

# THE BURKETT FAMILY

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

A GENEALOGY PUBLICATION

VOLUME 1 1993

## - A MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER -

Hi to all my relatives reading this ! This is the first of what I hope will be a continuing Publication for the Burkett Family. The idea came from the Burkett Reunion last year in Huntsville, Alabama and from conversations between myself, Danny Banks, and Audy Majors. Since some of you may not recognize my name, let me introduce myself. I am Marvin Oliver Webb, son of Martha C. Burkett who is a daughter of Almon Lee and Nancy Caldonia Burkett. Following the reunion last year, which I really enjoyed, I mentioned to Danny and Audy that I had a computer and why didn't we start our Family Tree by purchasing a program for Family Trees. We agreed and they have provided me with the first basic information on quite a few of our relatives. In the meantime, I have been studying various computer programs and have purchased three different ones along with several books about Genealogy. This first issue - others will follow about every three (3) months - will be devoted primarily to explaining our goals and to sharing what has been learned to-date about Family Histories or Genealogy as it is more properly known.

## GENEALOGY

**WHAT IS IT ?** Webster defines it as "an account of the descent of a person, family, or group from an ancestor ". Others have defined it as simply a family history with as much, or little, detail about individuals as desired and some call it "ancestor hunting".

**WHO STUDIES IT ?** The answer is far more than I even dreamed about when I started this project. When I first mentioned this study to my friends, I was surprised to find several who have been into this study for **years** but had never mentioned it. I found one who has not only been studying for over 25 years but had made three (3) trips to Germany seeking - and finding - more information. But the most astounding discovery I made was that deep inside massive vaults blasted out of the Rocky Mountains near Salt Lake City is the greatest treasure of genealogical information ever assembled. There are 1.5 million microfilm rolls, equivalent to 1.8 **billion** book pages, lining six rockbound chambers. Visitors are not allowed inside because dust particles on their shoes, hair, or clothing might contaminate the film. This huge underground storehouse was constructed in 1965 at a cost of \$ 2 million and is built to withstand any disaster. More protected than the crown jewels of England, here are the records of - read this number carefully - **2 billion** of our ancestors ! This data has been gathered

from over 126 countries by over 150 microfilming crews filming religious, local, and national "people" records all over the world. The sponsor of this mammoth effort ? The LDS (Mormon) church. Why does the LDS church (short for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) have the largest collection in the world ? Simply stated, genealogy is the method by which the living LDS sanctify their dead. In over 40 world temples - closed to all but the faithful - members are married for "time and eternity" and the children are "sealed" to their parents so the family will remain intact in the afterlife. This doctrine of the "exalted family" is also extended to ancestors who walked the earth long before the LDS church was started by Joseph Smith in the 1930s. And the reason for this huge collection is that LDS ancestors, who have been identified through a genalogical search, are baptized by proxy - with the descendents standing in for his or her forbear. (Since 1942, more than 95 million ancestors have been baptized, five million in 1987 alone. ) LDS members believe their ancestors in the hereafter have the opportunity to accept or reject the baptism. But if they accept, then they will be reunited with all the baptized generations of their family after the resurrection. What does this mean to individuals who are not LDS members ? The answer is that some of the

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**WHO STUDIES IT ?** *(continued from Page 1)*

2 Billion recorded ancestors the church has gone to so much trouble to find are probably ours whether or not we have ever had an LDS member in our ancestral family. Furthermore, and this has the most significance for us, this immense complex is open to **everyone**, not just LDS members. The LDS church has constructed a library in Salt Lake City and it's an impressive place. It has five floors and 142,000 square feet. Working in that building are over 200 people, collectively fluent in thirty languages, who in a single year welcome over **700,000** ancestor hunters to the library. This then is at least a partial answer as to who studies Genealogy. Not every ancestor hunter can make it to Salt Lake City so if that many go to the library then the total number of ancestor hunters in this country must easily exceed 1 million or more. [ Have I been to Salt Lake City yet ? No, but you can bet I'm going to try ! ]

**NEXT REUNION**  
**JUNE 19, 1993**

**WHY STUDY IT ?** From the foregoing, it is obvious why the LDS church studies its ancestors. But for the rest of us, is ancestor hunting important when we consider all the other things we can do with our time ? Based on the limited time I have invested so far and on what I have learned, I definitely think so. There seems to be a need, an urge or desire, or just plain hunger on the part of thousands and thousands of people to uncover the buried secrets of their heritage. The freedom of mobility, and divorce, has taken its toll in that many feel rootless and yearn for a sense of family. Also, there is the plain old *fun* of it in what can be discovered. For example, I have some documents from one of our relatives in Texas and I quote from one of them - "Another story is that Mary F. Young married Andrew Smith and lived on a farm in the Blanket Springs community of Mills County, Texas in the late 1880's or early 1890's. One day while Mary F. and Andrew were hauling a large tub full of eggs in a wagon to the town of Mullin, they passed by a tree where a dead man was hanging. With great fright, Mary and Andrew ran their horses three

or four miles into town *breaking all of the eggs*. They stopped at the home of Mary's cousin, Joe Burkett, and gladly accepted an invitation to spend the night." End of Quote. But could it be that this was the origin of the statement which almost all of us have heard "Don't put all of your eggs in one basket" ? As humorous as it is, I could also *identify* with that situation because I think I would have run those horses too ! In concluding this discussion on WHY, I'll close with an observation from a few of the books I have read. It seems that as you begin to understand who your forbears are, you begin to understand who *you* are. And in the end, this may be the most important legacy we can give our descendents.

*Did you know that James Henry Burkett (1863-1945) was the Burkett who originated and developed the famous Burkett paper shell pecan - a delicious round pecan ?*

**WHEN SHOULD WE STUDY IT ?** The fact is that we are already late in beginning and there is precious little time to waste now. Our study must begin just as quickly as we can in collecting, organizing and recording data about our relatives - especially those of you reading this. I read of one case where a person's Mother died and about a month later he was called on to assist in sorting out his Mother's affairs. They discovered photo albums with some very old tintype pictures - some more than a hundred years old - but no one could identify the pictures. With this Newsletter and the upcoming Reunion, let's all get started in compiling as much information as possible. Later in this issue I will tell you about some of the things we will be interested in and ask that each of you work on them as diligently and quickly as your time permits.

**WHERE DO WE STUDY ?** There are so many different sources for obtaining information that they can't be listed here. But a brief sample of these sources would be the LDS records already mentioned, courthouse records, census reports,

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**WHERE DO WE STUDY ?** (continued from Page 2 )

church records, family Bibles, newspapers, birth certificates, marriage certificates and cemeteries to mention a few. With the aid of this newsletter and through reading the various books I have purchased, I will try to point you in the right direction.

**MURPHY'S LAW -**

*The chance of a piece of bread falling with the buttered side down is directly proportional to the cost of the carpet.*

**WHAT'S IN A NAME ?**

[This will be a "Reader's Digest" version taken from several books but primarily from the one written by Jeanne Eddy Westin entitled "FINDING YOUR ROOTS" and published by Ballantine Books (Reference 32554). If you can locate a copy through a local book store, I believe you will find it well worth reading. If you can't find one, let me know and I will try to get some more copies.]

**Your name .** Think about it. It's one of your most personal possessions and defines to the world who you are. If you don't think so, share with me a recent hospital experience I had and one of the Nurses said "Move 489 down the hall". I was on one of those gurneys - naked with just a sheet, of course - and I thought "Wait a minute. I'm not 489. I'm Marvin Oliver Webb, the famous golfer!" I guarantee that almost everyone of you reading this will be quick to correct anyone who mis-identifies you.

Okay, Marvin Oliver Webb. You've made your point but **where** did our names come from ? This, to me, is one of the most interesting things I have learned. First names, of course, are called "given" or "Christian" names, after early Christians who converted their pagan first names to Christian ones after baptism. Most of the first names in use in the United States come from five languages: Hebrew, Teutonic (which includes Germanic), Greek, Latin and Celtic (which

includes Irish, Welsh, Scotch). No matter what their ethnic background, these are the names most immigrants have given their children. The reason ? To "Americanize " them. A second generation Japanese, for example, might be named not, say, Masa, but Phillip, which is Greek.

Hebrew contributed biblical names and accounts for about half of all first names. The Teutonic tongues gave us names associated with warlike characteristics. The Greek, Latin, and Celtic languages often gave us names for personal characteristics and abstract qualities.

**COMMON AMERICAN FIRST NAMES AND THEIR ORIGINS AND MEANINGS**

<i>Names of Hebrew origin:</i>	<i>Meaning:</i>
Adam	Earth
Ann	Grace
Dan (Daniel)	He judged
David	Beloved
Elizabeth	Oath of God
Eve	Life
James	May God Protect
Joseph	He shall add
Judith	Praised
Mary	Bitter
Samuel	Name of God
Thomas	Twin
<i>Names of Teutonic (including Germanic) origin:</i>	
Amelia	<i>Meaning:</i> Industrious
Arnold	Strong as an eagle
Arthur	Fearless
Charles	To become adult
Edward	Guardian of property
Ethel	Noble
Francis	Free
William	Resolute protector
<i>Names of Greek origin:</i>	
Andrew	<i>Meaning:</i> Manly
Barbara	Stranger
Basil	Most noble
Cynthia	Of the moon
Dorothy	Gift of God
Eugene	Well-born
Eunice	Fair victory

**WHAT'S IN A NAME ?** (continued from  
Page 3)

**COMMON AMERICAN FIRST NAMES  
AND THEIR ORIGINS AND MEANINGS  
(continued)**

<i>Names of Greek origin :</i>	<i>Meaning:</i>
George	Tiller of the soil
Peter	Rock
Phillip	Lover of horses
Sophia	Wisdom
<i>Names of Latin origin:</i>	<i>Meaning:</i>
Camilla	Free-born
Clarence	Famous
Claude	Limping
Emily	Industrious
Florence	Flower
Laura	The air
Genevieve	White enchantress
Martin	Warlike
Patricia	Noble
Paul	Small
Rufus	Red
Sylvia	Of the woods
Victor	Victory in battle
Virginia	Pertaining to spring
<i>Names of Celtic origin (including Irish, Scotch, and Welsh) :</i>	<i>Meaning:</i>
Alistar	Defender of men
Brian	Strong
Donald	A lord
Dougal	Dark-complexioned
Duncan	Brown warrior
Eileen	Light
Kevin	Gentle and beloved
Leslie	From the gray stronghold
Morgan	Sea dweller
Morna	Soft
Owen	Well-born

The origin of most first names is in the Bible. In A.D. 325 the Church outlawed the use of pagan names (like Marcus or Diana, which referred to pagan gods), and much later, in 1545, made the use of a Saint's name mandatory for Catholic baptism. As a result, there were only about 20 common names for infant boys and girls. And

then, as now, John and Mary led the name parade.

However, in the 1600's the Protestants rejected anything Catholic and started using Old Testament names such as Elijah, Joshua, Patience, Priscilla, Rejoice, Truth - even He-soundeth-the-Trumpets-for-Jehovah (imagine a child going through school with a name like *that*. The kids today would probably nickname him "Trumpets". Hey, Trumpets! ). And there was the shortage of boys names compared to girls because boys names could be made feminine by putting a feminine ending on it such as Christina for Christian, Charlotte for Charles, and Juanita for Juan. But because of the ancient cultural bias against applying feminine names to the male, it didn't work the other way around.

Middle names. What about them? They were first used as a status symbol by German nobility in the fifteenth century but did not come into widespread use until several hundred years later. In fact, they were not common in the United States until after the Revolutionary War and the fashion then was to use the mother's maiden name as a middle name.

Last names (surnames). There are about 1,500,000 family names in the United States today. Although huge numbers of German, Italian, Polish, Russian, and other immigrants brought their own surnames to this country during the last century, the family name picture in America is very close to what it was in revolutionary times. The first federal census, taken in 1790, lists the most common surnames as follows: Smith, Brown, Johnson, Jones, Davis. Today, according to the records of the Social Security Administration, the five most common are: Smith, Johnson, Williams, Brown, Jones.

Why have they changed so little after all these years? As an example, many of the people whose names mean "blacksmith" - Schmidt from Germany, Kuznetsov from Russia, Ferraro from Italy and so on - simply "Americanized" their names and disappeared into the estimated 2.5 million Smiths we now have. And so many other names were similarly translated, such as Woods from the German Holtz, the Dutch Bos, the

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**WHAT'S IN A NAME ?** (continued from Page 4)

French DuBois, the Polish Borowski, and the Spanish Silva. Or Hills from the German Buehler, the French Dumont, the Italian Costa, the Hungarian Hegy, the Irish Bryant, and so on.

The practice of using surnames was not adopted until about A.D. 1000, when the growth in population and commerce caused Europeans to take them up (merchants needed to know which John owed them money). Surnames were first used by noblemen in Venice and from there the practice spread to France, England, Germany, and then the rest of Europe.

William the Conqueror brought the custom of family names to England from Normandy, France and nobles usually took their surnames from the names of their estates (Somerset, for example), then passed both estate and name on to their sons. But by the end of the thirteenth century, the peasants, who made up about 70 percent of the population, had begun to imitate their manor lords and adopted the use of family names.

Experts generally agree that family names in Western countries originated in much these same ways : according to place, occupation, patronymics (son of), or nicknames. For example, when the local priest wanted to differentiate between the many Johns on his parish rolls, he would write "John atte [at the] water" or "John river" or "John near the mill" or "John by the [village] green" or "John on the hill"- which of course eventually became Atwater, Rivers, Mill, Green and Hill. Occupational names are based on trade or occupation, such as Miller, Farmer, Baker, Carpenter, Fisher, Miner, Archer.

*Did you know that one of our relatives, Barbara Ann Chisholm, won the National Cherry Pie baking contest in 1958, went to Washington and met Vice President Richard Nixon ?*

One of the most common ways of forming surnames is patronymics. Williamson in English means "son of William", Petersen in Danish means "son of Peter", O'Brien is Irish for

"descendent of Brien" and so forth. It took a few centuries for this practice to stabilize. At first, in England, Robert the son of Peter became Robert Peterson but his son John did not become John Peterson but John Robertson, and so on, which changed the surname every generation. In 1413, Henry V decreed that the surname of an individual be listed on every official paper, and this tended to start the legal process of standardizing family names, which was completed when parish registers were established in 1538.

Nicknames form the last class of words from which surnames are derived. A family with the name of Stout possibly had an ancestor who was more than a little overweight; one with the name of Little could have had one who was small of stature; if it was Reid it could have been a red-haired ancestor; if Longfellow, a person who was tall or long-legged; if Goodman, a man kind to his neighbors. [Do we know where Burkett came from ? Not yet but that's one of our objectives.]

- TIDBITS -

*Things ain't what they used to be and probably never was.*

- Will Rogers

**WHAT ARE OUR GOALS ?**

Our first goal is to collect and organize as much information as we can about the family and descendents of Almon Lee Burkett. By doing this while so many of the descendents are still living, we hope to avoid the "gaps" in information which you will notice in our forbears as we put together in computer form all the information we have about all of the Burketts and their descendents.

After we gather the data on this family, we will start the process of locating and contacting other relatives. Since we have a great amount of data already on hand, this will help considerably in our efforts.

The ultimate goal is to put together all of this information in "book" form with family charts (see attached sample), anecdotes, pictures and any other mementos we can obtain.

## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE BURKETT'S ?

[From one of our Texas relatives, StellaB Jaynes, (no, that's not a typing error - her name is spelled with no space between Stella and B) who has been collecting information for many years and has traveled perhaps thousands of miles in doing so, comes the following.]

The Burkett's are modest people with a strong sense of family devotion, law-abiding citizenship, peacefulness, and personal honesty. They also have strong, perhaps rather dogmatic, views on politics and religion. Such views very likely caused our Burkett forefathers to leave Europe a little over 200 years ago and establish homes in America. Of Dutch descent, our Burketts came from Germany along the Rhine river area close to Holland. Some of them may have lived in Holland.

Family legend (and this is one of the things we would like to prove or disprove) says that three Burkett brothers came to America soon after our Revolutionary War ended in 1783. They landed in Pennsylvania but went separate ways within a few years. According to the legend, one brother went toward Illinois, one toward Kentucky and one went to Virginia then on to North Carolina and perhaps later to Tennessee. Unfortunately, we do not at this time have the names of those three Burkett brothers. However, we do know that Henry Burkett, Sr. was a son of the one in Virginia and North Carolina. [This Henry Burkett was the Great Grandfather of our Almon Lee Burkett who was my Grandfather so that would have made Henry Burkett, Sr. my Great, Great, Great Grandfather. (See below)]

Henry Burkett, Sr. 1796 - 1875  
(Great, Great, Great Grandfather)

John Burkett 1827 - 1860s  
(Great, Great Grandfather)

Jobe M. Burkett 1847 -  
(Great Grandfather)

Almon Lee Burkett 1875 - 1944  
(Grandfather)

It is said that most - but not all - of the Burketts had a good sense of humor and here are some examples which were either written down or passed on by word of mouth.

*A man should work eight hours a day and sleep eight - but it's better to arrange things so they are not the same eight.*

*There is no indigestion worse than having to eat your own words.*

*When you get to heaven  
You will likely view  
Many folks whose presence there  
Will be a shock to you  
But, keep very quiet,  
Do not even stare  
Doubtless there'll be many folks  
Surprised to see you there.*

**MURPHY'S LAW -**  
*No one's Life, Liberty, or Property  
are safe while the legislature is in  
session.*

## WHAT CAN WE DO - NOW ?

As mentioned previously, our first objective is to develop as much information as possible about the living descendents of Almon Lee Burkett in order to avoid the "gaps" in information which confront us regarding some of our ancestors.

Between now and our next reunion and as your time permits, sit down and make some notes on the following:

1. The name you go by. ( I may already have your formal data but I need to know which name you use especially if it is a nickname. If it is a nickname, tell how you got it.),
2. Talk about jobs you have now and in the past.
3. Your health. This may become very important as we collect information because it may reveal an inherited disease or problem which future generations may guard against given warning of anything in our family which appears hereditary.

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4. Your hobbies. Whatever they may be. Golf, stamp collecting, sewing, bowling, etc.
5. Schools you attended - grammar, high, vocational, college, home study.
6. Military. If you served, tell us what branch, when and how long you served, your rank and any special schooling you had. Also, where you served and any other information associated with your service.
7. Sports and/or athletics.
8. Memorable events such as meeting astronauts or movie stars, winning contests, whatever.
9. Special and routine memories about your parents, grandparents, other relatives, friends. You might mention picnic's with friends or relatives or bowling tournaments.
10. If you are parents, do the above for your children starting with number 1. If you know how you got your name (after an Aunt or Uncle, for example), tell us that and how you decided on your children's names.
11. Collect, organize, date and identify your photographs. If possible, make 2 sets and send us one.

I hope the above gets the message across that we want to know about you and yours - even what you might think is uninteresting because it just might be interesting to a descendent 50 years from now or to a living ancestor you have never met.

## WHAT CAN WE DO - FUTURE ?

Once you have gathered up your information, notes, and photo's, keep it updated with births, marriages, deaths, and even divorces. Also keep the achievements data updated such as awards, graduations, and so forth.

### - THE MODERN SERF -

*During the middle ages, serfs were required to work three months a year for their masters. Today, the American taxpayer toils about four months a year to pay taxes.*

## - FUTURE EDITIONS -

We will include in our future editions current information received from our relatives and each Volume will have calendars for the next three months showing Birthdays and Anniversaries. We will also record any deaths which have occurred. Sad as they may be, they are part of our Family History and need to be recorded. Unfortunately, I'm getting this first edition out after the first of May so the relatives with events in the early part of May will perhaps miss some cards they might otherwise have received. Plus I may not have received all of the correct information from everyone and there may be some omissions. If you spot any omissions or errors, be sure to let me hear from you.

In other articles, we will also talk about old and new information about the Burketts and about subjects related to our research.

I have not had time to talk to printers relative to reproducing pictures in our Newsletter but will be doing so soon. I think it would be more interesting if we can include pictures from time to time and especially those of our ancestors which can be located and identified. I do know there is a Laser process for making copies of photo's but don't know about the quality in a Newsletter.

In addition to the 3 months of calendars showing Birthdays and Anniversaries, we will have a separate column for new births and one for weddings so it is necessary that you let me know immediately about either of these. Be sure to let me know about weddings scheduled in the future so that they may be included as an announcement.

## - HAPPENINGS ELSEWHERE -

In October of this year, there will be a Burkett reunion in Tennessee. Several of us plan to attend although this will be my first time but some of our relatives have been there in previous years.

We will be inviting these relatives to attend our reunion but do not know at this time who or how many might join us.

*- CLOSING COMMENTS -*

Well, that's about it for this time, folks. I'm sure you can see we have just begun - me, especially. But I will need all the help I can get and will appreciate any you provide. I did notice that there is still a lot of information missing within our current family and, as time permits (I have to have time for golf, you know!), I will be sending printouts of what I have and ask that you complete the data where possible. I plan to bring the computer to the reunion but don't wait until then to start giving me additional information. I would like to have all you can provide in time to enter it before coming up for the reunion. Then we could simply verify that I have entered it correctly.

Let me point out that this is not a one-man project. We need suggestions as to what you would like to see in the newsletter as well as suggestions about the reunion. Again, don't wait until the last minute but start thinking about it now so we will have time to do something. As I stated in the beginning, we plan to publish this newsletter about every three months so the next issue will be after the reunion.

LET ME HEAR FROM YOU!! MY ADDRESS IS -

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(813)961-1679

***DON'T FORGET !!***  
*A "new and improved" REUNION*  
*June 19, 1993*  
*Sharon Johnson Park*  
*(same place as last year)*

*We'll have -*  
*Entertainment*  
*Games*  
*Prizes*  
*Name Tags*  
*Old Photo's*  
*Mementos*  
*And More !*

*Bring your old photo's and mementos*

**DON'T YOU DARE MISS IT !**