



# THE BURKETT FAMILY

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## *The Original Burkett Pecan Tree is Gone!*

Lightning finally got it. It was located near Eastland, Texas just off Interstate 20 and was pictured in our last issue with the fence around it and a descriptive plaque attached to the fence. Of course, it had been dead for many years but had been left standing until lightning hit and the state went out about four weeks ago and took every thing down including the fence. However, it is my understanding that the state of Texas plans to place a Historical Marker on that site stating what had stood there. Unfortunately, the removal took place about two weeks before I got out there so the only pictures we will ever have are those which appeared in the Newsletter.

## *Congratulations*

Wow! August 8 and 9 were two busy days as far as new grandchildren go! Buddy and JoAnna Burkett had *no* grandchildren until these dates but they made up for it by welcoming one on each of those days! To go along with these two, Marvin and Joan Webb McMahon welcomed their second on August 9. Before the parents jump on me for listing the grandparents first, let me hasten to say I had to do it this way because the grandparents were the ones who sent me the info! Moving right along, they are listed in the order of their birth.

Proud parents Jerry and Martha Ann Waldrup - she's the daughter of Buddy and JoAnna - had a 7 pound, 20 ½", daughter and named her Jeri Ann. Jeri Ann was born at the Huntsville Hospital east on August 8 at 5:50 PM.

Following along not far behind Jeri Ann, proud parents William Earl and Jennifer Hamby Burkett - he's the son of Buddy and JoAnna - had a 9 lb. 6 ounce, 21 ½", son on August 9 at 7:50 PM. He was named William Vann and was also born at the Huntsville Hospital east.

Now we switch the scene to Long Island, New York where Billy and Debra Jean Fitchett -

she's the daughter of Marvin and Joan McMahon - became the proud parents of an 8 lb. 8 ounce daughter on August 9 at 10:15 PM. Her name is Caroline Joan and she is my grandniece.

We understand that all three are doing well and so are their parents now that they have arrived! So a hearty WELCOME! to you Jeri Ann, William Vann and Caroline Joan! ■

## **It's Bogle Reunion Time**

Believe it or not, another year has come and gone and it's almost time for the Bogle Reunion in Woodbury, Tennessee. This year it will be on Saturday October 8 and will again be held at the Bank on the square in Woodbury. [For those of you who may be reading about this reunion for the first time and may not understand, many of us had a Grandmother (or Great Grandmother) who was Nancy Caldonia Bogle Burkett. Grannie was married to Almon Lee Burkett.] We had a pretty good turn out last year and enjoyed meeting some of our Bogle relatives for the first time. However, it rained which prevented some from attending and eliminated the plan for some of our cousins to walk around to the old Burkett homestead. This year maybe we'll get lucky and have a nice day which will allow some more Boggles to attend and we'll have the opportunity to meet them. So mark your calendar now! ■

## The Search for StellaB . .

Many of you are aware that much of the data which we now have about our Burketts is the result of several years of research and a lot of travel by StellaB Jackson McMichael Jaynes. However, she gave us very little information about herself. For many months I have tried to locate her to let her know that we are continuing her research and to thank her for the work which she did. As of this date, I have not been successful. Her mother was a Burkett who married a Jackson and StellaB is my third cousin once removed. StellaB was born in Lubbock, Texas according to information I have. StellaB first married a McMichael and they had two children both of whom along with her first husband have died. She then married Willard Grady Janes.

During my trip to Texas in early August - and we'll have more on that trip later in this issue - I made a very determined effort to locate StellaB. I did locate a nephew of Willard Grady Jaynes by the name of William Jaynes who lives in Linden, Texas. He told me that his Uncle Grady had died about 10 - 12 years ago and was buried in New Prospect, Texas on Highway 59 between Jefferson and Linden. He also told me his Uncle Grady was buried next to his first wife and that there was a space next to his Uncle Grady for "Auntie" which is what they called StellaB. He further told me that StellaB is not buried there and that they have lost track of her. Williams' wife said she thought StellaB moved to San Marcos after Willard died but I was unable to turn up any Jaynes in San Marcos who knew StellaB or her husband.

As I continued the conversation with William Jaynes, he remembered that one of Willard's daughters married a Raymond Jones - he thought - and they lived in some small town between Houston and Galveston. He said her name was Josephine and she was called Jo. Even with a great deal of effort by some Telephone company operators, I was unable to locate this daughter.

Since I wasn't having any luck, I again called William and by now he had located old phone

*continued on Page 3*

## THE BURKETT FAMILY

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*continued from Page 2 -*

numbers for both daughters - Josephine and Mickey. I tried the number for Josephine and it was not hers. I then tried Mickey and got her! We had a long talk and the first thing she told me was that I had the correct number for her sister but the area code had changed from 713 to 409 so that explained my problem in locating Josephine. The next thing she told me was that they had lost contact with StellaB (they called her "Mac" which I guess came from her first married name of McMichael) because StellaB moved from Linden to Goldthwaite soon after Willard Jaynes died. I have now spoken with Josephine and she told me she also had not heard from StellaB for several years. Next, Mickey said that a Juanita Surratt was a niece of StellaB and lived in Linden. Well, I called William Jaynes again (by now I had found out he was called W.T.) and told him what Mickey said about Juanita being a niece of StellaB. He said he had known Juanita all his life but didn't know that. I asked him if he knew where Juanita lived and he said he did not but gave me her daughter's phone number there in Linden. I called her and she said her Mother lived in Marshall, Texas and gave me the number. However as I finish this issue for mailing, I have been unable to reach Juanita Surratt. ■



## *Over the back fence*

Received word from Bob Burkett, Jr. as to why he missed our reunion. We kept looking for him because I knew he planned to attend. It turned out to be his car battery. When he got in to head our way that Saturday morning, the battery was dead and by the time he got it fixed it was too late. Sorry about that, Bob. We missed you! Next time maybe get a die-hard, huh?!

During my trip to Texas, I arrived in Abilene mid-afternoon. Not having eaten since early that morning, I wanted something but

didn't want to spoil my dinner because I thought I might be able to have dinner with A.J. Burkett and his wife. Anyway, I told this to the waitress in the motel restaurant and she suggested pie. I told her that sounded pretty good and asked what kind she had. Upon checking she came back and said all she had was pecan pie. I asked her what kind of pecan and she said it was Burkett. Well, I said, in that case I'll have a slice. After she served it, she stood back and asked why I said o.k. after learning it was Burkett. I told her it was because I was a Burkett and one of our relatives had developed that pecan. She got a kick out of that - and I enjoyed the pie! Very tasty!!

And speaking of the Burkett pecan leads to the next item. From time to time Audy Majors had wondered if there had been any Burkett twins prior to him and his brother Almon. He had finally learned about twins on the Majors side but we had no knowledge of any Burkett twins. Until - in rummaging through my notes on James Henry Burkett who developed the Burkett pecan, I stumbled across the fact that he had a twin sister named Malinda Jane! So there, Audy. Now we have found twins on both sides of your family! ■



## **The Texas Trip!**

Hang on, pardners! That was some kind of trip and will take a heap of telling - and I can tell ya'll now it won't all be covered in this issue because I am still tying up some loose ends. So whoopie-ti-yi-yo and get along lil' doggie - let's get to the story tell'n.

My first stop was in Abilene to visit with A.J. Burkett and his lovely wife Martha. And hot! Was it ever hot! 100°! But I had a very nice visit and they have Burkett pecans in their back

*continued on Page 4*

yard. Of course, I'm out there when there are no pecans - they are ready in November. I tried to locate some Burkett's from last years crop - even stopped by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to see if they might know where there were some - but no luck. A.J. had a few and gave me four to bring back. As had been described, the Burkett is more of a round pecan as compared to the oblong type. Back to A.J. - he's the one who sent me the photo's of the Burkett pecan tree and Burkett, Texas which we published in the last issue. He worked for the telephone company and has now retired. After much discussion about the Burketts and Burkett, Texas, we came to the conclusion that we don't know if we are related. A.J. says his relatives came from Missouri down to Galveston and then worked their way northwestward. Also they were out there well before any of our known relatives arrived in Texas. But the nagging question remains - where were they before Missouri? Remember that our information on the three Burkett brothers says that one of them was believed to have gone to the midwest. The next morning I went to the library there in Abilene and looked through some records. It may be that I'll ask A.J. to do some copying of those records and mail them so I can spend more time reviewing in detail. He offered to do that.

Leaving Abilene in a generally southeastern direction toward Austin, I arrived in Burkett, Texas and, folks, I can tell you, it's *small!* There is one store, the water tower, the cemetery, and a few houses. Unfortunately, when I went by Freeda Burkett's house, she was not at home so I did not get to see her. (I learned later that she was across the street at her sister's.) I did spend a lot of time and took a lot of pictures in the cemetery. Since I still had a lot of ground to cover, I moved on and spent the night in Brownwood. The next day I called back and talked with both Freeda and her husband. I plan to send some information for them to check out for me. For the next day and a half, I spent my time in the Brownwood library but, as luck would have it, the lady who handled the genealogy section was out sick. However, I did

review their cemetery records and old newspapers. I did locate some information and made some notes to check out at a later date.

From Brownwood I headed on southeastward to the town of Mullin where the Williams Ranch was located. I was specifically interested in locating the Williams Ranch Cemetery since information in StellaB's records indicated that Henry Burkett Sr.'s wife, Mary Epley, was buried there. She was my third great grandmother. (You will recall from a previous newsletter that her son, Jacob Lorenza, who had already gone to Texas came back to Cannon County to finish settling his father's estate and took his Mother back to Texas when he returned.) Upon arriving in Mullin, I pulled off the side of the road and asked about the Cemetery. These two gentlemen I was talking with said to take the road to the right which we could see from where we were standing. I asked how far it was back there and they said it was "a pretty far piece". Well, I took the road right and after about a block ran out of paved road. Turned out that "a pretty far piece" was 4.2 miles - *and* over a single lane, unpaved, very rutty, very dusty road! Even saw a deer in the road *and a roadrunner -beep beep!* I finally arrived at the cemetery which is on a hill overlooking the natural springs which was one of the main attractions for settlers. It was fenced with a nice sign similar to the Burkett cemetery and was fairly well maintained. There was a large metal box with a visitors registration book so I wrote my name, address, and purpose of my visit with a request for anyone having information to write me. Going on into the cemetery, I did locate the grave of Mary Epley Burkett. She died in 1884 at the age of 84. I also located the grave of John Chessar and we'll have more on him in future newsletter issues. The Williams Ranch was named after John Williams and I located both his and his wife's graves. While looking at their graves, I began to get an answer to the question which had been nagging at me. What caused Jacob Lorenza Burkett to take his wife and seven children, leave Cannon County, and make that long trip? And how did he know to go to the Williams Ranch?

*continued on Page 5*

*continued from Page 4 -*

There on the tombstone of John Williams wife was her name - Annie *Epley* Williams. I thought then - I bet she was a sister to Mary Epley Burkett! She could have been in touch with her sister and told her about the ranch and about the available land grants and she, in turn, told her son, Jacob Lorenza! Made sense to me there in the cemetery because here is what a marker placed at John Williams grave by the state of Texas had to say.

### JOHN WILLIAMS

*(February 6, 1804 - August 4, 1871)*

*One of the earliest permanent settlers of Brown and Mills counties, North Carolinian John Williams migrated to this area in 1855 and helped start the local cattle industry. Williams Ranch settlement grew up around his homestead and Herd Pen Branch of Mullin Creek took its name from his round-up pens. Married to Annie Epley, he had five sons, William L., George W., John T., James D., David A. and one daughter Elizabeth C., all pioneers of the community.*

According to our records, Mary Epley came from North Carolina and StellaB says that John Williams came to Texas from Cannon County. Well, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to put things together after that, do you?!

After spending a little over two hours searching the cemetery, I came to the conclusion that Jacob Lorenza Burkett was not buried there in the Williams Ranch cemetery with his Mother, Mary Epley Burkett. During the drive back to Mullin, "a pretty far piece", I decided there had to be another cemetery around there somewhere so I located the Post Office (which was unattended) and decided to sit there until someone came by. Folks, we're talking about a very small and very old sleepy type Texas town with the temperature near 100° and it's the middle of the afternoon so there's nobody stirring. Well, I sat there for about 30 minutes before somebody came by but they told me there was another cemetery and how to get

there. The cemetery was named Oak View. When I arrived at Oak View, there was a gentleman working in the cemetery cleaning it up so I asked him if he happened to know about any Burketts. He said he did and not only walked me over to that section but took me straight to the grave of Jacob Lorenza and here is what it says on his tombstone.

<p>1st LT          JACOB L. BURKETT          CO. D          18 REGT          TENN INF          C. S. A.          MARCH 15, 1830          DEC 25, 1875</p>
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Based on information from StellaB, I already knew that Jacob's first wife, Lavina, had died and was buried at Burnet, Texas.

Just before I turned off the main road and crossed the railroad tracks (keep these railroad tracks in mind) enroute to the Williams Ranch cemetery, I had noticed a monument by the Texas Historical Commission and made a mental note to stop and read it when I came back. Upon leaving the Oakview cemetery, I went to that monument and here is what it said.

### THE SETTLEMENT OF WILLIAMS RANCH

*Once a prominent frontier town, Williams Ranch grew up around the homestead of cattleman John Williams who came to this area in 1855. The community flourished during the Civil War (1861 - 1865) and by 1874 had stores, saloons, a hotel, mill and blacksmith shop. In 1875 Henry Ford and J.M. Parks bought most of the land in the village and platted a townsite. They proposed the name "Parksford" but "Williams Ranch" prevailed when the Post Office opened in 1877. The community was a stagestop and a roundup point on the western cattle trail. It claimed the first hotel, newspaper, telegraph, and public school in Brown and Mills counties. In 1881 it was one of the towns considered as a*

*continued on Page 6*

*continued from Page 5 -*

*site for the University of Texas. Williams Ranch reached the peak of its activity in the early 1880s with a population of over 250.*

*The settlement began to decline when the railroad bypassed it in 1885. An outbreak of mob violence was quelled by the Texas Rangers in 1887. By 1892 the Post Office and all businesses had closed. Today the site is marked by the natural springs that attracted the original settlers and by Williams Ranch cemetery, burial place of many pioneers and their descendants.*

The railroad referred to above parallels and is just off the main road through Mullin and is "a pretty far piece" from Williams Ranch - 4 miles. In those days of horses and wagons, 4 miles was definitely "a pretty far piece".

Leaving Mullin behind, I headed toward Goldthwaite where I had hopes of locating information about StellaB suspecting she might have moved back there after her second husband, Willard Grady Jaynes died. However, I had no luck in locating any Jaynes nor anyone who knew of any Jaynes. Some of the town people I spoke with suggested I try San Saba and Lampasas. Since both were on my way, I went to both but again had no luck.

Burnet, Texas was to be my next stop since my information indicated this was the first stop for Jacob Burkett and his family and that his first wife Lavina had died and was buried in the Hoover's Valley cemetery. Also, a Jim Burkett lived there and I had been trying for months to get him to respond to my phone calls but without any success. I had my mind made up I would just drive up to his front door and let him tell me to "get lost" if he didn't want to talk. Well, that all sounded pretty good but I failed to take into consideration this wasn't a town where you could look up somebodys address and drive up on their street. Seems he didn't live in town; he lived out in the "boondocks" and I couldn't locate anybody who knew him much less tell me where he lived - and I still couldn't get him to

answer the telephone. Just the answering machine. I guess he doesn't want to be bothered. Stubborn Burkett!! Anyway, I went out to Hoover's Valley - and you'd better be lucky and ask somebody who really knows the way or you'll never find it. It is really out in the "sticks"! But I was lucky and got there o.k. But again I was out of luck. I could not locate the tombstone for Jacobs wife Lavina "and infant". Again there was a monument by the Texas Historical Commission and here's what it said.

#### HOOVER'S VALLEY CEMETERY

*Established in 1850 by the Rev. Issac Hoover of local Methodist Protestant Church, he came from Tennessee. Soon initiated services in nearby Oak Grove. Oldest stone dates from about 1850. Another grave is of Whitlock Family, killed by Indians. Marked graves total 157, unmarked 88. Tract is still in use.*

This was the only cemetery I visited where the maintenance of the grounds appeared careless. I saw tombstones which had been knocked over and with tractor wheel prints close to them which made me think it was done by a mower. I saw some broken in half with part of it ten feet away. There was a sign on the gate which might explain this because the sign asked for volunteers to help maintain the grounds. After a couple of hours I had to give up and come to the conclusion that Lavina "and infant" had to be among the 88 unmarked graves.

After Burnet, I had one more stop but I'll make that an article in our next issue. As I drove home - and it's "a pretty far piece" from Burnet, Texas to Tampa, Florida - I had time to think about the land I had covered. Burkett, Texas was a little hilly and had mesquite and cactus here and there. From Burkett to Mullin the land began to flatten out - you could see forever - the soil appeared richer and the cactus and mesquite disappeared. The Colorado River runs just west of the line I was following and certain areas were referred to as being in the Colorado Basin. I saw huge pecan groves -

*continued on Page 7*

continued from Page 6

some right along the banks of the Colorado River and there's even an area known as *Pecan Bayou*. San Saba and Lampasas were about the same with hills starting to reappear. As I got closer to Burnet and also in Hoover's Valley, some cactus and mesquite began to show up. With all of this as hindsight, I can see why people settled around Williams Ranch because there was plenty of water; the soil was rich; and it wouldn't have taken near the amount of labor to clear the land as it would in other locations. Also - and this is only a guess - I would bet there was plenty of grass for the cattle. To sum it up, that area looked pretty good to me.

Was the trip worth it? Yes. I met with limited success while there but I learned a lot which I believe will help in future research. I met and talked with some very nice people and just generally enjoyed it. I'll have more in future issues. ■

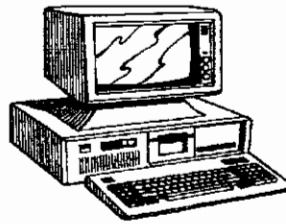


## From the Kitchen -

From time to time as we receive them, we will publish your favorite recipes. This recipe was requested at our last reunion and is provided by Alice Burkett -wife of Ken Burkett-who lives in Lebanon, Tennessee. If you have a favorite recipe, send it to me whether it's for pie, pinto beans, or pot roast. Lets share!

### *Dump Cake*

1 ½ cans cherry or blueberry filling  
 1 large can crushed pineapple  
 1 box yellow cake mix  
 2 sticks melted oleo, ½ cup finely chopped pecans, ¼ cup shredded coconut  
 Lightly grease 13x9x2 baking dish. Spread pie filling evenly over bottom. Add crushed pineapple, including juice, on top of pie filling. Add cake mix and smooth out. Add melted oleo, chopped nuts, and coconut over cake mix. Bake at 350° for 1 hour. ENJOY!



## The Historian's Corner

Upon returning from my trip to Texas and other places which had taken about four weeks, I found that lightning had damaged my computer, one of my printers and my VCR. Naturally I was concerned about our family data but prior to leaving I had talked to my computer folks about upgrading when I returned so I took it to them. Well, no problem about our data and we went ahead with the upgrade which not only made it faster but included an internal tape drive which allows me to back up the entire computer with a minimum of effort and time. It also relieves my mind about losing all of this data! I also purchased a scanner and had hoped to have it working in order to bring you some pictures. However, it was not to be. Turns out there is a scarcity of knowledge about scanners even among people who are supposed to know computers so I guess I'm going to have to struggle through it by myself. I kept delaying this issue hoping to get it working and that's why it is late. But next time! ■

## The Latest on StellaB . . .

I finally reached Juanita Surratt and, after a few minutes conversation, she realized I needed *Viola Surratt* who was indeed related to StellaB through StellaB's first husband who was a *McMichael*. Juanita had Viola's phone number so I called and spoke with her. She told me the last she heard from StellaB was a Christmas card two years ago. She thought StellaB was in a Nursing home and also told me that StellaB had her first husband's grave moved from Linden and was "pretty sure" it was back to Goldthwaite. I told Viola I felt sure StellaB had more information than what I had and Viola said she had a big book but had loaned it to someone and couldn't remember who! I didn't realize my hunch when I came through Goldthwaite was right on target. I just didn't think about checking nursing homes. *The search goes on!!*