

Postscript
Early Days in the Free State of Ray

Charles, Moody, Lucy, Isaiah, Stillman and Porter all heard the call, and settled in Ray County, Missouri. Ray is one of the largest and best counties in the State, very fertile, being one of the Missouri River counties. It was known as the Free State of Ray, and later as the Mother of Counties, on account of its size, at that time comprising what is now the twelve northwestern counties of Missouri.

Prior to the sixties there was no organized public school system. The families that could afford it employed governesses or tutors for their children. To meet this situation the Mansur families built a log schoolhouse midway between the homes and employed a private teacher, Miss Joie Nesbitt. She was the daughter of Mrs. Martha Oliphant, wife of Major Alexander Oliphant. She and her sister, Mary Oliphant, boarded with the Charles Mansur family. She seems to have been charming and lovely in every way. One of her pupils, Emma Mansur, took lessons from her on the guitar and in later years sang some of Miss Joie's sweet songs, accompanied by her rosewood guitar given to her by her brother, Tip Mansur.

To this woodland log schoolhouse came all the Mansur children, Uncle Carleton's older children and the Nuckles boys. A few years later, the district was organized and Uncle Isaiah gave half an acre on the State Highway, where the second Mansur schoolhouse was built. It was to this white schoolhouse on the hill that Mary E. Lane, of Ohio, came to preside as the school mistress. A year later she became Mrs. Isaiah Mansur.

Through many succeeding years the Mansurs have all stood high in the community. Uncle Moses Carleton was a saintly old man. Morning and evening a chapter in the Bible was read and his prayer of thanksgiving and praise was made. When the writer was a child it was counted a great privilege to spend the night at Uncle Carleton's. He, cousin Mary, and Maggie Mansur made up the household. The whole place bore the atmosphere of perfect peace, happiness and contentment. When HANNAH FELT MANSUR lay dying, she asked that the window in the west be opened and her bed be turned so that she could look toward the setting sun where her children were, for Stephen and Hannah Mansur had six children who possessed the spirit of adventure and pioneering. The west held alluring possibilities to be possessed only by those who had stout hearts that would fare forth and capture them.

Cousin Mary took Maggie home when she was two years old, at the time of Maggie's mother's death. Mary Howard Carleton never married; she was engaged to Otis, son of Uncle Gilman, but he died before their marriage. She is buried in New Hope cemetery, where so many of the Mansurs and relations lie. The church is a very large country church situated on a ridge; the churchyard extends south into what has become a large and beautiful cemetery. The original native forest trees have been augmented by cedars and pines. Many large and handsome monuments, as well as small stones, mark the last resting-place of the dead. It is God's own acre, and here the sweet song birds sing unmolested, the soft breezes blow through the protecting trees over these last homes under the "little green tents," where all sickness and sorrow and pain are forever more forgotten.

Other branches as well as Stephen's line have adventured far from the early New England homeland. They are scattered all over the United States, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast, and from Winnipeg to the Gulf of Mexico. The Mansurs have served in all of the wars of defense from the earliest colonial wars down to the present time. They are honest, industrious, Godfearing people. The Mansur women, by marriage as well as by birth, deserve just as much credit and respect as the Mansur men. In pioneer days they underwent many privations and hardships. They, too, displayed a staunchness and tenacity of purpose to face and meet life bravely as well as their fathers, husbands, and sons.

Charles Mansur was one of the leading business men of his day in St. Louis. He and a partner owned a stern-wheel steamboat that ran from St. Louis to Cincinnati. He sent Isaiah with a stock of dry goods to open a store in Ray County; and Stillman with a stock of goods to Chillicothe, Mo. The Carleton home-place was part of his farm. He left it to his sister, Lucy Mansur Carleton, in his will.