



VOLUME 1 1999



THE BURKETT FAMILY

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Developer of Burkett Pecan

James Henry Burkett (1862 - 1945)
Samantha Victoria McAdams Burkett (1847 - 1940)
Photograph about 1925
(Photo courtesy of Joe Burkett, Jr. Kerrville, Texas)



*James Henry Burkett and Samantha Victoria McAdams Burkett
Date Unknown
(Photo courtesy Kaye Burkett Johnston)*

The Burkett Pecan -

What better way to begin an article on the Burkett Pecan than with the outstanding picture on page 1. A copy of this picture has been previously published but it had nowhere near the quality of this one which was provided by Joe Burkett, Jr. of Kerrville, Texas. Then to be able to follow it with another picture of James H. and Samantha simply puts frosting on it!

There are many, many articles about the Pecan and about the original tree itself as taken from various Texas Newspapers and other sources. Some selected articles will be included in this issue but there is no way all of them can be included. In reading these articles, and keeping in mind the number of articles, it will be very clear there was a great deal of interest and pride in the pecan and in the original tree as a landmark of an important commercial development which also initiated the formation of a Pecan Growers Association in Texas.

Following this discussion about the pecan will be an article expanding on the children and descendants of James Henry and Samantha Burkett. Previous articles dealt with Joseph Washington Burkett and descendants. This issue will have information received recently about Omar Burkett, his children, and descendants.

THE BURKETT FAMILY

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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.

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NO MORE SPRINGTIME FOR THIS TREE: This current picture of the historic First Burkett Pecan tree shows the end of its life.

varieties and to discover new varieties of food-bearing plants, trees, and prolific grasses. This work has given me much

A tree to see

World's first Burkett pecan

By Red Gibson

□ Five miles east of Putnam, between Abilene and Cisco, stands the world's first Burkett pecan tree.

The tree, now protected by a wire enclosure at the edge of U.S. 80 (IH 20), was produced by pecan pioneer J. H. Burkett, who discovered an unusual tree growing wild in the bottomlands of Battle Creek and used a bud from it to produce the first Burkett variety, in 1900. The original wild Burkett tree was lost to floods or vandals long ago.

Burkett's pecans were among the first thin-shelled pecans grown, and with them Burkett made a big contribution to a major Texas industry.

Texas pecan growers harvest a crop of more than 38 million pounds a year, worth \$8.5 million. The price varies according to the size and quality of the crop in other states. Last year was an off year for most states, but Texas had a particularly good harvest—50 million pounds. These nuts brought 12 cents a pound above the average price. They sold for 40-45 cents a pound wholesale, and up to 70 cents a pound retail—in the shell.

Pecan prices also reflect the amount of work it takes to get pecans out of trees. Although some growers use mechanical shakers on tractors, much harvesting is still done by sure-

footed men and boys who thrash the trees with long cane poles, knocking the nuts to the ground to be picked up by other hand laborers. Dr. Josiah W. Worthington of the Texas A&M Agricultural Extension Service, predicts that mechanical harvesting—including pickup—will increase dramatically in the next few years.

Dr. Worthington calls the Burkett one of the tastiest pecans grown, but he notes that horticulturists erred years ago when they recommended the Burkett for widespread use. The Burkett just didn't do well in damp climates. It grows best in upland sandy soils of the cross timbers region, and it needs less moisture than varieties grown on the Gulf Coast, such as the long-popular Stuart.

The Burkett tree bears large

round nuts, full of kernel. The shells crack easily and yield their fruit readily, which is always an advantage no matter whether you are shelling pecans for money or just doing your share on the Christmas pie.

Christmas pies, incidentally, get a large part of the crop. In fact, one of the grower's big problems is that he must harvest his crop quickly after the nuts mature if he wants to hit the Thanksgiving-Christmas buying peak.

Texans also have their finger in the pie, so to speak, all over the world, with shippers sending pecans out in everything from 100-pound sacks of fresh-fallen pecans to tiny packages of shelled and hand-culled pecan meats.

Texas is second only to Georgia in the size of the average annual crop. The pecan tree grows all over the state—or at least in enough places so that Texas is justified in calling the pecan the state tree.

The pecan tree is valued for its great shade, its longevity (100 years isn't unusual) and, most of all, its fruit. We can commend the people who wisely chose the pecan as the state tree long ago. And we can commend J. H. Burkett. He made a healthy contribution to the state's economy and to its citizens' taste buds.

Abilene Reporter-News September 29, 1993

Historic pecan tree may be history

By LORETTA FULTON
Staff Writer

The original Burkett pecan tree, age 93, is stressed out but not ready for the woodpile just yet.

"It just looks like it's under severe stress right now," said Pete Krause, landscape architect for the Abilene District of the Texas Department of Transportation, which is responsible for the tree.

To relieve the historic tree's stress, experts have been pruning it, babying it, doing everything they can to make the old fella rest easy.

"We'll try to pull it out and get it to re-leaf next spring," Krause said. "It may leaf back out, but there's no guarantee."

The tree, the first of its kind when it was bred in 1900 by J.H. Burkett, has attracted the attention of Interstate 20 travelers in Callahan County between Putnam and Cisco. Since 1966 it has been protected with a chain-link fence and commemorated with an historical marker and a larger sign.

The towering tree was magnificent in its day, withstanding West Texas weather since the beginning of the century. But apparently the tree is having a hard time recovering from a lightning strike a year and a half ago.

About half the tree's bark was knocked loose by the bolt, making it easy for insects and disease to infiltrate. The tree is reaching the end of its life span, Krause said, and has "a whole multitude of problems that are hard to treat."

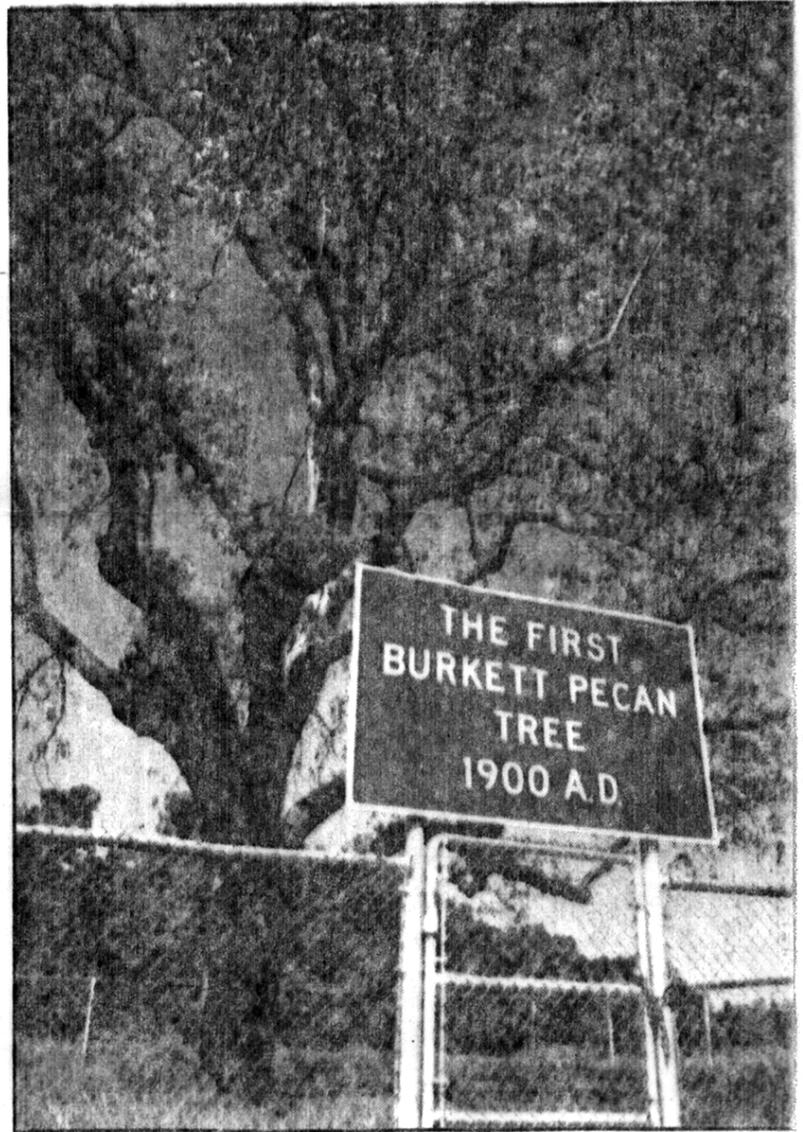
The tree definitely was not poisoned as some people have speculated, Krause said.

"We don't suspect any foul play," he said. "The hot, dry summer just taxed it too much."

Krause said there is a chance part of the tree will come back out next spring, but that it "probably will lose most of its shape and character."

When the tree's time comes, the area will lose a landmark that originally stood in someone's front yard, long before an interstate highway was thought of. Dan Childress, a Callahan County pecan grower, said the variety was born one day when J.H. Burkett found a round nut he liked.

Burkett grafted the nut to a native pecan tree and the Burkett tree, which produces a papershell pecan, was on its way to the history books.



David Kent/Reporter-News

The original Burkett pecan tree, beside Interstate 20 between Putnam and Cisco, has suffered a setback but hasn't been pronounced dead yet.

money order at the following address:



Texas Historic Landmark -

To the left is the marker erected by the the Texas State Historical Committee at the above site. This marker is currently in the hands of the state department in Baird, Texas awaiting a decision as to what may be done with it.

It reads as follows: *The Original Burkett Pecan Tree Bred From A Native Tree 1900 By J.H. Burkett (1861 - 1945) Texas Pecan Industry Leader. Recorded Texas Historic Landmark 1966.*

Abilene Reporter-News July 1, 1994

Folks pine over loss of Burkett pecan

By LARRY ZELISKO
Regional Editor

PUTNAM — To some people it was just a tree.

But it was more than that to the handful of people who watched it being cut down Thursday morning. To them the tree was a landmark with roots extending to the early days of Callahan County.

"Its death is a sad deal," said Felix Manion, president of the Callahan County Historical Commission. "That's why we're doing all we can to preserve this wood."

The tree was the first Burkett pecan tree. Grafted in 1900 by local botanist J.H. Burkett, the soft-shelled pecan tree thrived until being struck by lightning two years ago.

According to local legend, the tree was due to be bulldozed in the 1960s to make way for Interstate 20. Citizens, however, rallied to save the tree, the stories go. Since the interstate was built, the stately tree has stood its ground in the right-of-way between the highway and the north access road. The area around the tree was fenced, and a sign noted the tree's significance.

"I never failed to go by without noticing the tree," Robert Watson of Baird said. "But I guess to some people it was just a tree."

Watson chairs a historical commission committee determining what to do with the wood from the tree.

"We've got all different kinds of ideas about what to do with the wood," Watson said.

Nothing definite has been decided, but plans are to make a table or bench for the courthouse in

'It's a dirty, crying shame about this tree.'

Robert Watson

Baird out of the largest pieces of wood. Smaller limbs might be made into bowls, plaques, coasters and other commemorative items. Pieces of the tree have been reserved for descendants of J.H. Burkett.

The first limb was cut at 9:40 a.m. By 10:30, all the limbs had been felled by a crew from Ike's Landscaping of Abilene with three chain saws.

As the crew worked and the small group watched, truck drivers thundering down the interstate glanced at the proceedings, and some cars honked as they sped by.

Cutting down the 50-foot-tall tree and cleaning up the branches took about four hours.

"The spot looks barren now," said Tony Breedlove, co-owner of Ike's Landscaping. "I hated to see that big, ol' tree go."

But there was no choice, he pointed out. Had it been left up, the tree would have become infested with bores and rotted away. **This way the wood can be used for something to remember the tree by.**

"It's a dirty, crying shame about this tree," Watson said. "I've admired it for years. I always had a desire to get pecans from it, but once it started dying it was too late."



The bigger they are ...

← Tony Breedlove steadies the ladder while Russell Simpson cuts a limb off the first Burkett pecan tree. The tree, located on the Interstate 20 right-of-way about 30 miles east of Abilene, slowly died after being struck by lightning two years ago.

The above article was published in the Abilene Reporter-News July 1, 1994. I went by the site in August 1994 enroute to Abilene during my Texas visit. Little did I know that I had just missed visiting this site by perhaps 45 days. *Note that pieces of the tree have been reserved for descendants of J.H. Burkett.* - Oliver Webb

Later in this issue there will be information as to how to acquire a Burkett pecan tree for any who might wish to plant one.

The following is an edited version of a speech by Omar Burkett in 1959. The actual date is unknown. This article was provided by Joe W. Burkett of Kerrville, Texas.

Location and Story Relating to the Discovery of the Famous Burkett Pecan -

- by Omar Burkett

Mr. Toastmaster, Members of the Eastland County Pecan Growers Association and Cisco Chamber of Commerce, Friends of Callahan and Eastland County, and Visitors:

As a prelude to the dedication ceremony, may I give you certain information not known to the general public relating to the Burkett family residence here. Our family moved to this farm, which is comprised of 52 2/3 acres out of the N.E. corner of Survey 3, B.O.H. land, Callahan County in December 1899, and located two miles east of Putnam.

This is the first pecan tree to bear the Burkett name, grown from the first graft-bud wood taken from the parent tree which was located approximately 200 yards southeast of this location on a sharp bend on the south bank of Battle Creek. Several of the pecans were found in a "cache" made by rats or squirrels by brother Joe and me. Upon showing them to our father, the late J.H. Burkett, he urged us to find the tree where those nuts grew. The result was that we did find the tree located as above stated. From this parent tree, fertile budwood was taken in the spring of 1900 and placed on this tree you see here which was then a small growth of some 5 or 6 feet in height. Accurately calibrated and prepared, three (3) buds and 2 or 3 scions were transferred within two or three hours, all of which lived, and this was the beginning and subsequent state-wide recognition of the Burkett pecan.

The parent tree was destroyed only a few years after discovery and but for the timely work by our father in budding this tree and placing it at the disposal of the pecan industry, there would have been one less paper shell variety for use and benefit of the people.

Practically all of the budwood from this variety which was given to the pecan industry at an early day came from this tree as you see it today. Producing much budwood as well as fine quality nuts for 58 consecutive crops from 1900 through 1958, it now shows to be well fruited for this year, 1959. Trained experts in the field of Agriculture and Horticulture have many times inspected this tree to determine the place of joining of the two native varieties but without success. All agreed that only the deft and skilled hands of a Master Craftsman could have done such perfect work.

Other information not known to the public is that our father was approached many times by those who saw a chance for profit. Companies, as well as individuals, sought to have him copyright the Burkett Pecan. Their object, of course, was to buy the copyright, once issued, to grow and sell the budded Burkett Pecan Tree. Our father gave them all the same answer, "No, I have spent most of my life in trying to improve old varieties and to discover new varieties of food bearing plants, trees, and prolific grasses. This work has given me much pleasure. This is sufficient recompense for me and our family."

Friends, my father had the same philosophy of life as Joyce Kilmer, a noted poet, and in this connection we think it appropriate to quote the last lines of one of Joyce Kilmer's poems, "Poems are written by fools like me, but only God can make a tree."

Many of Texas great citizens have paid high tribute to the Pecan Tree. State legislation designates the Pecan tree as the State Tree. Those who have read the history of Texas in an understanding manner are of one accord that James Stephen Hogg was probably Texas' greatest Governor. When asked by friends, "What kind of monument would you prefer at your grave — cold lifeless marble?" "No," answered the Governor, "I want at my head a Texas Pecan Tree." This answer by Governor Hogg gives a picture of one who had a profound philosophy of life. Truly, it is not the epitaph upon the tomb but the service one renders during his habitation here that makes one great.

Now I, Omar Burkett, son of James H. Burkett, make a serious appeal to all kith and kin, that we here and now dedicate this tree to the welfare of all who eat of its fruit and rest in its shade, to the Pecan Industry, to Agriculture, and to kindred fields. Further, let us dedicate the Burkett Pecan tree as a mark of peace and goodwill to all who may grow it. Let us finally dedicate this tree with the protection we give it to the thoughtless ones who destroy tree without reason. Friends, let me assure you that you will be meeting the wishes as I know my father would have approved to dedicate this tree here today to men and women of "goodwill" everywhere. To the Association, and friends individually and collectively, thanks to each of you for this permanent recognition of the Burkett Pecan Tree. ■

Want a Burkett Pecan Tree ? -

Some of you have expressed an interest in obtaining Burkett Trees for the purpose of planting and growing. Through the courtesy of Mrs. Robert Watson, wife of the Chairman of the Burkett Tree Project for the Callahan County Historical Commission, here is information on how you may obtain these trees.

Mr. Charles Walker is a member of the Eastland County Pecan growers Association. Mr. Walker told Mrs. Watson that he feels sure the tree can be obtained from Womack Nursery in DeLeon, Texas. Their phone number is 254/893-6497. The home phone for Mr. Larry Womack, the owner, is 254/893-5705.

Mr. Walker told Mrs. Watson the Burkett Tree is susceptible to a disease called Scab and that wetter conditions, such as Alabama and Florida, would make the disease more of a problem but steps could be taken to combat the problem so don't let that deter you if you are interested.

Mr. Walker also told Mrs. Watson that he grows Burkett pecans and that he usually has some for sale. Mr. Walker's phone number is 254/629-8695. These pecans are available about November of each year and make excellent pies. Please feel free to contact Mr. Walker if you are interested. ■



Interested in Burkett Mementoes ? -

Mrs. Robert (Dorothy) Watson is our contact for anything pertaining to the original Burkett tree wood. As I have mentioned, her husband is the Chairman of the Burkett Tree Project of the Callahan County Historical Commission.

Shown above is my pen which I purchased last year. At that time, they were having difficulty with the first vendor and subsequently changed vendors. These pens are again available for \$29.00 each plus \$3.20 per shipment. They will not have the tree engraved on them as shown on mine above but will have "1st Burkett Pecan Tree" engraved on them by laser.

An additional item now available is a wooden box which measures 6 ¼" long, 2 ¼" wide, and ¾" deep. They sell for \$20.00 each plus \$3.20 per shipment. While I do not have a picture of this box, Mrs. Watson tells me the man who makes them is a cabinetmaker, is very gifted, and the boxes are beautiful. They will make great gifts or keepsakes and will have the Burkett Tree laser-engraved on them along with "1st Burkett Pecan Tree." The letters on the box are about 3/8" tall and the tree engraving is about 1 ½" x 1 ¼".

Sales of these boxes and pens benefit the Historical Commission and all profits are used to fund historical markers, cemetery restorations, etc. They are currently considering a project to place a small marker and the original marker near the site where the tree stood. Mr. and Mrs. Watson receive none of these funds.

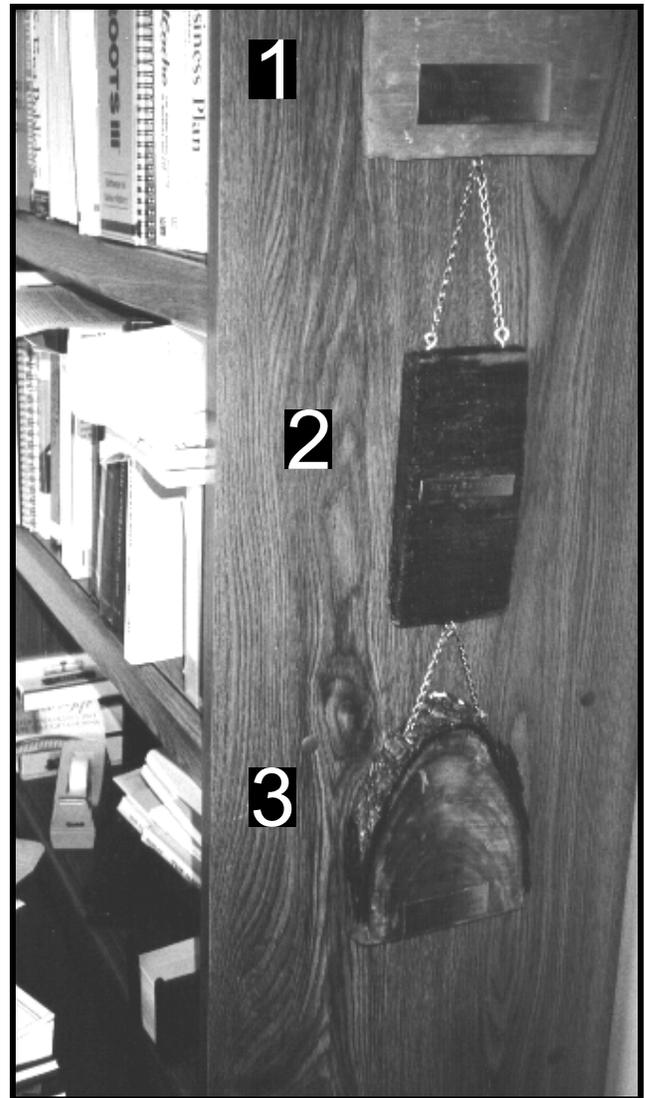
These pens and/or boxes may be ordered by check or money order at the following address:

Callahan County Historical Commission
c/o Mrs. Robert Watson
3750 Pvt 4633
Baird, Texas 79504

(If a personal check is used, allow one week for the check to clear prior to shipment.)

Any questions may be directed to Mrs Watson at 254/725-7439 or her email address rwatson@camalott.com.

If desired, larger pieces of the tree are available such as the one I own and which is shown in the picture to the right. This is beautiful wood and, if you are gifted in furniture making, you may want to think about something along that line. Contact Mr. or Mrs. Watson for questions about custom pieces. It may be somewhat expensive but the wood is beautiful.



The above hangs on the end of my bookcase. Number 1 is a piece from a Burkett homeplace near Sugar Tree Knob in Tennessee; Number 2 comes from a homeplace of Henry Burkett, Sr. which I wrote about in Volume 3 1998; and Number 3 is a section of the original Burkett Pecan Tree which I purchased during the visit to Texas last September by me, Audy Majors and Sid Huggins. Audy Majors placed a preservative coating on it and can be contacted for information.



The Certificate shown above is what you get when you purchase a pen. If you purchase a box or some wood, you get the one shown below.



The Burkett House of Eastland, Texas

by
Kim Lowrance

*This article was prepared by the current owners
and has been edited for this Newsletter*

Joseph (Joe) Washington Burkett and his wife Fannye (Pullig) built their first home on a forty-four acre tract of land purchased from Mr. and Mrs. J.P. Hellums on January 9, 1918. The land was situated about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile south from the court house in the city of Eastland and Joe dedicated a portion of the land as "the Burkett Addition to the Town of Eastland" on January 15, 1919. (See *Burkett Addition on next page.*)

Joe, Fannye, and their children lived in a small house on Eastland's Seaman Street prior to the construction of The Burkett House. Son Joe Burkett, Jr., born in 1912, recalls living on Seaman during the flu epidemic of 1918 and his sister's birth in the new home in 1920. He further remembers the construction of the house, built with local materials, and their subsequent move into the home in late 1920. According to him, the rambling two-story house and grounds, surrounded by a lattice fence, were complete with a double garage to house their Model T Roadster, servants quarters, a wash house, a large concrete cellar, a cistern, and two large metal storage tanks used to catch rainwater. The additional acreage boasted a chicken house and run, a red feed barn, a milking barn and cow lots, and a red board fence constructed of 1 x 12 lumber. Joe, Jr. himself planted the beautiful Burkett pecan trees that still adorn the property today.

On a personal note, Mr. Burkett and Fannye separated in 1925 and she retained the home and adjoining property. The next year their daughter Lasca, who was a victim of infantile paralysis, died in the home on March 23, 1926. Fannye sold "The Burkett House" to C.A. "Stoney" Martin, an independent drilling contractor and his wife Helena Mae in November 1926.

The original dwelling under the Burkett's ownership was constructed as a two story frame house with Four Square features that include an expansive front porch, a side-gabled porte cochere, exposed eaves, and a low-pitched roof. The interior floor plan models the Four Square design with a formal front room that spans the width of the house and four even rooms behind. Upstairs, the four bedrooms are balanced in a square design with the sun room (sleeping porch) juxtaposed over the porte cochere.

At some point during the Martin's possession between 1926 and 1935, stucco was added to better suit the Mansville lifetime metal tile roof to add a Mission Revival appeal that became popular in Texas during the 1920's. The roof topping the house in 1919 is the same roof we are enjoying in 1998 and the original nine-light, single -sash windows are still in use, with the exception of the living room picture windows, which are more recent duplicates of the initial twelve-light windows.

Another modification to the initial structure was the enclosure of the screened porch to accommodate laundry facilities prior to 1953. A revamping of the staircase prior to 1953 concluded the structural changes.

R.Y. and Maude Lindsey purchased the home from the Martin family in 1942. They in turn sold it to A.J. Blevins, Junior, Eastlands Chrysler-Plymouth dealer in 1952. Son Stan Blevins recalled his family's move. "We did a little 'fixing up' porch to moving in but not much. We did add the concrete back porch while we were there."

Next, Bill Hart, a local attorney, and his wife Beverly bought the house in 1964. This remained their family home until 1979 when it was sold to Wayne and Bonnie White. Wayne worked for the Texas Highway Department and Bonnie is an artist. His engineering skills combined with her artistry proved to be a winning combination for the landmark house. They completely renovated the house in the fall of 1979 only to have their work destroyed by a fire December 23, 1979. According to Fire Chief Phillip Arther the fire began when the floor furnace in the living room overheated. The fire spread quickly throughout the house, which was filled with holiday guests, but firefighters were immediately on the scene. Thankfully, no structural damage occurred; however, the interior suffered major losses including a portion of the hard flooring downstairs, the living room windows, and the woodwork in the living room. Fire recovery experts hired by the Whites replaced plumbing, wiring, and sheetrock, and they once again renovated the decor of the house.

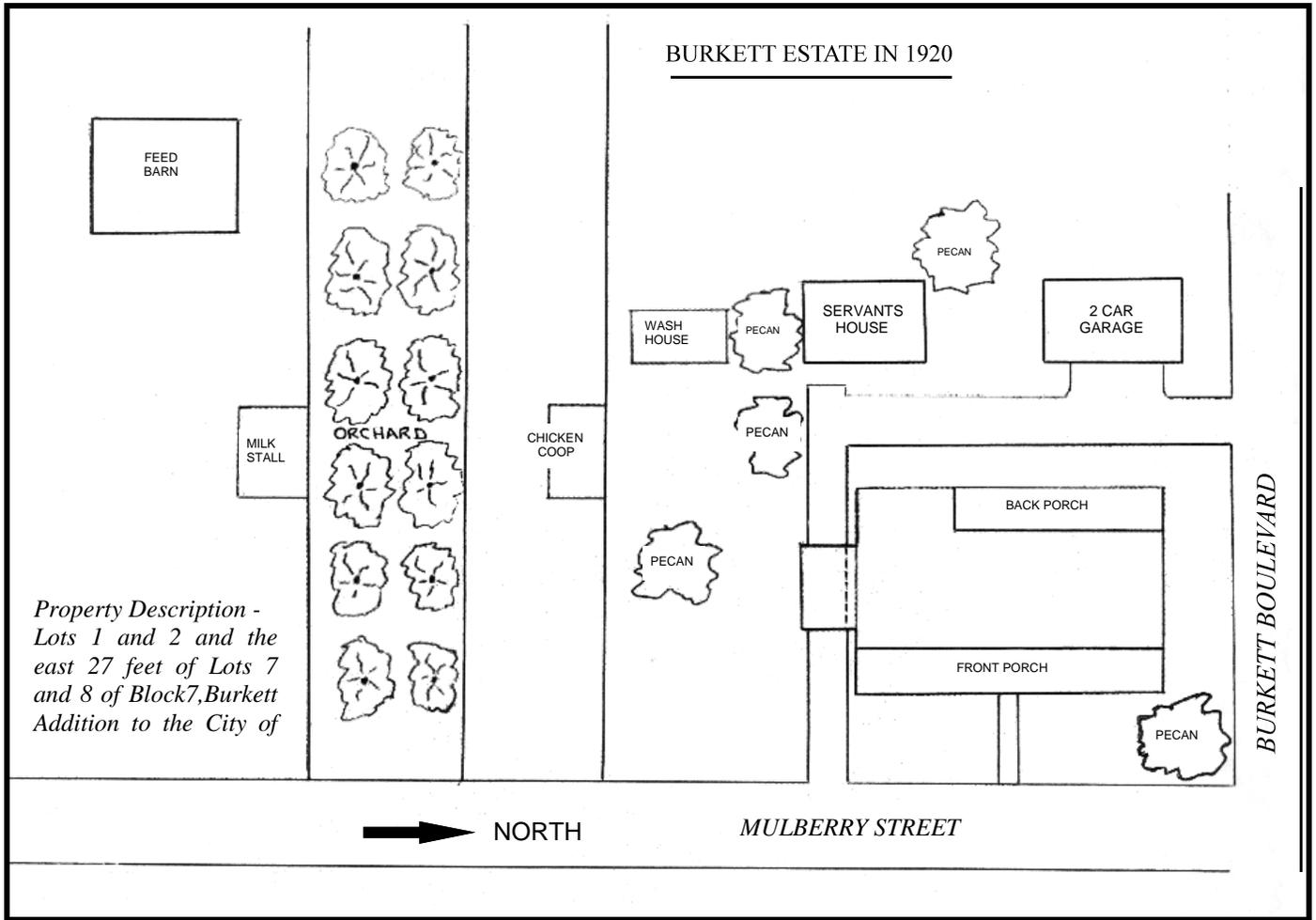
The home sold again in 1992 to Vonita Duncan, then finally to us, Randy and Kim Lowrance, in March of 1996. The house and grounds were in severe disrepair, and our first project was basically to clean the place up. We "guttled" the interior, leaving the handmade Birch cabinets, the wallpaper in our daughter's room, and the original woodwork throughout the house. We restored the hard wood floors, carpeted where necessary, added two central heating and air conditioning units, renovated the kitchen and bathrooms, painted and wallpapered the remaining rooms. Our final effort indoors was the conversion of the fourth bedroom into a closet and dressing room. Outside, we painted, repaired windows, recovered the lawn, and replaced the sidewalks.

Randy and I have close ties to this area. He is an Eastland native, and I was reared a fifth generation Stephens County resident. We have two children. Surrounded by the shade of some wonderful old Burkett pecan trees, our family plans to enjoy the fruits of this home's history for many years to come.

Additional Information -

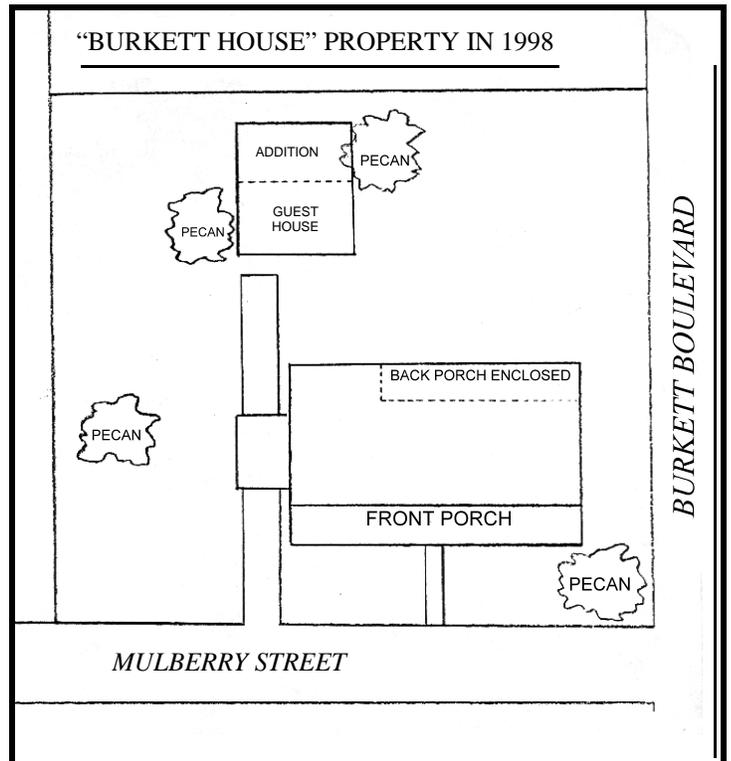
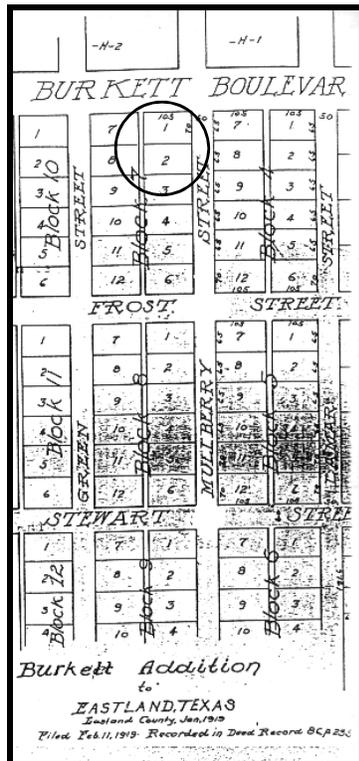
In the second paragraph of the above article, Mrs. Lowrance states that Joe Burkett, Jr. remembers their move into the house in *late 1920*. I think she misunderstood Mr. Burkett because she also states that he remembers his sister, Dorothy Jean Burkett, as being born in this house July 4, 1920. Therefore, they must have moved into the house sometime during the first half of 1920.

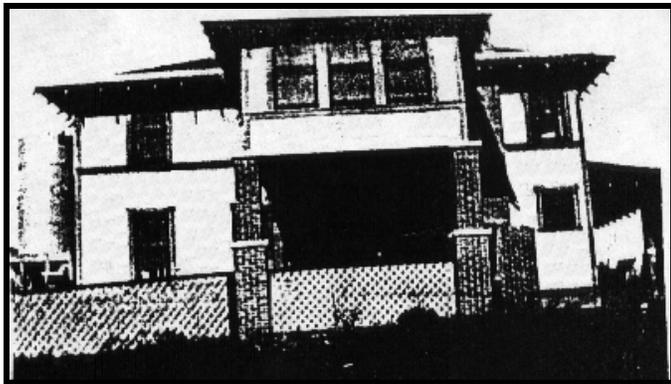
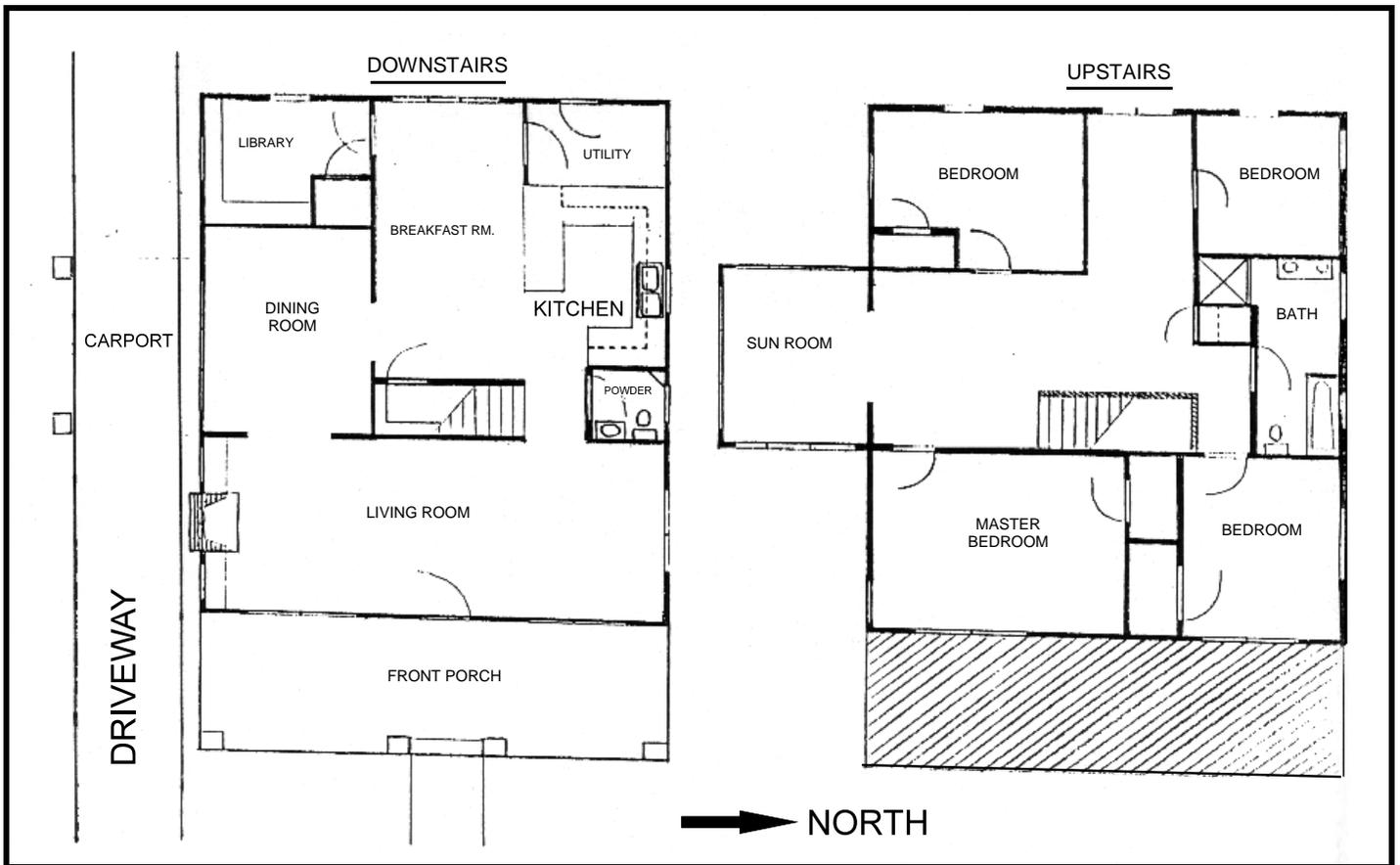
If I am interpreting the plat shown on the next page, the house was built on a lot which was 135' long on the Mulberry Street side and 132' deep along the Burkett Boulevard side as shown in the circle to the right. Joe Burkett deeded the streets and alleys to the city of Eastland so long as they are used for that



purpose.

Looking at the above layout for the estate as of 1920 and comparing it to the layout to the right as of 1998, it appears that some of the property was sold because everything to the left of where the chicken coop used to be is gone. ■





SOUTH VIEW - FALL OF 1925



FRONT VIEW - PROBABLY AROUND 1997 FOLLOWING RENOVATION



FRONT VIEW - DECEMBER 1994

Have you paid your 1999 Dues? If not, this is your last issue!

Journal of Tennessee Trip

by

Mae Delle Burkett Goodwin

This is an edited and condensed version in order to conserve space in this Newsletter. Making the trip were three children of Joseph Lafayette Burkett; sisters Mae Delle(68) and Gladys (65), their brother Edgar Lorenza(80), and the husband of Gladys, Archie 'Arch' Hodges(63)

For years it had been talked among our family how good it would be to go to Tennessee — especially among the boys. As we grew older, we talked about it more each year. Finally, after much talk, the ones going were Ed, Glad, Arch and I. I had my paper and pencil in my lap and, as we drove, I wrote about what we saw and what happened to us so that the ones who did not go could have it to read and enjoy. If you promise not to tell, I will let you in on a secret — Ed, Glad and I are getting so old we were not sure we could remember it all if I didn't write it down.

The purpose of this paper is to tell what we found out about Henry Burkett, our great grandfather; Jacob Burkett, our grandfather; and David Burkett, Jacob's brother.

Thursday June 19, 1969

Arch, Glad, Ed and I left Goldthwaite at 7:30 am, feeling fine and looking forward to a good trip. As we leave, we are thinking of the others and wishing they could have come along to enjoy the pleasure of hunting the country where our Dad, Joe Burkett, lived and roamed as a boy.

We go through Gatesville, and Waco with Gladys reading Uncle Jim's letter trying to get facts in our mind which will help us when we get to Tennessee. Guess Glad has had too much fresh air as I smell the sweet odor of Ben-Gay. We are headed for Shreveport. It is 3 o'clock and we have crossed the Louisiana state line. At 5:15 we are nearing Monroe, Louisiana and at 7 o'clock we are on a bridge crossing the Mississippi river, a beautiful sight to behold. My eyes won't let me see as fast as I need to. We stayed at the Motel Dixiana in Vicksburg.

Friday June 20, 1969

We visited the old court house museum in Vicksburg and my vocabulary fails me when I try to put it in words. To get the thrill of it you will have to go see for yourself. Don't ever turn down a chance to go there.

We then went to the battlefield grounds called Vicksburg National Military Park and cemetery. The place is beyond description. The monuments, artillery, beautiful magnolia trees, and the plaques thrilled us. After leaving the park, we headed for Jackson, Mississippi. It is 5:10 and we have just crossed the line into Alabama. We are near Eutaw, Alabama and it is 6:45. We have driven 726 miles and will be stopping for the night before long.

Saturday June 21, 1969

We spent the night in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. We had planned to stay in Birmingham but didn't quite make it. We were on our way at 8:30 enjoying the kudzu vines, magnolia trees and beautiful hills and mountains.

It is now 12 o'clock and we are leaving Gadsden. We stopped at Fort Payne for lunch at a place called Tourist Center which was a log house 117 years old and enjoyed it very much.

It is 2:20 and we are headed for Chattanooga, Tennessee. We have just gone through Rising Fawn, Georgia. The towns almost meet and have such beautiful names. The Tennessee River is just as pretty as the Mississippi and I am so thankful I have had the opportunity of being on this trip. More beauty — we are surrounded by mountains. We are near Manchester, Tennessee and have just crossed the Little Duck River. It is now 5:35 and we are entering Murfreesboro.

Sunday June 22, 1969

Last night, we stayed at Stone River Motel in Murfreesboro but moved to the Murfreesboro Motel today. We read letters and reviewed Burkett notes. We had a good night's rest and plan to go to church today. We looked in the telephone directory and see the names of 2 Burketts. We have had breakfast and are on our way to Bradyville. We are especially enjoying the trip for we feel like we are on some of Dad's old stomping ground. We see corn and tobacco growing plus lots of rock and rail fences. While I am talking about Bradyville, I want to tell this — us Texans speak Bradyville wrong. We say it like this, Brady-ville. However, everyone in Tennessee said Bradyville so that you could hardly hear the ville. They say it with ville close to Brady like this — Bradyville. Anyway, we drove into Bradyville and stopped at a store. We told them we were looking for information on the Burketts and they told us exactly how to get to Dave Burkett's place, who is Henry's son. Off we went and met the people who live on Dave's old place. Their name is Porter Arnold. Some men were on the porch and Ed introduced all of us and told them our business. They were very nice and told us the place had 15 acres and was owned by three different names — 2 Ferrells and David, The Ferrells were David's first wife's people. Some rooms had been added since David lived there. His house was a 16 foot room and kitchen on the side of a hill. There was an old time well with a 3 to 4 foot long bucket and rope to draw the water. Arch took pictures of the house and Glad standing by the well. Among those at the house was a Mr. Thomas who told us about Lessie Burkett Heath, David's stepdaughter. He told us about who kept her when she was small and later gave us her address and phone number in Murfreesboro. Now here is something I wouldn't tell if I knew Ed and Arch wouldn't tell but I don't have any hopes of this so here goes. While at this house, David's old place, Ed, Arch and an old man were out in the yard talking while Glad and I were talking with Mr. Thomas. Soon as we left David's place, Ed and Arch just died laughing and told Glad and I what the old man had said. Pointing to me, he had said, "Is that Jacob's sister, the old gray headed lady?" Of course, Jacob just happens to be my grandfather but all the rest of the trip I heard this tale every few hours. The Arnolds and the Lowes both told us about StellaB

being at their places and showed us a piece of paper that StellaB had left with her name and address on it so they could send her any more information they might get. Anyway, we had been invited by Mr. Thomas so we went on to church and heard a good sermon from a young preacher. In his closing remarks, the preacher said there were some people from Texas and introduced us. All the folks seemed anxious to help. We decided to go to Curlee Cemetery and see if we could find David's grave. We hadn't been in the cemetery but a few minutes until we found a tomb rock that said, "Lou Phemia, Daughter of D.E. and F.D. Burkett, Born 2-20-1877 and Died 7-27-1896." The inscription said, "Borne by Angels Hands Away to a Home of Peace and Love." We learned later this F. D. on tomb rock was Fannie, David's first wife. Up to this time, no one had told us about Lou Phemia. I now want to tell that everyone in Tennessee says tomb rock, not tomb stone or marker. There were lots of unmarked graves in Curlee cemetery. Then Mr. Thomas came to the cemetery and said he would take us to some people he thought could help us. He first took us to a man sitting on his front porch who said, "Why, yes, I knew old Dave. I was afraid of him." He then told us this tale. This man's father was a neighbor to David when the man was just a little boy. The neighbor's pigs got into David's corn patch and David went and told the man. The pigs got into the corn patch and again, David went and told the man perhaps in a little louder tone for that was when the man got scared of David. The man's father said, "Why David, if you will go home and put rocks in your fence like I have mine, the pigs won't bother you." He said David was a good man. Mr. Thomas said there was another place David lived and he would take us there but he would not go in with us. He said 2 ladies lived there and they were crazy. Mr. Thomas was a jolly kind of a man and laughed a lot so we thought it was just his way of saying cranky women. When we got there, Ed, Glad and I got out of the car and went to the house. Ed knocked and we could hear talking. Ed knocked again, and again we heard walking and talking in the house. Ed said we better go. I called hello. No answer. I called hello again. A voice from inside said, "What do you want?" I said, "We want to talk to you." The voice answered, "Well, we don't want to talk to you, we want you to leave." Ed, Glad and I run a foot race to the car. I am not calling names but the oldest one in the bunch of us beat the others to the car. Now may I say if there is ever anything in this world I will never forgive Arch for, it will be because he didn't have the door open on my side of the car. While on this subject, when we later told Lessie about it, she said it was a wonder they didn't shoot us, that they had a gun. She said they were really crazy but wouldn't talk about them much because she said she had eaten many of a meal there when she was little that she wouldn't have eaten if it wasn't for them.

Mr. Thomas next took us to the home of Mr. E.A. Gaither. We all liked him and he was very nice to us. He said David was a good man, an honest man, and worked hard. He said David did him a great favor one time and he felt indebted to him. It seems Mr. Gaither's father was thrown from his horse and had broken bones. David picked him up, put him on his back and carried him to a Doctor. He said after that he did

everything he could for David. He said he gave David work and worked with David himself. He also said David was a mover about and that he always moved David to where he wanted to go and moved him back when he wanted to come back. He said David was a good citizen and a farmer but that he was a poor man. He sat up with David when he died. He said the county furnished the casket and he and another man took up a collection and bought handles for David's casket. He said David's daughter Lou Phemia was a beautiful girl and one of the smartest people he ever knew. She was his school teacher and taught him the Lord's Prayer. He said David obeyed the Gospel in Rutherford County but drifted away, was restored, confessed his wrong at Donnell's Chapel which is a small town between Murfreesboro and Bradyville. Mr. Gaither also said he knew Aught¹ (or Ott) Burkett, one of David's nephews. Mr. Gaither said I had features like David. We all liked Mr. Gaither and he was the last man we visited at Bradyville.

We had our lunch with us and ate a late lunch beside the road between Bradyville and Murfreesboro and came on back to the motel where Gladys called Lessie, Dave's stepdaughter. She was expecting us to call because a lady from Bradyville had called her and told her to stay home that we were going to get in touch with her. She came in a few minutes to our motel bringing with her David's bible. She also brought one of her school report cards to prove to us she wore the name of Burkett and it said Lessie Burkett. She was 54 years old and was nice looking. She referred to David as Pappy Burkett. She said David was good to her and her mother. She said he was jolly and talked a lot. Lessie said her mother, Emma Phillips Burkett was buried at Evergreen. We all liked Lessie very much. She seemed so kind and good. When she got ready to go, she said she might give us David's bible, that she thought we were entitled to it as her children was not kin to David at all. She promised to come back to see us and bring David's picture. She left the bible for us to look at. We copied these records from David's bible.

D.E. Burkett and F.D. Ferile was married December the 15th 1867 - AD

²D.E. Burkett and Emmer (Emma) (Philope) Phillips was married June the 17, 1918

³ Phemia Burkett born February 10, 1877

D.E. Burkett was born April 22, 1841

Fannie Burkett was born July 7, 1842 (Ferrell)

³ Lou Phemia Burkett born February 20, 1877

Phemia Burkett died July, Monday the 27, 1896

²F.D. Burkett died December 27, 1819 (We think this should be 1918 - added by Mae Delle)

D.E. Burkett died March 28, 1926

All this information copied out of bible with the following hand written:

Femy Burkett Bible. Miss Lufemia⁴ B. Burkett Age 11 - 20 day of February

Bible printed 1884

We know some of these dates don't check out right but have copied as bible said and written.

Lessie said she had heard Lou Phemia was a beautiful girl. Lessie is 54 years old. She was born 1915. Lessie came back Tuesday evening and brought David's, Lessie, and Emma's picture. David looks exactly like Uncle George Burkett and our brother, George. She brought another picture of a man, a lady, and 2 children. She did not seem to know who they were. We feel sure it is Henry, Mary, and 2 grandchildren⁵. She gave it to us. She also gave us papers in David's bible. Nothing important — just receipts, letters, and poems written by Lou Phemia. The cutest thing to me was the hand of Lou Phemia drawn on paper⁶ when she was a baby. Another thing that interested me was a letter⁶, we feel sure was from Aunt Martha Young and was David's sister. She lived in Hollis, Oklahoma. She was writing David about some money they should see about. Of course all of us heard Dad talk about this money. Lessie's name is Mrs. Tom Heath 433 Kings Highway Murfreesboro.

Lessie told us she and her mother did not get anything when David died. She said people told them they were entitled to David's place but she said, "We never did do anything about it." She said she did not know if they should have had David's house or not. Mr. Claude Gaither, the man that thought so much of David, said he did not know if David paid his part of the place or not. He said David was supposed to be co-owners with the Ferrells.

Lessie was so good, kind and sweet. She did not show resentment toward the Ferrells. She did say she and her mother had an awful hard time. She said her mother worked for rich people who did not want her around but wanted her hard work. Even tho David is just our great Uncle, it was thrilling to know where he lived and hear things about him. When Lessie came for her last visit with us, she told us her children did not want her to give David's bible to us but I think she really wanted us to have it. She had 2 children, a boy and a girl.

It is Wednesday April 14, 1999 at 6:15PM and I am going to interrupt this story. While typing it, I got to wondering more and more about Lessie and wondered if I could find her — and I did!! I went on the internet and found a Tom Heath listed in Murfreesboro with the address and phone number. I called, explained who I was and asked about Lessie. She said, "This is Lessie!" and I almost jumped out of my chair! She was delighted to hear from me and wanted to know about the four folks who were up there in 1969. I told her about Mae Delle, Gladys, and Edgar and that we had visited Mr. Hodges last September in Texas. I also told her I wrote a family Newsletter and that was what I was working on when I decided to try to find her. We talked for maybe 30 minutes or more and I have to say she is everything Mae Delle wrote about her — very friendly, courteous, and a good sense of humor. At one point she said something about her age and I said, "I know, you're 84 and you were born in 1915." She laughed and said, "You know more about me than I know myself." We had a great conversation and I told her I was going to send copies of what I had and what I was writing and that we would come by to visit with her maybe in June when I would be in Huntsville

for the reunion. All in all, a very enjoyable phone call. There will be a picture of Lessie, her mother, and David following this article.

Now, back to the story about the trip.

Monday June 23, 1969

After a good nights rest and breakfast, we went to the battlefield at the National Military Park even though it was coming up a cloud. We saw a picture show which included singing by both North and South groups and it was wonderful. I could have watched it again. There was a list of Tennessee boys in the Civil War and Glad copied the Burketts. We think 5 of them are ours. Henry had a George, James, Jacob L., John and Nat⁷. While Glad and Ed looked at books, Arch and I showed a Forest Ranger the map of the battlefield given to us by Joe Burkett, John's boy from Angleton, Texas. On this map was a place marked "Purkett" and we told the ranger we thought it should be Burkett. He said misspelled words on the map happened every day. The Ranger gave Arch directions on how to get to the "Purkett" place and we struck out to what we hoped was Jacob's place and we believed where Granpa lived. We arrived in just a few minutes and went to the door and knocked. A negro woman came to the door but couldn't tell us much. She said she had lived there a long time and owned the place having bought it from Charley Haynes. She said it had 3 ½ acres. It was obvious she was scared of us and only opened the door a little. I will have to tell another tale on myself because I know if I don't the others will. We asked the negro lady which way the house faced and she said she didn't know. I thought I would help her out and said, "Where does the sun come up?" She answered me saying, "Why, in the east." So we still don't know which way the house faced. We knew there was a dirt road by Jacob's house and also knew there was a creek close by the house. This house has the road and the creek.



Glad and Edgar on the front porch

We went back to the motel and after lunch headed for Woodbury un Cannon County to see if we could find Henry's place and where he is buried. As soon as we got to Woodbury, we went to the courthouse. These records came from Cannon County courthouse.

Will Book A 1836 - 1895. Page 246

The Will of Henry Burkett was made June 20, 1874 and his Will probated April 5, 1875

We then went to the Registers office to look for deeds. We found —

Grantee	Grantor
Henry Burkett	Isiah Marcum

Deed 1863 - Book 1 Page 258 175 acres \$450.00 Old John Holloway tract District 3 on Short Mountain.

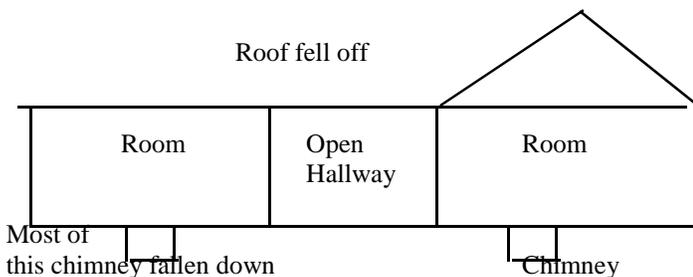
It stated — there is a house on this land and Henry Burkett now resides in it. Also we found —

Grantee	Grantor
Henry Burkett	Irwin Petty

Deed 1854 Book K Page 29
270 acres — \$700.00 District 4

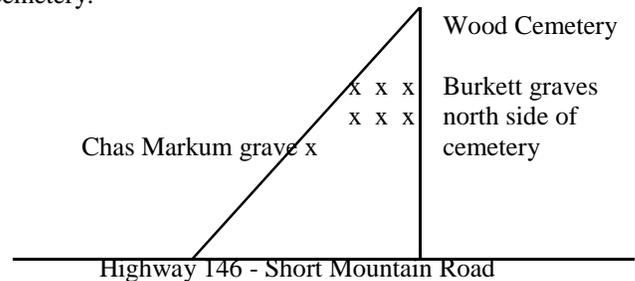
We were so thrilled when we found the deed saying Henry resides in the house in 1863. We got directions to Short Mountain and hit the road. After we had driven the distance they told us in Woodbury, we saw a store a short distance from us. We drove to the store to get a coke and ask where the old Markum place was. The name of the man at the store was Willie Womack and he said the house was about ½ mile from the Wood Cemetery which was where we turned to go to Henry's house. Mr. Womack said we could see the house from the road but we could not. We kept driving and came to a house with some people sitting on the porch. Ed talked to a man sitting on the porch and the man agreed to go show us the house, which he did.

You never saw such a wilderness in your life. If I hadn't wanted to see the house so bad, I wouldn't have dared go into such a jungle looking place⁸. You could tell we were following an old road and it was thrilling to see blackberries where we were walking. Finally, we came to it. I can't say which of us was the most excited. I would not take anything for just getting to see that old log house. It was a 2 room house. an open hallway joining the 2 rooms. The chimney on the right side was standing and in pretty good shape. The chimney on the other side was mostly fallen down. The house looked like this - - -



The logs were so pretty. They were yellow poplar. The roof was made of chestnut board and part had fallen in. Square head nails were used to build it. We brought some home for everyone that wants some. Most of the nails were ordinary size but some were huge. I just got one huge one, They were in so tight I couldn't pull them out. We didn't pick the nails up off the ground but pulled them out of the walls. There was a smoke house or some kind of little building on one side of the house and the old barn out farther. We saw 2 snakes, one out in the yard and one in the walls of the house. They were jet black and the man said they were black snakes and not poison — but they looked poison to me.

It was thrilling just to stand there and look at that log house. The man that took us to Henry's house and told us the kind of logs the house was made of was Gray Gunter⁹, Route 2, Woodbury, Tennessee. According to Mr. Willie Daniel, Route 2, Woodbury, Tennessee, Henry was buried in the Wood Cemetery about ½ mile from his log house. Mr. Daniel told me where the Burkett graves were and showed me how to draw the cemetery. These Burkett graves did not have readable markers but Mr. Daniel said they were all Burketts but he did not know which was Henry. There was a Church of Christ at this Wood Cemetery.



After leaving Henry's place, we started back to Murfreesboro and stopped at a store to get cold drinks. We were talking to the store-man and a Mr. Miller came in. The store-man said, "Here is a man that can tell you more than anyone I know." This Mr. Miller told us Isiah Markum was father of Charlie and that Charlie lived on the place after Isiah. He said he knew James Burkett well. James was a son of Henry. He said he remembered when James died¹⁰ and that James had lots of relatives visit him. He also said James could throw his voice and that Henry *lived and died on the place he bought from Markum*¹¹. (*Italics added for emphasis. See discussion at end of article.*)

I sure pulled my part of the bone heads on this trip. When we went to this last store and Glad and I were talking to the store-man about us finding Henry's house, I said it was on Low Mountain. Glad corrected me and said, "Short Mountain, Mae Delle." We all had a big laugh. Says I to myself, "What's the difference? Short means Low." But of course we did have to call it Short Mountain since the deed called it that.

We got back to the motel about sundown. It is now 10 o'clock and we must get to bed.



This is the photo I promised some time back of David Burkett, his second wife, Emma Phillips Burkett, and her daughter, Lessie. This is one of the photo's given to our Texas relatives by Lessie when they made their journey to Tennessee and met Lessie who adopted the name of Burkett and went by that name until she married. This excellent copy was provided to me by Margie LaJuana Goodwin Ivey.

Tuesday June 24, 1969

We all had a good nights rest and breakfast this morning at the Murfreesboro Motel where we are staying. We went to the courthouse to search for papers on Jacob and did not find one paper, deed, birth record, death record, not one thing with Jacob's name on it. After a delicious meal downtown, we went back to the motel and called Lessie who came and brought David's picture. Lessie went with us and we visited several old people that different ones advised us to see but learned nothing more. We went back to town, bid Lessie goodbye and left Murfreesboro about 3:30 o'clock headed for Arkansas.

I will cover this part of the trip from Murfreesboro to Arkansas and back home to Texas in an article in the next issue. In all, they were gone 9 days, were in 11 states and covered 2,452 miles — quite a trip. But if you read carefully what Mae Delle has written, it was a trip they all thoroughly enjoyed and probably talked about for a long time after they got home.

Footnotes Relating To The Trip -

¹ Refer back to Page 13 Column 2 first paragraph. I know of no relative with the name of Aught but it could have been "Aud" Burkett who was my grandfather and a grandnephew of David's.

² Refer back to Page 13 bottom of Column 2. This says that David and Emma married June 17, 1918 but also shows that Fannie, his first wife, did not die until December 27 of the same year, 1918. Obviously, one is incorrect.

³ Refer back to Page 13 bottom of Column 2. One birthdate is listed as February 10 and another is listed as February 20. Her tomb rock shows February 20.

⁴ Refer back to Page 13 bottom of Column 2. Her tomb rock spells the name as Lou Phemia instead of Lufemia.

⁵ Refer back to Page 14 Column 1. Published in Vol 3 1998.

Footnotes (continued from page 16)

⁶ Refer to Page 14 Column 1 3rd paragraph. I spoke with Margie LaJuana Goodwin Ivey after I spoke with Lessie and she is going to get with her sisters to see if these are in their Mother Mae Delle's papers.

⁷ Refer to Page 14 Column 2 under Monday June 23, 1969. StellaB referred more than one time to a son named Nathaniel but we have never found any proof that Henry and Polly ever had a son named Nathaniel. We feel this was an error on StellaB's part.

⁸ Refer to Page 15 Column 1 last paragraph and see Volume 3 1998 Page 7 where Audy and Sid also encountered those "jungle" and briar conditions.

⁹ Refer to Page 15 Column 2 Paragraph 2. This Gray Gunter was a great Uncle of the Shawn Gunter who escorted Audy, Sid, and Robert to visit the old Burkett home as reported in Vol 3 1998 page 8.

¹⁰ Refer to Page 15 Column 2 Paragraph 3. It seems doubtful that he remembered when James died since census records indicate that James and family had moved to Madison County, Arkansas in 1880.

¹¹ Refer to Page 15 Column 2 Paragraph 3. This appears to be an obvious mistake. This property was bought in 1863 and then sold only 4 months later. Henry did not die until 1875. Also, we have in our possession a document where David sold his interest in a 270 acre tract owned by his father Henry and in that document David claims his father died there on that 270 acre tract near Bradyville. ■



L to R - Edgar Lorenza Burkett, Gladys Burkett Hodges, Birdie Burkett Chambers, Mae Delle Burkett Goodwin, Anna Louisa Burkett Jackson. This was made at the tomb stone of Lavina and Infant, the first wife of Jacob. I first published this in Vol 4 1998 but did not know their identities. So here are 3 of the 4 who made the Tennessee trip. Mae Delle, second from the right, was the author.

Huntsville Reunion Date -

The reunion will again be the third Saturday of June which is June 19 so mark your calendar now and plan to attend. Due to the fact that heat has bothered some of our relatives, we are holding the reunion this year at the Meridianville Church of Christ which is just north of Huntsville on Highway 231/431 North. A detailed map will be included in the next issue of the Newsletter which you will receive well before the date. Arrangements to use the Church were made by Debbie Burkett Howard. There is plenty of parking and excellent facilities inside which is where we will be — air conditioning!! The facilities for serving food are also excellent so make your plans now. ■

Heredity: A Genealogy Poem

by

Grandpa Tucker*

(* not related to us)

I saw a duck the other day
It had the feet of my Aunt Faye.
Then it walked, was heading south
It waddled like my Uncle Ralph.

And when it turned I must propose
Its bill was formed like Aunt Jane's nose.
I thought, "Oh, no. It's just my luck
Someday I'll look just like a duck."

I sobbed to Mom about my fears,
And she said, "Honey, dry your tears.
You look like me, so walk with pride,
Those folks are from your Daddy's side."

submitted by Carma M. Brown carma@uni-sol.com to and previously published by RootsWeb Genealogical Data Cooperative RootsWeb Review Vol . 1, No 29, 30 December 1998. (This notice required in order to use the above poem)

Coming In The Next Issue -

Articles and photo's scheduled for the next issue will include:

Return to Texas - the conclusion of the trip by four Texas relatives to Tennessee in 1969 seeking information about our relatives.

Joseph Lafayette Burkett and friends - a photo many of you, including his descendants, have never seen.

A Williams Ranch Homestead - another photo many of you have never seen. This and the above photo courtesy of Debbie Lloyd.

The Daniel Epley, Sr. Family - a photo on the front porch of a Tennessee house which includes Mary 'Polly' Epley and Henry Burkett, Sr.

George Washington Burkett - a son of Henry and Polly Burkett and a brother of Jacob Lorenza. We found out he moved to Burlingame, Kansas which has a street 130 feet wide to allow oxen drawn wagons to turn around.

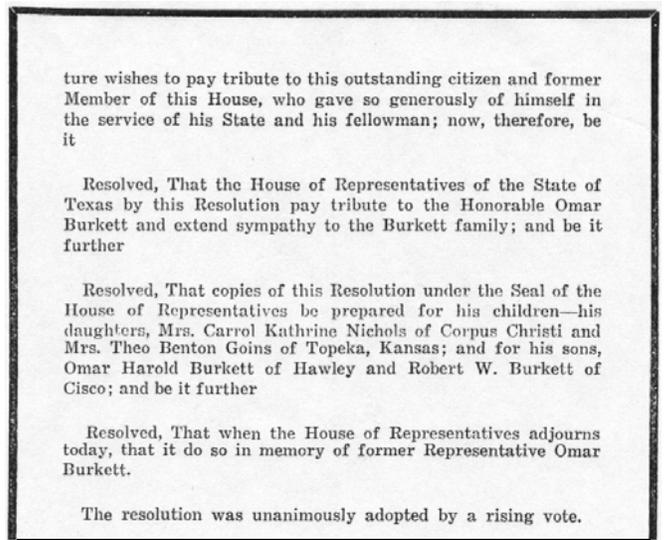
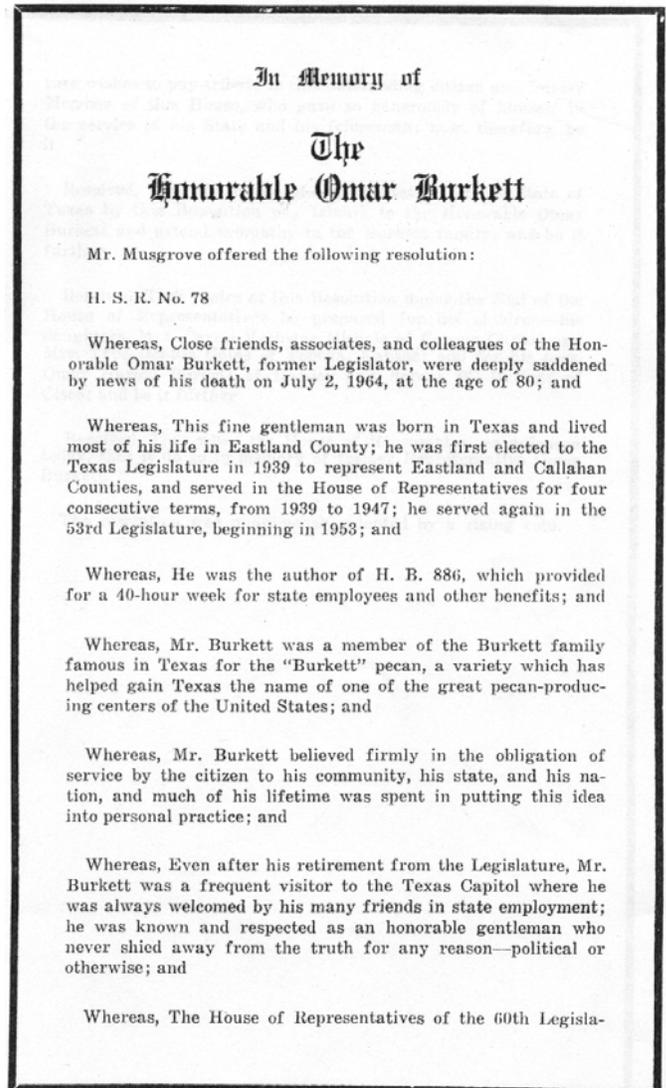
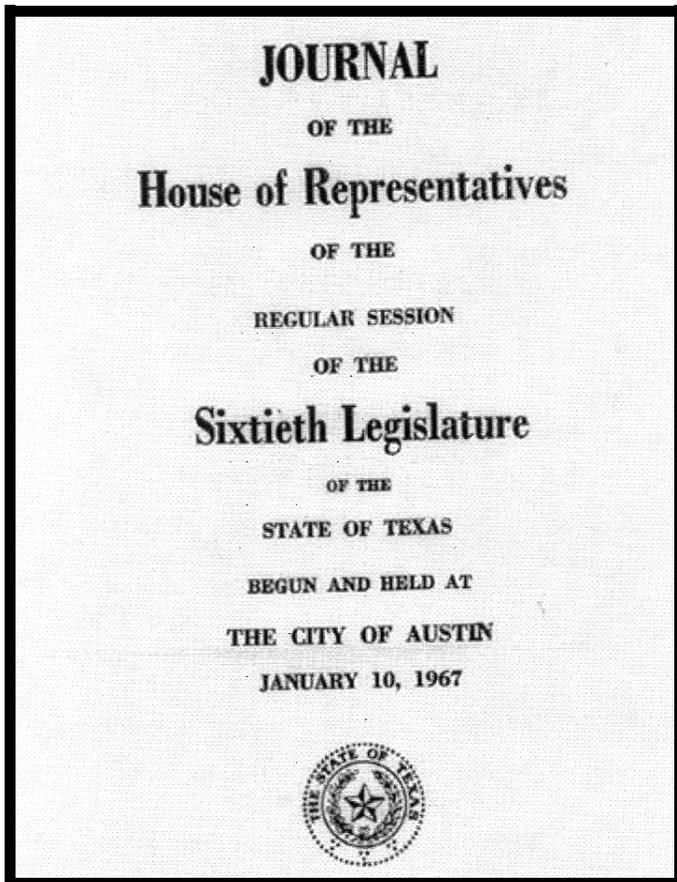
Omar H. Burkett -

In Volume 2 1998, photo's were published of Joseph Washington (Joe) Burkett and his wife Fanny Newell Pullig, and of Joe and his brother, Omar Henry. Now we have a photo of Omar and his wife, Katherine Benton Pulley, which was made at the same time. This photo is in the special insert section at the end of this issue.

This special insert on Omar Henry was prepared by Mary Katharine (Kaye) Burkett Johnston, a granddaughter of Omar and a daughter of Robert William Burkett. We recently made contact with Kaye and she has provided us with missing information about her family including this about her grandfather. I was especially delighted to hear from Kaye because my information did not indicate that Robert had any children and, as you will see, he had two.

This very informative and well written insert was prepared by Kaye and her daughter, Melanie, just for our Newsletter and contains a reference to a resolution by the Texas House of Representatives, a copy of which is shown below. And I think you will find it interesting as to how Omar went about getting his education and how he went about paying for it.

We thank Kaye for permission to use this copyrighted insert shown on the following four pages.



Have You Paid Your 1999 Dues?

The Historian's Corner -

Oliver Webb



First, I must apologize for the lateness of this issue even though it was beyond my control. This issue was scheduled to have been out the middle of last month but, unfortunately, I caught a virus which lasted 7 weeks and made it all but impossible to work on it. It was one of those weird ones which produced no fever, no aches, but left me weak and shaky in spite of the best efforts of my golf buddy/Doctor of 22 years. And yes, I took my flu shot last October. This isn't supposed to happen here in the land of sunshine! Anyway, I'm about 90% recovered and continue to make some progress daily. Glad to be back because I got way behind also on my email and snail mail.

We continue to locate relatives and information as indicated by the special insert in this issue. But it seems to be a double-edged sword. The more folks and the more information we collectively come up with, the busier I get which means I am not able to communicate with some of you as often as I used to — and I feel bad about that. However, I will continue to try my best so forgive me if I don't respond as promptly as I used to.

In publishing some of the stories and information about our relatives from time to time, there is bound to be some repetition. When articles come from different sources, they frequently contain some information not included in other articles but it isn't always possible to edit them. So just bear with me when you see this happen but I feel it is worth some repetition to have articles from different sources.

Last year when Audy Majors, Sid Huggins, and I made our trip to Texas, I wrote about our visit to the old homestead, orchard, and cemetery of James H. (Jim) Burkett in Clyde, Texas — and about our distress over the condition of the cemetery. I recently received a message from Dorthy Watson in Baird, Texas, that a group of Boy Scouts had selected the cleaning of the cemetery as an Eagle Scout project. They went in and removed some vines, raked leaves, and painted the fence surrounding the cemetery. This was good news and makes us feel better to know someone cleaned it. (Dorthy is in charge of the Burkett Pens, etc. described in an earlier article of this issue.)

After finishing the article in this issue about the 1969 Trip to Tennessee and after my conversation with Lessie Burkett Heath, the stepdaughter of David Burkett, I spoke with Margie LaJauna Goodwin Ivey, a daughter of Mae Delle who prepared

the trip account. I was interested to know if they had a copy of the letter written by Martha Jane Burkett Young in 1907 to her brother David. LaJuana did not know but agreed to talk with her sisters and others to see if it could be located along with any of the other items which Lessie spoke of as having been in David's bible. After that, I received a call from Helen Mayr to discuss this subject and Helen will also look for any of these items. Hopefully, some of them will turn up in the papers which were brought back from that Tennessee trip.

As a hobby, Kaye Burkett Johnston collects recipes and, although interested in any unique recipes, is especially interested in pecan pie recipes. If any of you have what you consider is a good pecan pie recipe and you are willing to share it, please send a copy to Kaye at her email address, KBurkett24@aol.com or mail to her at:

Katharine B. Johnston
P.O. Box 6164
Scottsdale, AZ 85261-6164

Also, how about sending me a copy and I will publish it in the Newsletter. Then you can obtain some Burkett Pecans as shown on page 6 and have some holiday Burkett pecan pies!

I hate to keep talking about money but that's what it takes to keep this going. I have had some response and some contributions which I really appreciate. In fact, were it not for the significant contributions made by a few, I would have had to almost bear the full expense of this issue. I published the following in Volume 4 1998:

1999 Newsletter Dues -

\$15.00 remains the amount of dues for next year. However, the expenses for this year were unusually heavy for photo's and postage and, for those who can afford it, any contribution over and above that will be much appreciated. The Dues not only covers the cost of printing and mailing the Newsletter but also accumulating the information and photo's. I would like to receive your Dues no later than March 1 in order to know how many copies of the Newsletter to prepare. Make your check payable to me and mail to the following address

Oliver Webb

15439 Lakeshore Villas Drive #77
Tampa, FL 33613-1326

However, I regret having to say that many, many of you have not paid your dues. This places a considerable financial burden on me and I am now at the point of simply having to remove those who have not paid. There are expenses which I have covered and continue to cover personally but I have had to discuss this in several issues and must now say that, if your dues are not received, your membership will be cancelled without further notice. The process of having to continually go back and remind so many is also time consuming and expensive.

For one final time, I ask that you bring your membership up to date. Your failure to do so will simply tell me you are no longer interested and you will be removed.

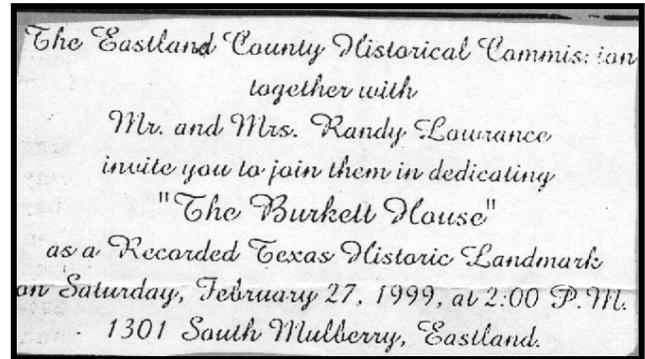
I will continue the Newsletter for those who have supported it. ■

More on The Burkett House -

In my rush to get this issue to you, I failed to mention the reason for featuring the Burkett House. It has been dedicated as a Texas Historical Site. To the right is a copy of the invitation sent out by the current owners and renovators, Randy and Kim Lowrance.

The street address is 1301 Mulberry Street in Eastland, Texas and, if you ever have the opportunity, you are invited to stop by and see this home and the marker on the front porch.

Below is the article and a photo of the event as taken from the Newspaper. ■



Cisco Press - Eastland Telegram - Ranger Times Sunday March 7, 1999

State Historical Marker Dedication At Burkett House

It was another milestone for Eastland County when a State Historical Marker was dedicated February 27 at the Burkett House, 1301 South Mulberry in Eastland.

The beautiful old home sits beside Highway 6 in the southwestern part of Eastland and it fronts on Mulberry Street. It is the home of Kim and Randy Lowrance and family.

On Saturday afternoon Ed Allcorn, Chairman of the Eastland County Historical Commission, opened the program by welcoming Commission members and recognizing special guests and members of the Lowrance family.

Among the guests were Judge Brad Stephenson, Judge Scott Bailey, and the Honorable James Keffer, State Representative.

After a prayer, Allcorn said, "The major public awareness of the County Historical Commission normally stems from the various historic markers and their dedication ceremonies throughout the state. There are many folks who travel through the state following a line of these historical markers. We are pleased today to dedicate yet another marker in Eastland County. After driving by this house for many years, it was only recently that I learned of its tie to the Burkett family. It was not until today that I found out the street I have been driving down is Burkett Street. In fact, until I read the marker history as printed in tomorrow's Eastland Telegram, I was also unaware of the family's prominent history in Eastland County and the state. I was aware of the pecan and the Burkett Pecan Tree and a little of its history."

Rep. James Keffer read the text which appears on the marker, giving the history of the House. He quoted:

"Joe Burkett, who with his father and brother discovered and cultivated the original Burkett Pecan Tree in 1900, was a schoolteacher, County Official and State Legislator. He and his wife, Fannye Pullig Burkett, built this home in 1919 and 1920. It originally included a large farm lot with outbuildings. The foursquare house was modified by new owners in the 1930's to reflect the romantic period revival styles popular in that era. The stucco finish, low hipped tile roof with overhanging eaves, front porch and porte cochere contribute to the home's Spanish Colonial revival appearance."



L to R - Randy Lowrance, Kim Lowrance, Judge Brad Stephenson, Judge Scott Bailey (Ret.) on the front porch

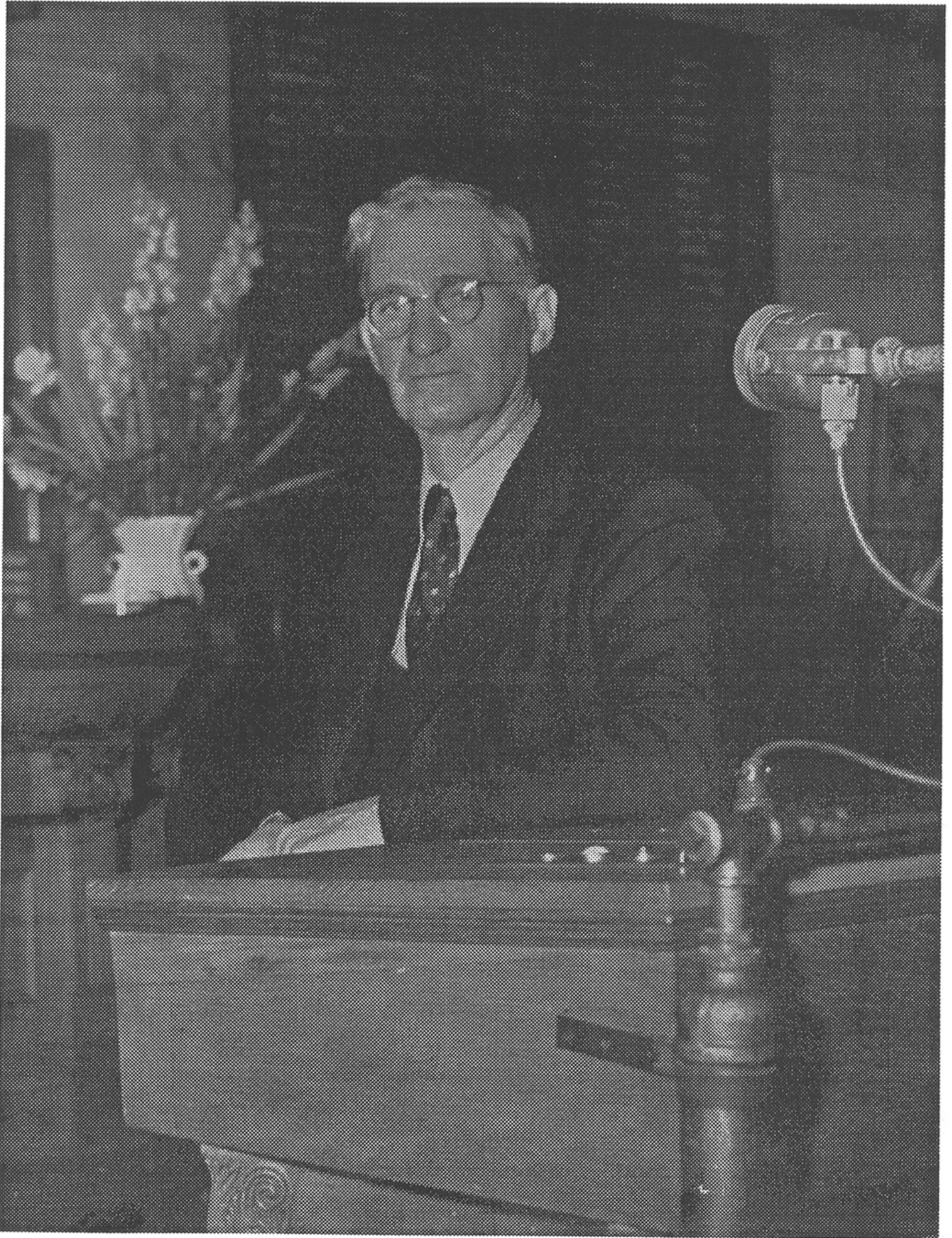
The Historical Marker was then unveiled on the porch. It consists of a bronze marker with the text. A medallion above the plaque is engraved with the State of Texas.

Judge Scott Bailey and Judge Stephenson each gave some comments. Judge Bailey told of the history of the Burkett family, and he reflected on the era this house symbolized.

Judge Stephenson said: "This is an absolutely gorgeous house! Kim and Randy have done a fabulous job of preserving this place in Eastland County history."

Guests remained for refreshments and a tour of the Burkett House. They found a warm and inviting family home with period furniture and handcrafted decorative items. ■

This information was provided by Margie LaJuana Goodwin Ivey and has had minor editing to fit this space. I have added an arrow pointing to the marker in the above photo.



OMAR HENRY BURKETT AT THE LECTERN OF THE TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 1941

INSERT ON OMAR HENRY BURKETT

Omar Henry Burkett was born 24 Sept. 1883, in Lampasas, Lampasas Co., Texas, the first child of the marriage of Samantha Victoria McAdams Nolley and James Henry Burkett.

A quiet man who preferred deeds to words, Omar began his career as a teacher and rose through public service to serve in the Texas State Legislature. There he authored the state's 40-hour work-week law, which, for the first time in Texas history, provided workers with vacation and sick leave pay.

Omar is one of the two Burkett brothers who discovered the pecan tree that would, through their father's horticultural work, yield the world-famous paper-shell variety known as the Burkett pecan.

Omar's mother Samantha was widowed with three children when she married James on 22 March 1882 at Lone Grove, Llano Co., Texas.

James H. Burkett farmed in Mills County, then moved his family to Coke County, where he went into the mercantile business. In addition to Omar's half-sisters, Sallie E. Nolley (b.1872) and Virginia Nolley (b.1874) and his half-brother Sam E. Nolley (b.1878) (Note: Nolley information courtesy of Gordon Cooper, Austin, Texas), Omar was joined by a brother, Joseph Washington (b.19 Oct 1885) and two sisters, Iru Ona (b.10 Apr 1888) and Katie Lee Opal (b.14 Aug 1891).

In the fall of 1891, the family moved to Eastland County. James farmed and the children went to school at the Moss Schoolhouse, a little less than 2 miles from their home. That year,

Omar (age 8) and Sam (age 13), picked cotton for 30 cents a hundred pounds. This was during an economic time when cotton in the bale was only 5 cents a pound. The following spring, in 1892, the boys hoed cotton, corn and other row crops from sunup until sundown for a neighbor, Mr. Sam Erwin. They were paid 25 cents a day each.



OMAR HENRY BURKETT &
KATHERINE BENTON PULLEY BURKETT
THE YEAR OF THEIR MARRIAGE, 1906

In December 1899, the brothers Omar and Joe were out hunting when they found several large round pecans in a cache made by squirrels or packrats on the north bank of Battle Creek.

When they showed their find to their father, he urged them to try to locate the tree where these nuts had grown. The next day, scouting up and down the creekbed, the boys found the tree in a sharp bend on the south bank of Battle Creek. Working with the assistance of Omar and Joe, James began the horticultural work in the spring of 1900 that would lead to his tenure as Chief of the Texas Dept. of Agriculture's Edible Nuts Division, and to the development of the Burkett pecan.

During the fall of 1899 and the school year of 1900-1901, Omar, Joe and one sister, Iru, attended school at Lone Pecan, about two miles away from their new farm home in Callahan County. At this time their father owned and operated a small newspaper in Clyde. Beginning in the school year of 1902, Omar was needed at home to help with the family's livelihood. Joe, Iru and sister Katie Lee Opal, continued their schooling.

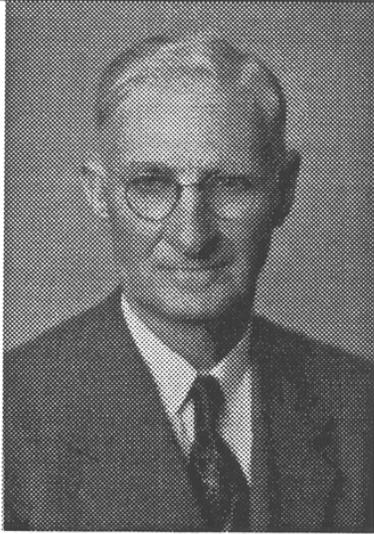
INSERT ON OMAR HENRY BURKETT

On Sept. 24, 1904, Omar was 21 and, not being interested in the newspaper business, had his own plans for his future. He first wanted to finish his schooling. The day after his birthday he went to Gorman, where the school year was just beginning. Omar picked cotton the last week in September, making \$21.75 for the week. He roomed in the home of the Ellis family, paying \$8 a month for his entire keep. Omar's \$21.75, together with the money he made working nights and weekends at the local cotton gin, tided him over financially until Jan. 1, 1905.

Home for the Christmas holidays, he found that finances for him to continue school could not be had locally. Returning to Gorman, he had a talk with J.F. and J.H. Hankins, twin brothers who were co-superintendents of the Gorman High School.

The Hankins brothers were fine educators, in Omar's eyes, who "looked solely to the human side of life and helped many, many boys and girls through school who had no finances nor any other help." They agreed to lend him the money he needed for room, board, and clothing, and for expenses to the county seat where he could take the examination for a teaching certificate at the end of his classes. The final bill when school ended, including the trip for the examination, amounted to \$77.25, every penny of which Omar repaid from his salary as a teacher at his first school at Young Springs, near Desdemona. His salary was \$50 a month. Omar spent a total of 13 years as a public school teacher in Callahan and Eastland Counties. He taught all subjects in all grades, from first grade through high school.

The receipt for \$77.25 was one of two pieces of paper Omar considered sources of particular pride.



The other was House Bill 886 of the 53rd Texas State Legislature, Texas' 40-hour work-week law, which he authored. Becoming effective Sept. 1, 1953, the bill mandated that Texas' hourly wage workers would now work a 5-day, 40-hour week. The bill also, for the first time, provided for vacation and sick leave pay. Omar's pride in being associated with this law was shown in the fact that he had his authorship of it inscribed on his tombstone.

His long career in government service began when he was elected Callahan County Commissioner

in 1910. He served four terms in this office before becoming Chief of Police in Eastland, Texas.

In 1906, he married Katherine Benton Pulley, (b. Sept. 17, 1890 in Cisco, Eastland Co., Texas). They had four children:

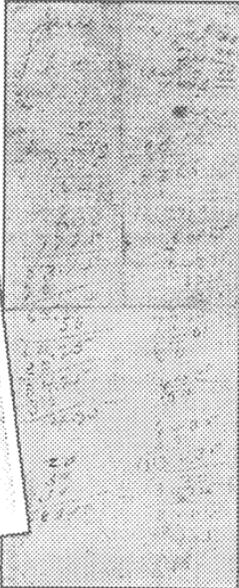
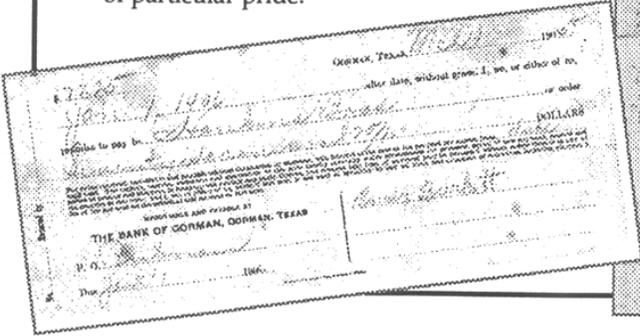
1) a daughter, Theo Benton, b. 26 June 1908, Cisco, Texas. Theo became a registered nurse, married and divorced Phillip Goins, had no children, and died 20 May 1972 in Topeka, Kansas, of lung cancer. She was employed at the time as an emergency medical technician. She is buried at



THEO BENTON BURKETT GOINS 1946

Lawnhaven Memorial Gardens in San Angelo, Texas. She was wryly funny, tall and slender, with luminous brown eyes and a headful of glossy black hair she always wore in a chignon.

2) a son, Omar Harold, b. 3 March 1912, in Cisco, Texas. He died 18 July 1987 in California. He worked as a pipefitter. His ashes were spread at the Burkett Family Cemetery in Clyde, Texas, in 1987. It is unknown whether he had any children.



OMAR CAREFULLY NOTED EACH PAYMENT ON THE BACK OF HIS LOAN DOCUMENT, UNTIL IT WAS PAID IN FULL.

INSERT ON OMAR HENRY BURKETT

KAYE BURKETT AT HER PIANO RECITAL, 1947



3) a son, Robert William, b. 27 March 1918 in Cisco, Texas. He worked in law enforcement all his life, after serving in the Navy in World War II. He was a game warden, a sheriff's deputy and a Justice of the Peace in Odessa, Texas. He secretly married Mary Frances Street 1 Jan. 1935, when both were 16 years old. Mary Frances was born 9 March 1918 in Bartlett, Texas. Since it was the height of the Depression and they were still in high school, they did not tell anyone about their marriage. They continued to live at their separate family homes until 1937, when Mary Frances became pregnant with their first daughter, Mary Katharine (Kaye). A second daughter, Brenda Frances, was born 22 Sept. 1941. Bob and Mary Frances were divorced in 1955. He died in Abilene, Texas, 10 May 1990. Mary Frances died in Eastland on 25 June 1990. They are both buried in Eastland Memorial Cemetery, Eastland, Texas.



THE ROBERT W. BURKETT FAMILY:
(L TO R) BRENDA, MARY FRANCES, BOB AND KAYE
1945

term of service, the 53rd Legislature, 1953-1955, that he authored the landmark 40-Hour Work-Week Law.

Omar was a friendly yet formal man. He never left the house without a coat and tie, although on the hottest summer day he might be seen with his suit coat draped over his arm. His grandchildren called him

"Pop." As a child from about age 5, Kaye would tag along with Pop as he walked around Eastland's town square handing out campaign literature and asking for votes. He carried a little mother-of-pearl handled pocket knife which he would pull out to peel a peach as he chatted with folks.

Katherine Benton, "Katie Ben," a beloved wife, mother and grandmother who always smelled like the big, puffy sugar cookies she loved to

4) a daughter, Carol Katherine. She was born in Cisco about 1930, married a man named Presley, by whom she had two daughters, Beverly and Rebecca. Her second marriage was to Charles Nichols. She is living in the San Angelo area at this time.

Omar joined the Masonic Lodge in Putnam in 1916, and at the time of his death was a 32nd Degree Mason. He was also a member of the Hella Shrine Temple of Dallas.

Next Omar served as Chief Supervisor of the Eastland District of the Texas Railroad Commission, a position he held for 15 years.

In 1938, he was elected to the Texas House of Representatives and continued in this position for three terms, serving in the 46th, 47th, and 48th Legislatures, from 1939 to 1944. On losing his next election, Omar went to work in the office of the State Comptroller as auditor. In 1953, the 76th District of Eastland, Callahan and Shackelford Counties sent Omar to the House of Representatives for a fourth term. It was during this last

bake, died in Eastland on 18 Dec. 1961. Omar died in Eastland on 2 July 1964. They are buried side by side in Eastland Memorial Cemetery, Eastland, Texas.



KAYE JOHNSTON AND HER DAUGHTER, MELANIE

*Written by Katharine Burkett Johnston from the notes and papers of her grandfather, Omar H. Burkett.
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