

A chapter in Memorabilia (p. 131) contributed by Olive Grigsby Bush, calls attention to a number of Grigsby families who came to California beginning about 1845. Some first moved to Missouri to live before beginning the overland migrations. One who became well identified with California vineyards was Terrill Lindley Grigsby (1818-1892), born in Tennessee and died in Napa, CA at age 74. His 257 acre ranch became known as Occidental vineyards. This, and a stock farm, was the basis of a lucrative business, which in the 1870's provided capital for a somewhat disastrous venture into the construction of a railroad between Napa and Lake County.

Still another Tenn born Grigsby to 'go west' was Franklin Temple Grigsby (1829-1893) who, with his brother John came to California in 1845 and has been identified with the Bear Flag Party of Sonoma. A 1912 History of Napa by Tom Gregory made this comment, "Franklin Temple Grigsby returned to Missouri after spending 1½ years in the army during the Mexican War. Prior to his return to California, 1851, he married Mrs Martha Alexandre Bray and to them were born 12 children. I might add here that I think the Grigsbys helped populate Napa County, because when I was a boy almost every family know to me was related in some way to the Grigsbys."

Jessie F. Grigsby (1819-1890) was the first Grigsby ancestor of Olive to 'go west'. A brother of John and Franklin Temple Grigsby, Jessie had remained in Missouri until 1851 and then returned with his wife, Margaret, and 3 children. A son of Jessie and Margaret, Willis Preston Grigsby, was the first child born in California (1851)- and became the grandfather of Olive.

The grandfather of Jessie was Aaron Grigsby (1752-1841), born in VA and died in Giles County, TN. Both records and tradition connected with Aaron identified him as a colonial seaman who later served in the U. S. 'privateer fleet'. In records and pension papers is reference to his capture by the British during the Revolution. Olive, with the help of Harold W. Grigsby of London, has come up with confirmation of these records in the following manner: It appears that merchant vessel, Grand Turk, was acquired about 1780 as a U.S. privateer, which, together with her crew, set about harassing the British fleet at every opportunity. Aaron was a member of the Grand Turk crew and the eventual capture and imprisonment of Aaron is recounted by Harold Grigsby from records in London.

"I have been to the Public Records Office at Kew and have handled the actual log-books kept by the Master of the ship, HMS Dolphin, a British warship of 50 guns and crew of 240. This (said Harold) is the English version of the recapture of the barque HMS Swift, which the Americans on board the Grand Turk had captured a few days previous and upon which Aaron Grigsby and others had been put as part of a crew to sail her to Martinique. 'Sunday, Dec 8, 1782: Sighted quarry and gave chase. Fired a gun and musketry and brought too a schooner Swift captured by the Grand Turk rebel privateer. Shifted prisoners and sent 2 Petty Officers on board her'. No names were given (wrote Harold) but upon examination of other journals - under Supernumeraries was listed: 'Prisoners taken on the Swift schooner Dec 8 - Aaron Grigsby.' Further information listed transfer on Dec 25 to HMS Formidable, and under column 'Destination' - Barbados Prison, Jan 30, 1783." With the end of hostilities, Aaron was released to make his way home - just 200 years ago! Many thanks to British records and Harold's research!

Jan 1983