



## Back in the Hills: 99 Reunion Report

Relatives, friends, reunion, remembrances: all descendants learned once again that "family" can be one of the most important words in the English language. The Sixth Annual Reunion of the Back/Bach descendants was held in Whitesburg, Ky., on October 8th, 9th and 10th, 1999. They arrived on Friday from Kentucky, Colorado, Texas, Michigan, North Carolina, West Virginia, Virginia, California, Ohio, Indiana, Florida, and Georgia, and left for the return trip home on Sunday.

The agenda for Friday evening was registration and visitation at the Pine Mountain Grill. On Saturday morning, there was more of the same. At 1:00 p.m., Appalshop and the C.B. Caudill Store and History Center presented the Roadside Theater's Revival Singing and the Back/Bach Follies. Dr. Reedus Back gave a short presentation on the Back family. The inspirational revival singing was performed by the Roadside Theater Artists, the Mullins Family, Kim Neal, Ron Short, Randy Stanley, directed by

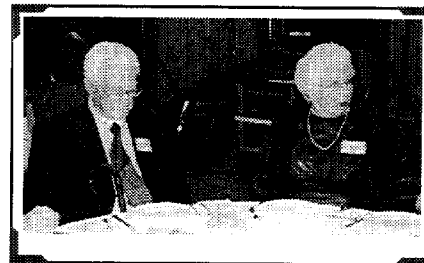
Dudley Cooke. As Hassie Helton said, "Time ran out, or we probably would have been there until dark."

The evening agenda featured a buffet dinner at the Pine Mountain Grill, followed by an outstanding program. James Gary Back, again so capably as in years past, served as Master of Ceremonies. Stephen Bowling, a Back descendant, an official historian for Breathitt County, Ky., a Back genealogist and author of several books, enlightened the crowd of approximately one hundred descendants on the "Breathitt County Backs." Sue Hall read three poems by her mother, Hassie Helton, also a Back descendant. Musical selections were a Christian medley by Kyra Stepp and Arthur Christian, a country selection by Marla Brown Tobia, granddaughter of Irene Back Brown, and a gospel selection by the Hampton Family. Custer Back, a 93-year-old cousin and one of the authors of A Back Family History..., told how the book came about. More stories were shared before the end of another reunion. Many met again for breakfast on Sunday morning before departing. Comments included: "Better every year — found more new cousins!" and "Our first meeting — it was very

interesting, and we will be back next year." Many thanks and a hearty round of applause to the local organizing committee: Stella Elam, Ray and Beulah Back.

Plans are already underway for next year's reunion, to be held in Morehead, Ky. We hope to see you there!

*Two authors of A Back Family History attended this reunion:*



**Custer Back**  
came all the way from California;  
pictured with his sister,  
Ann R. Back Elam



**Kenneth Back**  
and his wife, Mary,  
traveled from Indiana

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## Steering Committee Contacts:

### **Reedus Back, President**

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*Represents and promotes the Society; oversees general operations; collects, reviews and edits genealogical data; responds to general inquiries; and acts as meeting host.*

### **Stella Elam, Executive Director**

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*Processes memberships; publishes and distributes materials; coordinates computer projects.*

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#### **Southeast: Shirley Back Fowler**

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# We Remember

Those who died this year:



**Dexter Bach**

75F 1-8-9-1

**David Back**

75A 4-4-1-11-3

d. 12-25-1999

(Breathitt County Coroner)

**J. Odell Back**

75A 4-3-9-4-3

**Kenneth Back**

75F 10-7-3-1

**Kathleen A. (Millett)**

**Kennash**

75F 2-1-4-4

**Madonna Jean (Arnett)**

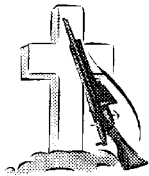
**Pemberton**

73A 7-4-5-2-2

# HISTORY

## Henry Back and the War of 1812

by *Reedus Back*



One of the activities of the 1998 Back/Bach Genealogical Society Meeting was a ceremony to honor veterans who are buried in a small cemetery in Letcher County, Ky. One of those honored was Henry Back Jr., a veteran of the War of 1812, and my great-grandfather. I was privileged to have the opportunity to raise the flag in honor of his Service.

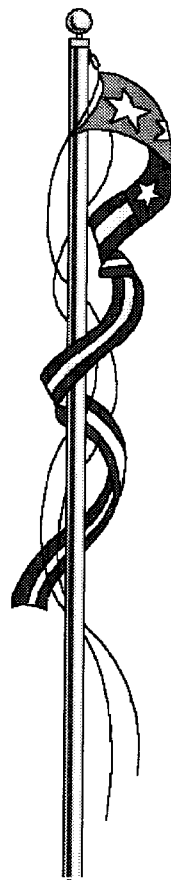
That ceremony, and the fact that [A Back Family History](#) merely states that he served in the war, encouraged me to seek more information about my great-grandfather's service record. I found that Private Henry Back served as a rifleman (foot soldier) in the Northwest Army under the command of General William Henry Harrison (later the ninth President of the United States). Private Back was a member of First Company, led by Captain Daniel Garrard, and the Second Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William Jennings. The First Company was made up entirely of Kentucky volunteers.

Henry Back, along with 4,000 other Kentucky volunteers, demonstrated his patriotism by action when he left his mother's home in Cumberland, Ky., to serve his country. The woeful lack of preparedness of the United States to wage war in 1812 made volunteers a real necessity. When Congress declared war on Great Britain on June 18, 1812, the regular Army had only about 10,000 troops and very few trained officers. The Navy had fewer than twenty seagoing ships. So without a large volunteer force to augment the regulars, the outcome of the war would most likely have been different.

The company muster roll shows that Pvt. Henry Back served for seven months and one day, even though he volunteered for only six months. This may seem like a short period of service, but it was longer than the three months that volunteers were asked to serve when the call went out. Pvt. Back's service

officially began when the Second Regiment was organized and the First Company became a part of it on September 1, 1812. He was honorably discharged on April 1, 1813.

The payroll record shows that Pvt. Back received his first payment on September 11, 1812. The amount was an advance payment of ten dollars, issued at Newport, Ky. The record also shows that his salary was \$6.66 per month, and the total that he received for his period of service was \$46.85, including 23¢ for the extra day that he served.



I did not find any clear record to indicate that Pvt. Back's unit engaged in battle with the British during the period of his enlistment. He would not have fought in the first battle in Canada in September 1813, because he was discharged before that date. This does not rule out that he could have engaged in battle with advanced guards of Indians. The Indians had allied with the British and the role of their advance guards was to pave the way for attack by the British. Thus any defeat of the Indians was a significant victory. One recorded defeat of a large Indian advance guard was by two companies of Kentuckians under the command of Captains Bland Ballard and Daniel Garrard, the latter being Pvt. Back's company. He did participate in this significant battle, and possibly others. In this particular case, the defeat of the Indians prevented a planned attack by British Major Muir. When Major Muir learned that his Indians had been defeated, and that 700 of them had fled in dismay, he called off his planned attack and retreated.

After his discharge, Henry returned to his mother's home in Cumberland. There he met and pursued Susannah Maggard; they were married on March 24, 1814. Henry and Susannah eventually settled in the Rockhouse Creek area of what is now Letcher County. They farmed and reared a family of twelve children. The tenth child was David Back, my grandfather.

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