



THE BURKETT FAMILY

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE BURKETT HERITAGE FOUNDATION

**REUNION IS JUNE 15- MAP ON PAGE 12
MAKE YOUR PLANS NOW TO BE THERE!!**

More About Our Tennessee Relatives Who Went To Texas -

In Volume 2 and 3 of 1994, I wrote about our Tennessee relatives who moved out to Texas, primarily Jacob Lorenza Burkett, a son of Henry Burkett, Sr. I have recently discovered additional information about this family in papers I received from Arnold Burkett who lives in Penfield, Pennsylvania but which were originally prepared by StellaB "Nita" Jaynes.

I had speculated about how they came to make the decision for such a long move and had come to the conclusion they must have heard back from an Aunt (mother's sister) who was already living in Texas. However, it now appears that a Reverend Ike Hoover had already moved to Texas and returned to visit his old home state of Tennessee and presumably relatives. While there, his talk about Texas persuaded Jacob Burkett and Dave Epley, an Uncle of Jacob's, to make the move and I wrote about their trip in an article in Volume 2 of 1994. They arrived in Hoover Valley, Burnet County, Texas on Christmas Day, 1865 with their seven children, George W., Joe L., Mary, Sarah, twins James H.(Jim) and Jane, and Fannie.

Upon their arrival in Burnet county, Jacob and his wife Lavina became home owners until her death probably in 1866 or 1867. She is buried in Cummings Cemetery at Hoover Valley. *(Those of you who remember my articles on my Texas trip will recall that I went to the Hoover Valley cemetery looking for the grave of Lavina but was unable to locate it. I now realize I was looking in*

the wrong cemetery - should have been looking in the Cummings cemetery. More about this Cummings cemetery later.) In a letter written by James H.(Jim) Burkett, one of the sons of Jacob and Lavina, he made some very impressive remarks about their mother. One of the remarks was "I remember seeing my mother lying in a winding sheet on the bed with what looked like a little doll in her arms. They told me she was dead." *(The cause of death is unknown at this time but could it have been that the "doll" he referred to was an infant and that both it and Lavina died during childbirth? I have other papers which led me to believe I was looking for the grave of Lavina and infant.)*

After Lavina's death, Jacob Lorenza broke up housekeeping and placed the younger children with kindhearted neighbors. The twins Jim and Jane who were about 4 or 5 years old and Fannie who was about 2 or 3 years old were placed with the Elkins family; Sarah, who was about 8 or 9 was placed with Reverend Jack Mabry; and Mary who was about 11 or 12 was placed with the John Davis family - all living in Hoover Valley. Nothing is known about the two oldest boys, Joe who was about 13 or 14 and George who was about 14 or 15, so the presumption is that they continued living with their father. Although this placing of children with other families upon the death of a parent was fairly common in those days, it still must have been very hard on both Jacob and the children to suddenly find themselves split up. But it does make a statement about the goodness of people in those days to take in these children.

About two years later, Jacob Lorenza married

(Continued on page 2)

Miss Matilda Reed and she assumed the responsibility of mothering his children. They were brought together again under the same roof; at first living for a short while at Rose Hill, McCullough County but they returned soon to Burnet County and lived on the John Davis farm. There, Ellen, the first of the half sisters, was born. Laura, the second half sister, was also born in Burnet County. The family next moved to Lone Grove, Llano county, and lived on the D.H. Trent farm. They then moved to San Saba county where the Reverend John Reed lived and located on the Vest farm. From there they moved to Big Valley, Mills County, where the third half sister, Lavina, was born. *(It would appear that Matilda Reed must have been a kind, understanding and thoughtful person because this daughter was named after Jacob's first wife.)*

In Big Valley, Jacob pre-empted (*not sure what this means*) a small place which he later sold to Dave Farley. The Burkett's next located on a place near the Colorado river in Mills county having bought the place from "Uncle" John Conner. Later, Jacob sold that place to Abe Ezzell. Jacob then bought a place on Prescoat creek one-half mile below Prescoat's old home place. It was part of the old Murrah ranch four and a half miles south of Goldthwaite near the Colorado river and included the Little Pecan Bayou. His house was located just above the Bayou and about fifty yards from the Colorado river. *(During my trip to Texas and my search for Nita Jaynes, I crossed a bridge over the Little Pecan Bayou near the Colorado river which must have been very near this home place. But of course I didn't know this at that time.)* It was at this farm that Jacob Lorenza died Christmas day of 1875 only months after returning from Tennessee with his mother and sisters. According to family legend, his death was a result of wounds received during the Civil War. He was buried in the **nearby Joy cemetery** on the place whose last known owner was J.R. Parkes. *(Again referring back to my article in Volume 4 1994, I included a picture of the tombstone of Jacob Lorenza which I located in the Oakview cemetery in Mullin and I had speculated that he must have been moved from another cemetery because he had died in 1875 and the Oakview cemetery had not been established until 1891. I had also speculated that he*

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The Ancestry Research Club

had been moved by some of his children since at least one of them, Joseph L. Burkett and his wife Della Catherine Pyeatt, was also buried in Oakview. It now appears this was exactly what took place since we now know he was originally buried in the Joy Cemetery. Incidentally, Joseph L. and Della Catherine Burkett were the grandparents of Nita Jaynes.) Two months after Jacob's death, his youngest daughter, Virginia, was born. She was the last of the four half sisters: Ellen, Laura, Lavina and Virginia - children of Jacob and his second wife, Matilda Reed. *(My current records disagree with this because I show Lavina to have been the last born. I will have to reverify some of the dates I am currently using.)*

While the Burketts were living in Burnet county, an Indian massacre of the entire Whitlock family occurred December 7, 1870 on a farm adjoining the Burkett farm and records indicate they were buried in Cummings cemetery where Jacob's first wife, Lavina and infant, were buried.

Jacob's father, Henry Burkett, Sr., died in March of 1875 and Jacob returned to Tennessee for the purpose of closing the estate. When Jacob went back to Texas, he took his mother, Mary "Polly" Epley Burkett and two of his sisters, Martha Young, Mary Brown, and their children. Later, Martha Young moved to Oklahoma.

Although the above adds to what we know about Jacob Lorenza Burkett, it also raises some more questions. How much longer after Jacobs death did the family and Jacob's mother Mary Epley Burkett continue to live at the farm there along the Colorado river? Based on the information I currently have, the children's ages when their father died were as follows: George was 23; Joe was 22; Mary was 20; Sarah was 17; the twins Jim and Jane were 13; and Fannie was 11. Although I do not have Mary's wedding date, it appears that Sarah was the first to marry in 1877 at the age of 19, two years after her father died. George, the oldest son, married in 1879 at the age of 27 which was four years after Jacob died and Joe married in 1882 at the age of 29 so this means the oldest boys were unmarried for about four years after their father died. I do not seem to have the date when their stepmother Matilda Reed Burkett died. If I could locate a deed showing when

the farm was sold that might answer part of the question. But based on the information I now have, it appears that all of the children of Jacob's first wife, Lavina, were married by 1882.

However, this still left the four sisters born of Jacob's marriage to Matilda Reed and they were very young when Jacob died with the oldest only being about five years of age. So what happened to Matilda Reed and the four daughters? As of now, I seem to have absolutely no information about her and/or the four daughters. And how much longer did Jacob's mother, Mary Epley Burkett, continue living on this farm? It appears that his mother died at the Williams Ranch in Mullin where I found her grave but how long had she been living there before she died in 1884? Perhaps Nita Jaynes can provide some of these answers.

Still another question begging an answer is covered in the next article. ■

Where Was Henry Burkett, Sr Buried and Where Was His Farm?

For some time now, Audy Majors and I have wondered where Henry Burkett, Sr. was buried and we even went to Tennessee and drove around areas searching in cemeteries where we thought he might be but with no luck.

Now we read again about Jacob Lorenza returning to help settle his father's estate in 1875. I have located a deed which shows that Henry Burkett, Sr. purchased 270 acres in the 4th District of Cannon County in February of 1854. I have an undated map of Cannon County which seems to indicate the 4th District was in the southwestern part of the county around Burt. Woodbury is shown as being the county seat so it would follow that the deed showing when and to whom the property was sold would also be on record there along with a map showing the districts as they existed at that time.

Some of you may recall that one of our Bogle relatives, Lois Gilley, is the treasurer of Cannon County and works in the courthouse. I have written her to see if she can give us any help.

Irvin Petty
To Deed 270 acres
Henry Burkett

I Irvin Petty have this day bargained and sold and do hereby convey unto Henry Burkett his heirs and assigns forever for the consideration of seven hundred dollars to me paid the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged a certain tract or parcel of land lying and being in Cannon County District No. 4th State of Tennessee and bounded as follows to wit: Beginning on Hyman Wilsons north east corner thence with the big road to the forks at the old grocery House thence with the road called the Young Road to a stake running with a (unreadable) line down the hollow the first one back of the old Grocery House, thence down the hollow to the west boundary line of a hundred and fifty acre tract the said Moore purchased from Ormond Straw thence west with said line to the corner thence west with a line of a three hundred acre tract to Wilsons Corner thence north with said line to the beginning supposed to contain one hundred acres also one other tract Bounded as follows, lying and being joining the above described tract (unreadable) Bounded on the North by the lands of Hyman Wilson, on the east by Lindsey Pealen, on the South by the lands of Micajah Petty and on the West by a conditional line marked by Willis, (unreadable), supposed to contain one hundred and seventy acres be the same more or less. To have and to hold the same to the said Henry Burkett, his heirs and assigns forever. I do covenant with the said Henry Burkett that I am lawfully seized of said land have a good right to convey it and that the same is unincumbered. I do further covenant and bind myself my heirs and representatives to warrant and forever defend the title to the said land and every part thereof to the said Henry Burkett his heirs and assigns against the lawful claims whatever. Given under my hand and seal this 22nd day of February 1854.

Test D.S. Hand
Y.L. Brevard

Irvin Petty (seal)

State of Tennessee Personally appeared before
Cannon County me Brinkley Laseter Clerk of
the County Court of said
Cannon County the within named Irvin Petty the
Bargainor with whom I am personally acquainted
and who acknowledged that he executed the within
deed for the purposes therein contained. Witness
my hand at office this the 22nd of Februry 1854.

B. Laseter, Clerk

Filed at office February the 22nd at 2 oclock P.M.
1854 and registered March the 15th at 4 oclock
P.M. 1854.

Jas H. Ward, Reg

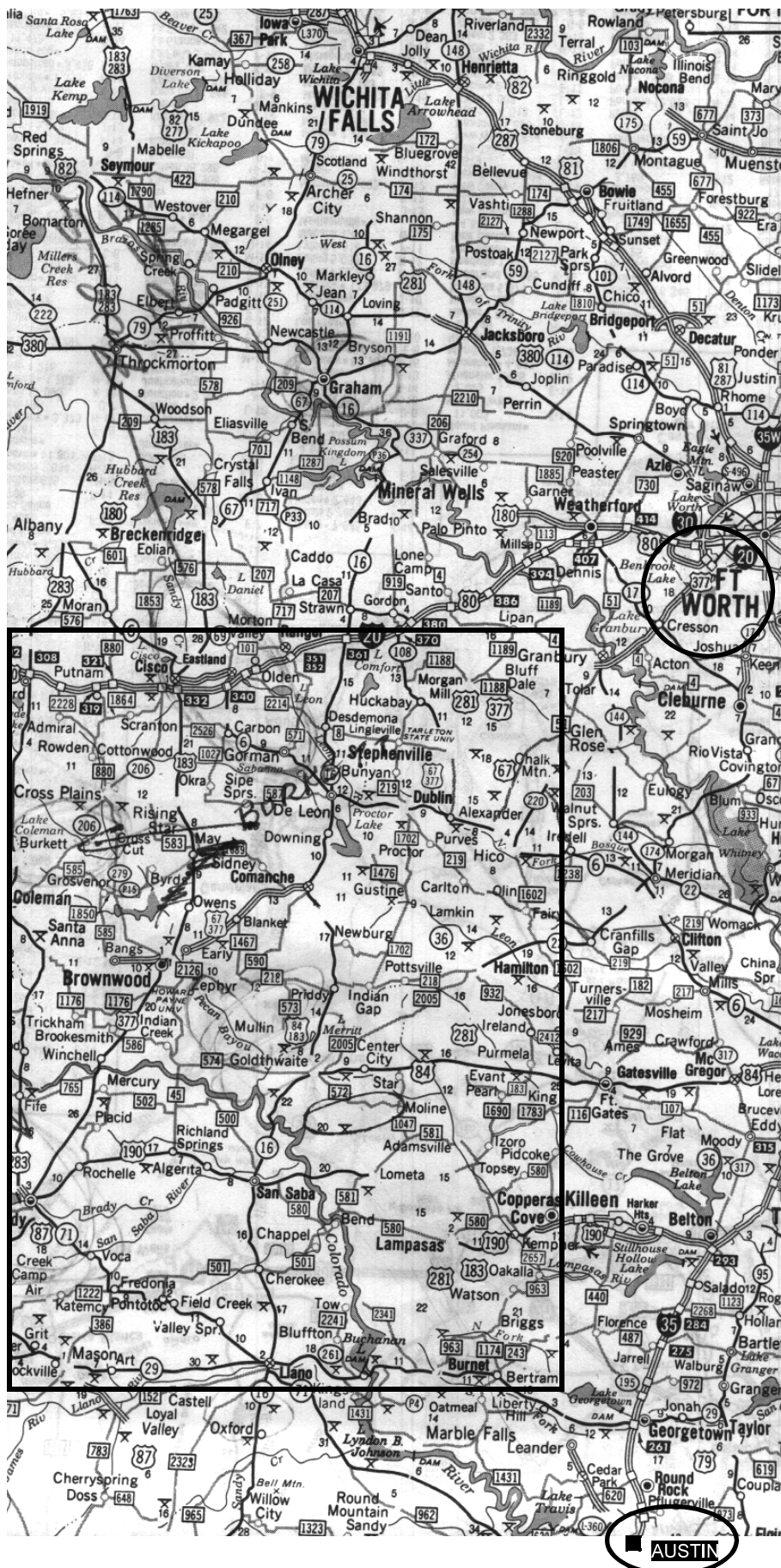
*(All of the above is recorded in Book K in
Cannon County. As I have done with other
documents, I copied the handwriting, including
spelling, capitals and punctuation, as close as
possible.)*

When there was no Preacher available -

In the early days of new territory, settlers often found themselves without the benefit of a preacher which presented problems for couples who wanted to marry. Below is an example of the method often used to overcome that problem.

Know all men by these presents, that with the public knowledge of the community the maid Rachel King and the bachelor Harry Burdine undertake to live together as Man and Wife without benefit of clergy, there being none in these parts. We hold them to be truly married in the Eyes of God, and on their part they undertake a solemn pact to marry legally as soon a a Priest of the Holy Roman Catholic Church shall pass this way.

Although the above example uses the Catholic Church, the same format was used but simply replaced the Catholic Church with the church of their faith. This is just another example of how different life was on the frontier compared to how we know it today. ■

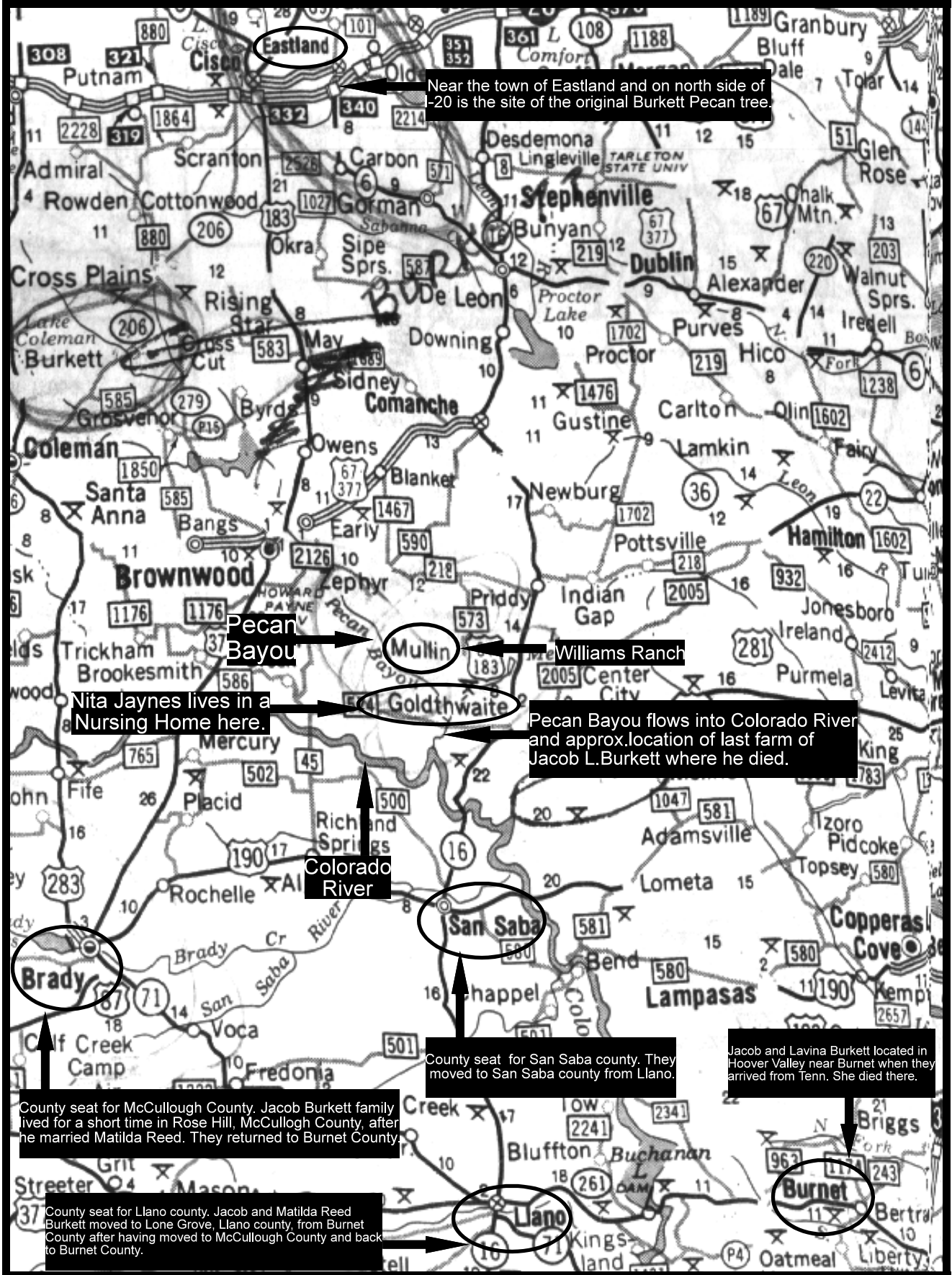


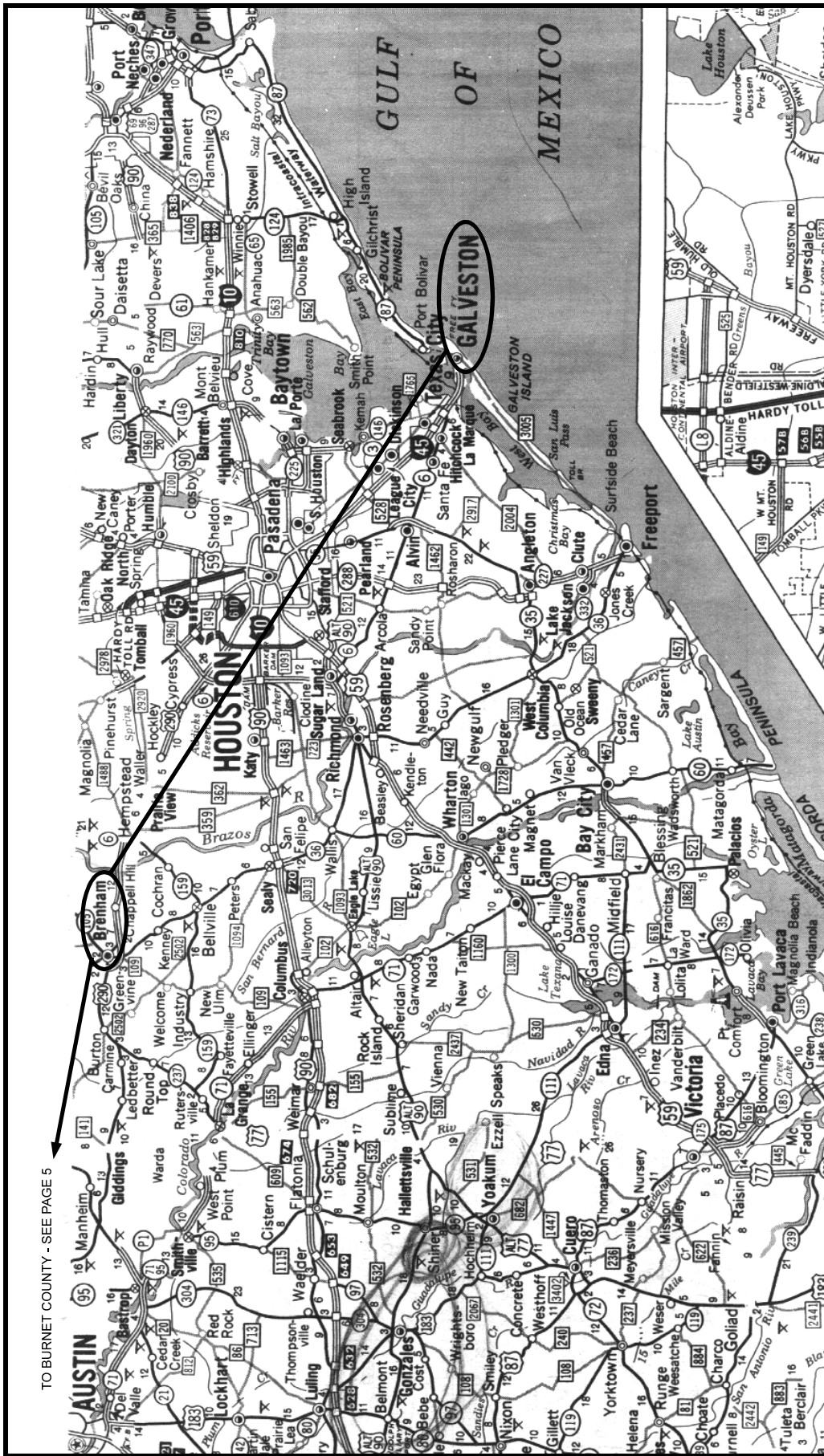
The enclosed area is enlarged on the next page. The main purpose of this map is to allow you to see where this area is located with respect to towns you recognize such as Ft. Worth and Austin.

On the next page, I have identified the county seats for those counties in which the Jacob Burkett family lived but this does not mean they lived in these towns. Except for the last farm along the Colorado river, I have no information as to what part of the counties they lived in. I think it would be safe to say they did not live in town because all the information I have refers to farms.

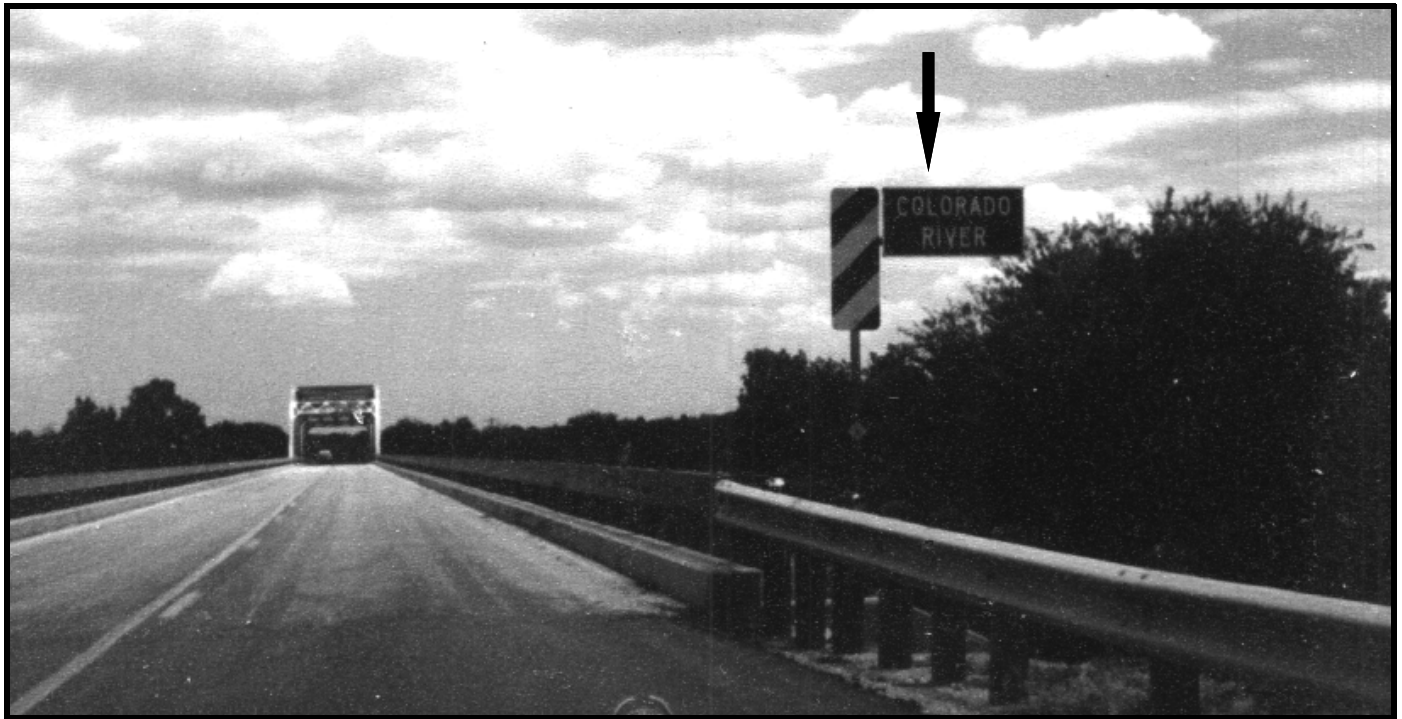
However, one thing is obvious. Jacob Burkett was not afraid to move and my guess is that each time he improved their situation. Later in this issue there will be a picture of where I crossed the Colorado river. The picture shows, and I remember, this was good looking land with plenty of trees and would not have been too far from his last farm. I believe I was on Highway 16 headed south from Goldthwaite toward San Saba.

When they left Tennessee, you will recall they traveled down the Mississippi to New Orleans and took a steamer to Galveston. From Galveston, they rode the train to the end of the line at Brenham and used wagons from there to Burnet county. Later in this issue I have included a map showing the route from Galveston to Brenham to Burnet County.





As already reported, the Jacob Burkett family used wagons to get from Cannon County to Memphis; took flat-bottom boats to float down the Mississippi to New Orleans; took a steamer through the Gulf of Mexico to Galveston; took a train from Galveston to Brenham, Texas which was then the end of the line and from Brenham used wagons to get to Burnet County. The above map shows the route from Galveston and the distance was about the same (on a straight line basis about 120 miles) from Galveston to Brenham and from Brenham to Burnet County. It is not known how long the trip took from Galveston to Brenham nor from Brenham to Burnet County. However, it occurred to me that when Jacob's father, Henry Burkett, Sr. died in 1875 and Jacob returned to Tennessee and then brought his mother, Mary Epley Burkett, back to Texas with him, she was 75 years old. Given the travel conditions which existed at that time, this must have been quite a journey for a person of that age but she must have been a hardy soul who lived 9 more years after that and died at the age of 84.



To the best of my recollection, I took the above picture crossing the Colorado River when I was south bound on State Road 16 between Goldthwaite and San Saba - refer to the map on page 6. Just beyond the sign and to the right as I drove across the bridge was a large pecan grove. Although not too clear, I believe the picture shows how much the area was loaded with trees and other vegetation.



James H. "Jim" and Amanda Burkett

In the previous issue, I wrote about the "Uncle Jim" who was very clearly remembered by Laura Burkett Durham and who provided the picture to the left. Jim Burkett was the son of Jobe and Nancy Richards Burkett who was Jobe's first wife. According to Laura's recollection, Nancy died of T.B. and it must have been soon after Jim was born. The records show Jobe and Nancy were married September 16, 1869 but I do not have Jim's birthdate. However, the information I have shows that Jobe married Rebecca Carolina Rigsby August 22, 1872, about 3 years after he married Nancy Richards, which would indicate Jim was about two years old when Jobe and Rebecca married although Laura remembers her grandmother Rebecca saying that Jim was about four. This is another instance of not having good records. Also, I have no information as to where Nancy Richards Burkett, Jim Burkett and his wife Amanda were buried. Jim then was a half brother to all of the children of Jobe and Rebecca Rigsby; Almon Lee, Julie, Dollie, Tolbert, and Lizzie.

A Story That Needs To Be Told -

(When I first heard this story several years ago, I promised not to print it in this newsletter. However, as time passed, I became convinced that it was a story which needed to be told since it involved a member of our family. I hope I will be forgiven for breaking that promise.)

The following is an article which appeared in an Illinois newspaper May 22, 1971.

Truck Hero Tells Story

(EDITORS NOTE: Audy Majors, a semi-trailer truck driver, is credited with saving the life of Walter Reynolds, another driver, after Reynolds truck collided with stray cattle and overturned and burst into flames on Interstate 80 near Colona last Sunday night. Majors, who returned to his home in Huntsville, Ala., for the first time Friday was contacted by the Times-Democrat. Here is an account of the accident based on that interview.)

By David Ramacitti

“Damn it, your truck is burning - I gotta get you out,” Audy Majors yelled as the injured truck driver cried out in pain when Majors attempted to pull him from the burning wreckage of a semi-trailer tractor.

Moments later, after Majors had dragged the driver from the mangled cab, the truck’s gas tank exploded, but truck driver, William Reynolds, 46, Columbus, Ind., was safe.

“When I saw the back of his trailer start shaking and jumping all over the road, I knew he was wrecking,” said Majors, 36, from his home in Huntsville, Ala.

“He slid off into the median of the highway and his cab turned over,” Majors, who drives for the John Blue Co. of Huntsville, said. “I stopped my truck about 100 feet beyond and jumped out. I had to fight my way through the cattle on the highway to get to his truck. By the time I got there it was already burning,” Majors said.

“His right leg was sticking out of the windshield, but the top of the cab was all mashed down and he couldn’t move.

“He was shouting to help him out, but when I started to pull on his legs he said I was hurting his back. But I told him, ‘Damn it, your truck is burning, I gotta get you out.’” Majors said.

“I didn’t have any choice. I pulled him about 50 feet away from the cab and just as I did his gas tank exploded. It would have been all she wrote for him if he was still in the cab,” Majors said.

REYNOLDS, a driver for Cosco Home Products Mfg., Columbus, Ind., was listed in good condition Saturday night at Illini Hospital, Silvis, with a broken pelvis.

Illinois State Police, at the time of the wreck, credited Majors with saving Reynolds life by getting him out of the burning truck.

Danny Kirby, Reynolds supervisor, contacted in Columbus, Ind. said his firm was considering several plans for “showing our appreciation to Majors.”

He said his company planned to send Majors a catalog of their products with instructions for Majors and his wife to pick out any gift they wanted.

KIRBY ALSO said the President of Cosco Home Products planned to write a letter of commendation to Majors and to his superiors.

And Kirby said, his firm is also working with the Illinois State Police to nominate Majors for a heroism award given annually by the state agency.

Majors said the wreck, which occurred about 11:30 p.m. last Sunday, apparently was caused by stray cattle on the highway.

“THERE MUST have been 80 or 90 head out there,” Majors said. “They were black cattle and that driver didn’t have a chance. I don’t think he ever saw them. I never saw his brake lights go on.

One of the (two) cattle he hit must have torn out his steering and he lost control. He cleared a path for me through those animals, like bowling pins, otherwise I would have hit them,” Majors said.

Majors, who weighs about 175 pounds and is

about 6-feet tall, said, "That man is lucky he wasn't fat. There was only about a foot of space below the smashed cab top I could get him through. If he'd been any bigger, I couldn't have gotten him out."

MAJORS ESTIMATED Reynolds weighs about 190 pounds and stands about 6 feet 2.

"I'm still not sure where I found the strength to pull him out," he said.

"I got some flares from my truck and put them along the highway and tried to get the cattle off the road so somebody else wouldn't hit one, too," Majors said. ■

(Audy did receive a letter from the President of Cosco Home Products, Mr. Clarence O. Hamilton. In his letter, Mr. Hamilton said, "When one performs a heroic act such as you did on the night of May 16, 1971, it reflects great credit on the individual who performed such an act. You have given the greatest gift that any person can give another person - the gift of life."

I concur with those comments by Mr. Hamilton which is why I decided this story needed to be told. And I doubt that very few, if any, of our younger relatives have heard this story or ever would have if I had not made this decision to break my promise.)

Don't Mess With A Burkett !

Several issues ago, I wrote about my Uncle Audy Burkett telling a man to take his hands off me - I was only 17 - and I concluded by saying, "Don't mess with a Burkett!" Now his son, Kenneth Wayne Burkett of Jasper, Alabama has followed in his footsteps.

After working for the Jasper Police department for twenty years and rising to the rank of Lieutenant, Kenneth was fired by the Police Chief for reasons which Kenneth felt were unjustified.

Following a hearing, the Jasper Civil Service Board agreed with Kenneth and reversed the dismissal. However, this didn't satisfy the city so they appealed the ruling. The Judge agreed with the Civil Service Board to reinstate Kenneth.

Still not satisfied, the city went to the Court of Civil Appeals where they were ***again*** ruled against.

Even this didn't satisfy the Jasper officials! They then went to the Alabama Supreme Court which has now denied the city's request to hear the case. So Kenneth is now waiting for the city to make him an offer on his backpay and reinstatement.

This should be the end but, given the city's failure to exercise common sense after the Judge agreed with the Civil Service Board, who knows what they might try next even though everybody who has heard the case has agreed with Kenneth. However, seems to me they have already spent too much of the taxpayer's money in pursuit of what, in my humble opinion, was nothing more than a personal vendetta.

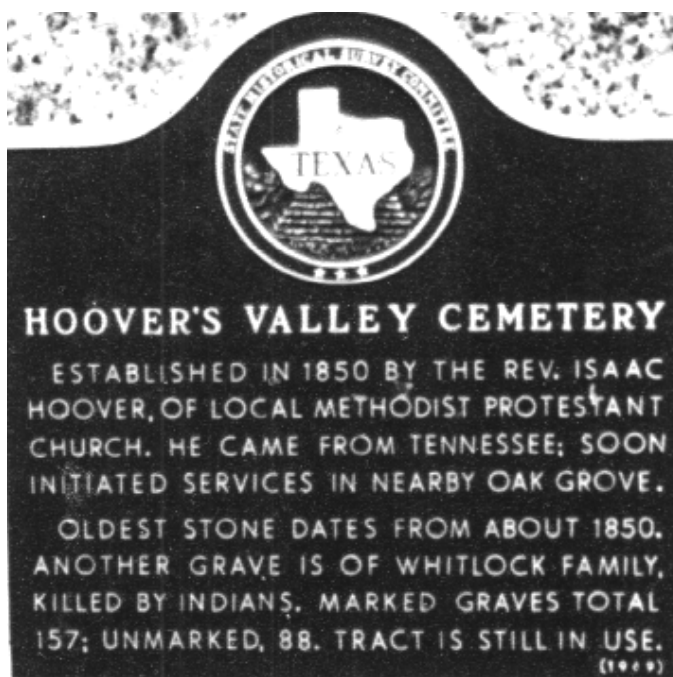
his has been going on for over three (3) years now and speaks volumes for Kenneth's willingness to "dig his toes in and not give up." It also supports what I said before - ***"Don't mess with a Burkett."*** Congratulations, Kenneth!! ■

The Historians Corner



Having just spoken about Uncle "Audy" Burkett brings to mind the question which has been going around in my mind for a long time about the correct spelling of his name. I have seen it spelled as "Audy" and I have seen it spelled as "Audey" but have never known which was correct. I have now found a Social Security record which lists him as "Audey" Burkett, SS# 421-09-7262. This would indicate how his social security card read and, if he was satisfied with his card which I assume he was or he would have had it changed, this would seem to show he spelled it "Audey" which should put an end to my question. If any of the children or any of our relatives have any comments on this, I would like to hear from you.

On page 1 of this issue in writing about Jacob and Lavina Burkett, I concluded that I must have been looking in the wrong cemetery for her grave in that the information I had indicated she had been buried in the Cummings cemetery. Other information I had indicated the Whitlock family, who had been killed by Indians, was buried in the same cemetery. Something kept nagging at me about this so I went back and checked the pictures I took out there and found one of the marker (shown below) which states the Whitlock family was buried in this, the Hoover Valley cemetery. Perhaps it was named the Cummings cemetery in the beginning and then was renamed the Hoover Valley cemetery but this seems to indicate I did look in the right cemetery and, as I originally speculated, the graves of Lavina and Infant must be among those now unmarked as shown on the marker below.



On page 3 of this issue, I wrote about asking for help from Lois Gilley in locating the old farm of Henry Burkett, Sr. and have now heard back from her. She sent me a large map of Cannon County and told me that everyone she spoke with believes the districts shown on the map I have were the same during the 1800's. This narrows the search down and I will be going back to the courthouse in Woodbury and digging through some more old records.

Laura Burkett Durham put me on the trail of

another relative. This relative is Magnolia "Maggie" Watson Seagraves. Maggie, as she prefers to be called, lives in Birmingham and is the daughter of Palmo Dewey Watson and Dollie Mullican. Palmo was the son of Dollie JoAnn Burkett and her first husband Lee Watson. Since John Almon Carroll, son of Leva Burkett Carroll, also lives in Birmingham, I sent him Maggie's address and asked that he call and visit her which he did. John tells me he really enjoyed the visit and left some forms for Maggie who has now completed and mailed them to me which gives me some additional information I did not have. Maggie, we are glad to have been able to get in touch with you and hope that you will be able to attend our reunion in Huntsville.

From time to time in reading, I encounter something which piques my curiosity. Recently in reading about the early days in Texas, I read where an individual had been awarded 5 leagues and four labors of land. I had no idea how much land this was but, in looking it up, discovered that a league was 4,428 acres and a labor was 127 acres. This is a total of 22,648 acres!! That's a lot of land, pardner because a square mile consists of only 640 acres!! The individual I was reading about was awarded the five leagues and then he got a labor of land for each child.

That's it for this issue. See you at the reunion.

Membership Application
for
The Burkett Heritage Foundation
(Dues are currently \$25.00 per year)

Renewal

I would like to join. Here is my check.

I can't afford it at this time but would like to continue receiving newsletter.

Amount enclosed: _____

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Make check payable to M.O. Webb and mail to:

The Burkett Family
c/o M.O. Webb
15439 Lakeshore Villas Drive #77
Tampa, FL 33613

(Your dues pay for the annual reunion expense and for the Newsletter publications and postage)

DIRECTIONS TO KALEA PARK - THE DATE IS JUNE 15

THIS IS A PICTORIAL DRAWING AND IS NOWHERE NEAR SCALE!!

