

*Sarah Elizabeth Yates Hunt and son, George Wiley Paul Hunt. A photograph made in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1865.*

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## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GEORGE WILEY PAUL HUNT

*As Told by George Wiley Paul Hunt  
to Sidney Kartus.\**

### CHAPTER I.

Daniel Hunt, my paternal grandfather, was born in North Carolina in 1786. According to the *Genealogy of the Name and Family of Hunt*, by W. L. G. Hunt, published in Boston in 1862, which is on file in the Library of Congress, the Hunts from whom Daniel Hunt was descended were known as the New Jersey line. They came from Kent, England, where they belonged to the gentry and had a coat of arms. The motto was "Faithful to the end." The genealogy states that this line of the family spread to Alabama, Kentucky, North Carolina and Huntsville, Missouri.

Daniel Hunt emigrated from North Carolina to Kentucky, where he married Agnes Barlar, who was a native of Tennessee. They moved to Missouri when it was a territory. When Randolph County was organized Daniel Hunt donated the land for the court house, and the town was named Huntsville in his honor. The first court house was built of logs, and some years afterwards it burned. All the archives, including the will of Daniel Hunt, were destroyed. He died in 1842.

George Washington Hunt, my father, was born in Huntsville, in 1828. He was the youngest son of a large family. When he was twenty-one years of age, in 1849,

*\*Acknowledgement is due to Mrs. Edna Hill, personal secretary to Mr. Hunt during many of his years as governor of Arizona. Mrs. Hill took all dictation and prepared the manuscript.—S. K.*

with a great many others from that section of Missouri he joined the Argonauts and went to California. At two years he returned, by way of the Isthmus of Panama to his native town in Missouri.

He was married there to my mother, Sarah Elizabeth Yates, daughter of John Marshall Yates, whose plantation was near Huntsville. John Marshall Yates was related to the great Chief Justice John Marshall, being a grandson of John Marshall's sister, Martha Marshall Yates. The Yates family was an old colonial family, the first forebear having come with Lord Baltimore when the colony of Maryland was settled. George Yates, from the west of England, was the first surveyor of the Port of Baltimore. His great-grandson was Dr. Michael Yates, Caroline County, Virginia, where my maternal grandfather, who was a grandson of Dr. Michael Yates, was born in 1796. My maternal grandfather married Virginia Christian in Lexington, Kentucky. Virginia Christian was the granddaughter of Captain John Christian of Hanover County, Virginia. The Christian family came from the Isle of Man and were given a grant of land by the King of England in 1665. They settled on the Rappahannock.

Captain John Christian served in the Revolutionary Army. He taught school in the winter and joined the colors in the summer. At that time John Paul Jones was playing havoc on the high seas with the English navy. One summer Captain Christian received word that a son had been born to him. He asked his company to name him and the men named the boy Paul Jones Christian. When Captain Christian died in Lexington, Kentucky, his son, Paul Jones Christian returned to Hanover County, Virginia, and settled the estate. It is from the line of descent that I hold my membership in the organization known as Sons of the American Revolution. In every generation since that time there has always been a Paul in the family name, and this is the origin of my name Paul. I was named for my uncle, Dr. Paul Christian Yates, who in turn was named for Paul Jones Christian.

The Yates and Christian families were slave holders. My grandfather was a first cousin to Richard Malcolm Johnston who commanded the Kentucky dragoons at the battle of Fort Meigs wherein Tecumpseh met his death. Johnson received eighteen wounds in that battle, being carried back to Kentucky on a stretcher by his soldiers. He afterwards became a member of the United States Senate, and vice-president of the United States.

My great-grandmother Christian was the largest slave-holder in Randolph County, owning some fifty slaves. Grandfather Yates also had numerous slaves. When the civil war broke out, Grandfather Yates had three sons go to the southern army. Missouri was a border state and there were raids from guerillas on both sides during the conflict. In 1864 Grandfather Yates, with other members of his family, including my father's family, left for St. Louis, Missouri. There we were protected from disturbances, as his nephew, Richard Yates, was the war governor of Illinois.

I had been born in Huntsville, Missouri, November 1, 1859. My older brother was six years older than I, and my younger brother six years younger. So I grew up without any playmates of my own age. There were four boys in our family.

I have a vivid recollection that while in St. Louis my mother took me to a public function. It was a memorial service for the martyred Lincoln. There I saw the bust of Abraham Lincoln. My grandfather, although an ardent southerner, always held Abraham Lincoln in high esteem and held that if he had lived his kindly nature and authority would have rendered reconstruction much easier for the south.

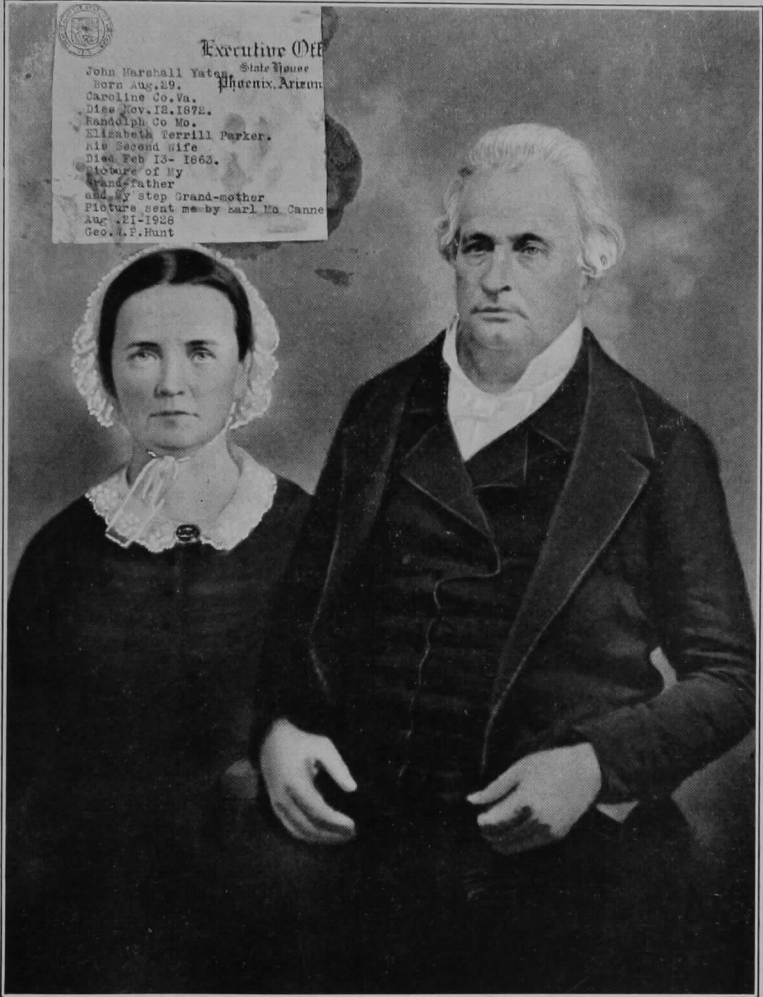
Another enduring recollection I have is of our return from St. Louis to the old plantation of Grandfather Yates. The fences were down and bones of cattle and other live stock were lying about. It was a terrible homecoming to those who had lived there previously.

My father and mother had moved out of Huntsville when they left St. Louis in 1864, and upon returning we settled near my grandfather's estate, which was some eight miles north of Huntsville. There was a small village nearby called Darksville. There I went to school four months in the winter. In the summer I attended a subscription school, as it was called, for three months. My reading was confined to private libraries of the family, and to such authors as Washington Irving, Fennimore Cooper and Dickens.

In 1872 Grandfather Yates passed away. In the panic of 1873 my father lost most of his property, and with his wife and children went to California. But after three months we returned to Missouri and settled on a farm near Darksville. From my grandfather's estate my mother had inherited twenty acres of land and on that our home was built.

I continued going to the summer and winter schools until the spring of 1878. Altogether my education went so far as to qualify me for teaching school in the Missouri of that day, but I had no desire to teach. My uncle, Dr. Paul Christian Yates, had been a regimental surgeon during the civil war and wanted to educate me as a physician. But I did not prefer that profession. The adventurous westward urge that had been in our family for centuries, which had brought them from England to tide-water America, and from the coast to Missouri, caused me to leave home and come west. I knew my mother, whom I greatly loved and admired, would be heartbroken. I did not have the fortitude to tell her. So I ran away, leaving on March 3, 1878.

My mother was a devout member of the Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church for many years. My father died in 1900. I returned to visit mother in 1900. She wished to sell her home, and I bought it. She lived in it until her death in 1904. I then leased it to my older brother for life, free of charge. He passed away in 1930 and in January, 1932, I deeded the home place to the



*John Marshall Yates and his second wife, Elizabeth Terrill Parker Yates; maternal grandfather and step-grandmother of George Wiley Paul Hunt.*

Mount Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church as a memorial to my mother. As a recompense for my abrupt departure, I was in later years, when my mother grew old, able to add to honor and affection for her all the comforts of life for her declining days.

I left home about four o'clock in the morning. The distance to Huntsville, the county seat, was about eleven miles. I knew the topography of the country, especially the surrounding five or six miles. With a few of my belongings in a bag I went through the fields and woods in order that no one would see me. I arrived in Huntsville about eleven o'clock.

My mother's cousin, W. S. Christian, was, at that time, county recorder of Randolph County. He had lost a leg in the Civil War and had been afterward elected to that office. I went to him and he gave me a letter.

I avoided all my acquaintances and that afternoon took the train for Kansas City. I stayed in Kansas City, as I recall, one night. Next day I could not find anything to do, and I had only \$2.05 left. So I went down to the railroad yards. A man said he would put me on the train and I could go a long way for two dollars. Being a greenhorn I accepted his offer, but when the train pulled out of the yards the officers came around and I was ousted. That did not deter me. After the train left I walked across the Kaw River and about nine o'clock came to another station, and there got into a box car on a freight train. I do not know what time of the night it was, but later the train stopped suddenly. Evidently someone had been run over for I heard the trainmen running around with lanterns and saying that someone had been cut up and killed. That was rather a harrowing experience for me.

Next morning I arrived in Topeka. There I spent my last five cents for a loaf of bread. That night I boarded another freight car and on Sunday morning arrived at Manhattan, Kansas. I got off here because it was rather dangerous to board a train in the day time. All day long I stayed around the yards of the railroad. That was my

first Sunday away from home, and I was very much down in spirits, as well as hungry. I remained there that night, and Monday morning early went out into the country to look for a job. About noon I came to a farm house. The farmer said, "Come in and have something to eat." So I had my first meal for several days. During my school days I, with other members of my class, studied elocution, and I had committed several pieces to memory. So after dinner I repeated one of my pieces in return for their generosity.

My host told me to go to another farmer, who, he thought, probably would have something for me to do. I went there but with no results. But I stayed with this second farmer all night and had breakfast there the next morning. I was referred to an old German farmer in the vicinity. From him I finally secured work for one month, at fifty cents a day. I thought at the end of the month I would have enough money to go back home, but at the end of the month I was just as determined as ever to seek my fortune in the far west.

I left for the railroad, and there found that a great many men were beating their way on freight trains. Sometimes I would ride and then again I would walk. I recall that in western Kansas I was riding on a freight train when a trainman came, found me and made me get off. Upon descending the side steps I was afraid to let go; he told me to jump or he would kick me off. I jumped from the moving train and luckily fell in a sand pile so that the fall did not hurt me. That was my last experience in "jumping" a train. I walked into a place and obtained a job in a section house helping cook; the man's wife was away for a week. I did the best I could and got a dollar a day.

I then bought a ticket to Denver, arriving there with just a few dollars in my pocket. The first night I stopped at the Women's Christian Temperance Union. I had to pay twenty-five cents. I could not find work. The next night I went to the outlying suburbs. It was dark and I vaulted the fence of a very fine home, made my way into

the coal house and slept there that night. Years afterwards, in 1927, as Governor of the State of Arizona and chairman of the Arizona Colorado River Commission, I was in Denver meeting with governors and representatives of the other states of the river basin. A local newspaper man who interviewed me asked, "Were you ever in Denver before?" I said, "Oh, yes, I stopped in a fine hotel." He said, "But I suppose you had not quite such a royal welcome as you have now." I replied, "No, it was quite different; I slept in a coal house." His paper made much of the story.

That morning I walked to Golden, Colorado, and stopped there overnight. This was about the middle of April. The next day I walked up the canyon to Blackhawk and there entered a lodging house. I had but five dollars left after paying the proprietor \$1.00 for my lodging. I asked if there was any work. He said, "No," but in the morning he told me, "We have a job in the kitchen." "All right," I replied. I was in the kitchen for a week, after which I was put in the dining room and later on in the office. As assistant in the office to the proprietor I still had to help in the dining room and also assist the chambermaid in making up the beds. I stayed about half a year in the place. That was in 1878.

I met many people there. George Fertig, a miner who was stopping at the hotel, advised me that he was going out prospecting the next spring. He wanted me to go with him. I made my plans to accompany him in the spring of 1879. In the meantime my work at the Blackhawk Hotel ended when the hotel closed. I went up to another place, then to Central City and back again to Blackhawk. When spring came, with what resources we had, we started on this prospecting trip. We walked to Denver but went over the mountain trail instead of down the canyon. The journey required one day. It was a long march of about forty miles. Upon reaching Denver we purchased our outfit and one horse to pack. The next night Fertig returned with the information that he had been in a monte game and had lost all of his money. But

the outfit was purchased and paid for, so with my means alone we set forth.

We prospected in the mountainous section to Central Park. Then we went to South Park, and finally parted at a little mining camp in southern Colorado.

In the meantime we had traded our pony for two burros, one for me and one for my partner. I went to Pueblo and from Pueblo to Colorado Springs and from there to Manitou. At Manitou I concluded, as my funds were getting low, to go to Leadville, Colorado. I packed my burro and proceeded to Leadville. Crossing the last mountain range, I think in October, I came into the great mining camp of Leadville in the fall of 1879. At that time it was one of the booming mining camps of the west. There was much that was new to me, especially the dance halls where anybody could pay so much to dance with the girls and then pay for the drinks. There were a number of vaudeville houses and variety shows. The camp was lively. At times one could hardly walk on the streets. Most of the time I was in Leadville I worked for a laundry. At that time there were no steam laundries, all work being done by hand. My job was to collect the clothes, deliver them and collect the pay.

In March I packed my blankets and started for the Gunnison country. That was a new mining field which was just being opened. As I emerged from the suburbs of Leadville, a freighter returning with empty wagons took with him both me and my roll of bedding. I rode with him until we came to a railroad. There I joined another outfit and went with it to the Gunnison country. Arriving at Gunnison I heard of an opportunity in the mountains for work in a saw mill, but, although I made a trip to the saw mill, the job did not develop. I stayed one night and came down again. On my way, as I sat on the side of the road to rest, a small outfit came by. There were three men with their equipment, two mules and a wagon. They told me I could go with them. The next day we crossed the snow line and had to camp one night in the

snow. The snow was very hard. Finally we reached the Gunnison country. One of the men of this party afterwards proved to be a great friend of mine.

I could not get anything to do and after about six weeks, in company with another man, I went into the San Juan country. From there, traveling over Indian trails, we came to the Animas River. At that place a townsite had been laid out, and bricks were being made for houses. We secured work at the townsite. For six weeks we made brick, until the weather turned very cold. A group of us who had been working at the brick yard started for Santa Fe, New Mexico. I still had my burro. We stopped one night at a watering place, the name of which I do not recall. The next place of importance was the Pueblo of Taos. There we passed one night. The journey from Taos to Santa Fe, New Mexico, was very trying and we were exhausted upon arriving at the capital. However, tired as I was, I went to see the old capitol building and the old church.

The Santa Fe railway was building a road through the Rio Grande Valley to El Paso, and offered free transportation to anyone who would go to the scene of construction for employment. The next morning, I, with the others, obtained transportation and enjoyed a train ride. When the train stopped, we learned the place of operations was about thirty miles from the railroad. There was no way to get there except by walking. Discussing the matter, we concluded it would be a better idea to build a boat and float down the Rio Grande. I bought the lumber and the group of us built a flat boat. We launched it that afternoon and with our blankets and some grub we started exploring the Rio Grande by boat. We missed the railroad camp but since we were out we thought it as well to go on. The third day out rapids were encountered. Prior to that time my companions had been relating how expert they were in many matters, but the minute we struck the rapids and the boat filled they all jumped ashore. It was amusing. I stayed with the boat, which

floated down the stream. As I stood up the water ran over the gunwale. But the boat did not sink; half a mile down-stream I got it ashore. I baled out the water and saved part of our food. The salt and pepper were gone; the flour was wet. I lost my shoes. In about an hour the others came up, very meek. From that time on I was the undisputed captain of the boat.

The next day we came to a camp of soldiers. At that time President Hayes was going from California through Arizona to the east. The military department had soldiers at different points along the route. We had reached one of the points where soldiers were stationed for his protection. I went to the camp, where one of the soldiers gave me a pair of shoes in place of those lost in the rapids. The next place was called San Marcial, near Rincon, New Mexico. At that time the railroad had not reached San Marcial but grading was being done. There were many rough characters in the neighborhood. Only two of our party were left. With our boat we established a ferry and for the next sixty days made a good living by boating passengers across the Rio Grande. We were engaged in doing this until Christmas, when we met the man who had aided me in Colorado when I was returning from my unsuccessful trip to the saw mill in the mountains. He was en route to Silver City. The ferry business having ended with the advent of cold weather, with plenty of food and blankets, we started down the Rio Grande again. Our only mishap occurred when the river spread in a tremendous gale. We could not follow the channel. Some of us reached the east bank. Two of the other fellows had been on the west bank trying to kill some game. After we made the east bank there was no way to get back. One of the fellows on the other side pulled off his clothes and waded over. We had plenty of food. The next morning the river had frozen, except the current, and without difficulty we went on to El Paso, where we were to be for six weeks.

This friend of mine, whose name was Jim Waters, and I stayed together. Finding nothing to do we rolled up our blankets again and started for Arizona. The Southern Pacific was then being built through Arizona and New Mexico, and near El Paso there must have been a thousand Chinamen working on the road bed. We walked to Deming and from there walked into Lordsburg. From Lordsburg, Waters and I went to a small mining camp called Shakespeare where we stayed for the next two months.

*(To be continued)*