



THE BURKETT FAMILY

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE BURKETT HERITAGE FOUNDATION

IT'S REUNION WEEK!!

That's right! It's this coming Saturday, June 18 - or it is if your Postman is on schedule because I'm putting this in the mail to reach everyone no later than Wednesday, June 15. So start packing now to make sure you don't forget something - especially your photo's and memento's for our Memento Table!

Included in this issue for those who are not sure of how to get there are some pretty good maps to guide you and even a map of the Sharon Johnston Park showing our Pavilion location. These were provided by Audy and Sandy Majors and we thank them for these. There will still be signs out to guide you but now you have a little extra information. And incidentally, I have been spelling the Park name incorrectly. I was spelling it as "Johnson" instead of "Johnston".

So come on. I'm looking forward to seeing all of you!

Our "Polish Cousin" . . .

In the May Issue of Reader's Digest, I came across an article entitled "True Face of the Vietman Vet". This article was about one man's efforts to not only act as co-chairman for fund-raising to erect a Texas Vietman Veterans Memorial but to also dispel the myth that *all* of the Vietnam Vets were suffering from stress related to their service and were "social outcasts" and bedraggled losers given to the wearing of fatigues, blue jeans and long hair.

This man's name was B.G. Burkett. The article also disclosed that Mr. Burkett had attended the University of Tennessee after coming home from Vietnam. Well, as you all know, our Burketts were strong in Tennessee and in Texas. Also, based on an analysis of Burketts by StellaB Jackson Jaynes and described in a previous issue of our Newsletter, this seemed to fit in with what a Burkett would do. So I attempted to contact Mr. Burkett by telephone but was unable to do so because his number was unlisted. Suspecting that this unlisted number was the result of his activities as outlined in the Reader's Digest article and

really wanting to contact him in hopes of establishing contact with our Texas Burketts, I wrote the President of Reader's Digest. I explained my reason for wanting to contact Mr. Burkett and asked if he would forward my letter to the author of the article in hopes that the author would have an address or phone number and could, in turn, forward my letter to Mr. Burkett. I received a letter back from Reader's Digest saying they had forwarded my letter and about ten (10) days later received a phone call from Mr. Burkett who had received my letter. And here comes our "Polish Cousin".

During our phone conversation and in response to my question as to whether or not he was one of our Burketts, he told me he was not - but here is where it got interesting. It seems his original family name was Burschät (I believe I spelled it right) which was Polish. They had migrated to Canada from Poland and apparently they were suffering a great deal of harassment and discrimination because they were Polish. *During a trip to Nashville, his Aunt came across the name of Burkett, liked it and his family subsequently adopted it!*

- continued on Page 2

Our "Polish Cousin" *cont. from Pg 1*

While I don't have any proof, that almost had to be one of our Burketts. According to Mr. Burkett, that's how it happened as told to him by his Aunt who is still living and is in her 90's.

Since he had been nice enough to call me, I asked if there was anything I could do to help him in his efforts to expose these "self appointed heroes" and "stress disabled " Vets - and we're talking the phonies here- not those with genuine disabilities. He has already exposed several hundred and is continuing wherever he finds them. He told me I could help by letting him know about any Vietman Vets who claim to be big heroes or who have some farfetched stories about how they have been treated and how they are suffering. Generally they will be seeking publicity or funds. To help in understanding what Mr. Burkett is up against, I have ordered reprints of the Reader's Digest article and a copy is enclosed. I told him about our Newsletter and that I would ask each of you to let me know if you hear or read about any Vietman Vet whose story seems just a little unbelievable and that's what I am asking now. If you run across something in print, send me a copy. If it is something you hear, get as much detail as possible - especially names and places.

As we continued to talk, I told him how we had lost touch with our Burketts out there and about the Burkett pecan. He then proceeded to tell me that Burnet, Texas had a lot of Burketts and that they were the ones involved with the pecan! I had already called several communities trying to locate StellaB Jackson Jaynes, her relatives or any Burketts but had met with no success. Now here he is telling me what I was searching for! But the minute he mentioned Burnet, it rang a bell that somewhere I had read something so I began to dig back through and re-read all these documents I have. Did I find anything? You bet! Read the next article. As we were ending our conversation and I repeated my intention to include it in the next Newsletter, he said, "Well, I guess you can just refer to me as the Polish Cousin!" - and that's where the name of this article came from.

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Publisher

The Burkett Heritage Foundation

Historian and Editor

Marvin Oliver Webb

Assistant Editors

Danny Banks

Audy Majors

Reunion Manager

Audy Majors

Legal Advisor

Danny Banks

For further information about subscriptions
and articles write to:

THE BURKETT FAMILY

c/o Oliver Webb

13465-B Gouvernors Drive

Tampa, Florida 33618

(813)961-1679

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From Tennessee to Texas ... the Burkettts and Epleys

(This article is copied almost word for word from a handwritten account presumably by StellaB "Neta" Jackson Jaynes. Perhaps more than anything we have published to date, it graphically illustrates the hardships of those days and the extremes which people were willing to go to in order to build a better life for themselves and their families)

Jacob Lorenza Burkett (a son of Henry Burkett, Sr.), his wife Lavina, and their seven children George, Joe, Mary, Sarah, Jim, Jane and Fannie migrated from Tennessee to Texas in 1865. Traveling with them were some of their Epley Uncles and Cousins - Daniel, William, David, George, and their families.

This group left middle Tennessee soon after the end of the Civil War and went overland to Memphis where they loaded their livestock, wagons, household goods, and families on large flat boats and sailed down the Mississippi river to New Orleans. *The river journey lasted 30 days.* At New Orleans they took passage on an ocean ship through the Gulf of Mexico to Galveston, Texas. They traveled by train (immigrant cars) from Galveston to Brenham, Texas (end of that rail line at that time) then continued by ox wagons and horseback to ***Burnet and Lampasas*** counties in central Texas arriving Christmas Day in 1865.

They left Tennessee because Civil War damages and graves seemed to have ruined their lands. Texas must have pleased them as they remained and did well.

Jacob L. Burkett brought his widowed mother (Mary Epley Burkett - wife of Henry Burkett, Sr.) and his sisters with their families (Mary C.E. Brown & sons) (Martha J. & William Young & children) to central Texas in 1876 or 1877 after Jacob returned temporarily to Cannon County, Tennessee to help settle the estate of his father, Henry Burkett, Sr. , who had died in 1875.

A few months after Jacob brought his mother and sisters to Texas, he died from lingering effects of battle wounds received during the Civil War. He served as a Lieutenant in the Confederate army.

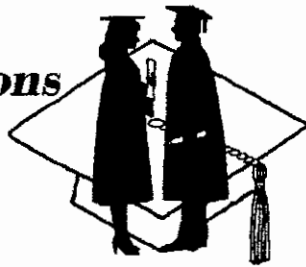
It is interesting to note that James Henry Burkett (1862 - 1945), a son of Jacob and Lavina Burkett, was the Burkett who originated and developed the famous Burkett paper shell pecan - a delicious, round pecan. Two of James' sons - Joe and Omar - served in the Texas legislature.

I've heard this James Henry Burkett say that he really liked his 12-year old cousin Jobe Burkett who carried and played with the 3-year old James in Tennessee. ■

Editors Comments: Using the information from StellaB Jackson, I would estimate the children's ages as follows: George-13, Joe-12, Mary-10, Sarah-7, Jim-3, Jane-2, and Fannie-1. Just think about traveling that far with the 7 of them plus livestock! And 30 days on flat boats down the Mississippi!! I don't have a clue at this time as to what an "immigrant" train car was which they rode from Galveston to Brenham, Texas. Perhaps later research will provide a description. Note that the Jobe Burkett in the last paragraph is the father of Almon Lee Burkett who most of us currently attending the reunion are descended from. Jobe is buried at Sugar Tree Knob in Cannon County, Tennessee. Jacob's first wife Lavina died in 1868 and is buried in Burnet County, Texas. About 1869, Jacob remarried to a lady named Matilda Reed and they had four (4) daughters. Finally, this is the article I remembered reading which referred to Burnet and which I printed in bold italics at the end of the second paragraph.

*Age is a matter of mind
If you don't mind
It doesn't matter.*

Congratulations to our Graduates!!



Samantha Katherine Burkett graduated from Rhodes College in Memphis on May 14 with a degree in Psychology. She is the daughter of William J. "Bill" Burkett, a brother of Bob Burkett Jr., which makes her Bob's niece. Bob tells me they are all very proud of her. Well, so are we! She's a Burkett, isn't she?!

Audra Elizabeth Majors graduated from Lee High School in Huntsville on May 25 . . . but not without a little "nervous anticipation". When I spoke to her the night before graduation, she confessed to being a "little nervous". Of course, I assured her that was normal and could remember feeling the same when I graduated. Congrats to you, cousin! ■



Over the back fence

(When I was young, a lot of activity took place in the back yard. Doing laundry, picking peaches, and canning are some of them. But talking to neighbors on each side of the fence was one which was engaged in by almost everybody.)

Had a nice letter from cousin Alma Edgemon. She reports that she and husband Bill are doing o.k. for being over the hill! She also says they are looking forward to the reunion. We'll see you both there!

Kathy Enfinger, daughter of Martha Majors Teague, has started a new job. She now sells TV advertising for Comcast Cablevision. Now that's all I got about her which is o.k. because I got a

lot of information about daughter Martha Lynn Barnes. (Let me pause here for a minute to point out that information on our youngsters is definitely something we want because, after all, this family research is for them. So don't be bashful. Let me hear from you about your kids and grandkids!) Now to continue about Martha Lynn. It seems our cousin has had a great year - she's now 14 - and has now made freshman cheerleader at Huntsville High. While attending Huntsville Middle School, she was in the National Honor Society; she was Head Cheerleader and won the title of All-American Cheerleader from the National Cheerleaders Association! Pretty good, huh! But there's more. She also performed in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. If that's not enough, now comes a trip to Mexico July 4 - 10 when Martha Lynn will be accompanied by her mother, grandmother Martha Teague, cousins Ben and Rachelle Buchanan, aunt Ann Teague Buschanan, and uncle Maury Buchanan. They will be going with her Uncle Maury's mission group. "Mission Discovery", to build houses and teach the word of God to the less fortunate people in Mexico.

It seems computers just cannot be trusted! In our last issue, the computer somehow listed an incorrect age for Rebecca Ann Thomas Banks. Now we all know that Becca is somewhere around 39 so how such an error could take place is beyond me. I certainly take no responsibility for such a dastardly deed! But I have taken corrective action to ensure against such a thing ever happening again!

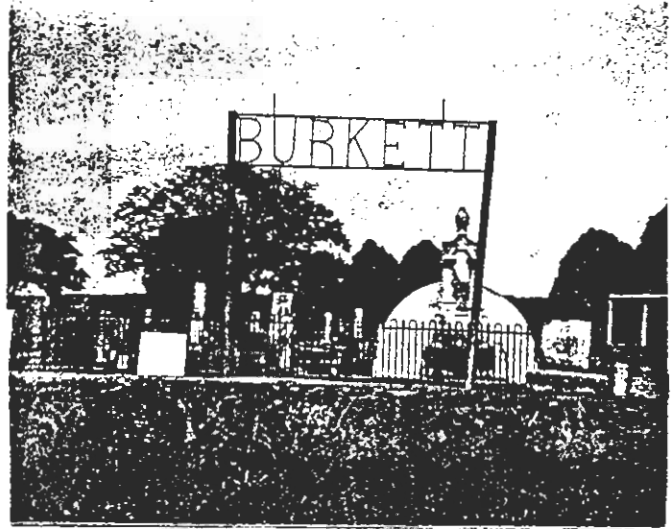
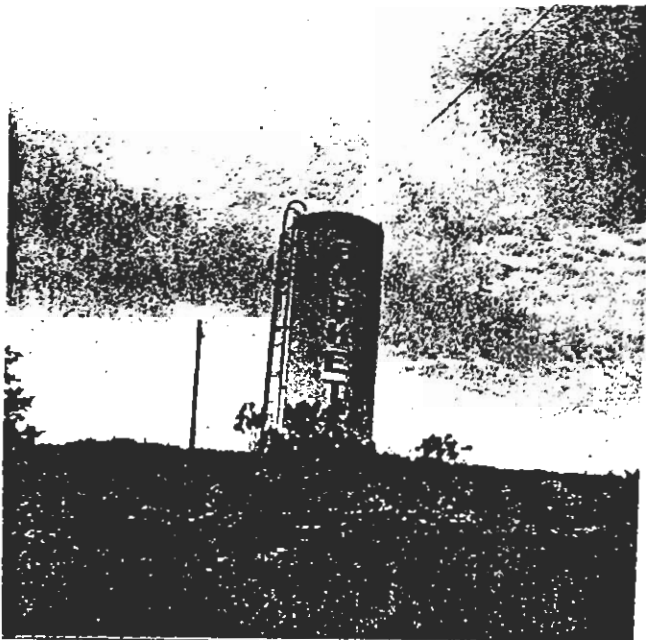
With reference to the first article in this issue about B.G. Burkett, I have just learned that 20/20 was out with their cameras over Memorial Day at various places around the country to film any of these phony veterans and their activities and will doing a program about Mr. Burkett's activities. It is expected to be aired sometime this month although I do not have an exact date at this time. Watch for it!

There is a Burkett, Texas!

If you wondered, as I did, then there is no longer any doubt. Here it is! It is located about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the distance from Austin to Abilene in Coleman County and is almost due north of Coleman, Texas.



Here is the water tower serving Burkett.

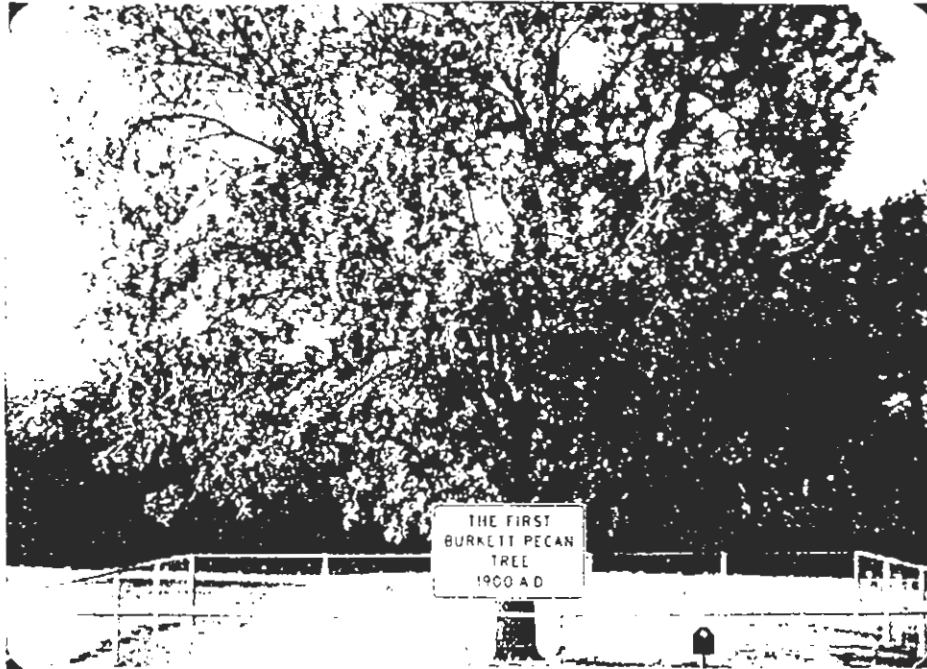


And this is the Burkett cemetery.

I have spoken to Freeda Burkett whose father was the first Postmaster. She not only took over his job at the Post Office, she maintained the cemetery for many, many years only recently retiring from doing both. She was a delightful person to talk to and I hope to get out to Texas and visit with her and some other Burketts this summer. Also, I understand there are at least six (6) more Burketts buried at the Knox Ranch just west of Burkett.

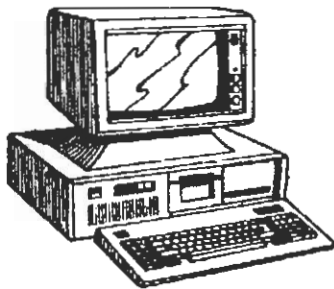
These photo's and the information which led me to Freeda were provided by A.J. Burkett of Abilene, Texas. I have invited him and sent him directions to our reunion. He tells me he would like to attend but is not sure at this time if he will be able to make it. He also loaned me a copy of his book "The Burkett-Gilliam Generations" while my copy was being mailed to me. This book was compiled by Maxine Burkett Seltzer who has died but I was able to locate her husband with information provided by Freeda Burkett.

I have attempted for the past ten (10) days to contact a Jim Burkett in Burnet, Texas but have not been successful. Perhaps they are on vacation. I am led to believe he is directly related to the Burkett pecan tree developer which would take him straight to us. I intend to keep trying.



And here is the first Burkett Pecan Tree - 1900 A.D.

This photo was also provided by A.J. Burkett of Abilene, Texas. Not unexpectedly, he tells me the tree has died. But this is the pecan developed by James Henry Burkett, one of our relatives.

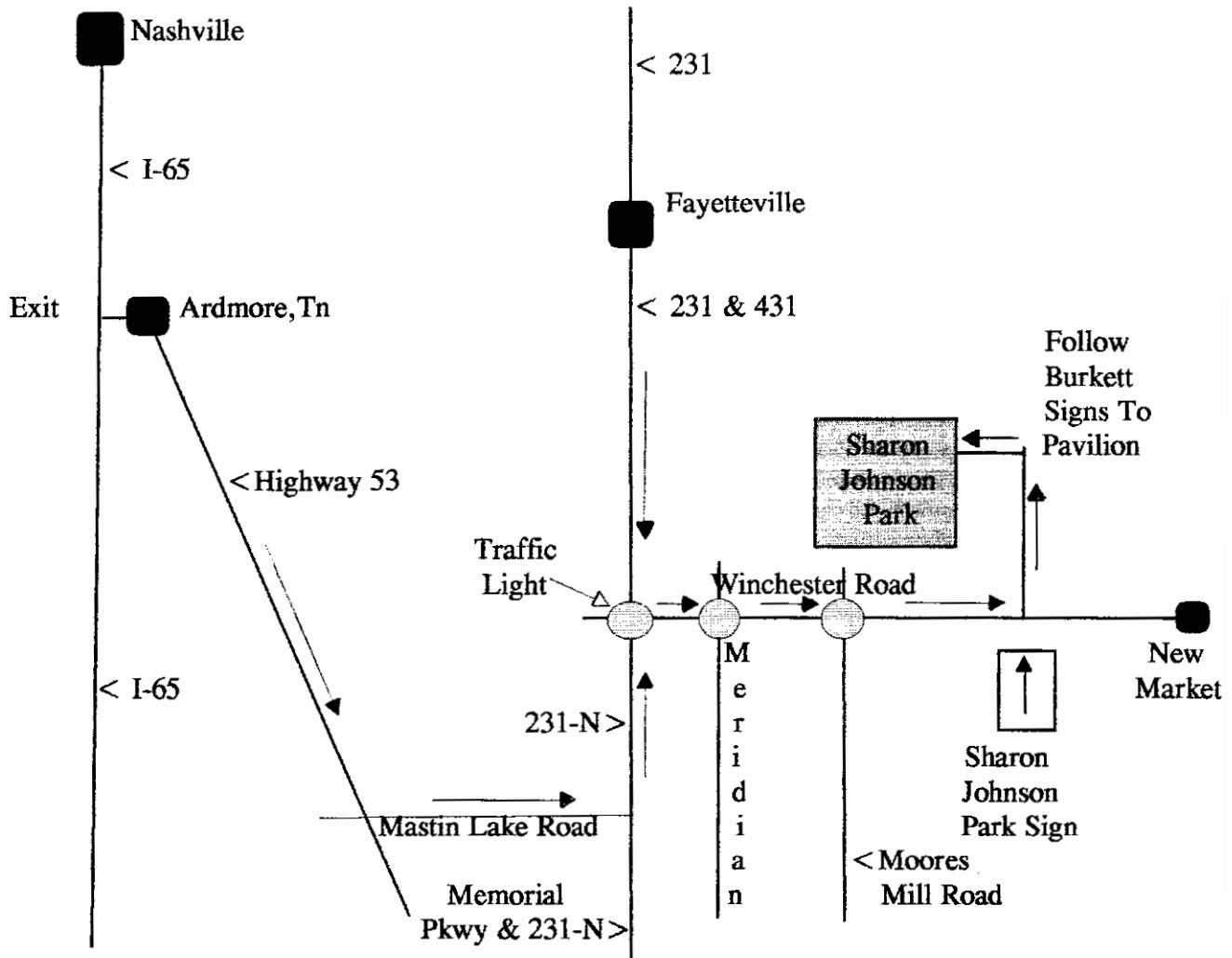


The Historian's Corner

So far, I have presented a lot of new information but that's not all! I know of at least three (3) Burkett Reunions besides ours. There's one in Bluefield, Virginia July 10; one in St. Louis, Missouri June 25; and one in Brownwood, Texas sometime later. I am also told that four (4) of our Presidents are Burkett related. They are Rutherford B. Hayes, Herbert Hoover, Richard Nixon and Dwight Eisenhower. Do I know this for a fact. No, not yet - one way or the other. I still have contacts to make and information to learn. Eileen Burkett Taft in Knoxville is one. I have already mentioned Jim

Burkett in Burnet, Texas. But the best is one I have talked with and we plan to exchange information. He is Arnold Wayne Burkett in Penfield, Pennsylvania and he has been working on the Burketts for about 25 years! Arnold tells me there were Burketts in the Jamestown Colony in 1607 but they were ones who left Germany and went to England first and then to the Jamestown Colony. I believe there is also a Burkettville, Maryland. Whew!

Well, all this tells me I have my work cut out for me! At this point I can only say that from what I am hearing we are all related at least back through Germany. Arnold says he has identified what he refers to as 18 "mainlines" of Burketts in this country. He says if I will send him my charts he will not only be able to tell me which "mainline" we are directly related to but will also be able to tell me who to contact. Unfortunately, with all this, I still have not been able to locate StellaB Jackson Jaynes who gave us our start.



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

- DIRECTIONS FROM TENNESSEE -

FROM NASHVILLE -

Follow I-65 south to Ardmore, TN exit. From Ardmore take Highway 53 toward Huntsville. Just as the four lane starts, you will be at Mastin Lake Road. Turn left on Mastin Lake Road and stay on this road until you come to Memorial Parkway - Hwy 231/431 N. Turn left on Memorial Parkway and go to the first traffic light which will be Winchester Road. Turn right on Winchester Road and follow it toward New Market. Before you get to New Market, there will be a sign with an arrow pointing to your left. Turn left onto this road, go a short distance and you will see the Burkett Family Reunion signs directing you to the Burkett Pavilion.





FROM FAYETTEVILLE -

Follow 231/431 south to the traffic light at Winchester Road. Turn left on Winchester Road toward New Market. Before you get to New Market, there will be a sign with an arrow pointing to your left. Turn left on this road, go a short distance and you will see the Burkett Family Reunion signs directing you to the Burkett Pavilion.

Memorial Parkway

Madison County Sharon Johnston Park

New Market, Alabama
205/379-2868

-  Group Shelter
-  Picnic Shelter
-  Restroom
-  Ball Field

No Animals in Picnic Areas Please

Gates Close 30 Minutes Before Sundown

No Alcoholic Beverages Allowed in Park

