

Dr. Eliab G. Macy

Dr. Eliab G. Macy, a first cousin of Joseph Gardner, was a lineal descendant of Thomas Macy, who came from England in 1635 on the Mayflower and was the first white man to settle on Nantucket Island. Joseph Gardner's paternal aunt, Mary Gardner, married Stephan Macy (both having immigrated to Ohio from Guilford County, North Carolina), and their son, Eliab, was born October 13, 1817, in Preble County, Ohio. Eliab's sister was Sally Macy Darrow, whose son, Clarence Darrow, became the famed lawyer.

Eliab Macy's family, like Gardner's, was Quaker; in his youth Eliab attended the Friends Academy at Elkton, Ohio. His early habits were marked by a desire to investigate all subjects, and thus at the tender age of seventeen, he was considered unsound in the Quaker faith and was expelled from that church for his belief in the science of phrenology. He had occupied the position generally defined as a "free-thinker", believing at that time in the political and theological doctrines of Thomas Paine.

In 1834 Eliab became an enthusiastic abolitionist and steadfastly adhered to that doctrine, believing that the proper adjustment of the institution of slavery would be for the government to purchase the slaves. In 1837, he commenced the study of medicine at the Ohio Medical College in Cincinnati, graduating in the class of 1840, and at once entered upon a successful practice in Butler County, Ohio.

He voted for James G. Birney in 1840 and 1844, for John Hale in 1852, and after that time was a Republican, although he voted for Peter Cooper in 1876, in advocacy of the "Greenback" cause. Eliab and Rachel Macy were married in Preble County, Ohio, on December 19, 1841. They came to Kansas in 1854 and settled in what became Bloomington in Kansas Territory. As previously mentioned in the introduction, the 1857 Territorial Map shows Eliab owning the northeast quarter of Section 19. The Macys were soon to have their faith and beliefs sorely tested, for shortly after their arrival in Kansas, Eliab became a candidate for the House of Representatives in the Territorial election held on March 30, 1855. That election ended in chaos when border ruffians from Missouri ejected the officials from the Bloomington Precinct (located where Clinton is today) polling place, confiscated the ballots, and illegally voted pro-slavery representatives to the Assembly. Judges Harrison Burson and Nathaniel Ramsey filed a protest report, and Governor Andrew Reeder approved a second election to be held on May 22.

Eliab gave the following report on the March election:

I came into this Territory about the middle of November 1854, and settled in the second district, and came from Butler County, Ohio. I have resided in the second district ever since. I was at the election of the 30th of March 1855, at Bloomington. The first thing that attracted my attention after I got there was a large body of strangers, who were holding a formal election in the front of Esquire Burson's house. I heard the name of Thomas Johnson announced as our governor. The polls were then opened, and there was a general rush around the window. Two men, who were strangers, placed themselves one on each side of the window, and acted as foremen, and dictated more or less to those who came up to vote, and told them they should not qualify according to the directions in the proclamation. The crowd that surrounded the polls was, I should think, some fifteen men deep. It was impossible for me to get to

the polls. I crowded in for half an hour, and did not get more than half way to the polls from the outside of this body of men. I was recognized by some one in the crowd, who cried out "There comes an abolitionist." I went back out of the crowd, by their help, a heap quicker than I got in.

Soon there was an announcement that Claiborne Jackson would address the congregation. He took an elevated stand, and addressed the people by saying that a few minutes' residence in the Territory gave them as good a right to vote as though they had been in years. He said that that was the order at California, and it should be so here; that Governor Reeder had no authority to issue any such orders as were in his proclamation; that they had come here to vote, and they would vote. He then called upon the people to form themselves in companies of fifteen men each, or somewhere in that number; they proceeded to do so; they had white strings and ribbons tied in their coats. Immediately after those orders, I saw numbers of them over the grounds, loading double-barreled shotguns. A committee of three, I think, was then appointed to wait upon the judges, to demand that they should resign. After five minutes had expired, some gentleman – I do not know who, as they were all strangers – took out his watch, and said, "We will give you one minute more; if you do not resign in that time, this house will be torn down." At that period there was quite an excitement in the crowd – a great many oaths and threats. I saw a lever placed under one side of the house, and I think the logs were raised some two or three inches, and let fall in their places again, without doing much damage.

During this excitement, I heard a crash in the window, and saw a confusion at the front door and a rush in the house. I passed around where the front door was, and saw a man they called Mr. Jones come out with a bundle of papers in his hands, and held them up and hallooed "Hurrah for Missouri!" I heard some body call me, and I looked around, and Esquire Burson, Judge Wakefield, and some others were some fifty or sixty yards north of the house. I went to them, and we went down under the bluff. There were some four or five of us, as near as I can recollect. We concluded, after a short conversation, to go to Mr. Ramsay's house,. Esquire Burson had the poll-books in his pocket. About that time we saw a crowd on horses and mules coming towards Mr. Ramsay's, where they came and called for Esquire Burson. Judge Wakefield told them positively he was not there. They were told the poll-books were not there. I saw these men ride down across the prairie very rapidly, and they soon returned with George Umberger, a neighbor of ours, behind one of them. They came up to Mr. Ramsay's house, and demanded that Judge Wakefield should go up to the polls with them. He refused to do so; when they drew revolvers, some of them cocking them and swearing that he should go dead or alive. The old man declared he would not go, and if they took him there, they would take him dead; but finally they pledged their honor, if he would go, he should not be hurt.

He walked up, and the followed him on their mules shouting. I and one of the judges followed them. Just as we got there, the judge came down off a stand, or out of a wagon, where they had had him up making a speech. He had a badge in his coat. I then left. I did not converse with any of these strangers.

E.G. MACY
Lawrence, K. T. April 28, 1856

Shortly after the election of 1855, the citizens of Bloomington organized the Bloomington Guards to fight and defend themselves against the Southern sympathizers who had stolen their election and continued to rob, steal their provisions and burn their cabins.

The Macy family suffered with their neighbors through the winter of 1855-56, which from all accounts was bitterly cold. They lived through pro-slavery raids until in the summer of 1856, David Hoyt, a free-state man and a Mason, decided to try to dissuade the pro-slavers from further attacks. This scheme ended in David Hoyt being murdered near Ft. Saunders and buried in a shallow grave. This in turn led to a raid on the fort by some eighty free-staters – Dr. Macy among them – who "...wiped out the inhabitants." [See *Augustus Wattles for a complete account of this historic incident*].

After the territorial election and the horrors of border warfare, Eliab and Rachel cast their future with the founders of Bloomington, now located one mile east of Clinton. Bloomington was officially incorporated by a legislative act approved by the governor on February 1, 1858. This act named William Jessee, Paul Berkau, Shubal Swain, Edwin Stokes, and William Terry as the first Board of Directors.

The murder of Napoleon Simpson on June 9, 1860, at the home of his cousin Joseph Gardner was very traumatic for Macy and his family. In 1862, Eliab represented Douglas County in the State Legislature with credit to himself and honor to his constituents. We can never know exactly when Eliab may have learned that his cousin Joseph (Gardner) had been wounded at Island Mound, Missouri, in October 1862. We do know that he volunteered his services as a citizen and a doctor, enlisting in the First Kansas Colored Infantry (new 79th) on January 26, 1863, at Fort Scott, Kansas, as Assistant Surgeon. On May 6, 1863, his son, Eberly, (one of eleven children) enlisted in the same unit.

On or about August 24, 1863, Eliab may have received the news of Joseph Gardner's death, but he himself continued to serve until the evening of April 11, 1864, when he was thrown from his horse while on duty at Prairie de Anne, Arkansas. His spine was severely and permanently damaged, leaving him "wholly incapacitated for manual labor." He wrote to the Secretary of War, the Honorable E. M. Stanton at Washington, D. C., asking for acceptance of his immediate and unconditional resignation as Asst. Surgeon of the 1st Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry. He was honorably discharged on June 15th of 1864.

But the war was not over for the Macy family. On the morning of November 9, 1864, in an incident near Cabin Creek, six miles from Fort Gibson (Arkansas), a party of seven persons (officers and others from regiments at Fort Smith on their way to rejoin their commands) were ambushed by a band of guerrillas. They were driven, before being murdered, a short distance from the road traveled by the troops. Lieutenant Eberly Macy was one of the soldiers killed in that attack.

Fort Smith, Arkansas, Dec. 15, 1864

To Dr. E. G. Macy, Bloomington, Kansas:

Doctor;

I have to communicate the sad intelligence of the death of your son, Lieutenant E. L. Macy. He fell in a fight with bushwhackers, six miles north of Cabin Creek, C.N., on the 19th of November last. Our party of seven – Captain Welch, Lieutenant Macy, Chaplain Gardner, Harbin, Collins, citizen Jones, and myself – were attacked by one hundred bushwhackers. A desperate struggle ensued. Captain Welch, your son and Harbin are known to be killed. Gardner was wounded and captured, and was probably killed after capture. These three fought like brave men, and died as became the true soldier.

Most truly your friend,
L.A. THRASHER

By all accounts, from his own recollections and those of his family, Eliab Macy espoused the cause of freedom and was forever a warm and earnest advocate for the oppressed, contributing freely of his means to their relief. In a letter to this author on October 30, 1979, Eliab's great-grandson, Earl Macy from Pasadena, California, states that Eliab was "active in the Underground Railroad." Also, in a

conversation with the author during the late 1970s, Lola Smith (wife of D.F.), who lived in the house build by Col. J. C. Steele, stated that the ruins of Dr. Eliab Macy's house next door were part of the Underground Railroad. She said that a fireplace with cooking utensils was visible in the basement foundation, and that slaves were fed at this location. Her son, Frank Smith, reiterated that story to me, and stated that he remembers very clearly the location and that the Macy well was nearby. This location is now part of the Clinton Lake Museum walkway to the Corps of Engineers' parking lot, east of the museum. Unfortunately, the site was not excavated during the construction of Clinton Lake.

Eliab Macy is buried in the Clinton Cemetery along with his son, Eberly, and another son, John. After Eliab's death in 1897, Rachel apparently moved to California to live with a son, Charles. She died in Pasadena in 1917 at the age of 93.