

# WHO WAS HARVEY BROWNE?

Margaret and Leight Wilson and Jeanne Luhr, amateur genealogists and members of Harvey Browne Presbyterian Church, spent two years researching Harvey Browne and his family. They have presented their findings to the Louisville Genealogical Society, as a Wednesday Night Program and a Sunday School Class at Harvey Browne Memorial Presbyterian Church, and in this brief narrative.

## Chapter 1: Naming Rights

Harvey Browne, whose full name was James Harvey Browne, was a physician from Bardstown, Kentucky, whose sister, Edmonia Browne Roberts, gave \$2,000 to the St. Matthews Mission Sunday School for its first church building with the condition that it be named in memory of her deceased brother.

## Chapter 2: Family Background

Harvey Browne was born into a prominent family in Bardstown, Kentucky. His father, James Marshall Brown, was a noted brick mason and a farmer with real estate valued at \$20,000 in 1870. He was involved in the building of Federal Hill, St. Joseph's Cathedral of Bardstown, Wickland, and two houses for himself. The first was Bruntwood, which later became the Bardstown Female Academy and is now a Bed & Breakfast and is on the National Historic Registry. The second was Beechland, where Harvey's parents died and where Harvey and his widowed sisters continued to live until their deaths. Beechland was inherited by their niece, Edmonia Browne Alexander, whose second husband, Fidel Jimeno, sold the house which was later torn down.

Harvey's mother was Susan Beauchamp. Her father, Newell Beauchamp, served in the Revolutionary War. Because of DAR applications the Beauchamp family is well documented. James Marshall and Susan Beauchamp were married February 25, 1818. They had five children: Catherine (Kate), James Harvey, Newell, Susan, and Edmonia.

One of the first things discovered when we began our search for Harvey Browne was a letter from Jack Muir, a Bardstown historian, to a Mrs. Moore. The letter was in answer to Mrs. Moore's question about the spelling of the Brown(e) family name.

"Col. Brown's children were high and mighty in the local society and supposedly added the "e" to their name. The Brownes received visitors one afternoon each week and it was known that visitors would not be welcome any other afternoon...I don't think he (Harvey) ever practiced medicine here, but, am inclined to think he followed his profession while a resident of another state. Stories go that one of the girls put wax on her face, (as was the fashion of the times) to the point that it would not permit a smile."

James Marshall Brown died November 9, 1879. Susan Marie Beauchamp Brown died May 14, 1883. They are buried in the family plot in Bardstown Cemetery.

Catherine Browne was the oldest child, born about 1820/21. On December 29, 1836, she married Henry Clinton Melone. By the 1850 Census she was living with her birth family again. No husband was in the household but there was a Hiram Melone, age 12. James Marshall Brown's will states: "I give to grandson Hiram Malone my silver watch." All published genealogies we have found state that Catherine had no children. Stith Thompson, the great-grandson of Susan Beauchamp Brown's sister, wrote about Kate and her siblings in a book, "A

Folklorist's Progress." He visited them about 1900, when the three sisters, Harvey, and their niece, Edmonia Brown Alexander, were living together in Beechland, "a museum of mid-nineteenth century elegance." Kate was crippled and lived on the second floor. Kate told him about the family. Catherine died June 25, 1908 and is buried in the family plot in Bardstown Cemetery.

Newell Browne was born about 1825. He attended the United States Military Academy for at least one year (1841). He graduated from the University of Louisville Medical School in 1860, moved to Mexico and became a well-regarded physician there. He married Maria Antonio Perez and had four or five children. The niece, Edmonia, who lived with the Browne siblings in Beechland was his daughter. He died in Mexico in 1896 and is buried there.

Susan (Sue) Browne was born about 1831/32. On May 30, 1865, she married Dr. Theodore D. Elliott. She was his second wife, the first wife and only child having died previously. Dr. Elliott graduated from Transylvania Medical School in 1822, practiced in Mississippi for some time and moved to Louisville by 1860. T. D. Elliott owned a farm in Louisville beyond 28<sup>th</sup> Street, between Chestnut and Broadway. Sue inherited this property when Dr. Elliott died July 30, 1877. He is buried in Frankfort Cemetery with his first wife and only child. There is still an Elliott Park in West Louisville between 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>, Magazine & Elliott Streets. Sue also owned property in Florida where she and her sister, Edmonia wintered. Stith Thompson's book states, "Cousin Sue Elliott(sic) had spent some years in Paris and had filled the house with bric-a-brac of the Second Empire." Sue died October 5, 1908 and is buried in the family plot in Bardstown Cemetery.

Edmonia Brown was born about 1837. (None of the sisters ever told their exact ages. Their ages vary widely from 10-year increments on the Census. There are no birth dates on their tombstones.) On August 15, 1895, she married Charles Roberts. She lived with him in Mississippi until he died in 1898, when she returned to Bardstown. He is buried in Oxford, Mississippi with his first wife. Edmonia was very active in United Daughters of the Confederacy and DAR. She traveled around the state and country attending and serving as an officer in those organizations. She was also an active member of First Presbyterian Church, Bardstown, Kentucky. In 1918, Edmonia fell and broke her hip when alighting from her carriage in front of the First Presbyterian Church. She died March 23, 1925, the youngest and last surviving sibling of the Browne family. She is buried in the family plot in Bardstown Cemetery.

### Chapter 3: Dr. James Harvey Browne

James Harvey Browne lived a very quiet life. It was extremely hard to find anything about him. Stith Thompson had written, "I have no idea what Cousin Harvey ever did for a living. He had medical training but I am sure never practiced." The 1908 newspapers from Bardstown, Kentucky are missing so we could not find an obituary until his obituary was found in a book of obituary transcriptions from the Pulaski County, Illinois newspapers. That obituary states, "Dr. Brown was born at Bradstown(sic), Ky., Oct. 12, 1823." We then found him in Mound City, Pulaski County, Illinois in the 1860 Census as a druggist and in 1870 as a physician. He had also been listed as a druggist in Bardstown in the 1850 Census and the obituary said, "In early life he was engaged in the drug business with Dr. William Nall..." He graduated from University of Louisville Medical School in 1856. We also found "Dr. Harvey Brown" mentioned in a November 19, 1878 Daily Cairo Bulletin (6 miles from Mound City). We speculated that he came back to Nelson County, Kentucky after his father died. Mound City

was a major naval base and hospital for the Union during the Civil War but we have no idea why Harvey settled there by 1860.

He is listed in the “Lists of people who hold the bulk of Nelson Co.’s wealth” in the Nelson County Herald, 12 Dec 1889. His obituary stated that Harvey was an elder at First Presbyterian Church in Bardstown but a reading of all the minutes of the church from 1818 through 1909 revealed that he was never elected as an elder. He was listed on the roll of members and he was elected a trustee of the Bardstown Female Academy. Harvey Browne never married, had no children and died of diabetes on September 1, 1908 and is buried in the family plot in Bardstown Cemetery.

#### Chapter 4: Hugh Barret

So how did Edmonia Browne Roberts decide to donate \$2,000 to the St. Matthews Mission Sunday School so it could build its first church building? Edmonia Browne Roberts knew Hugh Barret. Edmonia was a bridesmaid at the wedding of Jesse Middleton and James Barret, Hugh’s brother. Edmonia and Hugh were both at the head table for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party for Mr. and Mrs. James Barret in 1910. Edmonia had inherited from her husband and siblings and was quite wealthy. Hugh Barret wanted a building for the Mission Sunday School, which had been meeting in the Greathouse School. Maybe he asked; maybe she offered. There is no indication in either the Louisville Presbytery minutes or in the 1914 Courier-Journal article about the completion of the building that the \$2,000 passed through Presbytery before being given to the St. Matthews Mission Sunday School. In fact, the March 31, 1914, minutes of Louisville Presbytery state “Mr. Barret gave the lot, and the building was erected by Mrs. Chas. Roberts of Bardstown, as a memorial to her brother, Dr. Harvey Browne.”