



Thomas Adolph Grigsby: June 26, 1849 (Jefferson Co., Tenn.) – Aug. 21, 1937 (Webster Co., Mo.)
Photograph courtesy of his granddaughter, Bess Atkinson Scott of Fordland, Missouri.

TOM GRIGSBY WENT WEST - TO MISSOURI

By Bess Atkinson Scott

In the late 1800's the distance from here to there could stretch forth endlessly, depending upon one's means of travel, which, of course was limited to say the least. To the little group departing from Hamblen County, Tennessee, the trip to the Missouri Ozarks must have loomed ahead like an endless horizon. Perhaps it was spring when they took leave of their native Tennessee. Mary, Tom's older sister; her husband, Moses Lineberger; and their family of six started their journey westward. It meant two wagons were necessary and two teams of horses. Tom drove one team and wagon. No doubt Moses Lineberger had been making plans for some time. But what was to lie at the end of the over 700 mile journey? There was yet land in Missouri to be homesteaded, but it was not to be found in the more favored locations. Perhaps Moses' brother-in-law, Tom, would share their living quarters until Tom could arrange for a home of his own.

One wonders why, or how, they could leave the valley in Tennessee between the rivers of the Holston and the French Broad. Having been seen both in spring and in winter by the author, the land gives the appearance of great fertility. In spring the vivid red clay soil contrasts sharply with the green of the meadows and right-of-ways of the inter-states. Here and there huge limestone boulders erupt to lend a still greater contrast. To the east are the magnificent Smokies with their indescribable beauty at any time of the year, but especially in June when the rhododendron bursts into blossom. To the west lie the Cumberlands, exciting to drive across, breathtaking to look upon. Thus, one can sense the wild anticipation of the Lineberger children and their Uncle Tom -- hardly more than a boy himself.

The Mississippi River, that giant of waters cutting through Mid-America, was to be crossed. It is not known where Tom and his family planned to cross, but we do know they went by ferry. Such an experience must have been frightening, for at times the Mississippi can be quite formidable. Having seen the river when the water was unusually rough and high, and viewing the little ferry used in conveying autos in present day travel - the river appears wide and big and the ferry light and small! Apparently, however, their crossing was inconsequential, and the group was able to proceed as planned.

Having mentioned Tom's being a mere boy himself, we know he was born June 29, 1849 in Jefferson County, East Tennessee.¹ Thus he would have been in his early twenties when he undertook his journey. After age twenty, Tom's home was in Hamblen County, Tennessee, for in 1870 Hamblen County was formed from a part of Jefferson County. William Grigsby's farm fell onto the Hamblen County side. Again, why did Tom leave home, the rich fertile valley he had lived in for all of his twenty some years? Was it a sense of adventure, since his sister and her husband and family were undertaking a change, or was there just no room for him at home? By this time his mother, Sarah Reynolds Grigsby, first wife of William Grigsby, was dead, and William had taken a second wife, Catherine White.² Catherine White Grigsby and Sarah Reynolds Grigsby were first cousins;³ consequently, Catherine entered into her ready-made family not so much as a foster mother to Sarah's children, but as a cousin! The ready-made family consisted of Mary, born in 1843, but who had already established her own home and family, (Mary must have married young, for she died at

age 31, with a family of six); Joseph, born in 1845, but whose venturesome spirit had led him to join a government survey team bound for Texas, and from whom the family had had no communication since his taking leave; Nancy Ann, born in 1847; Thomas, (subject of our story) born in 1849; Martha, born in 1851 who was still at home; Susan E. Born in 1853; and Sarah A. born in 1856;⁴ presumably the year in which Sarah Grigsby died. According to Prentice Price, a recognized authority on East Tennessee history, the first-born of William and Sarah Reynolds Grigsby, named Alice, "died young".⁵

Thus, Tom Grigsby may have felt the urge to "move on" as was the custom in those days, for lands tend to deplete quickly through repetitious growing of cotton and tobacco crops. It is rumored, though unfounded, that Thomas Grigsby was a Civil War soldier, but because he was too young for enlistment, he used a false name. Close-mouthed as he was, none of his children was aware of such an experience. Doubtless his parents knew, and possibly some of his brother and sisters, but since we do not know the name he used we cannot locate his records. Anyhow, it makes for a good story, and if Thomas Grigsby did, or did not fight in the War Between the States, his brother Joseph did.⁶ Thomas perhaps did not think his personal venture such a good story, for my mother never referred to it, and our Uncle Ross says definitely, he never heard the story. But again, the Grigsbys are close-mouthed people.

Thomas Grigsby knew he must live by the soil - almost everyone did in those days - and possibly that accounts for his departure from Tennessee. The valley was becoming heavily populated, good farm land was difficult to come by, plus, he had no money. Land was cheaper in Missouri, and still could be homesteaded, as was mentioned earlier. The Lineberger farm was near the head of the James River, and I am sure it was recognized as one of the choice farm sites in Webster County. The census of Webster County, Missouri, 1880,⁷ shows the family of one Moses Lionberger (sic.) age 57, to be his wife, Margaret M. and children as follows: Horace L., 17; Effie S., 16; Etta C., 14; Joseph H., 12; Charles V., 10; and William W., 8; all born in Tennessee. The Lineberger gravestones, located in Pleasant Hill Cemetery, approximately six miles south of Marshfield, Missouri, just off Highway A, indicates Mary E. Lineberger died March 21, 1873. Therefore, in the intervening years, Mary had died, and Moses had re-married. Sadly, Mary must have died soon after their long trek from Tennessee, for on the 1870 census,⁸ Hamblen County, Tennessee, Thomas Grigsby was still living at the home of his father, William, which means the Lineberger-Grigsby team left Tennessee and established residence in Webster County, Missouri between 1870 and the year of Mary's death, 1873.

Tom Grigsby looked about for property, and came upon approximately 120 acres owned by a Mr. Gollieher. Tom purchased the land, but also homesteaded some thirty or forty acres nearby.⁹ The land came complete with a residence! It is sad indeed that none of us had foresight to photograph the old log home. Across the front, (or maybe it was the back), was a porch with wide-planked, hand-made board flooring, identical to the interior flooring. The supporting posts of the porch were slim tree trunks, perhaps wood of oak or hickory, or maybe sassafras. The one outside door was also of wide, hand-cut boards. The year had brought about a settling of the cottage, consequently the door always scraped the inside floor a bit.

On the south end of the one room was a stone fireplace with the rough fieldstone hearth made glossy by years of use. On either side of the fireplace was a tiny window. Grandpa's bed was in that room. (By now, the reader must have

guessed -- Tom Grigsby was my grandfather.) Over the bed hung a funny little old black leather lady's pocket-book. I never saw inside the pocket-book, but was consumed with undeniable curiosity each time I saw it. My mother said it contained Grandpa's valuable papers. His deed to his property or perhaps his marriage certificate, if they issued such in those days. To the north of this combination sitting room-bedroom, a huge country kitchen had been constructed. Again, with the same wide board floors, and with walls of log, "chinked" with Missouri clay. The kitchen was also the dining room, with a long family table perched in the middle of the floor. The most exciting part of the kitchen was a ladder-like, open stairway along the west wall, leading to the upper quarters where children may have slept, though I never heard my mother say the youngsters slept upstairs. We were never invited to the "upper deck," but invariably during a family visit, one of my sisters or I would scurry up the stairs to see if we could locate an out-of-date Sears Roebuck or Montgomery Ward catalog! One or more was always there, and we wanted them so we could cut out the pictures, specifically for paper dolls! Each time our mother upbraided us for our forwardness, but we repeated the venture on our next visit.

Another unique manner of construction of Grandpa's kitchen was the way in which it had, or had not been attached to the main or "fireplace" room of the house. The rooms were not flush, one against the other; and, as a result, a space of some ten or twelve inches existed between the two rooms. I always compared the rooms to two passenger cars of a train at their point of juncture. The space was enclosed, so some of the winter winds were shut out as one passed from living room to kitchen. The kitchen had one outside door, which had rough, hand-hewn Missouri fieldstone as steps. Later, Grandpa built a small room to the west of the main, or "fireplace" room, with just space for two double beds, and width to walk between them. A much more modern addition, two rooms of frame construction, which were painted gray with yellow trim, ran across the west side. A porch was across a portion of this structure, and in later years this became the front part of the house, and the first room was the "parlor". We were rarely in that room, for it was not heated in winter, and it contained special treasures of my aunts, such as a beautiful, Gone With the Wind type lamp, with violets on it. My nephew now owns the lamp. So much for Tom Grigsby's home -- a home to which he brought his bride, Sarah Morris Grigsby in 1877, and in which they reared their family of nine.

Sarah Morris Grigsby died in 1914. Rheumatism struck early in life, and she became a helpless cripple. Tom Grigsby lived on in his home, with his little black leather money bag, hanging at the head of his oak, somewhat Victorian, bed. He lived to be 86 -- no illnesses, no complications. He just slept away one August night in 1937.

Since we were left so little information on the family, I set about to learn as much as I could. What a revelation to discover other Grigsbys had lived in Missouri! In fact, the author of the only Grigsby genealogy in the Library of Congress was born in Springfield, Missouri.¹⁰ Since, in my estimation, we were the only Grigsbys in our part of the country, and since the name was unusual (I thought), it seemed someone in our family should investigate the background of Thomas A. Grigsby. Little did I know that the hills of Tennessee are as populated with Grigsbys as the Missouri hills lack them! True, Thomas and Sarah Morris Grigsby had a family of nine, but only one son had children. The children of the two daughters, (one being my mother, Sarah Grigsby Atkinson), have names other than Grigsby. Others in the family never married, and in the case of the one remaining member of the family, James Ross

Grigsby, marriage came late in life. Consequently, if James Grigsby, great-grandson of Thomas, and son of Alvin and Gail Rice Grigsby does not produce a son, Thomas Grigsby's line, insofar as the name is concerned, will cease.

Pertinent family data is to be found in the Grigsby Family Bible, (mentioned on Page 1) and from there I was able to learn dates of birth of the nine children of Thomas and Sarah Morris Grigsby. Dates of their respective deaths have also been painstakingly recorded, most of the information done in the careful handwriting of my grandfather. The family Bible is a most helpful bit of family heritage, and those wishing to preserve family history should make every effort to prepare and latch on to such property. It is my understanding that little was left of William's possessions, (Thomas' father) as there was a fire and the family photographs, etc., were destroyed. My information on William's family has been gleaned from the various census records and from the letter to Mrs. Hale mentioned earlier. All I have been able to locate is a photograph, given me by John W. Grigsby of Knoxville, Tennessee (I believe he is a fourth cousin of my mother's), of what is presumed to be the grave of William Grigsby. The grave is in Bent Creek Cemetery, near Whitesburg, Tennessee. Others think William may have been buried on the Reynolds Estate, but this has not been substantiated. Incidentally, the old home of Sarah Reynolds Grigsby still stands, and it is in my plans to locate and photograph it, in time. There will be no problem in future years in locating graves of Thomas and his family, for many of them are in Pleasant Hill Cemetery, marked with handsome granite stones, as are the graves of the Linebergers. It is my understanding, also, that cemetery records at Pleasant Hill are quite accurately kept.

Years earlier, Tom Grigsby had lost most of his contact with relatives back in East Tennessee. Perhaps communication would have been better, had his sister, Mary Lineberger, lived. However, the granite stone in Pleasant Hill Cemetery shows Mary's death as March 21, 1873. My mother often spoke of the Linebergers, particularly of Will and Mary. Will, my mother's first cousin, was much older than she. In fact, she often said she had few cousins on the Grigsby side; but, of course, they were back in Tennessee. In fact, there must be many Grigsby cousins there. It has been my pleasure to meet three first half-cousins, (you will recall William Grigsby had two marriages, and a total of fourteen children); Mrs. Clara Loveday, Mrs. Rebecca Mathews, and Mrs. Florence Underwood, all residing in the Knoxville area. Their father was William Ross Grigsby, who spent his last years in Williamsport, Ohio, not far from Columbus and Chillicothe. He was buried there in 1952, a few months after my husband and I went to Toledo to live. Also, Mrs. Mathews lived for many years in North Little Rock, Arkansas, approximately 200 miles from Tom Grigsby's home. How nearly our paths crossed, but didn't!

In various readings concerning the Grigsby family, all indications are that the family came from England. There are records of them in both Kent and Suffolk Counties.¹¹ In Genealogy of the Mays Family,¹² we find the following: "O'Hart says of the Grigsbys, 'This family is of Anglo-Norman origin, and was an illustrious family of Lincolnshire; one branch of it went into Ireland with Henry II and became one of the chief of the landed gentry.'" It is generally believed that the brothers, John and James, came into Virginia around 1660. In Genealogy of the Brown Family,¹³ speaking of the Burden's (or Borden's) Grant in the Northern Neck of Virginia, we find the following: "Borden then went to Europe and returned in 1737, bringing with him more than one hundred families to settle in his lands. In this list of settlers are the following names: John Patton, John Matthews, Ephriam McDowell, and the Prestons,

Grigsbys, Browns, Wallaces, Wilsons, Caruthers, Campbells, McCues, McKees, etc. They were Irish Presbyterians, who being of Scotch extraction, were called Scotch-Irish." My mother always said her father was Irish, but perhaps the Irish connection is through the Reynolds name -- another bit of history yet to be written.

If this fragment of Grigsby family history had been planned in chapters, perhaps the unwritten chapter would deal with the great, and great-great grandchildren of Thomas Grigsby. Such a chapter will have to be written by one of those great or great-greats, for here my story ends. The following historical and statistical information is given in the hope that future writers can pick up where I have left off.

In my research I have been able to establish the Grigsby line to which we belong, as far back as one John Grigsby who found his way into Tennessee in 1789.¹⁵ Records indicate John's purchase of 200 acres of land, "more or less" on Dodson's Creek in Hawkins County. Since the deed states that Virginia currency was used in payment of the land, one is led to believe that the John Grigsby of Hawkins County, Tennessee, could possibly be the son of "Soldier" John Grigsby, first of Culpeper County, Virginia, and later of Rockbridge County, Virginia. However, such proof remains to be established. The farm in Hawkins County, Tennessee, purchased by John Grigsby in 1789 has remained in the Grigsby family and is presently owned by Mrs. Jewell Arnott, a descendant of Nathaniel Grigsby and widow of Edwin Arnott.

John Grigsby of Hawkins County, Tennessee, had a large family, William being his eldest child. William was the father of William, Junior, my great grandfather, and the father of Thomas A. Grigsby, of Webster County, Missouri. (See family charts at end of article.)

If we are ever in a position to establish exact parentage of John Grigsby of Hawkins County, Tennessee, and assuming his father may be "Soldier" John, then we can trace our line back to "Puritan" John Grigsby, who set foot on Virginia's shores about 1660.¹⁶

"A body of emigrants from Virginia settled on the banks of the River Holston, in what is now Hawkins County, and formed the nucleus of a rapidly increasing colony, which was mainly recruited from Virginia and North Carolina."¹⁷ But, one Tom Grigsby chose not to remain -- he went west -- to Missouri!



James Ross Grigsby: (B. 1887) in World War I uniform. (At this writing he is the only living child of Thomas A. Grigsby.)

JOHN GRIGSBY of Hawkins County, Tennessee¹⁸

b. October 1752
m. 1778 to Winifred (?) Breeden, Ashby or Watson
d. 1 Oct. 1826

Children:

William Grigsby
Nancy Grigsby
Lucy Grigsby
Winifred Grigsby
Elizabeth Grigsby
Judith Grigsby
James D. Grigsby
Mary (Polly) Grigsby
Susan (Fanny) Grigsby
Samuel Grigsby
John Grigsby
Ashby Grigsby
Nathaniel Grigsby

WILLIAM (Old Billy) GRIGSBY of Hawkins County, Tennessee¹⁹

b. 1779
m. 1799 1st Nancy Brown 2nd Cynthia Walker (no children)
d. Nov. 1865

Children: (of first marriage)

John Brown Grigsby
Emaline Grigsby
Mary (Polly) Grigsby
Judy Grigsby
Althea Grigsby
Lewis Grigsby
Orlena Grigsby
Andrew Jackson Grigsby
William Grigsby
Willey Grigsby

WILLIAM GRIGSBY of Jefferson and Hamblen Counties, Tennessee²⁰

b. 1818
m. 1st Sarah J. Reynolds 2nd Catherine White
d. _____

Children:

Alice Grigsby (died young)
Mary Grigsby
Joseph Grigsby

Nancy Ann Grigsby
Thomas A. Grigsby
Susan Grigsby
Sarah A. (Sally) Grigsby
Martha Grigsby
Samuel Grigsby*
William Ross Grigsby
Wiley H. Grigsby
John B. Grigsby
Lucy Grigsby (died young)
Katherine Grigsby (died young)

THOMAS A. GRIGSBY of Webster County, Missouri²¹

b. 29 June, 1849
m. 18 Sept., 1877, Sarah Elizabeth Morris
d. 21 August, 1937

Children:

Ettie Jane Grigsby
Joseph A. Grigsby
Mary Elsie Grigsby
Sarah Elizabeth Grigsby
William Tony Grigsby
James Ross Grigsby
Jessie May Grigsby
Eva Pearl Grigsby
Thomas Oren Grigsby

SARAH (SALLIE) GRIGSBY of Webster County, Missouri²²

b. 8 March 1884
m. 26 July 1903 to Adolphus Edgar Atkinson
d. 11 February 1966

Children:

Guy Edgar Atkinson, d. Oct. 10, 1957
Veda Marie Atkinson, d. Dec. 14, 1980
Minnie Hazel Atkinson, d. Jan. 9, 1982
Gayford Atkinson, d. Nov. 14, 1940
Pauline Atkinson (died young)
Bessie F. Atkinson
Helen L. Atkinson
Marjorie June Atkinson

*Children of first marriage

JESSIE MAY GRIGSBY of Webster County Missouri²³

b. 13 January 1890
m. 24 March 1917 to Oscar M. Yandell
d. 27 June 1971
Children:

Clarence Yandell
Retha May Yandell

THOMAS OREN GRIGSBY of Webster County, Missouri²⁴

b. 12 December 1894
m. 22 March 1919 to Minnie Ragsdale
d. 3 April 1966

Children:

Alvin Hampton Grigsby
Mildred Alene Grigsby
Vivian Lorene Grigsby
Mary Lou Grigsby

JAMES ROSS GRIGSBY of Webster County, Missouri²⁵

b. 11 September 1887
m. 9 Nov. 1957 to Lou Gann

NOTE: This is only a beginning, but is a result of a little more than two years' research. Should anyone wish more detailed information as to dates of births, deaths, etc., most of such can be supplied.

References

1. Grigsby Family Bible, formerly in possession of the late Miss Marie Atkinson.
2. 1870 Census, Hamblen County, Tennessee.
3. Personal conversation with Mrs. Clara Loveday, granddaughter of William Grigsby.
4. 1870 Census, Hamblen County, Tennessee.
5. Price, Prentice, Letter written February, 1957 to Mrs. E. M. Hale, Armoral, Arkansas -- copy owned by writer.
6. Discharge papers of Joseph Grigsby, in Tennessee Archives, copy owned by writer.
7. 1880 Census, Webster County, Missouri.
8. 1870 Census, Hamblen County, Tennessee.
9. Personal conversation with Mr. Ross Grigsby, Marshfield, Missouri, September, 1977.
10. William H. Grigsby, Genealogy of the Grigsby Family. Published by the author, 1878, p. 5.
11. Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. XXIX, p. 43.
12. Samuel E. Mays, Genealogy of the Mays Family, p. 155.
13. James Edgar Brown, Genealogy of the Brown Family, p. 7.
14. County Court Records, Rogersville, Tennessee, Book 1, p. 24.
15. H. Jackson Darst, The Darsts of Virginia, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1972.
16. Americanized Encyclopaedia Britannica, Revised and amended, 1892, Vol. IX, p. 5750.
17. Names listed in will of John Grigsby, dated 28 Sept., 1826 Will Book I, p. 214, Hawkins County, Tennessee.
18. Information provided by Miss Pauline Arnott, Rogersville, Tennessee.
19. Jefferson County, Tennessee census 1850, 1860, 1870; Hamblen County, Tennessee census, 1870.
20. Grigsby Family Bible.
21. Atkinson Family Bible

- 22. Information provided by Retha M. Yandell from family records.
- 23. Information provided by Gail Rice Grigsby from family records.
- 24. Family records.

JOHN GRIGSBY of HAWKINS CO. TN - d. 1826

Nancy BROWN	-	WILLIAM (Ole Billy) GRIGSBY b. 1779
Sarah J. REYNOLDS (1)	-	WILLIAM GRIGSBY b. 1818
Sarah E. MORRIS	-	THOMAS ADOLPH GRIGSBY b. 1849
A. Edgar ATKINSON	-	SARAH ELIAZBETH (Sallie) GRIGSBY b. 1884

BESS ATKINSON SCOTT b. 1916