



THE BURKETT FAMILY



A Quarterly Publication

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Picture of Mary Burkett

Descendants of Mary Burkett

The Goldthwaite, Texas Reunion - Sept 7, 2002

Audy and I again arrived in Goldthwaite on Thursday and again checked in at the Redbud Inn which is becoming our home-away-from-home after staying there for our fifth year now.

This year we drove around some of the back roads looking at the land and at more sheep than we knew existed out there. We also checked out some more eating places since Oliver's restaurant had closed - a big disappointment to both of us since we had eaten so many meals there.

When we checked in, I again asked for and received the key to the meeting room there at the motel because I knew some folks were coming in on Friday and we would need a place to sit and talk. Sure enough, Burkett Curtis arrived with his mother, Juanelle Curtis. Due to business, Burkett had missed last year so it was good to see him. Juanelle had already told me there would be some 'new' relatives there this year and I knew there were some coming from California. Friday evening, these 'new' relatives checked in and we met them and went to the meeting room. This was Ray Cox and his wife Mary Lee from San Antonio. They brought along their family records and pictures and we had spent quite a bit of time reviewing them when I looked out the window and saw a car pull up. I went out and it was who I expected - Bill and Bernice Huckaby from Carmichael, California. Although I have been in touch with Bill via email, snail mail and phone for several years, we had never met so I was eager to meet them. They came in and I introduced them to Ray and Mary Lee Cox. Below is a picture taken in the meeting room with Bill looking at Ray's records and pictures. L to R Mary Lee Cox, Ray Cox, Bill and Bernice Huckaby.



I first became acquainted with Bill so many years ago that I can't remember how many years it has been. I posted an inquiry on the internet

about the Texas Burketts and it was Bill who put me in touch with Helen Mayr. Not only did he do that, he shared his information with me about the Jacob Burkett descendants - and it was a considerable amount. Let me stop here and identify Bill's line.

You will recall that Jacob Burkett arrived in Texas December 25, 1865 with his wife Lavina and seven (7) children. Not too long after their arrival, Lavina died during childbirth, possibly 1866 or 1867; we're not sure. The children were split up and placed in homes of folks kind enough to take care of them. On January 15, 1869, Jacob married Mary Matilda Reed and the children were brought back together with Mary assuming the responsibility for raising them. In addition to those seven (7) children, Jacob and Mary had four (4) children of their own as follows:

Martha Ellen Burkett
Annie Laura Burkett
Virginia Caroline Burkett
Lavina Burkett.

A measure of the class of woman she was can be understood by the fact that Mary named one of her children after Jacob's first wife, Lavina.

Frances Josephine Burkett was the youngest child of Jacob and Lavina Burkett. At the age of 17, she married John Edward McCall. One of their daughters, Leona Alyce McCall, married George Washington Huckaby. One of their sons, William Horner Huckaby married Laveeda Mae Nance and they had 2 sons, one of whom was William Arthur "Bill" Huckaby. This is shown below.

Jacob Burkett (2nd g'grandparents of Bill)
Lavina Burkett
|
Frances Josephine Burkett (G'grandparents of Bill)
John Edward McCall
|
Leona Alyce McCall (Grandparents of Bill)
George Washington Huckaby
|
William Horner Huckaby (Parents of Bill)
Laveeda Mae Nance
|
William Arthur "Bill" Huckaby
Bernice Edith Holder

Now let's identify Ray Cox's line. Malinda Jane Burkett was another daughter of Jacob and Lavina and a twin sister to James Henry Burkett. Malinda first married John Pavey in November 1880. My information indicates they divorced but I cannot vouch for the accuracy of that. However, they either divorced or John died not long after marriage because Malinda Jane married John Davis Cox in December of 1883. They moved to Chickasha, Oklahoma some time between 1895 and 1898. They had seven (7) children, the oldest of whom was James Jasper Cox who married Zora Lena Farris in 1906 and they also had seven (7) children. Ray Cox was the fifth child of this

The Burkett Family

Original Historian

StellaB 'Nita' Jackson Jaynes

October 8, 1907 - June 18, 1996



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. However, the impetus to continue her work began with a suggestion in 1992 by Gentry J.B. Burkett to have a family reunion in Huntsville, Alabama which was carried out by the efforts of Audy Majors. Over the years, Audy has continued his efforts toward the location and preservation of family information and artifacts.

CURRENT HISTORIAN AND EDITOR
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ALABAMA REUNION MANAGER
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marriage and his line is as follows:

Jacob Burkett (Great g'parents of Ray)
 Lavina Burkett
 |
 Malinda Jane Burkett (Grand parents of Ray)
 John Davis Cox
 |
 James Jasper Cox (parents of Ray)
 Zora Lena Farris
 |
 Ray E. Cox
 Mary Lee Ballard

My recollection is that we remained in the motel meeting room and talked until about 10 P.M. at which time we decided to go to bed.

SATURDAY MORNING -

When Audy and I came out to go eat breakfast we saw that Sharon Fleming and her family had arrived so we stopped and talked with them for a few minutes before heading up to the café. I think everybody else was ahead of us - Burkett Curtis and mother, Juanelle; Bill and Bernice; Ray and Mary Lee. After eating, Audy and I returned to the motel, gathered up camera's, etc. and headed for the bank. Audy was expecting to help set up the tables and chairs but, when we got there, found they had been set up the night before! Other folks began arriving and the camera's started clicking. Here are some of the pictures.



Above is Dot Burkett Alford of San Antonio and Katie Burkett Allen of O'Donnell, Texas. Dot is a daughter of Joseph Washington Burkett, Sr.; a granddaughter of James Henry Burkett and a great granddaughter of Jacob Burkett. Katie is a daughter of John Burkett; a granddaughter of George Washington Burkett; and a great granddaughter of Jacob Burkett.

Below is Audy Majors and Bill Huckaby discussing some family records.



Here is Bill and Bernice after a good night's rest looking fresh and rested.



Below is me with Burkett Massey. Burkett did not see Audy who was taking the picture and I was pointing.



Here I am outside with Jim Burkett and his sister Katie Burkett Allen who is just arriving.



Below is Lajuana Goodwin Ivy sharing a laugh with Juanelle Burkett Curtis. LaJuana is a daughter of Mae Delle Burkett Goodwin; a granddaughter of Joseph Lafayette Burkett; and a great granddaughter of Jacob Burkett. Juanelle is a daughter of Edgar Burkett; a granddaughter of Joseph Lafayette Burkett and a great granddaughter of Jacob Burkett.



To the right is Juanelle Curtis exchanging some conversation with Burkett Massey. Burkett was unable to come last year so we were delighted to see him. He is the son of Stella Mae Burkett Massey; a grandson of Joseph Lafayette Burkett; and a great grandson of Jacob Burkett.



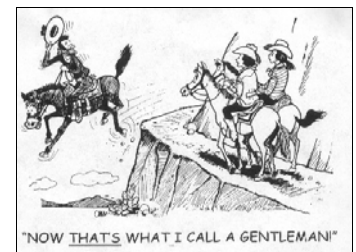
On the left almost out of the picture is Burkett Massey talking to Tom Cooper of McKinney, Texas. Tom is a son of Callie Ree Jackson Cooper; a grandson of Anna Louisa Burkett Jackson; a great grandson of Joseph Lafayette Burkett and a 2nd great grandson of Jacob Burkett. Next is Tate Ivy the husband of LaJuana Goodwin Ivy shown in the middle picture in the other column of this page. Tate seems to be paying close attention to some point that Juanelle Curtis is making.



In the next picture, the folks setting up the food are L to R - Burkett Curtis, son of Juanelle Curtis; Sharon Fleming, daughter of Jacob Bentley 'Jake' Burkett, granddaughter of Edgar Burkett, great granddaughter of Joseph Lafayette Burkett; and Della Massey Wetterman, daughter of Burkett Massey, granddaughter of Stella Mae Burkett Massey, and great granddaughter of Joseph Lafayette Burkett.



Texas cowboy humor.





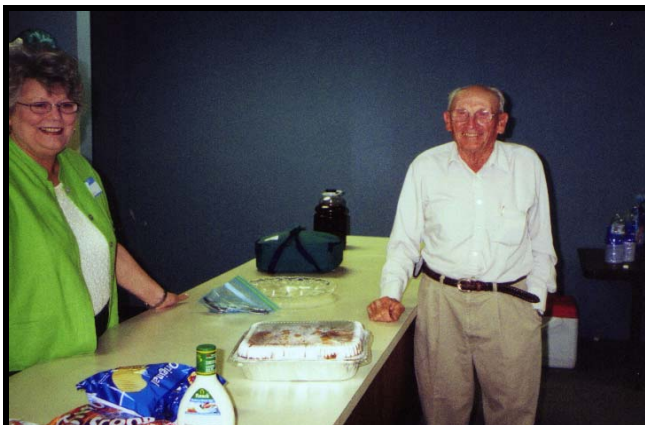
Also setting up the food counter above left is Della Lou Goodwin Geeslin a daughter of Mae Delle Burkett Goodwin and a granddaughter of Joseph Lafayette Burkett and, on the right, her daughter, Linda Gayle Geeslin Miles, who is therefore a granddaughter of Mae Delle Burkett Goodwin, and great granddaughter of Joseph Lafayette Burkett.



Standing is Doye Burkett Fannin, daughter of Lee Burkett, granddaughter of Joseph Lafayette Burkett and great granddaughter of Jacob Burkett. Seated on the right is Leta Durst, she is a Williams and Chesser descendant. Next to Leta is Beatrice Ethridge who is an Epley descendant. Then next to Beatrice is her son-in-law Bill Farmer. On the far left next to Bill is Glynda Burkett Scott, daughter of Jim and Frances Burkett, granddaughter of John Burkett, great granddaughter of George Washington Burkett and 2nd great granddaughter of Jacob Lorenza Burkett. With her back to the camera is Betty Ethridge Farmer, daughter of Beatrice Ethridge.



More folks setting up the food - Della Wetterman on the left and her mother, Mrs. Burkett (Mildred) Massey, on the right.



Della Wetterman with A.F. 'Bubs' Allen, husband of Katie Burkett Allen.



This is Bob Fannin, husband of Doye Burkett Fannin. Bob is showing off their dog, Tip, and I'm here to tell you that is one beautiful, friendly but BIG dog!



Above is Bill Huckaby having a chat with Dot Burkett Alford.



Ray Cox came over to have some conversation with Tom Cooper. Tom is seated and Ray is standing.

In the picture at the top of the next column, Bill Huckaby is reviewing and discussing with Beth Newland the information she brought which she said had been prepared by her brother Jerry Murray.



Beth's line is as follows:

Jacob Burkett (3rd g grandfather of Beth)
 Lavina Burkett
 |
 Sarah Burkett (2nd g grandmother of Beth)
 Archer William Murray
 |
 William Jacob Murray (g grandfather of Beth)
 Cora Mable Boss
 |
 Roy Coleman Murray (g'father of Beth)
 Edith Lura Davis
 |
 Paul Edward Murray (father of Beth)
 Unknown Boyett
 |
 Mary Beth Murray Newland

I'll have more to say about Beth and her brother, Jerry, later on.



Chow time! It was time to eat and none of us hesitated to line up because, as usual, the food not

only looked delicious, it turned out to be delicious. Our thanks to all who prepared that food! Facing the camera is Shelley Miles Horton, daughter of Elam and Linda Geeslin Miles; granddaughter of Della Lou Goodwin Geeslin and Don Geeslin; great granddaughter of Mae Delle Burkett Goodwin and Thomas Daniel Goodwin, and 2nd great granddaughter of Joseph Lafayette Burkett. With their backs to the camera is Sharon Burkett Fleming and I think one of her grandsons.

After eating, Burkett Curtis maneuvered me into being the MC this year. He and his mother had arrived with numerous door prizes and Audy Majors had again brought a large Burkett basket as he has done the past 2 years. Before we started drawing numbers for prizes, several prizes were given out as follows - Tate Ivy won the prize for being the oldest man present, it was a statue of a buzzard! Below is Tate showing wife LaJuana his prize. Tate has won



this oldest man prize every year we have had it. I don't understand it and neither does some others - we keep thinking one of us will catch up with him! The next prize was for the oldest woman and Leta Durst won that. Her age will NOT be announced - I may be a little dumb but I'm not stupid!! Her prize was a statue of an owl. Now how is it that the man gets a buzzard and the woman gets an owl? There's gotta' be a message in there somewhere. The next prize was for the person who made the longest trip to attend and that was won by Bill Huckaby who came from Carmichael, California. Next was the youngest girl, the youngest boy, the longest married, and the most recently married. All of these door prizes were

contributed by Burkett Curtis and his mother, Juanelle. Burkett also had a bag of U.S. flag pins which he passed around for everyone to have one.

This is the pin →



We now came to drawing numbers for the remaining door prizes. The large Burkett basket that Audy Majors brought and donated was the first to be drawn for in order to give everybody a chance. This was won by Della Massey Wetterman.

I had brought along 4 copies of the CD made by Joe W. Burkett of Angleton, Texas and featured a mixture of music - some of the old songs played in the old manner and then a mixture of more recent numbers. These were the next items drawn for.

When Bill Huckaby realized what we were doing, he went to his car and returned with free certificates for a dozen Krispy Kreme donuts. Krispy Kreme is one of Bill's clients.

Then we had several leaded or stained glass items which Leta Durst makes and they were drawn for. Beautiful work, Leta!

After the door prize drawings ended, I announced that we had some first-time attendee's and asked them to come up and tell everybody just who they were, where they lived, etc. Bill Huckaby was first and followed by Ray Cox. Here is where I am embarrassed - Bill Huckaby came up and told me that Beth Newland was also a first-timer. So I then called on Beth to come up and do the same as Bill and Ray. Beth, I do apologize. I knew you had not been there during the 5 years that Audy and I had been coming but guess my brain was not in gear to ask if this was your first time. We are proud and happy to have had all three of you first-timers!

Leta Durst gave us a report on the status of the Chesser Valley Texas Historical marker and I'll have more to say about that in a later article in this issue.

When our program was concluded, Burkett Curtis and his mother, Juanelle, presented me and Audy with a longhorn steer each - no, not a live steer but a nice, realistic looking statue. The steer is now perched on my printer staring at me. My youngest son came by, saw it and said, "Hey Dad, I like that and I want it." I told him, "If you want to fight me just try taking it!" He decided not to take it. Scared of his old man, I guess. Plus I received two books, "Mills County - The Way It Was" and "A No-Man's Land Becomes A County." While I appreciate my steer, let

me tell you I really appreciate those books! And you will hear more about them in future newsletter issues because there is a lot of history in them and our Burkett's are mentioned. Audy received copies of the same two books and tells me he is also enjoying them. Many thanks for the steer and books, Burkett and Juanelle.

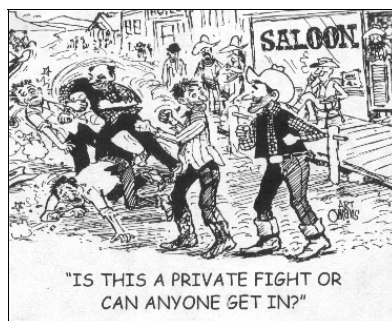


Here is a picture made by Bernice Huckaby of Bill Huckaby (standing) and Ray and Mary Lee Cox, some of the first-timers.

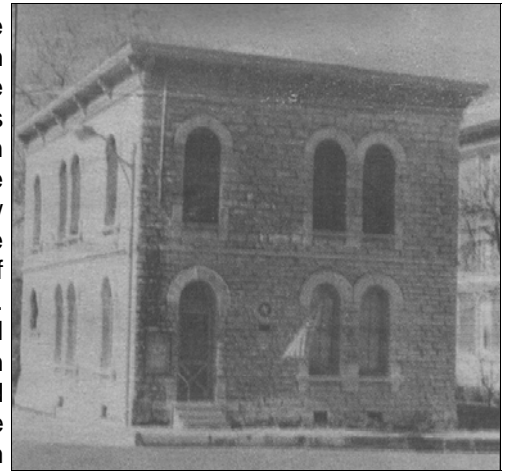


Above is me and Burkett Massey. You will note that I had cleaned my plate after seconds and dessert.

More cowboy humor



Here is the old jail in Goldthwaite which is located on the square and now houses the Chamber of Commerce. The old jail still exists on the 2nd floor. There is a room next to the



office for the Chamber of Commerce where stairs lead up to the jail. In the room are various items such as old shotguns, handcuffs, leg irons, heavy ankle ball weights which even Audy had a little trouble lifting, and other law enforcement items. Audy climbed the stairs to look at the old jail. I didn't because of my knee. I recommend a visit if you are in Goldthwaite. The steps and door lead to the Chamber of Commerce.

Just before leaving, I got to looking around and thinking about the descendants attendance this year. In prior years, there were primarily descendants of George Washington Burkett, Joseph Lafayette Burkett, and James Henry Burkett. But this year was different - we had more. Here is what I discovered when I put it down on paper.

You will recall that Jacob Lorenza Burkett came to Texas with his wife, Lavina, and seven (7) children. They are shown below with their descendants who attended.

Children Descendants

George Washington - Jim Mac Burkett

Katie Burkett Allen

Joseph Lafayette - Too numerous to list

Mary A. - NONE

Sarah - Beth Newland

James Henry - Dot Burkett Alford

Malinda Jane - Ray Cox

Frances Josephine - Bill Huckaby

You can see from this there were descendants from six (6) of the seven (7) children. To me, that was remarkable. But what stood out was that we had nobody there from Mary. When I started working on this issue, I became determined to try to locate some of Mary's descendants - and I did! Living right there in Gonzales was a great grandson of Mary, Paul Frenzel! There will be a separate article about that later in this issue.

Back to the reunion. After leaving the Bank, I took Bill and Bernice Huckaby on a tour as I had promised Bill. This included the Regency Suspension Bridge.



The Regency Suspension Bridge shown above was built in 1939 and connects Mills County and San Saba County over the Colorado River. Below is a picture taken by Bernice Huckaby from the middle of the bridge looking down at the River.



In the foreground are some of the cables which are part of the bridge. If you look closely, you can see some docks and we also noticed there were some canoe's on the river. It is definitely a high bridge and, to me, was totally unexpected since it seemed we had been on level ground until we came to it. To get to the bridge from Goldthwaite, take FM 574 west approximately 15 miles to County Road 432. Turn south, left, and go approximately seven (7) miles to the intersection of County Road 433. Go left. The bridge is approximately one mile further down the road. It's worth seeing and there is an RV park on the Mills County side of the bridge plus they have bar-b-que for sale on weekends.

However, before going to the bridge, I took Bill and Bernice to the Williams Ranch Cemetery and pointed out where the town used to be including the approximate location of the old "Hangin' Tree." From there, we went to the cemetery in Mullin. Since this was their first trip, they obviously had not been to either. Although there is only one Burkett in the

Williams Ranch cemetery - Mary 'Polly' Epley Burkett - there are many Burkett's in the Mullin cemetery including Jacob Lorenza Burkett with his Confederate Army marker. As they had done at the Williams Ranch, Bill and Bernice walked around and took several photo's with me pointing out the locations of some of them. While there, we saw Sharon Fleming and her group and met Ray and Mary Lee Cox entering the cemetery as we exited.

Finally, we headed back to the motel to pick up Audy who had decided he would not go with us since he and I had already visited the places on Friday. After picking him up, we headed out to a restaurant for dinner after which we went back to the motel.

While at the reunion, Ray Cox presented me with a couple of pictures. One of them was the marker made by Edgar Burkett for his grandmother Lavina. As I stated earlier, she and the baby died during childbirth. You will note we are not sure of the year this took place. She and Jacob had arrived in Burnet, Texas on Christmas Day, 1865. We are fairly certain she died in 1866 or 1867. I'm not sure as to when Edgar placed the marker but I could not locate it in the Hoover Valley Cemetery in 1994.



To repeat some of what was said earlier, after Lavina died, Jacob had to place the younger children with various folks who were kind enough to care for them. When Jacob married Mary Matilda Reed, they brought the children back together. Mary and Jacob then had four (4) daughters which leads me to the other picture given to me by Ray Cox. Those daughters were Martha Ellen, Annie Laura, Virginia Caroline, and Lavina. Here is the picture Ray gave me.



L to R - Martha Ellen, Malinda Jane, and Frances Josephine. Martha Ellen, a daughter of Jacob and Mary Matilda, was a half-sister to Malinda (Jane) and Frances (Fannie), who were daughters of Jacob and Lavina. I might also remind you Malinda (Jane) was a twin sister to James Henry Burkett. Ray, I thank you very much for these two (2) pictures.

There ain't a horse that can't be rode.
 There ain't a man that can't be throwned.
Saying of the Old West
 As quoted in "The Book of Texas Wisdom."

In the meeting room at the Redbud Inn on Friday night, we got to discussing some of the oldest relatives. Saturday morning, Bill Huckaby came to the reunion with a list he had run from his laptop computer and I found it remarkable. Here is that list of the direct line descendants of Henry Burkett who lived more than 90 years.

- Ruby Mae Lynch91
- Wilma Gabler91
- Mira Maltha Burkett91
- Nora Lee Elrod 92
- Alma Leona Young93
- Charles Lewis Watson93
- Mettie Gabler 93
- Ova Davis Burkett94
- Anna Louisa Burkett94
- Clarice Burkett94
- Lula Mae Barker94
- Lena Viola Riffe95
- Annie Laura Burkett95
- Ida Ernasine McCall *95 Texas
- Ella Jewell Cox96 Descendants
- John Andrew Tissaw96
- Hazel Rae McCall *97
- Robert McCall *99



Even more remarkable than the number reaching 90 and above is the fact that the top eight were all Texas descendants! And of those eight, three of the five oldest were children of John Edward McCall and Frances Josephine Burkett (see * above). Amazing.

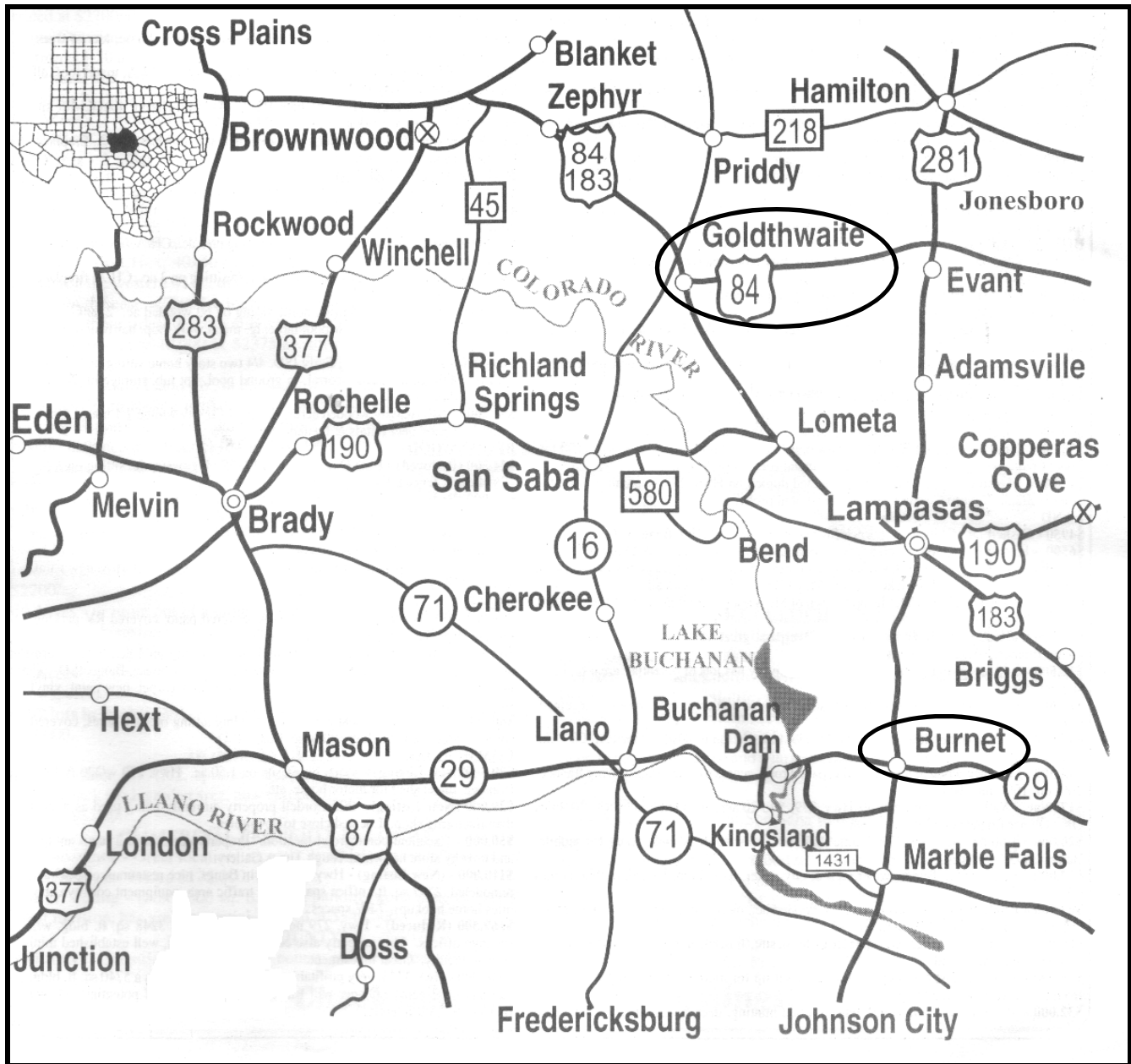
As always, the reunion ended all too soon. It seems the time just flies by. Everybody said their so-longs and began departing.

Before closing this out, I want to again thank Elam Miles for getting the space at the Bank. It has been an ideal place for our use. We were told that by next year the Bank will have expanded to take over this space but they will have built a new and larger hospitality center across the street so we can look forward to that. ■

Descendants of Mary A. Burkett -

Earlier I pointed out that we had no descendants from Mary at the reunion but that I had located some after returning home.

Mary, a daughter of Jacob Lorenza Burkett, first married John Clark and they had 2 children. John died at a young age about 1878. Nothing is known of those children. Mary next married John Templeton and they had 3 children - Alla Gertrude, Ora Estelle, and Fred. Ora Estelle married James Hardin Borden and their daughter married Rufus Frenzel. They had a son, Paul Borden Frenzel, and it was Paul I located living in Gonzales. We had a lengthy conversation which both of us enjoyed. We agreed to exchange information after the holidays since Paul told me both



he and his wife would be very busy until the holidays were over. He does have some pictures and more information and he believes they have a picture of Mary, an old tintype. He seemed delighted to hear from me and to learn about the Goldthwaite reunion which I invited him to attend next year. We will be back in touch after the first of the year and you can look forward to more information in the next issue. ■

The Above Map -

Notice the Texas map in the upper left corner of the above. The black area in that map shows the location of the detailed area which places it almost in the dead-center of Texas. This provides a better

understanding of just where Goldthwaite is located in Texas.

The lower right circle is around Burnet which is where Jacob and his family arrived Christmas day of 1865. Just by coincidence, Lavina's maiden name of Burnett was almost the same as the town. The upper circle shows the location of Goldthwaite. Mullin is not shown but is about 8 miles north of Goldthwaite on state road 183.

In addition to Burnet, Jacob lived in several towns in this area including Llano, San Saba, Lampasas, and I think Brady also. Notice the Colorado River runs in the vicinity of most of these towns and water was very important to settlers in those days. ■



INSCRIPTION ON MARKER

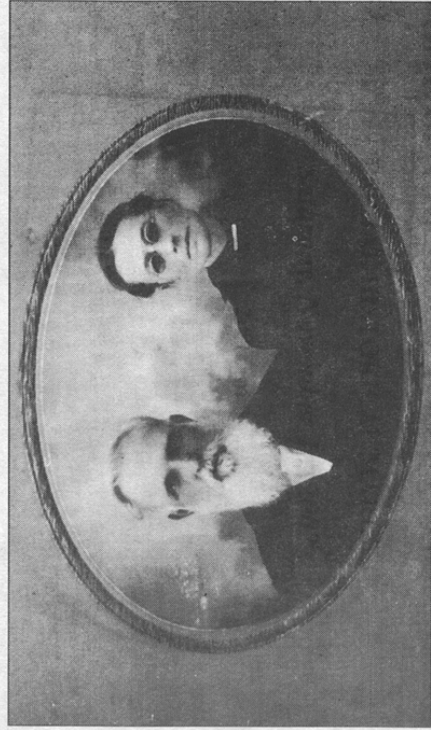
SITE OF CHESSEY VALLEY COMMUNITY

Near this site is the Chesser Valley, named for early settler John Dan Chesser, whose home became the focal point of a small rural community by the same name. Missouri native John Dan Chesser (1842-1914) moved to Texas with his family in 1854 and marries Tennessee Elizabeth Caroline Epley (1842-1924) in 1860. They first lived in Burnet, Texas, but moved to this part of the state after Chesser's service in the Texas State Troops during the Civil War.

The Chessers homesteaded 160 acres of land in the valley in what was then part of Brown County. They expanded their log home as their family grew to number 11 children. It served as a church, hospital and hotel for travelers along the Williams Ranch Road.

Chesser valley was the site of frequent camp meetings. Entire families came from miles away to camp out in a grove of Live Oak trees and attend prayer and preaching services under a tabernacle near the Chesser house. A one-teacher school began in 1868 to serve the children in the area around Chesser Valley. After Mills county was created out of Brown County in 1887, the new county commissioners court recognized the school district and designated it as District No. 8.

Those who settled the Chesser Valley Community were primarily friends and family of John Dan and Elizabeth Chesser. The Chesser House, which had been the nucleus of the community, burned in 1926, and by the dawn of the 21st century, only one original structure remained from the period of the valley's settlement.



John Dan Chesser and Elizabeth Caroline Epley Chesser



THE TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

and

THE MILLS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

present the

DEDICATION CEREMONY

for the

SITE OF CHESSEY VALLEY COMMUNITY

OFFICIAL HISTORICAL MARKER

Saturday, November 16, 2002

2:00 p.m.

(3.9 miles SW of Mullin on FM 573, at intersection
with Williams Ranch road)

Program

- Master of Ceremonies John W. Chesser
- Welcome Caroline Schwartz
Mills County Historical Commission
- Posting of the Colors on Horseback Randy McCuiston
Shane Chesser
- Placement of the Colors Seth Williams
Candice Williams
- Invocation R. C. Edmondson
Mills County Historical Commission
- Recognition of Guests Bobbie Davis
Mills County Historical Commission
- "America the Beautiful" Jaye Chesser
Shane Chesser
John Bryan Chesser
- History of the Valley and Inscription on Marker Layton Black
Luther Williams
- Tribute In Verse A. R. Whisenhunt
- Unveiling of Marker Leta Mae Durst
Triston Chesser
- "Amazing Grace" Jaye Chesser
Shane Chesser
John Bryan Chesser
- Closing Prayer Pat Chesser
- Refreshments and Reception Mullin Community Center
Mullin, Texas

MILLS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

- Caroline Schwartz Chairman
- R. C. Edmondson Vice Chairman
- Marilynn Johanson Secretary
- Wallace Johnson Treasurer
- Lee Ruth Campbell Reporter
- Judge Randy Wright Judy McKinney
- Richey and Shirley Reed Peggy Nowell
- Billy and LaVerne Hale Ramona Flores
- Flora Steen Bobby Joe and Bobbie Davis
- Walter Tubbs Allie Davis
- Della Edmondson Jackie Boykin
- Grace Belich Daisy Watson
- Von Dean Johnson Kay Miles
- Huldah Boykin Robbie Kerby
- Glen and Oreta Sanders Billie Day
Kathy Henry

CHESSER FAMILY RECEPTIONISTS: Lanita Chesser Butler, Janita Chesser Evans, Sue Better EVANS

AMERICA, THE BEAUTIFUL

O beautiful for spacious skies, For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties, Above the fruited plain.
America, America. God shed his grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood, from sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for heroes proved, In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved, And Mercy more than life:
America, America. May God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobleness, And ev'ry gain divine.

O beautiful for patriot dream, That sees, beyond the years,
Thine alabaster cities gleam, Undimmed by human tears.
America, America, God shed his grace on thee.
And crown thy good with brotherhood, From sea to shining sea.

AMAZING GRACE! HOW SWEET THE SOUND
Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved!
How precious did that grace appear, The hour I first believed!

The Lord has promised good to me, His word my hope secures,
He will my shield and portion be, As long as life endures.

The Chesser Valley Marker -

As shown in the program on the preceding pages it took place on Saturday, November 16. Leta Mae Durst reports the weather was beautiful and the event was well attended both at the marker site and the reception which followed at the Mullin Community Center. Leta Mae and her cousin, Luther Williams, were prime movers in getting this marker approved and constructed and are to be commended for their long and hard efforts. Also to be commended for their work and cooperation are members of the Mills County Historical Commission. Articles and pictures about the dedication ceremony appeared in both the Goldthwaite and Brownwood newspapers. Leta also provided me with some pictures which are shown below.



With reference to the program shown on the preceding page, Posting of the Colors on Horseback was provided by Shane Chesser on the white horse and Randy McCuiston on the dark horse.



Placement of the Colors was by Seth Williams on the left and Candice Williams on the right, a nephew and niece of Leta Mae Durst. That's Shane Chesser on the horse.

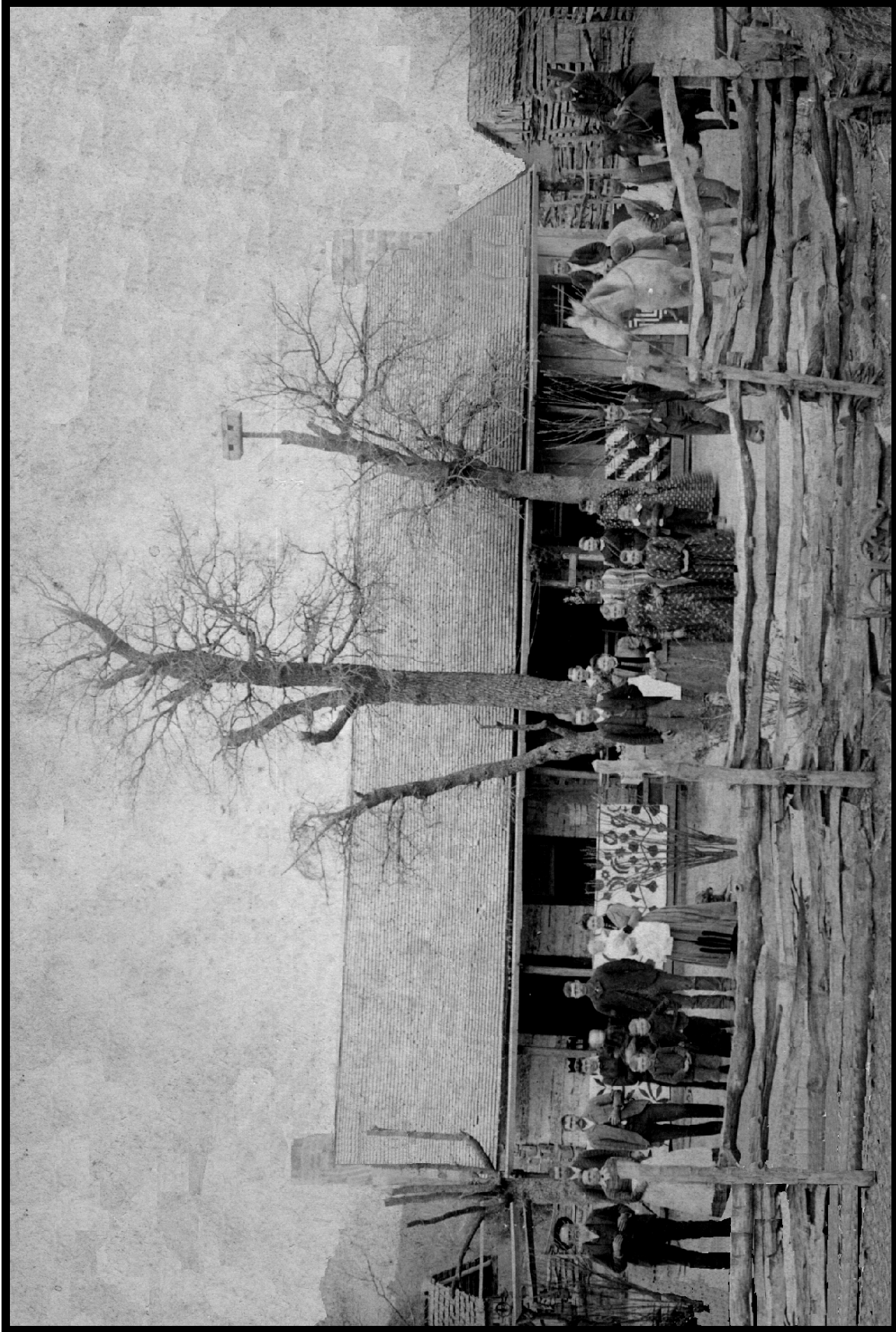


Unveiling of the marker was performed by Leta Mae Durst and Triston Chesser representing the oldest and youngest Chesser's.



Above left is Luther Williams and to the right is Leta Mae. Both of these folks have worked long and hard to get this accomplished and should get a great deal of satisfaction from seeing their project so well done with beautiful stone and great work by a stonemason.





This is the picture which was placed on porcelain and imbedded in the marker below the bronze plaque. A smaller picture of John Dan Chesser and Elizabeth Caroline Epley Chesser, as shown in the program on page 12, is above the plaque. It is also in porcelain.

A Birthday Party ! -

On September 28, 2002, Arlene Louise Burkett Ramskill Hopkins celebrated her 87th birthday. Arlene is a great granddaughter of Henry and Mary 'Polly' Burkett. As such, she is the closest living relative to Henry and Mary. Here is her line below.

Henry and Mary Burkett (Great grandparents)
 |
 George Washington Burkett (grandfather)
 |
 Samuel Walter Burkett (father)
 |
 Arlene Louise Burkett

Arlene was born in Burlingame, Kansas as was her father, Samuel Walter Burkett, after his father, George Washington Burkett, moved the family to Burlingame from middle Tennessee.



Above is Arlene preparing food at the party held at her home in Attica, Ohio.

Arlene first married Robert Ramskill and they had three (3) children - Roberta Irene, Sara Ann, and Jack. After Robert died, Arlene married Walter Hopkins and they had one son, Edwin Dene Hopkins.

I had the opportunity to speak with Arlene on the telephone several times and found her a delightful person to talk with. She has a great sense of humor.

Next is a picture of the family gathered to help Arlene celebrate her birthday.



Seated is Arlene and son, Edwin Dene Hopkins. Left to right standing is Jack Ramskill, Roberta Irene Ramskill Keller, and Sara Ann Ramskill.

These pictures and information were sent to me by Carol Hopkins, wife of Edwin Dene Hopkins and daughter-in-law of Arlene. Thanks, Carol!

And a belated Happy Birthday to you, Arlene! Wish I could have been there! ■

Now An Anniversary -

On September 19, 2002, Louise and Carl Smith, Jr. celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Below is their wedding picture of 1952.



Now here is their 50th anniversary picture.



As you can read, the article to the left was placed in the newspaper by their daughters.

Louise is the daughter of Leva Burkett Carroll and Everett Carroll; a granddaughter of Almon and Nancy Burkett; a great granddaughter of Jobe and Rebecca Burkett; a 2nd great granddaughter of John and Paulina Burkett; and a 3rd great granddaughter of Henry and Mary 'Polly' Burkett.

Louise and Carl live in McCalla, Alabama which is just a few miles southwest of Birmingham, Alabama.

To me, the scary part of this anniversary is that I remember when they got married! My belated congratulations to you two - and Carl, you're an okay guy even if you won't give me that 1939 Chevrolet coupe. ■

Favorite Recipes -

Dot Elrod, who lives in McMinnville, Tennessee, is collecting recipes which she hopes to compile by our Huntsville reunion next June. Here are a couple of Dot's favorites and which were also favorites of her mother, Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Burkett Elrod.

Layered Lettuce Salad

1 head lettuce
 1 cup celery, diced
 4 eggs, boiled and sliced
 10 oz. Green peas, uncooked
 1/2 cup green pepper, diced
 1 sweet onion, chopped
 8 slices bacon, fried and crumbled
 2 Tablespoons sugar
 2 cups mayonnaise
 4 oz cheddar cheese, grated

Tear lettuce into bite size pieces and place in a glass bowl. Layer rest of ingredients in order given. Add sugar to mayonnaise and spread over top. Sprinkle with grated cheese. Refrigerate 8 - 12 hours.

Lizzie's Skillet Chocolate Pie

1 1/2 cups milk 3 tbsp plain flour
 3 egg yolks 3 tbsp cocoa
 2 tbsp butter 1 cup sugar
 1 tsp vanilla

Mix milk and egg yolks in heavy iron skillet. Sift flour, cocoa and sugar together, then add to milk/egg mixture. Cook over low heat until thick. Add butter and vanilla. Put in baked 9 - inch pie shell. Make meringue of 3 egg whites and 6 tbsp sugar. Spread on top of filling, carefully sealing to edge of shell. Bake at 325 until brown.

Dot's address is:
 Dorothy Elrod Foster
 132 Peers Street
 McMinnville, TN 37110

If you have E-mail, you can send your recipes to Dot's daughter. Elaine Goodman at the following: wedg@blomand.net

Now I know there are some good recipes out there because I have eaten many of them so please take the time to send them on to Dot. They don't have to be fancy - just scribble them down on a piece of paper and mail to Dot. You don't even have to write a long letter - just your name and address so she will know who sent it (them). I know Dot will appreciate them and I can even share some of them with you in the Newsletter.

Now get busy with these before you lay this down and forget to send them! Thank you on behalf of Dot!

A Murray Reunion -

Earlier I wrote about Beth Murray Newland attending the Goldthwaite reunion and, on page 6 of this issue, showed her line of Murray's beginning when Sarah Burkett, a daughter of Jacob Burkett, married Archer William Murray. I also noted she brought to the reunion information gathered by her brother, Jerry Murray.

Via an email, Jerry advises that when his Dad, Paul Edward Murray, passed away, Jerry promised his Dad that he would put together the Murray Family Reunion. Jerry has now done so. The reunion dates are March 21-23, 2003 and will be held at the Quartz Mountain Resort in Altus, Oklahoma. This appears to be a really good place for a reunion. Those of you with computers can get a good idea by visiting their website at www.quartzmountainresort.com.

For more information, you can get in touch with Jerry at -

Jerry Paul Murray
1916 Cindy Court
Burlson, TX 76028-1321
817/295-1066

The Historian's Corner

- Oliver Webb



This has been a tough issue to get out. First, my monitor began blinking and switching color on me which made it a little hard on the eyes. Then my printer went on the fritz so it had to go in for repairs. The repairman told me he had to order the parts and it was in the pre-Christmas season. Anyway, it took a total of three (3) weeks to get the printer repaired. Plus I had to finally stop and go buy another monitor. This is why this issue is so late getting to you. Sorry about that but there was nothing I could do.

We have made more progress in the past year at locating relatives. First, we had Jeremiah Burkett as provided by Roberta Burkett, wife of Steve Burkett out in Washington. Then there was Beth Murray Newland who attended the Goldthwaite reunion along with Ray and Mary Lee Cox. After returning from Texas, I located Paul Frenzel. All of this has been discussed in this issue.

Paul has sent me a couple of pictures via email

but we need more time to work on them so they will appear in the next issue. I'm looking forward to working with Paul and his wife both in securing information from them and in providing them information they do not have. Hopefully, they will be able to attend the next Goldthwaite reunion.

For ten (10) years we have been gathering information and pictures about the family. They have been very busy and very productive years thanks to almost everyone. There have been times when I thought we might have located all we could and then suddenly more contacts would occur. There are still two (2) children of Henry and Mary 'Polly' Burkett we don't have too much information on and that is their daughters Matilda and Malinda. I am hopeful that this year will produce information about them. Roughly 208 years have passed since Henry was born and what changes have taken place since then! In future newsletters I will be describing some of these changes which will be difficult for our younger relatives to believe. Just take one item from our lifetime — the record player. Did you know that many homes today not only do not have a record player, some have never even seen one! And they don't have a clue what we're talking about if we say, "like a broken record." I have a high school classmate who has been teaching dancing all of her adult life and who still uses some records at her dancing school. She tells me she has to teach her young assistants how to operate them!

That's all for this issue. Again, I apologize for the delay in this issue but when the equipment breaks down there's nothing that can be done.

I wish everybody a belated Happy New Year. ■

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