

# Chapter One – Childhood Days

## A Birth In Iberia

In 1900 Iberia of Miller County was a small town located in the middle of the state of Missouri, about 117 miles west of St. Louis. The 1990 United States Census reported that Iberia had a total population of only 650 residents. Henry Dake, Dake's<sup>1</sup> father was born in Missouri. His parents had come east from Tennessee and were living in Missouri at the time of the 1870 census. It was in this small mid-western town of Iberia, on Saturday, the eighteenth day of October 1902, that Finis Jennings Dake was born. As Dake put it himself: "I was born in a little town down in the sticks."

Dake was born the son of James Henry (b. 7/10/1869 - d. 7/18/1912) and Mary Ellen Dake (b. 5/16/1870 - d. 1948). At the ages of twenty and nineteen respectively James and Mary had entered into marriage on Thursday June 13, 1889, in the state of Tennessee. Dake was the eighth child in a large family of eleven children.<sup>2</sup> He indeed was an unusual child having an ancestry of Scotch, Irish, Dutch, French and even Cherokee Indian from his mother's side of the family. And to top off, all this diverse heritage, he was born with big hands and big feet. A large child such as this truly needed a big name and that must have been what his parents had in mind when they named him after the famous American lawyer and politician, William Jennings Bryan.<sup>3</sup>

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1901  
*Agnes Ozman speaks  
in tongues in Topeka.  
Charles Parham calls  
tongues the "Bible  
evidence" for baptism  
in the Spirit.*

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<sup>1</sup> While it may seem lacking in respect to some to refer to Finis Dake as simply Dake, this was the name he was known by his entire life. To this day all over the world students of the Bible refer to his ministry and writings, and when doing so it is always simply Dake. This work will continue respectfully that tradition.

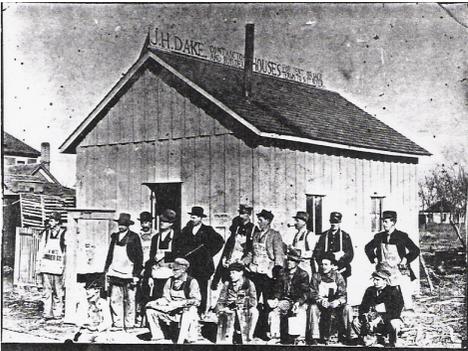
<sup>2</sup> See the Appendix for the Dake family tree.

<sup>3</sup> William Jennings Bryan, 1860 - 1925. American lawyer and politician.

## *The Dake's Move To Springfield*

It wasn't long after his birth in 1902 that the Dake family moved about 85 miles south to Springfield, Missouri. Henry Dake made this move understanding that it would take the resources of a large size town to feed his thirteen member family. Dake himself did not remember with any degree of certainty, how old he was at the time of this move. He said: "I don't even remember when we moved to Springfield, I was just a little lad at the time."

In Springfield Henry Dake showed himself to be an industrious and hard working father. He became very successful in building and contracting, and even ran his own general store of sorts. He and his building crew, built two wood-frame buildings in Springfield to operate his businesses from.



In the first wood frame building he ran his building business. From one end of the building, to the other, he mounted a large sign on the roof of his construction business. This sign read: *J.H. Dake, Contractor and Builder, Houses for rent or sale,*

*Terms to suit buyer.* The housing industry was a booming business in Henry Dake's day. At the turn of the century 25% of all Americans lived in their own home.<sup>4</sup> Land was cheap, construction methods were inexpensive and taxes were only 1% of income above \$4,000.00 for married couples.<sup>5</sup> Henry Dake's contracting business was no small concern, to the contrary he met the payroll for more than sixteen employees. At the time of his death in 1912 he had thirty seven houses under construction. With the financing of homes going for \$100.00<sup>6</sup> down and \$10.00<sup>7</sup> per month it was easy to see that Henry Dake was providing a very profitable

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<sup>4</sup> *Victorian America*, by Thomas J. Schereth, Harper Perennial, New York: New York, page 101.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* page 79.

<sup>6</sup> Or about \$1,858.00 in year 2005 dollars.

<sup>7</sup> Or about \$185.00 in year 2005 dollars.

lifestyle for his family, and was well on his way to becoming quite wealthy.

In the second wood-frame building Henry Dake ran his general store. A wooden sign that hung from a steel rod just up over the front door read: *J.H. Dake, Groceries Flour & Feed, Meat Market*. Groceries, like most goods were sold on credit. Cash and carry was a phrase that was to come much later. Henry Dake's store was arranged like most general stores of his day. Customers could see, feel, and even taste the merchandise. The counters on the right side of the store were filled with dry goods and those on the left side with groceries, sundries, and patent medicines. In the rear of the store you would find kerosene and the meat barrels. On occasion you might even find a luxury item such as a cuckoo clock!



Yes, Henry Dake was quite a business man, and for the times, Henry Dake and his large family were really doing quite well. Henry Dake was a generous man as well. He worked hard and expected such from his workers, but he rewarded them well and was known as a giver in the community. Dake said of his father:

“Every Sunday and on every holiday without exception my father would make great feast for his workers and his friends. He would invite our neighbors and would provide meals for crowds of people.”

Dake's recollection of this prosperous time was that:

Things were looking bright for us in those days, as far as our natural life was concerned, for we were being well cared for, receiving an education and looking forward to many opportunities in life.

As a father, Henry Dake was very strict with his children. Being a practical and hard working man he required such with his children. While not being religious himself, one of the many things

he required of his children, was that they attend church each and every Sunday. Dake recalled:

I remember that from my earliest days, we were all taught through the years that Sunday was the Holy day, the Holy sabbath, and we were to be so sanctimonious, so Godly, so consecrated, so righteous, so still and sacred, and about everything we thought or did on that day. But on other days we could do anything we wanted to do. We had a special cloak we put on that particular day. The other days we took it off and lived like we wanted to live.

For the most part, the Dake children attended the Methodist church but on regular intervals they attended the Baptist church as well. Dake recalls that “when only a very small boy, I was obliged to put on shoes, stockings and a hot suit to attend the services.” This was quite a task for a little boy to endure who had enjoyed the freedom of overalls and being barefooted for the whole week before.

### *Death In Springfield*

The days in Springfield were not all good however. The eleventh child of Henry and Mary Ellen Dake who was born on April 22, of 1910 did not fair well. Sadly Flomarie Etta Dake (b. 4/22/1910 – d. 9/26/1910) passed away as an infant of just five months and four days. Then just two years later the unthinkable happened. At forty three years and eight days of age, on Monday July 8, 1912, Henry Dake the husband, father and sole provider for his family passed away. The family recalls this being a heart attack. Dake noted:

Suddenly, and without a single day’s warning, my father was seized with an attack of the heart and died. It was a dark cloud indeed, that seemed to shadow our home.

Sadly, the very large Dake family laid their dad to rest, in a graveyard where his body would lay next to that of his dad and their grandfather; George W. Dake.

After the death of Henry Dake things turned bad financially; really bad. Mary Ellen Dake had been spending most of her time raising this large family and was not accustomed to handling business matters. Mary Ellen Dake had always been a sickly woman. Dake recalls:

“As a child I never remember my mother having a well day in her life, there was medicines and doctors all the time.” Most of the children who were still at home were young and unable to help in



anyway in regards to taking over Henry Dake’s businesses. Dake himself was not quite ten years old. In these circumstances it wasn’t but just a few days until the business men and lawyers in whom Mary Ellen Dake had placed her confidence, had the home-place and other property in their possession. Mary Ellen Dake was left homeless, penniless and physically unfit to work. Yet this mother now had the task to care for and finish raising the large Dake family.

Now for the first time in a long time, alone, without her husband of twenty three years, Mary Ellen Dake was to take her family to a new home. She became a renter rather than an owner. The older children did their best to work and help defray expenses. Dake himself, when just barely twelve years of age, secured a job as a newspaper boy and did his part to help the struggling family keep food on the table and a roof over their head.

### ***Growing Up Without A Father***

Doing the right thing sometimes has problems associated with it. It was a good thing for a young boy to help with the family expenses. Dake proved to be a hard worker just like his dad. He worked his way up from delivering and selling newspapers on the street to becoming a messenger boy. While this meant more

money; it did however cause him to have to leave his schooling. To help meet the needs of his family, Dake dropped out of school.

While certain aspects of Dake's early boyhood are to be commended, it is certain he was still just a boy. The movie industry was doing great. In the first few years after the turn of the century there were ten thousand movie theaters playing to a nationwide audience of over 10 million people weekly. Movies at this time were more popular than dime museums, concert halls, circuses and even street carnivals.<sup>8</sup> Like most of the young boys of his day Dake loved to attend the movies.

And not just any movies, but the shoot-up-cowboy type. Watching Buffalo Bill and Annie Oakley work around the ranch, fight Indians, and even other cowboys from time to time, and especially his favorite, Hop-A-Long Cassidy, was an exciting way for a little boy to spend his Saturday afternoons; especially when the average price of a movie was only about

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*1914  
300 people gather  
to form the  
Assemblies of God  
in Hot Springs,  
Arkansas.*

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seven cents. Later in his life he would admit to one of his shortcomings connected to his movie going:

In my young days after father's death I went to many moving picture shows, especially to those of the wild west type. Often I would sell old coats and clothing left by my father, for enough money to buy my ticket. The idea of being a cowboy, a real movie cowboy seized me; and in fact held me until God intervened in my life.

Dake's wayward activities were not only confined to moving-going, which today in most circles would be acceptable. No, he really was a roughy young boy. Dake himself said: "After father's death the Dake boys were the meanest boys in the whole country." It seems that the wonderful values and teachings of the Methodists around the turn of the century had very little affect upon his life. No blame should be associated with the Methodist or Baptist church here; after all, how much of an effect can a church

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<sup>8</sup> *Victorian America*, by Thomas J. Schereth, Harper Perennial, New York: New York, page 202.

have on a little boy who is “sent” to church for just one hour each week. While God was respected in the Dake home and the family was morally good, sadly, it cannot be said that it was a Christian home.

To illustrate the absence of God in Dake’s life a story written in *The Sparkling Fountain* concerning Dake and his brother Arthur who was eight years older than himself, will be of some interest:

While we were meeting in the wooden tabernacle on Boonville Street, the crowds would often come to find out about Pentecost. We also would attract quite a crowd of rowdies on the outside. They would cut the harness off of our old horses. They would stand at the windows and holler, pound on the walls, and carry on. Often times, the crowd on the outside looking in was almost as big as the crowd on the inside seeking the Lord. In Springfield, we seemed to be regarded as castoffs. But the power of God would come down and it seemed like the Glory Cloud of old would fill the tabernacle.

One night, while Sister Lula France from Joplin was preaching, a young boy ran halfway down the center aisle and threw an egg. It soared through the air, hit the pulpit a perfect bull's eye and splattered all over the platform, the preacher, and those near the front. The young man stood there with a great big grin, pretty proud of his aim. Mother jumped up, ran over to him, pointed her finger at him and said, "I saw you throw that egg." He arrogantly snorted, "What of it." Mother said, "I'm going to pray that you won't be able to sleep nights until you get saved. I'm going to pray that the Lord will make you miserable until you give your life to Christ. I'm going to pray that God will make you a preacher and a winner of souls - that you will lead many to Christ." Well, he just stood there, grinned, then swaggered out of the tabernacle. I can remember Mother praying about this many times afterward.

Years later, after Central Bible Institute had been started in the basement of our Church (which was located on the same spot where the tattered tent had stood), a tall,

well-dressed, handsome, young man came to my Mother one morning and said, "Mrs. Corum, do you remember me?" Mother looked at him and somewhat confusedly said, "No, I don't think I know you." The young man said, "I'm the one that threw the egg." He began to weep and related, "I couldn't sleep nights and I remembered that you said you were going to pray that I couldn't sleep. In my misery, I sought God and He saved me, and I'm here at Central Bible Institute to become a minister." He later wrote a Bible Commentary and pastored a church in Texas. His name was Finis Jennings Dake. And so, God used a humbling incident to make a preacher.

The Lord dealt with other members of the crowd that hollered in the windows and pounded on the walls of that tabernacle on Boonville Street. There was one little boy that was terribly mean. He wore a yellow shirt and we called him "yellow jacket". He would shout and throw stones at the people at the altar and run and hide. He would torment us any way he could. Martha Childers was a radiant young Christian then. She had a beautiful velvet dress and all the girls were envious of her. Just before church one night, while she was praying at the altar, this rascal threw a rotten egg and hit her in the middle of the back. One of the saints grabbed him and said, "Look here. The Lord's going to get hold of you and use you for His glory." Martha was full of the joy of the Lord and she got up and sang and testified anyway. By the way, "yellow jacket" became a Christian, got the Holy Ghost, and ten years later, he was the contractor that built the first building (Bowie Hall) at Central Bible Institute. His name was Arthur Dake and his brother was Finis Dake.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *The Sparkling Fountain*, by Fred T. Corum and Hazel E. Bakewell. Corum & Associates, Inc. Windsor: Ohio.

## *Death Comes To The Dake Family Again*

On Friday February 22 1918, the sixth child in the Dake family, at the age of 19, Joseph Franklin Dake, was killed. He had gone to war and had served his country proudly in the United States Navy. Again death had dealt a terrible blow to the Dake family. The Dake children had been taught well by the death of their father and the loss and hardship his death brought. Joseph Franklin Dake had taken out a life insurance policy in the Navy. With the proceeds from this life insurance policy and his pension plan, Mary Ellen Dake was left enough money to move to the country and rent a farm. The farm was located about eight miles from Marshfield, Missouri. There was also enough money to equip the farm with the necessary team of mules and farm implements, that would be needed to raise crops, both for eating and for sale. Dake himself, at this time, being about fifteen years of age accompanied the family to Marshfield and secured work on a nearby farm.

It was also during this period of Dake's life that he and his brothers went on what he called a: "notable fishing trip which was not altogether a pleasure trip." From the time he was just a very small child Dake had always liked to fish. He always had an intense desire to live in the open. In his own words:

Hunting, fishing and swimming seemed a part of me. Many was the time before father's death that I had slipped off for a swim, only to receive a whipping for my disobedience upon my return.

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1916  
*The Oneness  
Movement splits the  
Assemblies of God.*

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On this occasion Dake and some of his brothers left for a fishing trip in the farm wagon. While they were enjoying themselves fishing, it began to rain. In fact it began to pour. Having the ingenuity of their father flowing through their veins they came up with a remarkable idea. They would take the bed off of the wagon and use it for a shelter! Heavy as it was for the Dake brothers to disassemble, they managed to take apart the wagon. They turned the bed upside down and during the whole night of the

rain pouring down, the Dake boys slept in the dry. While young boys are very courageous and willing to try anything for an adventure, they sometimes don't think things through. When morning came, Dake found that he could barely move. In lifting the wagon bed he had sprained his back. Sadly, this back sprain later developed into sciatic rheumatism, and as just a young teenage boy, Dake ended up walking with a limp and using a cane.

This condition caused him to have to leave the farm and go back to Springfield where he sought treatment for his ailment. Later in his life, Dake would experience healing for himself and see many thousands of others healed through simple prayer and faith in God's Word. Yet at this time in his life Dake lamented:

Jesus Christ as the healer of sick and afflicted bodies was not a reality to me at that time. I managed finally, to do without the cane but was still more or less disabled at times.