

8x10
 book - Searcy County, AR
 1938 - 1986

The Burkett Family

My parents, Mary Powhatan (McNair) Kester and Robert Allen Burkett were married February 14, 1907 in Tommyhawk, Searcy County, Arkansas. This was the second marriage for both.

My mother was born April 22, 1880 at St. Joe, Arkansas. Her parents were William McNair and ^{RODAN}~~Rhoda Ann~~ Francis (Rainbolt) McNair, who were also born in St. Joe. Her grandfather, Claiborn McNair was born in 1922 in Knox County, Tennessee. My mother had previously married Isaac Kester. From this marriage three children were born, Hubert, Lela, and Willie (who died in childhood). Around 1905 or 1906 Isaac Kester was playing poker in a room in the southwest corner of the hotel, located in "Old Town St. Joe". Those known present were Isaac, his brother Brewer Kester, and Ernest Forester. For reasons unknown to me, the Kester brothers were shot by Ernest Forester. Isaac was critically wounded, and died the next day. Brewer was shot through the mouth, the bullet entering one cheek and coming out the other, he recovered. Ernest Forester was never apprehended.

Robert Allen Burkett was the son of James Burkett and Polly Ann (Gilley) Burkett. He had been previously married, and had a son, Leland.

My parents had four children, Fay, Lester (myself), Thelda, and Sheldon. We lived in a frame house on approximately 60 acres of land located on the west side of the road, 1/4 mile north of the Tommyhawk store.

Life was not easy enduring the hardships of making a living in hill country. Crops consisted of cotton, hay, grain, and always a garden. It's the good side of this life style that I remember better, such as neighborhood parties, an occasional dance, church at the "End of the Lane School House", also attending school there, and at Fairview School in north Tommyhawk. There was swimming in the summer at Tommyhawk Creek, and in Buffalo River. We fished, hunted squirrels, rabbits, 'coons', and occasionally found an Indian arrowhead.

Teachers whom I remember were Maude Butler, Mr. Ragland, Josie McElroy, and Leonard Keeling, at school we played baseball, and basketball. When I was 12, Josie McElroy chose me to recite the Gettysburg address at the Searcy County fair, *and I won 1st Prize.*

Our transportation was a two seated hack and a wagon.

As for politics, my parents were Democrats, and I'm a Democrat.

About 1914 my grandfather, William McNair moved to Oklahoma with my grandmother and eight of their eleven children. My mother, her married sisters, Rosie Hudspeth and Mattie Young, remained in Arkansas.

Hubert Kester, my half brother, left Arkansas at the age of 18, and settled in Miles City, Montana, working as a telegrapher for the Union Pacific Railroad. *Western Union Telegraph (by Dan R. Kester Clayton)* Later he retired from an executive position with the Amvets in the state of Washington.

Lela, my half sister, and Calloway Love were married in 1919, and a few years later moved to Scottsdale, Arizona. In May of 1928 my parents loaded their family, and a few possessions into a 1928 Chevrolet truck, and headed for Scottsdale, Arizona.

In 1965, with my wife, Luphene, I returned to Tommyhawk, and our old home place. The house was gone, and all that remained was a walnut tree, planted by my mother in 1914. I picked a walnut, which I have kept as a memento of the good times in a community where treasured friends and simple pleasures have become very meaningful to me.

Looking back over the years I remember my Aunt Rosie and Aunt Mattie and their families. Other families whom I remember are those of Robert L. Yarbrough, B.F. Henley, J. R. Lay, Dude Lay, Jimmy Baker, Will Hill, Charlie Moore, Lee Williams, Mitchell Reed, Gar Stills, John Henry Barnett (Searcy County Sheriff), Shell Lay, Tom Lawrence, Jim Litterelli, Willie Mays, Newton Keeling, George Moore, Clip Terrill, Wyatt Newport, and Willie Keeling.

Of our Burkett family, my sister, Thelda and I are the only ones living. I am ^a 76 years old Civil Service Retiree, living in Peoria, Arizona, 13 miles northwest of Phoenix. Thelda is a few years younger and resides in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Lester Burkett

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

23rd Psalm

IN MEMORY OF
LESTER BURKETT

BORN

JANUARY 5, 1910
TOMMYHAWK, ARKANSAS

ENTERED INTO REST
SEPTEMBER 10, 1994
PEORIA, ARIZONA

GRAVESIDE FUNERAL SERVICE

WEDNESDAY 10:00 A.M.

SEPTEMBER 14, 1994

RESTHAVEN PARK CEMETERY
6290 WEST NORTHERN AVENUE
GLENDALE, ARIZONA

OFFICIANT

REVEREND KARL POLHAUS
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

INTERMENT

RESTHAVEN PARK CEMETERY
GLENDALE, ARIZONA

Lester Burket Funeral Program