libbie and the other children always referred to them as Aunt Grey and Uncle Grey. Grandfather had one brother named Matt. Both had an "A" for a middle initial. One was for Armstrong, the other Andrew. I do not know what was which. (*I think Lou had her grandfather's twin sons confused with him and his brother William. Her grandfather's middle initial seems to have been "N" and his brother Matt's middle initial appears to have been a "W". However William's twin sons both had an "A" as their middle initial.*)

Grandfather had two sisters. One, named Agnes, (*who*) married Samuel Harley and had one child James, whom we always called Uncle Jim. His father died when he was very young. (*Uncle Jim was James Napier Harley.*) Grandfather's other sister's name was Jeanette. She married a man named Kirkwood and had quite a family. I do not know whether I know all their names, but there were Marian, Jessie, John and James—(*there were at least two more children, Jane and Agnes.*) The father died when the children were young. They came to this country after the other Reids had come to Tracy.

Grandfather Reid's mother's name was (*Agnes*) Napier, and there was an old tradition in the family that the Napiers traced their ancestry back to Old Sir Charles Napier, who was an admiral in the navy of Queen Elizabeth the First when the Spanish Armada tried to invade England.

Grandfather and Grandmother had two children before Aunt Libbie, one named Agnes and one named Bell who died in infancy. The dates I do not know. Aunt Libbie was born in Paisley, Scotland, in February of 1850—(*in the 1850 Rhode Island Census, Libbie was six month old and listed as having been born in RI, but every Census record after that records her birth country as Scotland.*)

Aunt (*Elizabeth*) Grey wrote Grandmother (*Margaret Reid*) that as soon as she was able to travel that she wanted them to come to this country (*USA*), and perhaps they could rear this baby, Aunt Libbie. I think Aunt Libbie told me it took them several weeks to cross the Atlantic as they came in a sailing vessel.

Grandfather worked as a carpenter in Rhode Island, having learned his trade at the shipyards in Glasgow, Scotland. Then about 1857 or 1858 he came to Tracy (*Tracy City, TN*) and had charge of the building for the Tennessee Coal, Iron, and Railway Company. At that time they built their own railway cars. (*William Reid was still in Rhode Island with his family in 1860. William probably made the trip to Tennessee soon after the 1860 Census record, and Margaret came in time for her daughter Maggie to be born in Tennessee in 1862. It is possible that William had made a trip down to Tracy City to look over the situation as to whether he could find the work he needed to support his growing family. Coal was being mined by the Ben Wooten family as early as the 1850's in the area around their home and store. That same area would one day be named Tracy City. Before the turn of the decade, the railroad was completed to the small village. This event set off a big migration of men from other states and countries looking for work. Some had already been trained to work in and around mining camps. It was a common practice for the head of the household to journey ahead to "test the waters" one might say. I think we can agree that the Reids came South because of the discovery of coal in the area which brought about the need for good carpenters to build the rail and mining cars.*)

In the meanwhile, Great-Uncle Matt, Great-Grandmother (*Agnes*), Aunt Aggie (*Agnes Reid Harley*) and her baby, Jim Harley came (*from Scotland*) to this country. Great-Uncle Matt came on to Tracy and worked with Grandfather and the women folks stayed in Rhode Island with Grandmother. The railroad was not completed when (*Great-*)Uncle Matt came. Uncle Willie and Uncle Matt (*the Reid twins*) were born after Grandfather left Rhode Island (*for Tracy City, TN*). (*The twins were born 31 July 1859, but their father was home when they were ten months old. If William came down to Tennessee previously, it would have been between the conception of the twins and when they were ten months old.*)

Grandfather kept trying to persuade Grandmother to stay in Newport (*where the family had settled*), and he would soon make his fortune and return. He asked Colonel Tracy (*Samuel F. Tracy*), for whom Tracy City was named, to go, one time when he

made a trip up north, to see Grandmother and her tell her how things were at Tracy. He tried to describe the settlement for it was little more than that then (1861). She looked at Colonel Tracy and said, “When I look out my window at Tracy City, will I see as many church spires as I see here?” Colonel Tracy replied, “Mrs. Reid, did you ever see a city with(out) churches?” When he returned, he told Grandfather (*that*) he didn’t have the heart to tell her there wasn’t a church in the town. (*Colonel Tracy died in 1863.*) At that time and for some time later, the people worshipped (*at*) a sawmill and sat on the logs.

I think the Catholic (*on Nathhurst St.*) and Methodist churches were the first built. At first the Methodist church was called Teresa Chapel for Aunt Teresa Shook because her husband, Colonel A. M. Shook, had persuaded Tennessee Coal and Iron Company to give the land upon which it was built, and she had helped collect money to build the church. The Shooks worshipped with (*the*) Methodists until the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was built (*This church was located at the corner of Laurel and Depot Sts.; it was in Tracy as early as 1893.*) All of the early Shooks were reared in the Presbyterian Church.

Grandfather and Grandmother had several children while living in Rhode Island. Uncle was next to Aunt Libbie (*b. 1850*). He was the oldest son and was named James Napier (*b. 1851*). I do not know where to obtain any of these dates. After him, there were two girls, Bell (*b. 1853*) and Agnes (*b. 1856*). I think Aunt Bell was the oldest. To me it always seemed strange that they would name two for the two who died in infancy in Scotland. I do know that both (*names*), Isabell and Agnes, were old family names in the Napier family.



William and Margaret (Melvin) Reid with their children: L to R: Isabell, Elizabeth “Libbie”, Agnes and James Napier Reid (taken ca. 1858 in Rhode Island)

Next came the twins, Willie and Matt (*b. 1859*). They were named after their father (*William*) and great-uncle Matt. One was W. A. Reid and one was Matt A. Reid. Again I do not know which was Armstrong and which was Andrew. The twins were old enough to sit alone when grandmother came to Tracy. (*This statement makes me believe that Margaret came to Tracy City in early 1860.*)

Grandmother wrote Grandfather that if he was not coming to Rhode Island (*then*) she was coming to Tennessee. The trip from Newport to Tracy was a long tedious trip at that time, and she had quite a party with her. There were her six children, Great-grandmother (*Agnes*) Reid, Aunt Aggie (*Agnes Reid Harley*) and her baby, Jim (*James Napier*) Harley. They had to go by train to New York City. There they took a boat to Georgia. There they had to transfer to a train that took them to Atlanta. In Atlanta, they had to transfer from one depot to another. Grandmother took her party into the coach and seated them. There she saw a transfer truck (*cart*) pulled by an employee stalled in the mud while crossing the street. She went out to see that her baggage was loaded on the train; while back by the baggage car, the train was signaled ahead. Some of the men helped her into the baggage car, and it was quite a while before she got back to the coach where the family was.

Great-Grandmother and Aunt Aggie were quite perturbed and kept wondering where Margaret was, for she had the tickets and money. Let us add here that Aunt Aggie and Great-Grandmother never wanted to speak the English language. They always spoke the Scottish dialect, and I must illustrate by telling a funny incident. A neighbor once said in talking of another neighbor, "She is such a nice lady." Great-grandmother said, "There's na a lady in au this land." Of course, she was speaking of ladies of rank.

The family arrived in Cowan after dark and was compelled to spend the night there. At that time there were no hotels there. Some of the train men (*railroad men*) had sleeping room across the street from the depot. Some of them were kind enough to crowd up and let the Reid family have one room. It had two beds in it so they could put the young children to bed and the rest of them did the best they could.

I do not know what time they left Cowan or how long the trip to Tracy took, but I do know they arrived in Tracy shortly after noon. (*I wonder what Margaret and her entourage thought of the winding, steep climb up the Cumberland Mountain on that work-horse-of-a-train. Maybe seeing the huge trees and dense forest reminded her of home in Paisley, Scotland. An interesting point to make here would be to remind the reader that the family did not come through Monteagle because it did not exist. The train just chugged right along the tracks through the wilderness on that end of the plateau. They may have seen a little activity near Sewanee or Coal Bank/Midway or maybe even some hints of the great war on the horizon, but when they neared what is now known as Monteagle, John Moffat had not yet nailed his sign, "Moffat Station," on that lonely tree near the railroad track; in fact, there would have been more signs of*

*human existence near old man Bazille Summers' fields in what became known as Summerfield. She probably thought of herself as a pioneer rail passenger since the railroad tracks, not too much earlier, had been finished from Coal Bank to Tracy City. Margaret could hardly wait to see the church spires!)* This was the time at which my Grandfather took a short nap. A young fellow who was learning his trade as a carpenter ran in and called out, "Bill Reid, your wife has come." It was like the boy calling "wolf"—he had done this before when he wanted Grandfather to show him something. So Grandfather kept napping. Finally, they made him understand that the boy was telling the truth, and he went down to the depot. This, of course, was the end of the line, so Grandmother (*had*) her family remain in their seats until their Father came.

My Grandmother knew nothing of country or village life and everything looked very primitive to her. When she saw Grandfather, she burst into tears and said, "Oh, William! Where have you brought me?" (*Dear Reader: try to put yourself in Margaret's shoes. This was the place that Dennis Curtis, ten years later, called "the meanest and dirtiest little place on earth." Margaret, like Dennis, moved from the industrialized North that was populated with cities, shops and people. I can empathize with the two of them; it was sort of the same feeling that baptized me in 1973 when I arrived at my new home in the Fiji Islands— the stifling humidity and smoldering heat with the perpetual smell of coconut husks permeating the air around me, geckos in my bed, and the sound of drums in the distance—not at all like Tennessee. I wanted to ask my husband, "Oh, Grady Ward! Where have you brought me?" The good news is that Margaret, Dennis and I survived our cultural shocks and moved on.*)

They lived first in a house near "Cave Spring." (*This probably was an area near the Fiery Gizzard in Tracy City according to Wm Ray Turner.*) Later they moved out to what was known as the Gregg place (*probably near Gregg Cemetery*). I know they lived there part of the time during the Civil War, and I think perhaps they moved from there to the old homeplace (*that*) Grandfather built (*on what became known as Reid Hill where Lois Shook lives now*). I do not know when or from whom Grandfather bought this land, but I know they moved into the house still not finished in the fall of 1869.

In the meantime, Grandmother had had three more children—all girls. My Mother, born in 1863, was named Margaret Jeanette Reid. Aunt Laura was born seventeen months later (1864). Aunt Charlotte was born later. I do not know the date (1889), but she was near the age of Aunt Libbie's oldest child, Mollie.

Grandmother died in the spring of 1870 from pneumonia. (*Margaret lived from fall 1869 until 28 April 1870 in her new house. She was probably the first interment in the family cemetery on the hill above her new home.*) Grandfather died in 1874. He tried to swing onto the switch engine to ride from the office to the car shop which was where he worked. He slipped and the engine ran over his leg. It never healed, and he died shortly from blood poisoning. Shortly after Grandmother died, Aunt Libbie, who had become

a widow, moved back home to help rear the children. Before his death, Grandfather married a Mrs. (*Elizabeth*) Brown (*on 17 March 1873 with his nephew James Napier Harley co-signing his bond*) whose husband (*William*) had been one of his friends, and had been buried in the Reid family cemetery. (*William Brown was probably the second person buried in the Reid Cemetery.*) This union did not last very long and I think (*it*) was a rather stormy one. She was never accepted by the children who always called her Mrs. Brown.

After Grandfather's death, Aunt Libbie and Uncle Jim cared for and reared the other children. Aunt Libbie had married George Sherrill, and they had two girls, Mollie (*Mary*) Pelham and Agnes. Aunt Libbie was married at the age of seventeen, had had two children and lost her husband and youngest child, Agnes, before she was twenty-one. Her baby, Agnes, died from whooping cough. She had lost her baby, husband, and mother within a year. She never remarried, but helped to rear several children whose mother or father died. (*On 31 January 1889*) her daughter, Mollie, married a Methodist preacher, W. T. (*William*) Haggard, who came from Marshall County.

Uncle Jim (*James Napier Reid*) later (*07 July 1881*) married Isabell Partin (*actually he married Isabell Patton*) from Pelham (*she was born in Bellfonte, Alabama*). (*I have a story on Isabell's "Patton" family on the [grundycountyhistory.org](http://grundycountyhistory.org) site—Jackie*). They had six children. Melvin was the oldest and married in Memphis where he was a railroad man. Her name was Eva; I do not know her surname. They had no children. Agnes married Albert Andregg. They live on Sullivan Island, South Carolina. They had four sons and one daughter. The daughter was named Isabell Patt(o)n (*her grandmother's maiden name*) and is married to a man named Woods and lives near her mother in Charleston. The boys were Albert, Jr., James Reid, Frederi(ck) and Melvin. All are married and live near their mother and father except Frederick who lives in Alabama. Fanny married Joe Sanders from Tracy and had three children—Joe who married in Alabama and is deceased; Francis, who married Guy Webster and has three children—a boy, Curtis, in college and two girls. They live in Angleton, Texas, and Fanny makes her home with them. Her youngest son, Edd, is not married, and I think lives and works in Killian, Texas. (*James Napier Reid died 14 September 1923 of "chronic nephritis" after being sick for over a year. His wife Isabell preceded him in death in July 1907.*)

Charles Haggard Reid, Uncle Jim's second son, married Stella Lloyd, and they had one son, Lloyd Charles Reid. Stella passed away a few years ago. Charles lives in Gretna, Louisiana, and Lloyd lives in New Orleans.

Ruth Reid married Harry Gilliam. She passed away several years ago. Isabel is Mrs. Weaver. She is Uncle Jim's and Aunt Bell's youngest daughter. Her husband passed away a few years ago. She has one son, John Reid, who lives in California. Isabell

spends some time with her brother, Charles, in Gretna, but is with Agnes who is not well in South Carolina.

Agnes Reid (*daughter of Wm and Margaret Reid*) married Peter Sidney Law. She had three children—Sidney who lives in Memphis and had three children, Walter, Audrey, and Rosa Margaret. Audrey is deceased. Rosa Margaret is married and lives in Memphis, and Walter is married, has three children, and lives in Chattanooga. Daisy Law is deceased. She has four children, Frederick, who died as a child, Melvin, Burchet and Agnes Reid. All of these live in and around Memphis. Clarence, Aunt Agnes's third child, died in infancy. After Agnes's death, Mama Maggie Reid, cared for Daisy and Sidney for ten years. Of course, Uncle Pete provided for the children financially. After ten years, he married Aunt Charlotte.

Isabel Reid, the next daughter, married Tate (I suppose his name was LaFayette) Hefner. They moved to Texas. They had one son named Willie. Isabel died quite young. Next comes my Mother, Margaret Jeanette Reid. She was always called Maggie, who was born in March of 1863 and married Joe N. Shook in February of 1888. They had five boys and one girl. I was the girl and was named Lou for my Father's favorite sister. I married Elmer G. Woodlee and had four boys and one girl. These will be mentioned later as I cannot complete this without saying something of the ones I know of the younger generation.

Mama's next child (five years younger than I) was Alan Melvin Shook. He was named for our Grandfather Shook, and Aunt Libbie's middle name was Melvin. Alan married Buena Cannon, and they live in Tracy. They had three children: Margaret Elizabeth, Mary Lou, and Alan Cannon Shook.

Reid Napier (*Shook*) was the next child, born in Tracy, and he died as a young baby. Their next child was James Reid Shook. James married Mable Thomas and lives at Kimball. They had three children: James Newman, who has three children and lives in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Mary Katheryn who married Dr. David Turner and lives in Chattanooga. They have four children. Clara Ann, called "Perky", married Joe Brown and lives in Jasper. They have two girls. Mama's next child was Charles, known as Bill. His real name was Charles Steele Davenport Shook, a name which he very much disliked. He married Bernice Cropp from Holloway, Ohio and now lives in Vermillion, Ohio. He had two daughters Charlotte Ann and Elizabeth Reid, both of whom live in Vermillion, Ohio.

Edwin was the youngest child. He was named Edwin Price and was named for Edwin A. Price, the husband of Margaret Shook Price. Both of whom my Father was a great admirer of. Edwin married Alma Parmley. They had one child who died as an infant. Edwin passed away about five years ago, and Alma still lives in Tracy on a part of the old Reid homestead.

Laura Reid (*daughter of Wm and Margaret Reid*) married Tom Payne and lived most of their married life in Texas. Her children were: Zillah, James, Andrew, Sherrill, Haggard, and Elizabeth. Aunt Laura lost several children as infants. Sherrill and Beth are the only ones left. Sherrill lives in Matador, Texas, and Beth lives out from Memphis and is married to A. R. Black.

Charlotte Reid (*daughter of Wm and Margaret Reid*), the youngest of the Reids, is married to Peter S. Law, ten years after his first wife, Agnes (*Charlotte's sister*) died. They had five children, Alan, Stanley, Agnes, Louise and John. Three of these are living : Alan, Agnes, and Louise. They live in Greenville, Miss.

Great Aunt Jeanette Kirkwood moved to Texas many years ago, having lived in Tennessee not too long. Quite a few of her descendants still live in Texas.

Great-grandmother Reid and Aunt Aggie lived with Uncle Jim Harley and Aunt Binah until their death and are buried in the Reid Cemetery. There are five generations of Reids buried there and lots of their friends. (*Binah's name was Albina Eller who was probably the daughter of David and Ellen Eller. She and James Napier Harley married 01 Jan. 1878 in Grundy Co., TN. Their children were Jessie, Maggie, Edgar, Pearl, Louellen, Mildred and Randall Kirkwood Reid. There is another child that I have no record of, and then the grave marked Garnet W. Harley who is probably their other lost child.*)

About five years ago Alan Shook bought the old place from the heirs and built a pretty house there. He has done lots of work there and lives on the place. He married Lois Parsons, and they have two nice children: a boy named Brian and a girl named Alison. (**This is the end of Lou Shook Woodlee's story.**)

Reid Hill was at one time a mining area. Some notes taken from Ike Woodard's booklet are: in June 1903, "Reid Hill miners were on strike," in Sept 1905, "Reid Hill mines operated under guard," and in June 1910, "John Myers hurt in Reid Hill mines." It's not clear to me whether the Reids owned the mining operation on their land, or if their land was leased for the operations, or if the coal company owned the mineral rights. It is my understanding that the term "Reid Hill mines" covered a large area from White City and up and around the Lankford Town area and out toward the Haven of Rest nursing home. The original Reid homeplace faced the road that goes up the hill in front of the cemetery. Since the original homeplace called for ninety acres, it is reasonable to think that all the land called "Reid Hill mines" was not owned by the Reids but carried their name just as the Wooten mines did in the beginning of coal mining in Tracy City.

One thing that caught my attention in doing this research is the tightness that this family had with its members. The term “caring for our own” certainly applied to the Reids and Shooks, but they also extended helping hands to others. Their love went further than the immediate family. One can see that the surnames of the in-laws were often used as first or second names for their children—Sherrill, Kirkwood, Shook and Haggard. The names Agnes, Isabell and Margaret were names of endearment. At their deaths, some descendants made the journey back to Reid Hill to join the young ones and the ancient ones in their final resting place on the big hill. To me, the little graveyard is a symbol of togetherness and love for both the family and the land.

The Reids were pioneers to this area; I hope this little bit of history brings them the respect from present day citizens that they deserve. Do you know why your street is named as it is? Are you interested? Start asking questions; have fun in your searching. My friend Kay Curtis will now know why her street is named Reid Street. If you have questions, corrections or additions to this work, please email me at [jackiepartin@blomand.net](mailto:jackiepartin@blomand.net) or write me at P. O. Box 295, Monteagle, TN 37356. There is much more information about this family in the Root Cellar at the Library. Look for the Shook Family History, a big notebook contribution made by Elaine Foster Andrews, another Reid descendant. I have a list of those known to be interred in the little cemetery and also those who are “probably” buried there. If you are interested, contact me.



