



THE BURKETT FAMILY

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We Have Lost Another Good Member of Our Family -

Helen Colleen Hodges Mayr
Born February 15, 1930 - Mullin, Texas
Died August 14, 1999 - Goldthwaite, Texas

On Monday, August 16, I signed on to the internet and found a message from Sharon Burkett Fleming telling me that Helen had died Saturday, August 14, at her home on Lake Merritt near Goldthwaite, Texas. It is my understanding that her death occurred as a result of a heart problem. (Sharon is a granddaughter of Edgar Lorenza Burkett and a 1st cousin once removed of Helen.)

This came as a total shock to me since I had spoken to Helen for about 15 minutes the evening of June 29 and she appeared to be in good health and good spirits. She was looking forward to the upcoming family reunion scheduled this year for September 11 and which was to be held there at her house on Lake Merritt. I told her during that conversation our tentative plans were to attend again this year.

Those of you who were subscribers to our Newsletter last year will recall that Helen was our contact for attendance at the September 12, 1998 reunion by Audy Majors, Sid Huggins, and myself. Below are two pictures published in Volume 3 1998.

I know I speak for Audy and Sid when I say we could not have been given a more gracious welcome when we arrived at her father's house on Friday evening, September 11, 1998. Although a lot of the work in preparing the information had been done by others, Helen had put a lot of

Standing is Helen with Audy Majors



Helen and her father with Sid Huggins



*Helen and her father with Sid Huggins
This and the previous photo made Friday, Sept 11, 1998*

effort and time into collecting and organizing information and photo's about our family. It was one of the most interesting evenings I have ever experienced. She had made extra copies of most of the information to give me and loaned me her original copy of that for which she didn't have an extra copy.

Since the reunion I had spoken with Helen a few times trying to either locate additional information and/or photo's. She was intensely interested in our family as a whole but especially that of Joseph Lafayette Burkett and descendants. One of the more interesting things which Helen did was to draw a tree with 10 main branches. The main tree trunk represented Joseph Lafayette Burkett and Della Catherine Pyeatt Burkett and each of the ten branches represented a child with smaller branches for their descendants. I included a copy of that on Page 8 of Volume 4 1998.

Based on information provided by Helen, the three of us, Audy Majors, Sid Huggins, and I, visited an old home site in Tennessee of Henry Burkett, Sr. after we returned from the reunion in Goldthwaite. We had not known the location of that property and were delighted to find and visit it. Audy recovered some of the old bricks from that house and sent one to Helen after cleaning it, coating it with an epoxy and attaching an engraved plate identifying where the brick came from. It was Audy's way of saying "thank you" to Helen for all her work and assistance.

Helen was a daughter of Gladys Beatrice Burkett and Archie Hodges; a granddaughter of Joseph Lafayette Burkett; a great granddaughter of Jacob Lorenza Burkett; and a 2nd great granddaughter of Henry Burkett, Sr. She is survived by her father, Benjamin Archer 'Archie' Hodges of Goldthwaite; one sister, Nelda Ruth Willingham of Arlington, Texas; a brother, Joe C. Hodges of Abilene, Texas; three sons, Mark, Edward and Wesley; and 6 grandchildren. The funeral was Monday, August 16, and burial took place in the Oakview cemetery in Mullin, Texas.

Status of Goldthwaite Reunion -

This year the reunion will take place as scheduled on September 11 but at the Bank on the square in Goldthwaite instead of at Lake Merritt as had been originally scheduled. All family members are urged to attend. ■

What a Great Huntsville Reunion! -

Thanks to Debbie Burkett Howard and the courtesy of her church, the Meridianville Church of Christ, not enough can be said about the facilities and location for this year's reunion!

The original thought was to avoid the heat by being indoors but we had not counted on all the other benefits available at the church. Beginning with paved and close-in parking, this included rest rooms, plenty of tables and chairs, and a complete kitchen where at least one family member used the microwave to warm a dish. Also available were large plastic tubs with stands *and a commercial size ice maker!*

As usual, family members had prepared a variety of food — with desserts — to satisfy anybody's taste. And, as usual, it was so good that it was easy to overeat — which I did along with several other relatives whose names I won't mention.

After everybody had *almost* finished eating (I say it that way because it was hard to quit!), Audy Majors took over and introduced Sid Huggins who gave an interesting talk about our family.

Following Sid's talk, Audy rounded up some volunteers to help him and began drawings for some prizes he provided plus some provided by others. Using the sign-in register, numbers were assigned and each person given one. We had 68 who signed the register. Audy then had some younger members of our family come up and draw a number from one of the baskets provided by Kathleen and Verdie Andrews.

The first two drawings were for pens made from wood from the original Burkett Pecan Tree in Texas and were provided by Audy. (A picture of one of these pens was included on page 7 Volume 1 1999.) Next, were some bricks from one of the homes owned in Tennessee by Henry Burkett, Sr. (A picture of the remains of this home was shown on page 7 Volume 3 1998.) These also were provided by Audy who had cleaned them, coated them with an epoxy, and affixed a metal plate identifying where the bricks came from.

Next came several baskets donated by Kathleen and Verdie Andrews in what has almost become a tradition. As in the past, these are excellent baskets made by hand by Verdie and demonstrate outstanding craftsmanship.

The next prizes were some martin bird houses made and donated by Bobby Carroll of Hueytown, Alabama. Seems that erecting bird houses for martins has become a favorite hobby up that way. The first one I can remember seeing was at my Uncle J.B.'s house.

Needless to say, folks were relatively quiet during the drawings because everyone wanted to win one of the prizes and they wanted to be sure they could hear the number being called!

Our thanks to Audy, Verdie and Kathleen, and Bobby for the door prizes and thanks again Debbie to you and husband Dale. We look forward to being there again next year!! ■

THE BURKETT FAMILY

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We wish to acknowledge the contributions made by StellaB 'Nita' Jackson Jaynes in compiling the initial data about our family. Without her efforts, much of the information we have would probably never have been located.

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The West Texas Reunion of Descendants of John Burkett -

As announced on page 15 of Volume 2 1999, the reunion for the descendants of John and Zona Burkett was held on Saturday, July 17. (John was a son of George Washington Burkett, a grandson of Jacob Lorenza Burkett, and a great grandson of Henry Burkett, Sr.)

Jim M. Burkett of O'Donnell, Texas is my contact for this branch of the family. He told me they had a good one with about 25 in attendance. Jim is a second cousin to our Goldthwaite relatives. Jim had purchased a digital camera and used it during the reunion but tells me he is disappointed at the results. They didn't come out as well as he had hoped so I am still hoping to get some photo's later.

John Burkett married Arizona 'Zona' Logan Albright on January 13, 1907 in Capps, Boone County, Arkansas. How John came to be in Arkansas is unknown at this time but he was just 21 having been born December 6, 1885. However, he didn't stay too long because our records indicate their first daughter, Cortez, was born May 27, 1908 in Putnam, Callahan County, Texas.

John and Zona had a total of eight (8) children — five (5) sons and three (3) daughters. The sons were:

John Elmo Burkett
 Jake Leroy Burkett
 Joe Watkins Burkett
 Dale Logan Burkett
 Jim Mac Burkett

The daughters were:

Cortez Burkett
 Wilda Lee Burkett
 Katie Louise Burkett

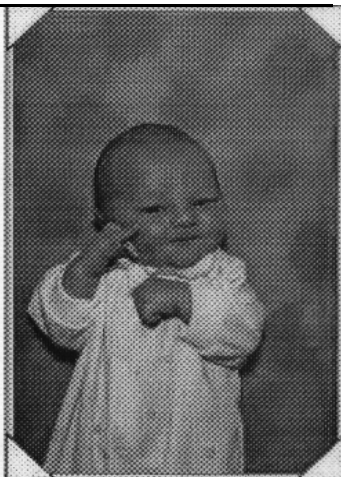
Jim Mac has sent me additional information about the family but I have just not had the time to enter it. Hopefully, I can get it all entered by our next issue. ■

We've Got A New Baby ! -

Born at 5:42 PM on August 20, 1999 at the Huntsville, Alabama hospital to parents Audra Majors Young and Michael Young and weighing in at 7 pounds and 6 ounces, we welcome Steven Audy Young.

He is a grandson of Audy and Sandy Majors, also of Huntsville, Alabama.

He doesn't know it yet but count on Audy Majors to tell him when he's old enough that he is a 5th great grandson of Henry Burkett, Sr. Congratulations to the parents and to the grandparents ! ■



Steven Audy Young

A Haunting Melody -

From time to time in searching for relative information, I come across a story that is not directly about our family but is interesting and took place during an important time frame of our relatives.

Below is just such an article.

This story begins in 1862 during the Civil War with a Union Army Officer, Captain Robert Ellicombe, who was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia.

During the night Captain Ellicombe heard a wounded soldier moan. The Confederate Army was on the opposite side of this strip of land. Although he didn't know if this was a Union or Confederate soldier, Captain Ellicombe decided to risk his life and bring the wounded soldier back to his camp for medical attention. He crawled on his belly and pulled the man back to his encampment. Upon reaching his own lines, Captain Ellicombe discovered the man had died and was actually a Confederate soldier. A lantern was lit. Suddenly, the Captain caught his breath and went numb with shock when he saw the face of the soldier.

It was his son.

The boy had been studying music in the south and, without telling his family, he had enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, Captain Ellicombe asked permission to bury his son with full military honors. His request was partially denied. The Captain had asked for a group of Army Band members to play a funeral dirge but that was turned down since the young man had died fighting for "the enemy." But out of respect for the Captain, his superiors did agree to give him one musician and the Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found in his dead son's pocket.

That music was the haunting melody Americans now recognize and which is played at all military funerals.

It is called "Taps." ■

Tips For A Lifetime -

To prevent egg shells from cracking, add a pinch of salt in the water before hard-boiling.

When boiling corn on the cob, add a pinch of sugar to help bring out the corn's natural sweetness. ■

Burkett Sidelights -

contributed by StellaB Jackson Jaynes(deceased)

Adella Pyeatt Burkett really enjoyed reading love stories and other fiction but she tried to keep her kids and grandkids from knowing it so she carefully kept the magazine or book turned away from our prying eyes while she was reading and churning at the same time. We noticed that she wanted to do the churning on days when the mail carrier brought her favorite magazine. On other days she usually invited us to

“churn for grandma, please” or “go play while grandma takes a nap”, (with book or magazine close to her pillow.) In later years she laughed with us about those incidents. ■

The Holidays Are Coming and Time For Pie ! -

And what better pie to have than a good old pecan pie! I have been soliciting recipes for a good pecan pie and I got one. Sent in by Evelyn Huggins, wife of Sid Huggins, this pie is vouched for by Sid who says, “the best pecan pie you have ever tasted. It is a winner.”

Pecan Pie Recipe

Heat the oven to 350 degrees.

Lightly beat 3 eggs with 1 cup of sugar.

Heat 1 cup Karo dark corn syrup and ½ stick of margarine or butter - just warm it, don't boil.

Pour syrup/margarine into eggs/sugar. (That's why syrup should be warm; otherside the beaten eggs will be stringy.)

Add 1 tsp vanilla and 1 full cup of broken pecans.

Mix well.

Pour the pie mixture into unbaked pie crust.

Bake 50/55 minutes or until a toothpick/knife inserted in center of pie comes out clean.

If pastry browns too quickly, cover edges of pie with foil.

NOTE: If whole pecans are used, they should be placed on pie after pouring into crust.

CAUTION! Eat only once a month! ■

Burkett Pecans for the above -

In Volume 1 1999 on Page 6, I wrote that you might obtain some Burkett pecans from Mr. Charles Walker and gave his phone number. However, I have since spoken with Mr. Walker on the phone and he has sold his property.

Mr. Walker was very friendly and we discussed at length not only the Burkett pecan but pecans in general. During this discussion, it became apparent to me that anybody willing to pack and ship Burkett pecans to us would be doing so pretty much as a personal favor. The reason for this conclusion is that pecan growers usually sell their crop to one buyer in the hundreds and thousands of pounds. Therefore, for them to select, pack, and ship a few pounds to us would involve additional effort and expense since that is not their normal method.

However, I plan to try to get a few pounds. If any of you are also interested, let me know and I will combine the order and see if I can get them to make one shipment to me. I can then split it up and ship to you. But keep in mind that with all the packing and shipping you will wind up paying a premium price just for the pleasure of having Burkett pecans. ■

Sears Response -

As outlined in previous Newsletters, I contacted Sears about the family legend that Burkett pecan trees had been sold through their catalog back in the 1920's and/or 1930's.

After going through their archives, they have now advised me they have been unable to find such an arrangement. They did tell me that all of their catalogs are available here in Tampa at the University of South Florida if I wanted to check them on my own.

I guess my next move is to contact Montgomery Wards and see if maybe they handled it. Sid Huggins told me it was his understanding from the beginning that it was Wards so that will be my next move. ■

Watson Brothers Identification -

On page 11 of Volume 3 1997, I included a picture of the three Watson brothers as shown below. However, I was not sure of their identity other than Frank Lee and asked for help. I have now been contacted by Cathy Underhill Digue (pronounced Dee-A) who has correctly identified them.



Left to right - Frank Lee Watson, Jessie Nelson Watson, and Charles Lewis Watson.

To refresh your memory, these three were sons of Julie Ann Burkett and her first husband, John Franklin Watson.

Cathy Underhill Digue is a daughter of Dixie and Naomi Underhill; a granddaughter of William Ernest Underhill; a great granddaughter of Julie Ann Burkett Underhill; a 2nd great granddaughter of Jobe Burkett; a 3rd great granddaughter of John Burkett; and a 4th great granddaughter of Henry Burkett, Sr. She is my 2nd cousin once removed.

Cathy has provided information about her family and I'll have more to say about that later but I thank her for the identification of the Watson brothers above. ■

The Daughters of James Henry Burkett -

Although our coverage of the two sons of James Henry has been extensive, little has been said about the two daughters. This has been primarily because I had little information about them. These daughters were Iru Ona Burkett and Katie Lee Opal Burkett.

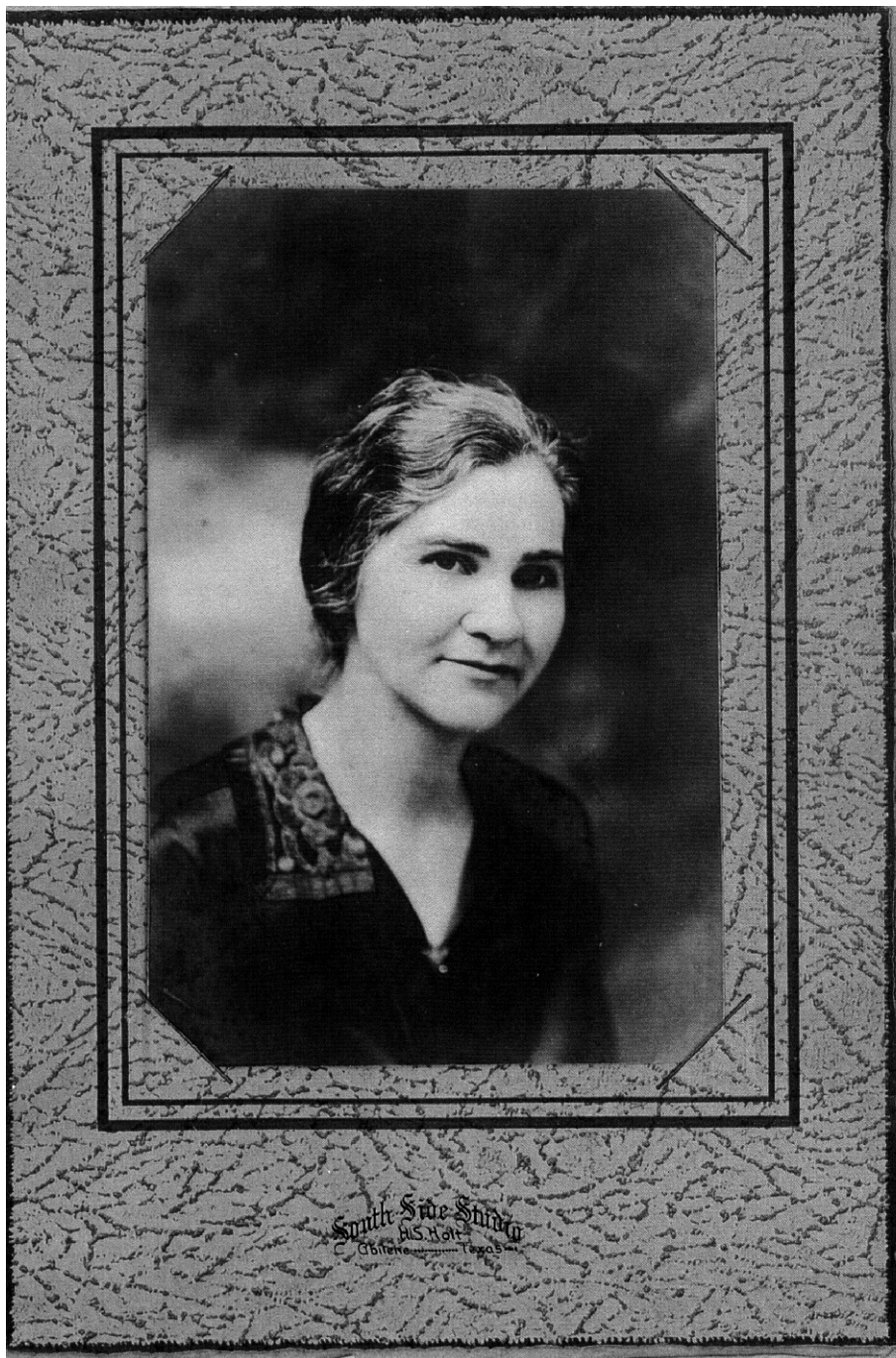
Iru Ona Burkett was born April 10, 1888 in Llano County, Texas and died November 2, 1959 in Abilene, Texas. Iru married Luther "Bill" Jackson in November 1906 in Putnam, Callahan County, Texas. They had four children — Juanita Merle, Robert Wylie, Rosalie, and William Luther. Nothing more is known at this time.

In his will, James Henry left the orchard in Clyde, Texas to Iru stating he had helped the sons enough during their lifetime.

The other daughter, Katie Lee 'Kate' Opal Burkett, was born August 14, 1891 in the town of Robert Lee, Coke County, Texas. She died July 22, 1949 in El Paso, El Paso County, Texas. Kate married Carl Grubbs and records indicate they had one child born to them but does not provide information as to whether it was a boy or girl. Kate taught school for three (3) years and then became a Naturopathic physician. Where Kate received her education is unknown at this time.

In Volume 3 1995 on page 1, I quoted StellaB Jackson Jaynes as follows: "Uncle James Henry Burkett had a daughter named Kate who researched the family history from the time our Burketts left Germany until they migrated to and settled in Texas. I have read the letter in which Kate detailed her findings, namely the German spelling was Burkart and/or Burkhardt. Kate was well educated and knew how to do genealogical research." StellaB having said this, I am surprised that she did not secure copies of Kate's research. At this time I have seen nothing which purports to having been prepared by Kate.

In an effort to gain further information about Kate and perhaps even locate some of her documents, I have sent a message to El Paso County requesting a copy of her death certificate. My hope is that it will reveal the name of the funeral home and from that I can obtain a copy of the obituary. From the obituary I am hoping there will names of descendants and their home towns. However, since our records indicate they only had one child, my hopes are not too high but one never knows about this family search. There

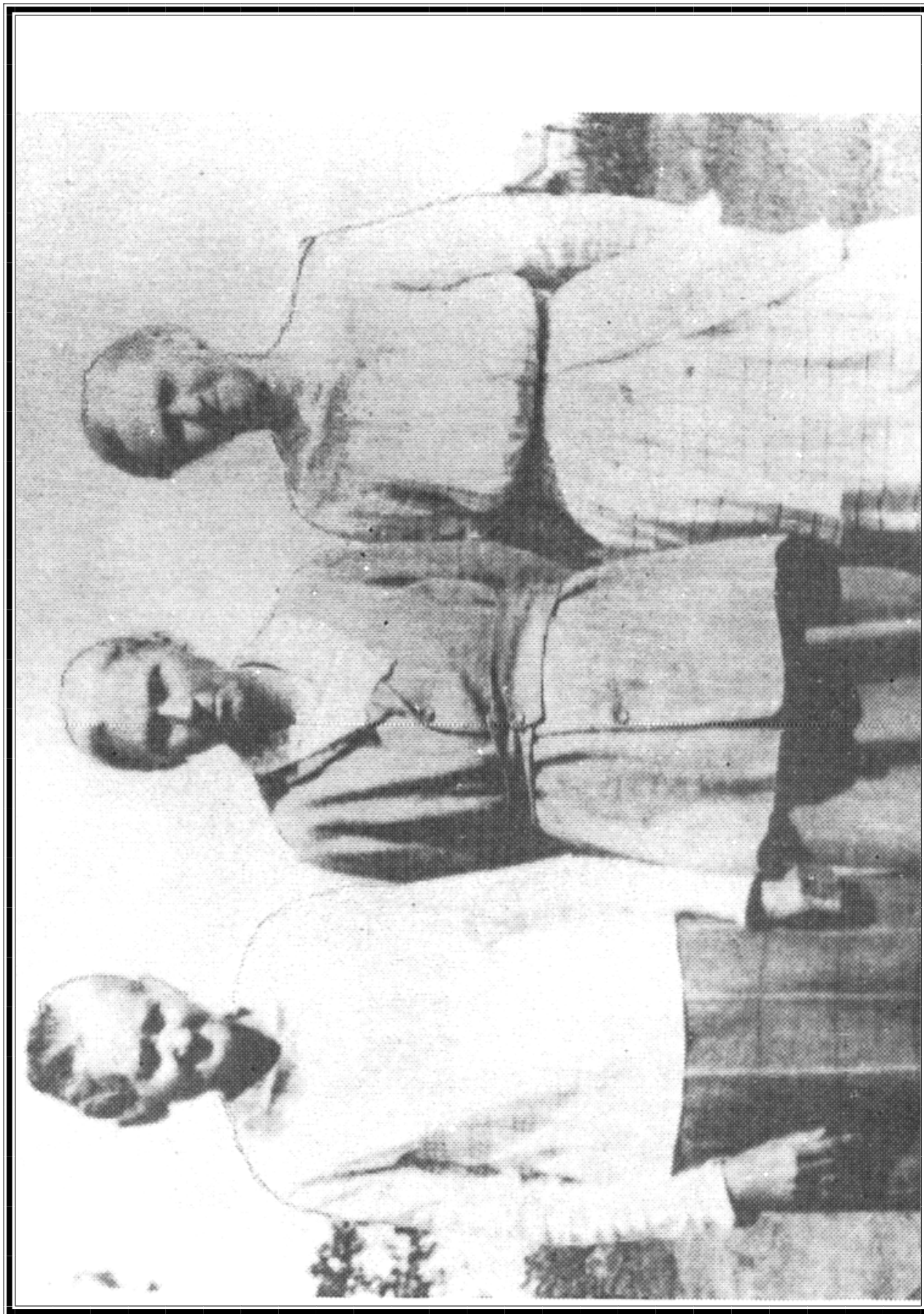


Iru Ona Burkett (Date of photo is unknown)

have been times when something jumped out of the blue at me so let's keep our fingers crossed on this. ■

More On How Our Ancestors Lived -

In 1915, up to half of American laborers were working twelve hours a day, seven days a week, for the salary of \$30 a month. This was about NINE cents per hour! (My first recollection of my mother, grandfather, aunts and uncles, was of them working ten hours a day, six days a week, in the Dallas cotton mill in Huntsville, Alabama. This was in the 1930's.) ■



This is a previously unpublished photo of Mrs. James Henry Burkett and her sisters. Left to right - Malinda McAdams Eldridge, Amanda Sarah Ann McAdams, Samantha Victoria McAdams Burkett.

Frances Burkett Watson Has Died -

On August 31, I received a phone call from Laura Belle Burkett Durham in McMinnville, Tennessee telling me her sister had died on Monday, August 30.

Born in 1918 in Warren County, Tennessee, Frances Oleta Burkett was a daughter of Tolbert Lee Burkett and Minnesota Elrod. She was a granddaughter of Jobe Burkett; a great granddaughter of John Burkett; and a 2nd great granddaughter of Henry Burkett, Sr. She married Joseph L. Watson. Frances was a beautician and an avid golfer in her younger years. During one of our trips to McMinnville, I saw several golf pictures of Frances and, since I was also a golfer, we had some good conversation about the game.

Funeral services are to be held at High's Funeral Home across from the courthouse in McMinnville. ■

Our Oldest Burkett ? -

I think so. On Saturday, August 28, Laura Belle Burkett Durham celebrated her 92nd birthday. She was born in 1907. She married Jesse Maury Durham and they had five (5) children — three (3) of whom are still living.

Now here is the only picture I can locate of Laura. That's Ara Burkett Chisholm on the left and Laura Belle Burkett on the right. They were first cousins.



Date of picture is unknown

A belated Happy Birthday to you, Cousin!!

And Speaking of Cousins -

I was reading the other day about a woman who was having trouble with her children. She was trying to get them to put the "g" on the end of words instead of saying goin', bein', gettin' and so forth. One evening the phone rang and one of her children answered and announced the call was for her. She asked, "Who is it?" The child responded, "It's your cousing." ■

Did You Know ? -

In 1800, one-fifth of the population of America was slaves. ■

American Surnames -

Much debate and discussion has taken place as to what the Burkett name was originally. Some said Burkhart. Some said Burkhardt. But why the confusion? Read on.

When an immigrant arrived in America with little knowledge of English and gave his name verbally to officials to whom it sounded odd or unusual, it was written down by the official as they heard it. Being thereby "official", it was often accepted by the immigrant himself as a correct American rendering of the name.

Immigrants to America from European countries have also consciously altered their names to relate them partially to the English language so that many names have a form and spelling which is different from anywhere else. Here are some examples.

From the Dutch, the name VAN ROSEVELT which meant "of the rose field" became Roosevelt. German ROGGENFELDER which meant "rye field" became Rockefeller. German PROERSCHING which meant "peach tree" became Pershing. Italian TAGLIAFERRO which meant "iron worker" became Tolliver. The list is endless

To arrive at the exact meaning of a surname is not easy. Many are not what they appear to be. BARKER did not buy like a dog but devoted his time to working with and preparing leather. This came from Old English *bark* "to tan.." POINTER did not direct people where to go by the use of an extended forefinger, but was one who made laces and cords for fastening hose together. USHER did not show people to their theatre seats but was a doorkeeper, one who kept watch at the door to the king's apartment. And there are countless other examples.

Do we know what Burkett — or Burkhart/Burkhardt — meant originally? No, not at this time but as our research continues we may uncover that. ■

A Book of Our Newsletters -

Over the years, I have had requests for copies of all the Newsletters. I could not comply because I was just not set up and able to do the work required to produce them.

I now plan to start work and produce a few copies with the objective of donating them to selected libraries and perhaps a copy to the Library of Congress. This will require a lot of work and could even get expensive. I estimate there will be about 375 pages which will include the issues through the end of this year. There will be a Table of Contents and an index. My guess is that the expense of producing, binding and mailing such a book could run to \$60.00 or more.

Before starting, I would like to hear from any who think they might be interested. I recognize that \$60.00 is a lot of money and may well be beyond the reach of most folks but, if you think you might be interested, drop me a line. After I get the book more toward the completion stage and can get an accurate cost I will then let you know and you can decide then whether or not you want to spend that much money. Having an estimated number may help in negotiating the cost. ■

*150 Years of
Texas Heritage*

1846-1996

Texas First Families

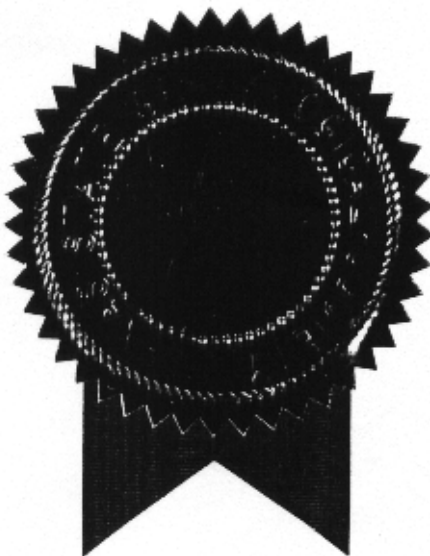
This Commemorative Certificate Is Presented To

Mary Katharine Burkett

A Descendant Of

William M. McAdams Sr.

Who Resided in Texas or Served The Republic of Texas
before February 19, 1846 when The Republic of Texas
Officially Became The State of Texas



Certified by the
Texas State Genealogical Society

23 December 1998

Jean Heggemeier
Jean Heggemeier, President

Wanda L. Donaldson
Wanda L. Donaldson, Vice-President

As you can see, the above was provided by Mary Katharine Burkett Johnston, a daughter of Robert William and Mary Frances Street Burkett; a granddaughter of Omar Burkett; and a great granddaughter of James Henry and Samantha Victoria McAdams Burkett. If you are a descendant of James Henry and Samantha Victoria McAdams Burkett and are interested in obtaining one of these certificates, contact me.

*The
Historian's
Corner -
Oliver Webb*



Although I sent this information to many relatives who have access to the Net, I want to repeat it here for those who do not have computers.

After almost 7 years of intensive — really intensive — work on our family history, it finally caught up with me. When I returned from our Burkett reunion in June in Huntsville, Alabama, I found that I simply had to stop and catch up on items I had let go here at home. Among my projects were remodeling my bath, trimming tree limbs and bushes, installation of a water softener (we have sand in our water in Florida!), auto servicing, etc., etc., etc. I am happy to report that I have now caught up on these items and can once again direct my efforts almost full time to the family. However, during the time I was working on my projects, I had to quit working on the family and I have not been as prompt in answering emails and/or sending information folks had asked for. I apologize and will try to get back on schedule.

Since I started on the family back in early 1993 and with the help of many relatives and friends, our file has grown from about 700 folks to 4,248. We have located relatives in many states and know there are at least four (4) family reunions each year. They are: Huntsville, Alabama; Goldthwaite, Texas; and Denver City, Texas. All of these are referred to as Burkett Reunions. Another I have just learned about is the Underhill Family Reunion which had its' first reunion this year in McMinnville, Tennessee and they plan to continue each year on the 4th of July. These Underhills are descendants of Julie Ann Burkett and Ezekial Oliver Underhill. Julie Ann Burkett was a daughter of Jobe Burkett; a granddaughter of John Burkett; and a great granddaughter of Henry Burkett, Sr.

Another thing I have been delinquent on is the posting of additional information about our family. I have received four (4) packets and/or computer disks containing information which I have just not had time to enter into the computer. But give me time — I'll catch up and acknowledge all this help.

Back on Page 5 of this issue, I wrote about trying to learn more about Katie Lee Opal Burkett Grubbs, a daughter of James Henry Burkett. I have just received an email message from the El Paso County Clerk's office telling me that the death date of July 22, 1949 was correct and that they

did have a copy of the Death Certificate available. However, they noted that she was removed to Albuquerque, New Mexico the day after she died. I plan to send them the \$9.00 for the Death Certificate to see if I can find out which funeral home handled it and then trace it from there. Just why she was transferred to New Mexico I don't know. However, I am hopeful this indicates she had some children who were living in Albuquerque and who wanted to bury her there. My plans now are to leave here September 7 for Huntsville and arrive at Audy Major's house that evening. We plan to leave for the Goldthwaite, Texas reunion on Thursday, September 9. I have now spoken with Sid Huggins and he is also planning to attend just as the three (3) of us did last year. After I come back from that trip, I will follow up on Katie Lee 'Kate' and see what else I can learn.

The Pecan Pie Recipe shown on page 4 calls for some vanilla. Evelyn Huggins writes, "I wish you had some of our vanilla — Sid makes his own and it is the best!" Hey, Sid! How about sharing with us your secret family recipe for making vanilla?

I apologize for this shortened issue but that also is a result of my having to just stop and catch up on these home projects. However, the next issue should be back to the normal length and should contain some interesting information based on all of these packets I have received plus a recap of the "three cousins trip" to Texas, etc.. ■

We Have Another Baby! -

Just as I was going to press with this issue I received an email message from Debbie Burkett Howard announcing the birth of a daughter, Hannah Elaine Howard, to David and Erin Howard. David is the son of Debbie and Dale Howard and is stationed at Langley AFB in Virginia. Debbie and Dale were headed up there from Huntsville to see their newest grandchild when Debbie sent me the message.

Hannah Elaine was born August 30, 1999 at 12:12 PM and weighed in at 8 pounds 2 ounces and was 20 ½ inches long. (We always give their length at birth because, as good as our Burketts are at birth, they still can't stand for a couple of weeks!)

Welcome to the Burkett and Howard families, Hannah Elaine!! ■
