**Taken in part from the Diary and memorabilia of Frances Wilson Osborne, great grandmother of this writer, Glenn N. Holliman 2011**

March 1932 *–* ***The Wendel Millions****. This is a puzzling episode in the life of the Stansberys in the Depression, one of false hopes. I remember my mother referring to this story many times in my growing up years.*

*One Miss Ella Wendel died March 13, 1931, age 75, at 39th and 5th Avenue in New York City, the last survivor of numerous sisters who never married.. She was worth at death close to $100,000,000. She was a descendent of John Gottlieb Matthias Wendel, who in late 1700s became associated with John Jacob Astor. John Wendel in 1799 married Miss Elisabeth Astor, a sister of John Jacob Astor. This couple had a child, John Daniel Wendel, b. 1800.*

*At age 34, John D. Wendel married Mary Ann Dew, ‘the amiable’ as she was called. Mary Ann Dew was the grand daughter of General Tobias Emerson Stansbury of Maryland. This may have been Tobias Stansbury, who died in 1709 in Maryland, a 7th great grandfather of this writer, or a great uncle descended from this line. We know our Stansbery line left Maryland and moved to the Carolinas by the middle 1750s, and later to Tennessee by the Civil War.*

*John D. Wendel showed an amazing ability to buy and sell real estate, and accumulated a fortune before his death in 1876. He built a mansion at 444 Fifth Avenue, finally demolished a century later from its construction in the 1830s.*

*The reclusive Miss Ella lived with the curtains drawn and the shutters closed. There was no telephone until her final illness, and until 1930, gas lit the house. When she died, she left her tens of millions to charity! (This information from A Memorial Address by Dr. Ezra S. Tipple, President Emeritus of Drew Theological Seminary, delivered 1935. Copy in Frankie’s papers.)*

*A March 1932 newspaper clipping saved by Frankie contains a photograph entitled: “Represent 2,000 seeking Wendel Millions – Lawyers representing 2,000 would-be heirs to the estate of the late Ella E. Van E. Wendel of New are seen presenting claims in surrogates’ court. More than $100,000,000 is at stake.”*

*Other newspaper clippings state a Rosa Drew Stansbury of Vicksburg, Mississippi attempted to establish a case for her relationship to the late Ella Wendel. Another clipping reports the vacant mansion worth $2 million and in late 1931 only inhabited by her dog, Tobey, an aristocratic poodle continuing to live as he had become accustomed! The mansion, by the way, went to Drew Seminary, and the fortune to other religious institutions.*

*My mother, Geraldine Stansbery, remembers this episode, and that the Stansbery brothers helped pay for lawyers to go to New York to contest the will. To the disappointment of the family (mother reports her mother Mayme was already designing a new house!), the inheritance went mainly to charity*.

*The October 16, 1933 edition of Time magazine announced the death of the lawyer, Charles G. Koss, 78, longtime legal adviser of the Wendel family. He fought so ably in court that the claims of 2,295 heirs were disallowed (DARN!), nine distant relatives were paid to drop contest proceedings, and a dull witted housepainter sent to prison for posing as Ella Wendel’s nephew. Tobey, age 8, the last of the poodles, died the same week as the attorney.*