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**The Sorrows of Sarah Jane Latta**

By Betty Kitchen

*Another name ... date of birth ... date of death ... another name ...date of ...*

So often that is all we find while searching for our families. Sometimes, however, these facts can be used to give us glimpses into those unseen lives. The subject of this sketch is Sarah Jane (Latta) Nalley, the youngest daughter of John and Annie (Hockenberry) Latta [branch 17], my great aunt.

Sarah was born 29 August 1840 in Monroe County, Ohio. She was young, quite young, when she married Marion Francis Nalley in 1855. She certainly had her share of sorrow. How could she possibly handle it all? To her nine children, death became a premature, but regular visitor.

The 1860's were a particularly bad period in Monroe County. Daughter Mary Ann was born and died in 1862. Son John William was born in 1863 and died in 1864. Although family legend contended that sons James "Levi" and George were both killed when struck by lightning while looking for the cows, contradictory material in the Monroe County, Ohio Newspaper Abstracts of the Spirit of Democracy from the 12 July 1865 edition stated, "Died 2 July 1865 of diptheria, James L., eldest s/o Marion & Sarah J. NALLY of Wayne twp. 9y 17d." Then quoting from the 2 August 1865 edition: "Died in Wayne twp. 13 July 1865 of diptheria, George, s/o Marion & Sarah NALLY, 7y, 4m, 5d." So now her first-born two sons are gone too. Her brother John Copeland Latta also lost his two little boys, only one and three years old, that September--cholera we were told. November, 1865--her father died; December, same year, her mother. That year--1865--would be remembered.

When her husband Marion Francis Nalley died in 1885 of consumption, she was left with three daughters (ages 19, 16, and 10), a blind son age 13, and a 24 year old son. In January of 1886 daughter Mary Jane married Simon Dougherty, and in June daughter Hannah married Jacob Morris. An article submitted to the MONROE COUNTY OHIO FAMILIES book by Mary Lou Henderson stated: "Because Hannah was only 16 and the law stated 18, Sarah, and her mother applied for the license. Since she could not write, Sarah made her mark (x) and the couple were married by a justice of the peace.

"Sarah married William A Flanagan as a second husband in September, 1887. At that time only Louisa (Lida) and Henry Harvey were still at home." Henry Harvey was only 24 when he died in 1897. The measles which caused his blindness eventually claimed his life.

Of her nine children, only four lived long enough to marry and have children. Again, I wonder, how did she cope?