

# A History of the Hoover Family and the Hoover Hill Community

*Note to the Reader: The following narratives were taken from: <http://www.fivehoovers.com/Narratives.htm>. Several have been edited for grammar and content.*

## Hoover Ancestry

The Hoover family probably is descended from one Bertoldus Hubere, born about 1190, a younger son of a minor landed knight of the baron of Switzerland. Bertoldus was a citizen of Bern, and his name appears frequently in official documents of that city. He had at least three sons – Nicolaus, born about 1218, Burchard, born about 1222, and Jacob, born about 1230. Nicolaus was a consul of his native city.

Burchard Hubere acquired land in the present Canton Aargau, Switzerland, largely in the County of Lenzberg, in the vicinity of Oberkulm. Professor Herman F. Macco, of Berlin-Steglitz, Germany, has traced this family in his work on President Hoover's family tree.

Georg Huber, descendant of Burchard, was deputy sheriff at Lenzburg in 1641, and miller at Oberkulm. His old mill, on the Ynen, known as the Neuenstein, is still owned by a member of the Huber family, who has converted it into an inn, the Gasthaus zum Baeren.

Johann Henrich Huber, son of Georg, was born about 1644, at Oberkulm. He was a linen weaver. In 1699 he migrated to Ellerstadt, a village near Duerkheim and Oggersheim, the German Palatinate on account of the Swiss Pietist Persecutions. He had married Maria Margareta Hoffman, daughter of a burgher of Oberkulm. In his old age, he returned to his father's mill at Oberkulm, and died there in 1706. Among his children was Gregor Jonas, born 7-6-1668, died 4-13-1741 at Ellerstadt.

Gregor Jonas Huber married Anna Marie, born 1675-76, died 4-13-1756. Among their children was Andreas, born 1-29-1723 at Ellerstadt, died 1794 in Randolph County, North Carolina, to America, 9-9-1738.

## Andreas Huber – Andrew Hoover

Andreas Huber emigrated from Germany in 1738 and became Andrew Hoover 1763. He first lived in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, with his brother, Johannes. He married Margareta Pfautz and raised a family of 13 children. The first, Jonas, and was born in 1746 in Maryland. He married Rachel Briles, probably in Maryland about 1768. Their first son was John Hoover, born in 1769. When the family moved to North Carolina about 1772, 12 of Andrew's children had been born, at least two of his children had married, and at least two grandchildren had been born.

John Hoover, like his father Jonas and his grandfather Andrew, lived out the rest of his life in North Carolina. All are buried near the Uwharrie River in Randolph County. At least nine of Jonas' siblings and half of John's emigrated west to Indiana and Ohio in the mid 1800s, President Hoover's ancestors among them.

### Hoover Cemetery

The Hoover Cemetery in western Randolph County contains the graves of Andrew Hoover, the great- great- great-grandfather of President Herbert Clark Hoover, and other ancestry of the 31<sup>st</sup> President of the United States.

Located two miles off the main road in the Hoover's Grove Church community, between Parker's Mill site on the Uwharrie River and Jackson's Creek, the cemetery lay unkempt and virtually unknown for more than a century before Victor Parker, operator of Parker's Mill for 33 years before it closed in 1945, became interested in the burial ground in 1928. He contacted Theodore J. Hoover, Dean of Engineering at Stanford University in California and the President's brother, and they collaborated in the restoration project, cleaning up the grounds and erecting a large stone marking the grave of Andrew Hoover.

In addition to the Andrew Hoover grave, the cemetery contains 23 others. Some of the slate rock markers include the names of A. Hoover, Amy Johnson, Mart Johnson, Lewis Johnson, Rachel Hoover, and Nancy Yats.

Other members of the Hoover family of that period were buried at Hoover's Grove Wesleyan Methodist Church and Pleasant Union Christian Church.

### History of Hoover Old Mill – January 15, 1930

The history of the old mill is a story of hardships, largely due to the Uwharrie River, but not entirely. The menace of floods was a source of trouble every summer, just as on the occasion of the rescue of the animals. Many families now in the west, notably in Ohio, Indiana and Iowa, are there because their forebears who had settled the Uwharrie region no longer could endure the freshets and their devastating sweep over farmlands.

Jacob Hoover, Sr., to whom the executors deeded this mill seat, had two mill houses that were destroyed by fire. He had built the first soon after the Revolution, and obviously the mill which Andrew Sr. had established had been destroyed in some manner, as it is known to have been standing in 1775. Jacob had a serious accident and became crippled for life when another large August freshet washed away his house. When his son, Joseph Hoover, Sr. succeeded to the proprietorship of the mill seat, it was at least 50 years old. It was he who requested, about the time of his death, that it be kept in his family for one hundred years. His request was zealously complied with, though the name of the mill was changed as the result of Hoover marriages and transfers. Before 1890 the mill was known for years as Arnold's Mill, and today (1930) it is known as Skeen's Mill.

It is now rapidly going to ruin. The mill today (1930) occupying the site must be half a century old or more. Its broad old doors creak to every wind, and parts of the floors have tumbled in. There is no trace whatsoever of the old wooden water wheel.

### Narrative of January 10, 1930

Andrew Hoover was born in Germany in 1723. He came to America in 1738, and settled in Pennsylvania. In 1746, he moved to Maryland. In 1774, he moved to North Carolina.

Andrew Hoover died 1794 and was buried not far from Parker's Mill in Randolph

County, about 1/3 mile from Mima McDowell's home. A monument was erected by Theodore Hoover in 1929.

On the left of Andrew Hoover's grave is the grave of Adam Hoover, a son of Andrew. Adam Hoover was 80 years old when he died.

There are 24 graves in this plot, but the names and dates do not show on all of them.

A short distance from the graves is signs of a house place. There is a foundation rock to the chimney there. The writer was told by old people that the place in mention is where a two room log house stood and that is where Andrew Hoover lived and died.

*"New York Times Magazine," June 9, 1929, by Nixon Plummer*

When President Hoover drove into Maryland on a recent Sunday afternoon, he found himself in a community that had known the name of Hoover long before there were Presidents of the United States. He had gotten lost in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, found his way back to the main highway, and at last came to the farm which was formerly owned by his great-great-great-grandfather, in Carroll County.

This ancestor of the President, whose name was Andrew Hoover, lived in Maryland until 1762. Then he went farther south and picked out a home site on the banks of the Uwharrie River, in what is now known as Randolph County, North Carolina. And this is how, one summer in the later half of the Eighteenth Century, the first American Hoover of whom there is any record, came to figure in a program of flood relief.

The Uwharrie River had gone on a rampage; the scene was within a few hundred yards of the primitive log cabin which the first Hoover erected soon after his migration from Maryland, and near the center of what became known in later years as the "Hoover Hill" community. Andrew Hoover's grave was recently found on the hillside near the site of the old home overlooking the Uwharrie at the bend, where he is credited with having performed his mission of relief.

The story as handed down through many generations that have grown up and died in the same section, related that Andrew Hoover swam the swollen river to release his horses and mules that had been hobbled on the other side, and then took refuge in the forks of a persimmon tree until daybreak. The tree is near what is known as the "Old Hickory Spring" from which the members of the Hoover household up the hill are thought to have dipped their drink water.

This old Hoover farm and the water mill which Andrew Hoover owned not far away, are North Carolina landmarks of the early activities of the Hoovers in America. Their isolation at the present time suggests what must have been the exceedingly wild surroundings in which they were established. The surveyor of Carroll County, Maryland, told President Hoover at the time of the President's visit, that Andrew Hoover had patented his Maryland farmland in two 50-acre tracts from the Colonial Government in 1746 and 1748. It is known that a few years previous to his removal to North Carolina Andrew Hoover had married Margaret Pouts in Pennsylvania. He had come to America when civilization on this side of the Atlantic was little more than 100 years old.

Its western march had barely begun, and red men still roved the eastern forests, right down to the log settlements on the coast. But few white men had penetrated the regions west of the Alleghenies, and there were not many settlers as far inland as the western boundaries of Pennsylvania, Virginia, or North Carolina. The latter state was then known as "Virginia's

Frontier.” Daniel Boone was yet to blaze his trail across Tennessee and Kentucky. It is an interesting coincidence that this leader of pioneers was born in Pennsylvania and lived in his youth near where Andrew Hoover married; and that Boone and Hoover migrated to North Carolina in about the same period.

Not only did they start for this frontier from almost the same locality, but they settled within a few miles of one another – Boone on the Yadkin River, Hoover on the Uwharrie River, which is a small tributary to the Yadkin. Modes of travel were primitive, as the highways were little more than Indian trails, and the stage coach was yet to make its advent in the interior of America. Farming was almost the only industry; such manufacturing as there was seems to have been represented by the early shoe shops and the quaint old water mills, with their overshot wheel that used to grind corn and wheat for the farmers. Communities grew up around these centers.

The community that Andrew Hoover founded in Randolph County continues today under the same name, although the old activities have ceased, and many of the old families have moved away. Andrew Hoover’s old “Mill seat” until quite recently was still in possession of certain descendants of the Hoover family who remained in North Carolina.

Hoover Hill was a post office until a few years ago. The old mill property is said to have been in the family at least 150 years. Hoover Gold Mine was discovered and operated with profit years after the founder of the community died. Hoover Grove is the local name of a church and burying ground, and it is within calling distance of the old Andrew Hoover farm. Nearby are the ruins or the barren sites, of many other Hoover homesteads, those of Andrew Hoover’s sons and succeeding generations. Those could be circumscribed, almost, within a radius of five miles.

The North Carolina records of the first Hoover in America and his descendants give the Hoovers generally, a place of consideration prominence in the local affairs with which they were considered. Apparently, they took far more interest in political matters than many Quakers of the time either desired or were permitted to take.

There is a story that either Andrew Hoover or one of his sons was a member of one of the boards of magistrates that existed then, and before which Andrew Jackson appeared after going with the task of regulating local affairs, including the rates that taverns might charge for lodging, meals, drinks and accommodation for beasts of burden.

One of the principal roads of that section of the frontier passed right through the Hoover community, if not by the old mill. People are yet living who remember the old stage coach lines that began to be operated 50 or more years after Andrew Sr. moved to Randolph. For many years after the passing of Andrew Sr. his descendants were identified with responsible political positions in Randolph County, and this was notably true in the period of the Jackson Administration. There is nothing however, to indicate that they were Democrats. On the contrary, it is believed they were Whigs. George Hoover was a sheriff in 1827, and years later, Frand Hoover was a clerk of the court. Other descendants of the sons and daughters of Andrew were generally found to be substantial people.

The energies of Andrew Sr. in establishing himself and providing for his children, of whom there were 13 – eight sons and five daughters – resulted in rather large accumulations of property for those early days. And these were increased by the marriage of the children.

The old grist mill, which in those days was a gathering center for the farmers of the community, afforded an income in shares of corn and wheat accepted as pay for grinding. It must have been one of the first mills for which Uwharrie was noted for over generations. After

Andrew Hoover died in 1794, the mill went to Jacob Hoover, in whose line it remained for many years, and whose descendants were to find the gold mine two or three miles away.

Hoover Gold Mine, according to the most authentic story of its origin, was the result of an accident, and was not established by virtue of any inherent Hoover tendency toward mine engineering. Its success does illustrate the pioneering nature which the Hoovers from Andrew Sr. down have shown. The mine was established by Joseph Hoover in aggap (sic) of the los (sic) mountain spur near the mill seat, as the result of an accident to the Hoover wagon. One day Joseph and a half-breed Indian, named John Singer, were driving up the hill for a load of lightwood knots. When the rear wagon wheel broke, the Indian jumped down to investigate; he found that it had crashed through a big rock in the road. Picking up the rock, they saw that it gleamed.

That was the origin of the gold mine as told by John Hunt, who lives near it today (1930) and whose father, Evans Hunt, deceased in 1920 at the age of 86 years. Evans Hunt was a friend of Joseph, John, and other Hoovers in that section.

This mine for years was a steady producer of gold. Its payroll as late as 1880 was \$12,000 a month. The mine sold once for \$20,000. Another time it sold for \$80,000. The story is that it was at one time one of the principal gold producers in the eastern part of the United States. It is in operation today for crushed stone, not gold (1930). The workable vein of gold long ago has given out, but it is said that every truckload of crushed rock from it contains as much as \$40 worth of gold. A prominent geologist of North Carolina is understood to have suggested that some of the gold be assayed out just to give Herbert Hoover a sample of what one of his ancestors possessed.

Near this mine property is what is credited with being the home site of John Hoover, whose migration westward when "up in years" carried the line to Ohio and beyond. From this line of Hoovers comes the President. John Hoover was the fourth son of Andrew Sr. and great-great-grandfather of Herbert Hoover. It was to him that Herbert Hoover referred to his speech at Elizabethtown, Tennessee, on October 6, 1928, in describing the early home of his earliest American ancestor.

"The earliest ancestor of whom I have record, Andrew Hoover, a settler in Maryland about two centuries ago," said Herbert Hoover, "migrated to North Carolina and built his home.\*\*\*\*\*In Randolph County of that state he did his part in building the community, and his grave lies in the little burying ground on what was then the Uwharrie River Farm. His son, my great-great grandfather was part of that movement which started west from your frontier."

John Hoover was a millwright. It was his business to build and repair the watermills, which by that time occupied most of the available sites not only on Uwharrie but on other interior streams of central North Carolina. He was a builder of water mills at a time when they were the sole manufacturers of the country's meal and flour. His travels through the section made him widely known among many of the early settlers and their children.

John Hoover was a man of considerable popularity, too, with a knack for making and keeping friends who talked of him long after he went west. When word of his death came back they mourned it sincerely. They were constantly concerned for the welfare of his children and followed with interest their movements as news would occasionally come of their continued westward march.