

The Genie



PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY

ARK-LA-TEX GENEALOGICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

P. O. BOX 4463
SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA 71134-0463

THE GENIE

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ARK-LA-TEX GENEALOGICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

P.O. Box 4463
Shreveport, Louisiana 71134-0463

The Ark-La-Tex Genealogical Association is a Section 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization incorporated in the State of Louisiana.

The purpose of this organization is:

- To collect, preserve and make available genealogical documents and records
- To encourage an interest in genealogy and to sponsor educational programs for its development
- To promote the Shreveport/Bossier City area as having significant resources for genealogical and historical research
- To compile and publish a quarterly publication, *The Genie*, composed of records of genealogical and historical importance, helpful research information, and ancestral queries.



The Ark-La-Tex Genealogical Association meets on the second Saturday of each month from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm at the Randle T. Moore Center, 3101 Fairfield Avenue, Shreveport, LA.

The membership year is from January 1 through December 31 and dues are \$20.00 annually for individual or same household family memberships. Dues for those members joining in the last half of the year (July 1 - December 31) are \$10.00. Membership renewals are due by January 31 at the "whole year" annual rate. Payment may be made online through PayPal, by regular mail, or at regular meetings. Refer to our website: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~laaltga/join.htm> for details.

Statement of Publication: *The Genie* is published on a quarterly basis and distributed electronically as a pdf document to members and subscribing institutions that have provided an email address. The Association also participates in an exchange agreement with other organizations that publish similar genealogical publications. Those publications that are received are donated to the Broadmoor Branch Genealogy Department of the Shreve Memorial Library.

We welcome family history and genealogy research articles and records, especially those that are likely to be of an interest to others. Some examples are family pedigree charts, cemetery surveys/records, family and community histories, and transcribed courthouse records. We also accept articles describing a genealogical "brick wall," as well as queries. All submitted material should be typed or very plainly written and sent to our mailing address or emailed to our editor. Please note that *The Genie* cannot be responsible for errors or inaccuracies, but will hasten to publish correction.

Copyright Laws: All who submit material from other sources should be aware of copyright restrictions. When articles are obtained from another source, permission should be obtained from the author, compiler, or owner of the material being submitted and a statement to that effect provided. Also, we encourage use of source citations when applicable.

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The President's Message

What a wonderful year we have had! In his Vice President's address, Reed has shared our varied programs with fascinating, informative speakers throughout the year. There has seemed to be a positive, receptive response to our attempts to keep our group aware of genealogy possibilities and positive responses are always well received! We are expecting to bring more genealogy awareness to you through News Blast emails, through our March "giving back to our members" event with Lisa Louise Cooke, through interesting speakers at our monthly meetings, as well as our always anticipated August seminar.

The special Christmas holiday monthly meeting in December was a joyous occasion. We had a terrific group of attendees to share in Debi Adderley's grand harp presentation, Phil Adderley's second "Probates" Horn Book session and the wonderful feast organized by Brenda Randall. The dishes prepared and shared were outstanding! Thank you to everyone who participated in our December program. I don't know how it could be improved upon!

The Education Committee has been very busy preparing for the arrival of Lisa Louise Cooke's Family History Day event. She tours around the country lecturing on her specialty, Google and genealogy, and how the two can work to the benefit of all genealogists. Our loyal members have supported Ark-La-Tex Genealogical Association for so long! The committee thought it would be good to honor our members with a ridiculously low cost (\$10.00) day of genealogy from such a well-known and energizing speaker. Non-member cost (\$20.00) is very low, too, so please set aside March 12, 2016, in your schedule for this Saturday special day.

With the controversies concerning Ancestry.com's new search system, and the fading support for Family Tree Maker program, many genealogists are a little frustrated these days. Those using these two historical standouts are investigating new websites to bring original documents to their computers and new software programs to manage their genealogy data. Another opportunity before us is to "give back" to the worldwide genealogy community this year with a transcription project through The National Archives. Check out <http://www.archives.gov/citizen-archivist/> which is the Citizen Activist Dashboard. You can explore this page or click on "Transcribe" and see how you can help put more original documents online for others to see and use. It is the beginning of a way to contribute to others using just a little bit or (or if desired, an abundance) of time. The "Indexing" option on www.familysearch.org has similar ways to volunteer for a great cause!

Possibilities abound! I am looking forward to another exciting year with all of you! This may be the year for you to write a page or two of memories, or to share research with our membership in *The Genie*. Please consider doing so! A number of members have made this somewhat of a habit after contributing one article. They often realize how exhilarating the process of writing can become and also the satisfaction of sharing with like-minded people what can be learned.

With the new year upon us, we seem to have more and more genealogy opportunities before us! We would love to have you join us in all of our endeavors. Happy New Year!!

Glenda Efferson Bernard

Vice President's Message

The last months of 2015 have been a great time for the Ark-La-Tex Genealogical Association. We have had some very interesting speakers for our meetings.

In October, Mary Lynn Wernet and Nolan Eller discussed the genealogical resources at the Cammie G. Henry Research Center at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches. The Research Center is located on the third floor of Watson Memorial Library. Ms. Wernet and Mr. Eller explained that the archives originated with Carmelite "Cammie" G. Henry's personal manuscript collection. By the 1930s, the Henry family had taken charge of Melrose plantation, which had been built by members of the Metoyer family, of mixed African and French ancestry, before the Civil War. The Henrys transformed Melrose into an artists' colony, offering refuge and support to many literary and artistic figures. A lover of Louisiana culture and history, Cammie Henry collected original manuscripts, (some dating back to the founding of Natchitoches) as well as rare books, and those of Louisiana authors. Her Melrose collection is still the largest and most valuable at the NSU archives.

The Cammie G. Research Center archives the Northwestern State University records, yearbooks, and publications. Researchers interested in any former student or faculty member of NSU will find information there. Other collections of interest to genealogists include those of James Aswell, the Cloutier Family, Robert DeBlieux, Caroline Dormon, the Egan Family, and the Federal Writers' Project. Marion Post Wolcott's Depression Era Images of Natchitoches Parish, Joe Delmon's photographic views of old Alexandria and photographic documentation of the 1927 Mississippi River flood offer amazing insights into these times and places.

There are also over 3,000 maps and a collection of recorded oral histories at the Cammie Henry Research Center. Original newspapers are available often in "full runs," although researchers are generally directed to microfilm versions to protect these fragile sources. The Melrose Imaging Project provides digital images of the Melrose collection to researchers to allow easier access and to preserve the valuable original documents. Ms. Wernet and Mr. Eller invited genealogical and historical researchers to visit them in Natchitoches to take advantage of these wonderful resources.

For our November meeting, John Agan spoke on "The Stories behind the Stones," presenting a history of the Minden Cemetery and relating the stories of many of the people buried there. Several years ago, Mr. Agan and fellow cemetery board member, Schelley Brown, developed a Ghost Walk Tour of the Minden Cemetery as a means of raising funds for maintenance. Costumed re-enactors stood by "their" graves and told their life stories for visitors. The Ghost Walk became an annual event held at the Minden Cemetery in conjunction with Veterans Day.

The first burial in the Minden Cemetery has probably been lost to history. Mrs. Mary A. Smith was re-interred there April 22, 1840, although her monument was most likely destroyed along with an unknown number of other markers by a 1933 tornado which hit Minden. This 1933 tornado that devastated much of the town is documented in John Agan's book *A Brief Account of the Tragic Year of 1933 in Minden, Louisiana*. The earliest dated tombstone in the Minden Cemetery is that of Sarah Emily Pennell who died September 13, 1843. The Minden Cemetery is the resting place of two U.S. representatives, four state representatives, a state senator from the 1950s, and twelve mayors who served since 1910. Mr. Agan told many stories concerning the occupants of the Minden Cemetery. Among the burials there was Hugh Wyllie, who was the step-great-grandfather of actress Ginnifer Goodwin, who stars as Snow White in the ABC fantasy series *Once Upon a Time*. This Goodwin-Wyllie connection surely would have gone unnoticed if the crew from the TLC series *Who Do You Think You Are?* had not shown up at the cemetery in the past year to film Hugh Wyllie's grave to present in the episode that dealt with Goodwin's family.

Our Hornbook sessions have been wonderful learning opportunities. In October, Sonja Webb recounted "Lila's Story," the very poignant history of Lila Hamilton from her book, *Noble Master, Noble Slave*. In November and December, Phil Adderley presented a two-part clinic, "Probates." Phil has a talent for

summarizing very involved legal processes and for detailing strategies for researching individual cases. He packs a lot of information into his presentations. Although I have not done a great job on my genealogical investigative skills, I feel that if I live long enough and stay close enough to Phil, I may be able someday to attempt his kind of diligence. These Hornbook sessions are now available through *The Genie*. Should you decide to read them, you will discover that they are excellent! They alone are worth much more than the price of membership in the Association.

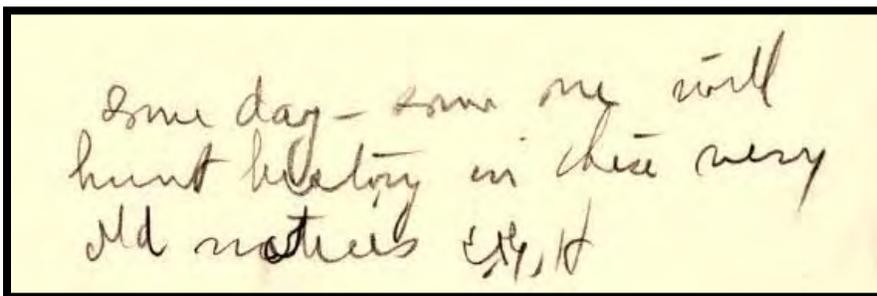
The December meeting was a grand event. The Association held its annual meeting in which two new trustees, Johnnie Covington and Mary Ann Heinsohn, were elected to the board. On behalf of the old board, I would like to welcome Johnnie and Mary Ann. Phil Adderley has graciously accepted the position of editor of *The Genie*. I know that he will do well in this very important position. Glenda Bernard presented "Learning from Genealogy: My Personal Story." She told the group that her father was born three weeks premature and was not expected to live. She spoke of her mother's struggle with tuberculosis. Sharing our stories is a basis for friendship, but it is more. Having learned these lessons, we as family historians really do feel compelled to testify. Debi Adderley played wonderful, holiday music on the harp as members and guests feasted on pot luck.

As I have stated before, I do like being the one who reports the activities of the Association. I do not get to attend many of the meetings, so it gets to be difficult for me. It has been suggested that I might have other contributions to make to *The Genie* that might be just as good or better. I could write about how to use the genealogy library at Shreve Memorial, for example. I might well shift to a slightly different kind of reporting in the future. I might do this reporting in addition to my current semiannual letters.

I think about the words that Cammie Henry wrote into one of her Melrose plantation scrapbooks: "Some day—some one will hunt history in these very old materials [*sic*]." The statement has the childish bravado of a high-school-yearbook prediction; however, she was into the real thing. Historians have pored over documents that she collected to great rewards. No one really knows what valuable information remains to be mined from her vast collection. In a very small way, we have done something similar in collecting information and setting it to paper and to magnetic media. Someday, someone may understand us and our world and make their world better because of our collecting and storing information.

I wish you all joy and health in the holidays and in the New Year. Stay curious.

Reed Mathews
Vice President



Some day - some one will hunt history in these very old materials C.G.H
(Note by Cammie G. Henry in a Melrose Scrapbook)

PERIODICAL EXCHANGE REVIEW

Compiled by Linda D. Scott

December 2015

The Ark-La-Tex Genealogical Association is part of an exchange program with other genealogical societies across the nation. The idea is to obtain newsletters and bulletins from these various societies in exchange for a copy of this association's publication, *The Genie*. This very successful endeavor benefits genealogists who visit the Broadmoor Branch of the Shreve Memorial Library in Shreveport, Louisiana. The items discussed in this article, along with many others, are found on a rotating magazine rack to one's right upon entering the Genealogy Department as well as on the shelf directly behind the rack.

The purpose of this article is to acquaint the reader with several publications which may be of interest in research. Generally speaking, one can find more data about the person of interest if research is covered in his locale before searching nationwide. For example, regional articles may provide an early church roster with just the name needed, while a magazine showcased to reach statewide readers may not include such detail.

This review highlights several exchange publications that are in the library at this time; however, future reviews will include a selection from the digital exchanges as well.

Numerous exchange copies have been deposited recently into the library's collection. Some interesting ones include:

The Louisiana Genealogical Register, Vol. LXI, #2, Summer 2015, published by Louisiana Genealogical & Historical Society. This 36-page volume has numerous stories, such as that of a store in Gonzales, Louisiana, Robbins's General Merchandise, which has an announcement of the Freedmen's Discovery Project, along with three rather long queries. There are two longer articles, "Family Ties Through DNA Testing" and "New Research Reveals Guidry's Exiled to North Carolina in 1756." The DNA article is especially interesting because it features an update to the 2nd quarter, 2006 issue, of the *Genie*, our journal of the ARK-LA-TEX Genealogical Association. The DNA of this African American Neal Family reveals ties to ancestors of Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, East Asia, Native America, and others.

Our Heritage, Vol.56, numbers 3 & 4, Spring and Summer 2015, published by San Antonio Genealogical and Historical Society, 84 pages. This periodical includes information on "Online Research at the Texas State Archives: A Tutorial," A Robert Cliendine's biography of "RC" Myers, and lastly, the story of the women of the Alamo. A member of the San Antonio society wrote an article about her favorite ancestor, Laura Dell Bell Fiendly. The author tells about her aunt's early life in Harrison County, West Virginia, her marriage to James Findley, her

religious beliefs, and the frugal life style she lived. The author, Julia B. George, concludes the article with 41 endnotes. I think you would enjoy reading this lengthy newsletter.

The Coweta Courier, Vol. 34, number 1, Spring 2015, published by Coweta County Genealogical Society, 24 pages. In this periodical, you will find articles such as "Tidbits" from the local newspaper, "The Newnan Herald," written in 1919, transcriptions of "Coweta County Deed Book A," pages 370-376, and excerpts and pictures from the family Bible of Rufus and Mattie Hendrick Miller. You can also see pictures of the Millers' Bible. There is an unusual listing of death recordings of surnames from "Hill to Holiday," which includes cause of death and other death information.

To Whom It May Concern!

I went searching for an ancestor, I cannot find him still.
He moved around from place to place, and didn't leave a will.
He married where a courthouse burned, he mended all his fences.
He avoided any man who came to take the U. S. Census.

He always kept his luggage packed, this man who had no fame.
And every 20 years or so, this rascal changed his name.
His parents came from Europe, they should be on some list.
Of passengers to the USA, but somehow they got missed.

And no one else in this world is searching for this man.
So I'm playing "Gene-Solitaire," to find him if I can.
I'm told he's buried in a plot, with tombstone he was blessed.
But the weather took the engraving, and vandals took the rest.

He died before the county clerks decided to keep records.
No family Bible has emerged, in spite of all my efforts.
To top it off, this ancestor, who's caused me so many groans.
Just to give me one more pain, betrothed a girl named JONES.

By Merrell Kenworthy

Parish Research Guides for Caddo Parish, Louisiana

Contributed by Glenda Efferson Bernard

Le Raconteur is published quarterly by the Louisiana State Archives. The articles below can be accessed by purchasing them from the archives or by obtaining a copy in your local genealogy library. Shreve Memorial Broadmoor has a complete set of *Le Raconteur* from its inception in 1978.ⁱ

If you would like to order a copy of the publication which holds any of the following articles, note the issue, the price and the total for each request along with your name, address, city, state and zip code. All issues April 2003-December 2011 are \$5.00 each. All issues March 2012-December 2014 are \$7.00 each with the postage included in the price. Send orders to Le Comite des Archives, P. O. Box 1547, Baton Rouge, LA 70821.

***Le Raconteur* articles which include information about Caddo Parish, Louisiana, from their Parish Research Guide Collection are:**

The Reids from Angus County, Scotland, to Caddo Parish, La. (1987 Annual, p. 42) *

Coroners for the State of Louisiana, 1866-1870 (vol. XI, nos. 3, 4, Dec. 1991, p. 94)

Louisiana Graduates of the George Washington University from 1824 to 1937 (vol. XII, no. 1, Apr. 1992, p. 18) *

1868 Coroners (vol. XV, no. 1, Apr. 1995, p. 38) *

Miscellaneous Court Documents (vol. XV, no. 2, Aug. 1995, p. 87) *

Native Americans on the 1870 Louisiana Census (vol. XX, no. 2, Aug. 2000, p. 114) *

Shreveport Sexton's Reports, 1862-1869 (vol. XXII, no. 2, Aug. 2002, p. 91) *

1862 Caddo Survey Map (vol. XXII, no. 2, Aug. 2002, p. 113)

Caddo Marriage Indexes On-Line (vol. XXV, no. 3, Sept. 2005, p. 208)

Index to Physicians' Registered Certificates, State of Louisiana, 1894-1908 (vol. XXVII, no. 4, Dec. 2007, p. 225)

Sudie Norman's 1874 Letter from Caddo Parish (vol. XXX, no. 2, June 2010, p. 116)

The Millings of Caddo/Bossier in 1884 (vol. XXXI, no. 4, Dec. 2011, p. 72)

Register of Sick and Wounded at Shreveport Freedmen's Bureau Hospital, 1865-1868, Part 1 (vol. XXXIV, no. 2, June 2014, p. 73)

ⁱ The asterisk (*) following several of the articles indicates that the article can be freely accessed digitally by members of the archives directly from the "Members Only" section of the website, www.lecomite.org.

William St Clair Query

I am searching for the date and circumstances of the death of William ST CLAIR (c1821-aft 1887?). His naturalization papers indicate that he was born in Scotland, arrived in the United States in 1840 in New Orleans, Louisiana, and was naturalized there in 1868. He married Irish born Margaret MOORE (c1828-1876) in Mobile, AL, 1850. Two children were born to the union: John William, (1851-1910) born in St Louis, MO, and Mary Jane (1854-1932) born in Louisiana according to federal census records. Mary told the family that her parents, William ST CLAIR and Margaret MOORE, met on a boat coming to America and that they died when she was about 6 years old. Mary also stated that she lived with a family who owned a bakery in New Orleans. Truly, Mary was documented as a domestic servant, age 16, in the household of William SMITH in New Orleans, a baker, from Scotland in the 1870 census.

William nor Margaret can be identified in any U.S. federal census for any year. There is a handwritten notation on their 1850 marriage license which states that "Mary's mother died October 17, 1876." This fact is yet to be corroborated. William is thought to have been a seaman and a ship carpenter. There were numerous William ST CLAIRS strewn throughout the central United States along the Mississippi River. A William ST CLAIR was living in and out of New Orleans from 1867 until he no longer appeared in their city directories after 1877. Interestingly the majority of articles found in newspapers of cities all along the central U. S. waterways during his lifetime, described a William ST CLAIR who was often accused of burglary, larceny or even one account of mutiny. Was William ST CLAIR, father of John and Mary, one of these Williams? I am searching for the date and death account of William ST CLAIR who was father to these two children, John William and Mary. Other questions arise: Why was Mary left with the Smiths if her parents were alive? If John and Mary's parents were dead when Mary was six years old (about 1860), why was a notation of Mary's mother's death in 1876 on the original marriage license? Did William ST CLAIR along with his wife, Margaret, really die about 1860 as Mary stated to her family?

William and Margaret Moore ST CLAIR were my great, great grandparents. Their daughter, Mary Jane ST CLAIR SIMEON was my great grandmother. Her daughter, Mary Margaret SIMEON EFFERSON was my grandmother. Any others researching the ST CLAIR and SIMEON families are welcome to contact me at the address below. All comments or suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

Glenda Efferson Bernard
November 2015
glenda646@gmail.com

Correction: This is a correction to page 42 of *The Genie*, Vol. 49, No. 3. The name listed after number 704 should have been William Holt (not Bolt).

From the files....

Contributed by Brenda Custer Randall

“The South-Western,” Shreveport, LA, April 23, 1856

1856/04/23—The Oldest Man Dead! “Doctor Jim”, a well-known colored man in this parish, aged upward of 125 years, died in this place on last Saturday morning. The old man boasted much of having been the play-fellow of General Washington, and could relate many circumstances connected with the American Revolution. He was perfectly familiar with the names of the ancient families about Fredericksburg, Virginia, such as: Spottswood, Dangerfield, Thornton, Lewis, Willis, Barton, Throckmorton, French, Wellford, Chew, Fitzhugh and others. Dr. Jim retained, until the day before his death, the full use of all his faculties, and walked several miles daily and often spoke of getting a young wife.

“The South-Western,” May 20, 1868

1868/05/20—(Texas Item, Hunt County) The Greenville Independent of the 2nd inst. Contained the following affair: “Mr. Joseph Caldwell, one of our patrons and a very nice genteel, intelligent man, so far as our acquaintance extends, while returning from Greenville to his home, some ten miles in the country, on Monday last, met and shot and killed a Mr. Graham, one of his neighbors. We have not learned the cause of the difficulty, and forebear any comments until the matter has been investigated.” We learn on going to press that Caldwell, after killing Graham, made his escape and has since been lying in the brush. On Thursday, a young man by the name of Ledbetter, and who was an enemy of Caldwell, though no way connected with the other difficulty, was waylaid and shot at by Caldwell. That looks like vengeance, and it is said Caldwell intends to kill all his enemies thus, “if it takes all summer.”

“The South-Western,” February 26, 1868

1868/02/26—Murderous Indian Raid into Cook County: We copy the following letter from Paris (Texas) Press of the 25th ult.: Grainsville, January 12, 1868, Editor Dallas Herald: Sir—It becomes a painful necessity to chronicle another bloody raid into this county by the Indians, one of the most daring that has occurred on this frontier. On Sunday, the 5th inst., about one hundred Indians struck Clear Creek. They began to steal horses, and plunder and burn houses. During Sunday and Monday they killed a Mr. Long, a young man named Leatherwood, Mr. Menasco and it is supposed Mrs. Carrollton, who is missing. Mr. Thomas Fitzpatrick and his wife, Arthur Parkhill and three of Mr. Fitzpatrick’s children were captured; also Miss Carrollton and Mrs. Edward Shegog, daughter of Mr. Menasco. They searched and plundered three houses on Clear Creek. They then came down the creek gathering stock. Near Mr. Davidson’s, Mr. Edward Shegog and some sixteen or seventeen men fired on them in the night, and Miss Carrollton escaped, making her way along the overland route to Mr. Davidson’s the next morning in the storm. The Indians killed Mrs. Shegog’s infant child soon after capturing her. They came down to Elm and halted for three hours, about three hundred yards from Mr. Sam Doss’s and about a mile and a half from Gainsville. Here Mrs. Shegog escaped and made her way to Mr. Doss’s about daylight. While camped there they sent parties around Gainsville, one of which passed through the town after moon set, as moccasins and other apparel were found in town next morning, and their loose ponies were seen on the square as early as eleven o’clock at night, but no one thought of Indians. A party below town stole Mr. Gilbert’s horses and hot on in the bed of Elm, near Gainsville, they

also killed three horses of Mr. St. Clare Jones, on Scott's Creek. A party camped and actually made a fire above town within three-quarters of a mile of the public square. One of their ponies was at the livery stable next morning. They cut off Mrs. Shegog's hair and stripped her of clothing. She says while they stopped near town they were continually driving the horses. These are hasty facts in the case, and we fear that the half is not told. I shall send a detailed account to the Courier next week. What are we of the frontier to do? If we are left to the broken faith of Indian treaties to shield us from those murdering, thieving fiends, our county is ruined, and if we are not outside of the precincts of mercy, it is time we're realising the defensive power of the military, in its protection of one of the most loyal districts of the state. It is to be hoped that the publication of authentic statements of Indian raids on the frontier will call General Hancock's attention to our unfortunate situation soon and give us efficient protection. Yours, W. F. G. Weaver.

"The Shreveport Times," 26 April 1873

April 25, 1873—Died at his residence, six miles from Shreveport, yesterday at 5 o'clock, Dr. Ferdinand Cavender, aged 45 years. The friends and acquaintances of the family are invited to attend his funeral at Summer Grove, this evening at 3 o'clock.

NOTE: What follows is a summary of what happened to Dr. Cavender just prior to his death. To read the entire story, go to [Find A Grave memorial #151452498](#). Its importance to us as researchers lies in the fact that his death certificate likely shows cause of death to be "emphysema", which by no means tells "the rest of the story".

On the morning of 22 April 1873, Dr. Cavender was sitting on his front porch when a bull entered his yard. Dr. Cavender went toward the bull to shoo it away but the bull charged instead into the doctor. First reports stated that doctor had been gored in the bowels and tossed several feet into the air. Subsequent reports from Dr.'s Snell and Ashton stated that horns did not penetrate but force of the blow(s) broke several or all ribs on right side and one broken rib punctured right lung, thus allowing the air to escape into the tissues, causing condition known as "emphysema". While this was technical cause of death, Dr. Cavender died from encounter with the bull, not from potentially genetic lung disorder.

"The Daily Leader," Ruston, LA. 12 Feb 1930

LOUISIANA KLAN CHIEF DIES IN SHREVEPORT: (February 10, 1930) U. S. Myer, 45, imperial klexter of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, died here early today after an illness of three months. Myers, who was a local jeweler, has been active in national and local Klan activities.

DALLAS COUNTY, ALABAMA: Marriage Records, 1818-1845, page 31: John Brantley to Sarah Minter, 24 Jul 1820. (NOTE: Based on Find A Grave, these could be the parents of John H. Brantley, b. 22 Dec 1920, d. 4 Jan 1978, in Flomaton, Escambia County, AL.)

UNION PARISH, LA PROBATE RECORDS, Farmerville, LA 1839-1847:

John N. Milling, dec'd, late of Ouachita Parish, Louisiana; wife, Sarah; inventory ordered 13 Sep 1840. Wm. C. Carr, James H. Seals. (Book A, pp. 71-76; Succession of John N. Milling)

“Guardian Journal,” Homer, LA, on 07 Jan 1903:

An awful tragedy occurred between two brothers, Will and Sam Miller, four miles north of Gibsland last Friday. It seems that the brothers had previously had a falling out and a fight over the moving of a Negro. Friday Sam Miller visited his brother’s place for some purpose when the trouble was renewed, and Will used a shotgun with terrible effect on his brother Sam. The charge of no. 7 shot took effect in the face, neck and chest and inflicted ghastly wounds. The injured man has been conveyed to the sanitarium at Shreveport and very little hope is entertained of his recovery. The other brother has not been arrested at last accounts.

“The South-Western,” Shreveport, LA, 23 Jan 1867

Homicide: On Friday, the 4th inst., an encounter occurred in Arcadia between Mr. Thomas H. Jones, a citizen of Bienville Parish, and Mr. Murphy. We have heard several versions of the affair and therefore cannot give the particulars, but it seems that bad feelings had grown up between Jones, a brother of the deceased, who in company with Frank was accosted by Jones for a settlement of their difficulties on the day of the tragedy, and in the fight which ensued, Frank received a pistol shot wound through the lungs from Jones, and expired in a few moments. Jones surrendered himself for trial and underwent a preliminary examination, but after a hearing lasting for three days before the sitting magistrate, he was discharged. This Thomas H. Jones is the same who wrote a letter to Gov. Wells some months since, and with documents, it will be remembered, as it went the rounds of the press and attracted considerable attention at the time. Owing to the relative positions of the parties, the affair has aroused much feeling through the neighborhoods. (*Minden Sentiment*)

NOTE: Above article was published 23 Jan 1867 in “The South-Western,” Shreveport, LA. It is a follow-up to death notice published 09 Jan 1867 in the same newspaper. An additional article was published 10 Jan 1867 in “The Ouachita Telegraph,” Monroe, LA, and reads as follows:

Thomas H. Jones, of Bienville Parish, we are informed, killed Frank Murphy near Arcadia, a few days ago. The difficulty arose from an angry dispute between Jones’ son and a brother of Murphy’s. Murphy, it is stated, fired the first shot and missed. Jones then fired with a similar result, but firing a second time, the shot took effect, penetrating his antagonist’s heart.

“The South-Western.” Shreveport, LA, 30 Oct 1867

NEW ORLEANS TYPOGRAPHICAL UNION—1867/10/30: *The Picayune*, of the 19th, says this body, which is composed of the printers of New Orleans, though not strictly a benevolent society, has performed many acts of charity during the present season. The society has suffered very severely from the epidemic, thirteen members having died there from. They are R. M. Hiter, H. R. Maxwell, G. S. Leonard, W. H. F. Pound, J. C. Abbott, W. J. Hannah, F. J. Winter, John J. Ackerly, T. J. Edwards, S. P. Craig, M. S. Cunningham, J. G. Henry, and John A. Glenn.

“Claiborne Guardian,” Homer, LA on 12 Sept 1877:

S. J. Mims, the Postmaster at Buckhorn, 14 miles south of Minden, has been arrested and charged with robbing the mails and with forgery. He was arrested by Deputy U. S. Marshall Dewing of Shreveport. Proof is said to be very conclusive.

“Shreveport Times.” 18 May 1873

DISSOLUTION NOTICE—The co-partnership, heretofore, existing between William H. Marshall and John W. Bateman, as wholesale grocers and tobacco merchants, at Nos. 16 and 17 Levee street, doing business under the firm name of Marshall and Bateman, is this day dissolved by mutual consent. Wm. M. Marshall is continuing the business and assuming all liabilities against the firm.

“The South-Western,” Shreveport, LA on 04 Oct 1854:

A difficulty recently occurred at Carthage, Panola County, Texas, growing out of the contested election between a Mr. Scruggs and Mr. J. H. Anderson, in which deadly weapons were freely used. The particulars have not reached us, but we understand that Mr. Jonas Miller was killed, and a Mr. Turner, a merchant in Carthage, was shot through the thigh. It is reported that some five or six others were slightly wounded.

“The South-Western,” Shreveport, LA 10 June 1868

STEAMBOAT BEN. McCULLOCH BURNED: On the night of the 26th of May, 1868, the steamboat Ben. McCulloch's 142 tons, running as a packet between Trenton and Camden, connecting with the Vicksburg at the former place, was burned to the water's edge and sunk at Roland's raft, 75 miles above Trenton, and 48 miles above Bayou Bartholomew. She had been making her trips in day-time and was laid up at the time of her burning, and had been for some hours previous to the fire being discovered. She had the freight and passengers of the last trip of the Vicksburg. She had on board at the time thirteen passengers, nine men, three white ladies and one colored woman. Mrs. and Miss Ryan, of Talladega, Alabama, and Col. Scott, of Hamburg, Arkansas, were lost. Miss Ryan was burnt on the boat; her mother was drowned. Col. Scott drowned in trying to save his daughter, which he did. When Captain Sinclair and the engineer first saw the fire the whole forward part of her was burning, and they with much difficulty got the two boats loose, put the passengers in, and started them in the woods, while the officers, deckhands, and firemen looked out for themselves and had to swim to the trees, climb and remain there the balance of the night, while the passengers enjoyed their berths in the yawls below. The water at this point was about 12 feet over the banks, and early the next morning, the passengers were started down the river. The deckhands and firemen made a raft out of the drift logs to convey themselves to a more inviting, less damp and fertile portion of God's creation. Captain Sinclair paid \$6000 for her a short time, and a few weeks ago, he insured her for \$1000. The captain, clerk, engineer and watchman came to Monroe on the 27th and entered a protest before Recorder Delery. She proved to be a complete and total loss; neither officers nor passengers saved anything but what they had or could hastily get on their persons. The captain has gone to New Orleans to get another boat to put in the same trade, and we have no doubt that he will get assistance from those interested in the trade and another to answer the requirements. (Officers of the boat from another article—James D. Sinclair, Master; T. C. Wilson, Engineer; John H. Polk, Pilot; John A. Walmus, Watchman.)

Original Docs Online Without Paying a Dime!

Presented to the Ark-La-Tex Genealogical Association's Monthly Meeting 11 July 2015

by Glenda Efferson Bernard

Locating copies of original documents online has become somewhat easier in the last year or two. To find them on free sites can be challenging, but not impossible. This is great news for genealogists... around the world! Original documents are far superior to transcriptions in that they are just that...original. Transcriptions are documents which are copied by someone and can include human error. Sometimes they are copied by hand or are typewritten and found online, in a book, newspaper or in other publication. Who would not want to have a copy of the original document in hand rather than a copy of something "second-hand?"

Three popular websites which allow genealogists to search for and obtain free copies of the original document are:

- **www.familysearch.org** has a huge, world-wide collection of original documents
- **www.chroniclingamerica.org** is a part of the Library of Congress website and makes research in newspapers available for many small and large cities alike.
- The Library Edition of MyHeritage.com found at **www.shreve-lib.org** is freely available to patrons of Shreve Memorial Library within their homes by using a library card.

Many other libraries in the country make similar offers. For those living outside of the Shreve Memorial Library area, check with your local librarian to see if a free remote connection to the Library Edition of MyHeritage is available. If so, instructions are probably as easy to connect with a library card as it is with Shreve Memorial. The Library Edition is said to be superior to the free MyHeritage.

A step by step approach to access original documents for these three sites can be found below:

www.familysearch.org

1. Set up a free account with a user name and password.
2. Click on "Search," then "Records."
3. I prefer to search by **location**, however, you can begin with filling in the Historical Record Search if you would like. For location, click on the continent of choice to search.
4. Click on the United States and then the state to search. Click on "start searching in 'Louisiana' (or your choice of a state to search)." All states are available and have different offerings.

5. The first screen that appears is “Louisiana Indexed Historical Records.” You can search this option, but realize that only a very small percentage of familysearch records are indexed!
6. For a greater percentage of available original records, scroll down the page to “Louisiana (or Mississippi or Iowa, etc.) Image Only Historical Records.” Be sure to look for options which begin with the state name rather than “United States...” for more targeted results. Click one of the many options whose dates best fit your ancestor to search.
7. **To see examples** in Louisiana:
 - a. click on “Louisiana World War I Service Records.”
 - b. Click on “Browse through 27,210 images.”
 - c. A list of all Louisiana parishes appears. Click on parish of interest.
 - d. In blue, at the top portion of the screen, you will see Louisiana WWI Service Records 1917-1920 > (Name of parish)- <Image (empty box) of 170>. Make a guess based on the first letter of the surname as to which number of images you would like to see. Guess a number (in this case, out of 170 images) and type that number into the Image box. If you are looking for “Babin,” you would select a lower number than “Williams.” This is all trial and error. Keep guessing image numbers until your surname appears-if it is in the collection at all.
8. If a document appears in which the information for your ancestor is typed, scroll further down the page to see if a copy of the original handwritten copy may appear. Remember, you are looking for a copy of the original document.
9. You can print or download to your computer and save the image.

www.chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/

(Click [here](#) to download a PDF guide on how to maneuver the Chronicling America site. Despite its name, the directions do not relate to the state of Iowa.)

1. You can click on “Search Pages.”
 1. Choose your state.
 2. Leave the years you see or select your own.
 3. Enter one or more search terms.
 4. Hit search and then on the next screen select the name of one of the newspapers under the sample page.
 5. Click near the red highlights to try to find an article you would like to read.
 6. If you want to look at other pages in this issue, click the “pages” arrows or the “image” arrow in the top bar above the newspaper page.
 7. Hit pdf in the top bar if you want to more easily read the page.
 8. If you find an article you want to print or download, zoom into the article. Notice the red framed box in the top corner of the page. Click the scissors logo in the top bar. A new screen will appear of the article you selected and you can click an option to print or to download.

To search with **advanced search**:

1. Click on the Advanced Search tab in the top bar on the opening site page.
2. Choose the state or a specific newspaper and the years desired.
3. With advanced search, you can choose how you search with 4 options. (I usually choose "...with the phrase.")
4. Hit search and follow the same procedure as above in the Search Pages tab.

To search by **state and name of newspaper**, click "All Digitized Newspapers" in the top bar on the opening site page.

To search by **ethnicity** in "All Digitized Newspapers" Advanced Search, click on the drop down and choose Hispanic, African American, etc. and only papers printed for that particular ethnicity appear.

www.shreve-lib.org to MyHeritage

This address will get you to the Library Edition of MyHeritage.

1. Go to www.shreve-lib.org to open Shreve Memorial Library's website.
 - a. Hover over "Services" on the left side of the top bar.
 - b. Click on "Genealogy" under Branch Services in the left column.
 - c. Click "MyHeritage"
 - d. Put in your library card number in this log in screen and click "login"
 - e. The EBSCO screen appears with MyHeritage written twice side by side. Click the **second** "MyHeritage."
2. You can search in 3 separate places on the first screen: Historical Records, Location and Categories.
3. To search by location, click on a continent of interest on the map.
4. In the U. S., a screen appears with all states. Click the state of interest. (I used Louisiana as an example)
 - a. You can enter date in regular search or advanced search OR
 - b. You can go directly to a collection (note the listing on the right side of the page).
 - I. I chose: "Louisiana-First Registration Draft Cards, 1940-1945" and did not enter search information on this screen.
 - i. Again, you can choose regular search or advanced search in this draft card collection. Notice applicable birth dates in the description of the set of cards at the top.
 - ii. Fill in search info and hit search. Results will appear.
 - iii. Scroll down to the original document copy. Click on full screen mode and to print, hit the tiny "printer" icon next to the "Exit Full Screen" box in the top right corner.

Submitted by Brenda Randall based on obituary information gathered by Friends of Genealogy.

LOUISIANA SOLDIERS IN ELMWOOD CEMETERY

Memphis (Shelby County) Tennessee – 1868

Published 20 May 1868 in *The South-Western*, Shreveport, LA

“LOUISIANA DEAD AT MEMPHIS: The New Orleans *Picayune* is indebted to Mr. Henry Wood, of Memphis, for the following list of Louisiana soldiers whose remains now lie in Elmwood Cemetery, in that city, and whose graves were decorated by the ladies of the city on commemoration day, the 2nd inst. The list is furnished for the benefit of relatives who may yet be in doubt as to the fate of their lost kindred. Louisiana papers are earnestly requested to copy the list.

Anderson, E., 12th La. Regiment;
 Bezer, J., La Mounted Rangers;
 Barker, Jas, Looney’s Regiment;
 Brown, Geo., 12th La. Regiment;
 Clair, Jno., 21st La. Regiment;
 Collins, Thos., 13th La. Regiment;
 Cuny, J. E., 12th La. Regiment;
 Daly, Wm. L., 25th La. Regiment;
 Fort, Peter, La. Volunteers;
 Gangrion, Jack, 21st La. Regiment;
 Hardee, G. W., 12th La. Regiment;
 Hutto, Thos., 25th La. Regiment;
 Lambright, L., 12th La. Regiment;
 Land, Wm., 12th La. Regiment;
 Lee, Richard, 12th La. Regiment;
 McClanahan, W. J., 21st La. Regiment;
 McClusky, W. P., 21st La. Regiment;
 McCormick, Pat., 11th La. Regiment;
 McCaghan, Jas., 12th La. Regiment;
 Nelson, C., 21st La. Regiment;
 Peeples, John H., 12th La. Regiment;
 Ryburn, John, 21st La. Regiment, Co. L.;
 Peason, __, 12th La. Regiment;
 Peak, J. T., 25th La. Regiment;
 Simpson, John H., 5th La. Battalion, Co. G;
 Sharpling, Lem, 1st Regiment, Co. G;
 Seemes, George W., 25th La. Regiment, Co. H;
 Smith, Robert, 25th La. Regiment, Co. E;
 Vours, J., 12th Regiment, La. Vols;
 Whitecarver, F., 25th La. Vols.;
 Walker, J. A., 12th La. Regiment.”

NOTE: Elmwood Cemetery appears to have a separate area, called “Confederate Soldiers Rest Area” for these 31 soldiers. Eleven were already posted in Find A Grave (www.findagrave.com), some with additional data and/or corrections to the names, and I added the others.



Confederate Soldiers' Monument at Elmwood Cemetery, Memphis, Tennessee

Photo was taken 20 Nov 2010 by Dee Burris Blakley and used with permission, The [website](#) also contains interesting information about the cemetery and other photos.

MRS. JURETTA HOLMAN MILTON FORT

by Isabelle M. Woods



**MRS. JURETTA
HOLMAN
MILTON FORT**

Mrs. Juretta Holman Milton Fort celebrated her 106th birthday on December 26, 2015. She has enjoyed a longevity many persons envy. Mrs. Fort has also been blessed to have survived to see and to experience significant changes in our world over a long period of time.

Mrs. Fort credits her longevity to having honored her parents, accepting their guidance, and being physically active throughout her life. In her own words, she “*went by the Rules.*”

The earliest known Holman ancestors are twin brothers, John and Edward Holman, who were born in 1846 in North Carolina. They traveled through Arkansas to settle on the rich agricultural land of Bonita, Louisiana. Upon freedom from slavery, they married, became farmers, and raised their children. In 1909, the birth of a set of twins was anxiously awaited at the Holman residence and by members of the community.

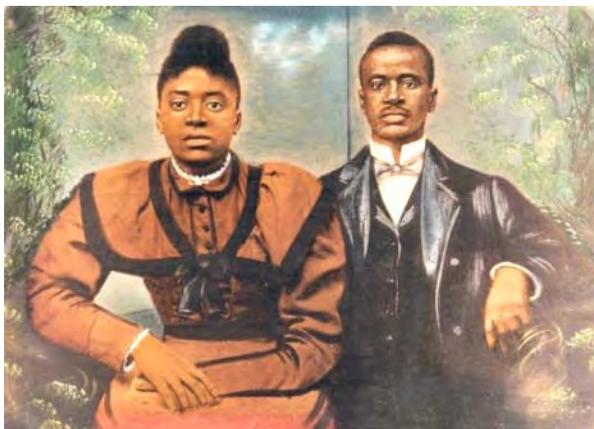
“People come to the house ‘cause, see, they thought we gonna be born Christmas Day and we born the day after Christmas. And said folks were out here like grass on the ground...”

Juretta and Juretha Holman were identical twin girls born on December 26, 1909, in Bonita, Louisiana, to Mr. and Mrs. John and Manervia (Barnes) Holman. Juretta is the seventh of thirteen children born to this union.

All, but one person, had difficulty identifying one twin from the other. Even their father, John Holman, used their size to tell them apart. He called Juretta, the “Big One” and Juretha, the “Little One.” Mrs. Fort said her sister, Nancy, “*was the onlyest one to tell us apart.*” Budding jokesters, each twin often pretended to be the other to fool their suitors and friends. Eventually their father’s nicknames were shortened by family members and friends to “O’Ikki” and “O’Lin.”



**JURETHA &
JURETTA HOLMAN**



Mr. John Holman supported his family as a tenant farmer, worked at a lumber mill, then returned to being a farmer. He also performed odd jobs. He cut and sold ice. By 1920 Mr. Holman was the gardener and mail courier for the nearby “Stonebreaker” Mill. To assist her husband, Manervia and her daughters washed and ironed clothes for White folks.

**MR. & MRS. JOHN & MANERVIA
(BARNES) HOLMAN**

At eight years old, Juretta attended school for the first time at the St. Joseph African Methodist Episcopal Church. Her lap was her desk. She and other students lined up in the aisle and inched forward to a blackboard at the front of the Church's pulpit to participate in the lessons of the day. She acquired a sixth-grade education, the highest level available to her at that time in Bonita. Her parents could not afford to send Juretta or her siblings



**MRS. JURETHA
HOLMAN
WOODS**

to the Morehouse Training School in Bastrop, Louisiana, to continue their education. Juretta and her siblings performed chores on their family's farm before and after attending school. Thus, Juretta learned how to do the work of a farmer, whom she envisioned in her future. These chores include the feeding, care, and maintenance of their diversified stock of cows, geese, hogs, turkeys and growing crops like cotton, corn, collard greens, and turnip greens. Unbelievably, she enjoyed the most difficult tasks of farm labor--picking cotton and chopping cotton.



ST. JOSEPH A.M.E. CHURCH, BONITA,

As teens, the twins were a force of contention against adversaries of their school's baseball team. When Juretta was the catcher, her twin, "O'Lin," was the pitcher; and *vice versa*. Juretta painted this picture: "*Child, you tell about somebody can make a sound 'round them brakes (thickets) and things. Honey, you could hear'em. "Ole Lin" could throw just as hard as any man ever could throw a ball. And folks would holler when she throw. She's really good. She was a better pitcher than I was. Sure was. But both of us liked that....*"



**MRS. NANCY
HOLMAN
SEAY**

The Holman family worshipped at the St. Joseph African Methodist Episcopal Church (affectionately known as "Saint Joe") at Bonita. Juretta served as an Usher. She has also maintained her membership with the Order of the Eastern Star.

In her twenties, her parents encouraged their children to register to vote. Registrants had to successfully pass a test of questions, such as, "Is this Tensas Parish?" Juretta not only had to pass the test, she had to overcome being mistaken for her twin, Juretha. Since "O'Lin" resided in Bastrop, she registered first, but did not pass the test the first time. When Juretta visited the Registrar of Voter's Office, the clerk insisted that Juretta had already tried to register.

"...All kinda stuff they ask me. But I know that 'cause we always would get the Enterprise. 'Cause we like to read the Enterprise...And they just ask all kinda questions 'cause they want no Black folks to get there, you know. But I had ...the bad one, "You done been here." "No ma'am, I haven't been here." Sure Lin had went before I did. Sure did. But they was...kinda stricky at that time...See, she thought 'cause she's White I wasn't gonna spit a word...But I wasn't going lie....I gonna tell the truth 'cause the truth was going to keep me straight...."

Juretta returned at a later date to successfully pass the test and register to vote on her first try.

On March 29, 1923, Nancy Holman, who was Juretta's eldest sister, married James Seay. That December, Nancy gave the twins a birthday party on the first Sunday after their birth date. This event has become a family tradition even after the twins married. With this standing invitation, family and friends, nationwide, have faithfully returned to Bonita, Louisiana, to honor the twins on that Sunday.

By 1929, the two lumber mills--the Bonita Lumber Company (aka "Stonebreaker Mill") and the Louisiana Cooperage Company (aka "White's Mill") --were no longer operating in Bonita. White's Mill had relocated to Monroe, Louisiana.

Mrs. Fort said her family, parents, and siblings were not greatly affected by the Great Depression because they produced their own food, created their clothing, and bartered with neighbors. They were essentially self-sufficient.



THOMAS OSCAR
MILTON

Juretta began dating David Milton, whose family traveled in the same social circles at church, at school and in the community. As a couple in 1930, they attended house parties. At church David always purchased Juretta's box supper to support "Saint Joe's" fundraising events. Their marital union produced son, Thomas Oscar Milton. The newlyweds continued to reside with Juretta's parents. Mr. Milton traveled to-and-from St. Louis, Missouri, where he planned to relocate his family. While living with her parents on about twenty acres of leased land, Juretta's father granted Juretta's request to farm five of these acres.

Juretta later refused to relocate to Saint Louis, Missouri. Eventually, this marriage was dissolved.

As a single mother with a young son, Mrs. Fort worried whether or not she could protect him and provide him with an education to ensure his survival into adulthood. In 1955, her anxiety returned in full force. During an oral interview in 2009, Mrs. Fort shared her reaction as she empathized with Emmett Till's mother, Mamie Till-Mobley, whose son died in 1955 at the age of fourteen years old in Mississippi.

"I was there, child. I was there in her shoes, child. Ooh, I felt for her. I felt for her. I felt for her. They talked about how his granddaddy, when they come there and took him, took him out, out the house and carried him and murdered him. Oh, I'm tellin' you, how my heart went out for her..."

By 1936, Mrs. Fort married her second husband, James Henry Fort, who preceded her in death in 1992. He was "Henry" to family and friends. She said this marriage endured for fifty-six years because each practiced the principle of "give and take." No child was born to this union. In the 1950's Henry and Juretta began their lives together enjoying a few modern perks, such as electricity and a Frigidaire refrigerator in a home built of cedar.

The Fort family later built a brick home. They finally had an indoor bathroom. This was a far cry from their youth when both used a secluded area in a field or thicket for a restroom. While Henry worked at a mill, Juretta and her son raised cotton and corn on five acres of land the Fort family leased from the Shackelford family of Bonita. Everywhere Juretta turned, her life was

fresh and new. She had a new home, land to farm, a young son to help her manage the farm, and a husband gainfully employed.

Easter has always been Juretta's and Nancy's favorite holiday. With excellent skills as a seamstress, Mrs. Nancy Seay often made the twins new dresses to wear at special events like the annual Easter Services at "Saint Joe." However, Juretta wanted to celebrate this holiday on a grander scale. She decided to invite the community to the Fort's home for an Easter egg hunt.

She continued this tradition of an Easter Egg Hunt for more than forty years. Relatives, neighbors, and friends brought their children from far and near to attend this festive occasion.

"The annual Easter hunt was well attended at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Fort with approximately eighty children attending.

"Among those from out of town were Mrs. (Ida) Lowe, Limmie Ellis, and children; Mrs. Easter Clark and Mrs. (Earlene Bowers) and sons of Monroe; Mrs. Juretha Woods and daughter of Bastrop; Darrell, Ricky, Marvin, and Jackie Murphy of St. Louis, Mo.; and Cedrick and Ervin Harris of St. Louis..." ("Bonita Colored News" by Dorothy Whitmore, *Bastrop (La.) Daily Enterprise*, April 21, 1969, Page 3, columns 3 & 4)

Other than her participation in religious activities, Mrs. Fort found solace in picking blueberries, in harvesting pecans, or by fishing with family and friends.

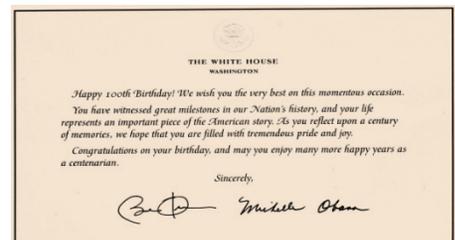
"Sometime we go and carry a old tub, make a fire, and one frying pan.... We'd cook corn bread.....catch enough fish and...fry it...on the water...we'd sit there and eat and talk. After they catch the fish, you know. It just is enjoyment..."

That is, until her husband, Henry, also fell in love with fishing after a stroke left him partially disabled. Henry often interrupted Juretta's serenity to ask that she bait and/or remove a catch from his hook. Her enjoyment for the sport of fishing soon dissipated. Mrs. Fort then directed her attention to a pastime associated with the soil with which she loved to work. She concentrated on gardening, which was a life-long passion for her well into her 90's.

The year, 2004, was a sad one for two reasons. Mrs. Nancy Holman Seay died on September 5, 2004. Mrs. Fort's twin, Mrs. Juretha Holman Woods, died twenty-one days later on September 26, 2004. However, family and friends continued to have a birthday party for surviving twin, Mrs. Fort, each December at various public locations.

On September 7, 2007, Mrs. Fort chose to reside at the Oak Woods Home for the Elderly at Mer Rouge, Louisiana. The staff at Oak Woods soon gave her a nickname, "Sugar Mama," for her sweet, congenial, and jovial disposition.

Mrs. Fort celebrated her 100th Birthday celebration in 2009 with a party at Bastrop, Louisiana. On January 26, 2010, she received birthday greetings from President Barack Obama congratulating her on her 100th year of birth.



PRESIDENT'S
BIRTHDAY GREETING

When asked her opinion in 2009 of the election of the first African-American President, Mrs. Fort said she worried about his safety on the day of his inauguration. She added, "...*And when he had to take his walk, I was just on pins and needles...*" She said that if she could say one thing to President Obama, "*I'd just let him know I was scared for him.*"

In Mrs. Fort opinion, she believes the election of President Obama has torn down the racial barrier between the Black and White races. She has also noticed a change in the way White people relate to her as a Black person. She believes that race is not a major factor now when people interact with each other. She envisions a better world in the future as people advance beyond the former racial barrier which she believes no longer prevails today.

"...This election has changed a lot of things 'cause everything is one color. I like that about it...Ain't no Black and ain't no White. Everything' just alike...I love that... I noticed here in the nursing home. White folks done changed from the way they used to be. They'd be yelling, "Hey, sister! You doing all right?" ...I said, "I'd never thought I'd live to see this!...Just sometimes stop right at your door. Sometimes no matter what in a wheelchair, they'll come up on in where you at....Oh no. Uh uh. No Lordy, uh uh. I never believed they would that. That what they doing now...Yes, a big change...Great things...I'm sure looking for that."

At Oak Woods, Mrs. Fort enjoys visitors from a wide range of ages. Many have fond memories of Easter, of the Fort's "Easter Egg Hunt," and of Mrs. Fort. Today, the former youngsters are parents. They introduce their children to Mrs. Fort and share their memories of yesteryear. One memory is of her generosity during foregone days when she distributed an Easter basket, a paper bag, or other container to each child who arrived empty-handed to hunt for eggs

Although Mrs. Fort is confined to a wheel chair, her mind is lucid. She remains playful, joking with visitors and the Oak Woods' staff. She peppers her comments with memories of today and yesterday with aplomb. She is a delightful participant of any conversation in a gathering. To keep mentally sharp, Mrs. Fort participates in activities like painting, crafts, and bingo at the Oak Woods Home for the Elderly. She likes to play bingo for money, not for food. She also diligently keeps a small red ball nearby to occasionally place in the palm of her hands to improve their dexterity.

Juretta has often found ways to bring families together. She has also kept her feet firmly planted on the soil. She has remained loyal to these principles for one hundred and six years.

The family tradition of a birthday party in December continues today. On Saturday, December 26, 2015, friends and families gathered for a birthday party in her honor at the Oak Woods Nursing Home in Mer Rouge, Louisiana, where she resides.



Once again, everyone wished her many happy returns on her one hundredth and sixth birthday

Happy 106th Birthday, Juretta! May you enjoy many more.

RELATING to the MURDER of WILLIAM D. VANARSDEL

Thursday, 01 August 1867, in Bossier Parish, Louisiana

Based on Articles Published in *The South-Western*, Shreveport, LA, with mention of other area newspapers.

Contributed by Brenda Custer Randall

Published 14 August 1867: \$1500 Reward: Whereas, an unheard of outrage has been committed in our settlement, by three men, known as Kit Gregory, Ben Gregory, and a man said to be named Jim White: in the cold and deliberate murder of William D. Vanarsdel, at his own home, on Thursday, the first day of August, 1867. We, the undersigned citizens and friends of the deceased, believe said murders and (blotted out) should be killed or arrested, say to Augustus Boon, W. H. Pinckard, Sidney Walker, or any other person, or persons, if you or either of you shall capture or take any or all of said desperadoes, you shall be paid at the rate of five hundred dollars for each one taken or killed. Kit Gregory is about 18 years old, black hair and eyes, and a down-cast look; his complexion is dark or rather yellow, speaks very little and slowly, and weighs about 125 pounds; 5 feet 2 or 3 inches high. Ben Gregory is about 20 years old, black hair and eyes, his eyes quite same, his complexion is yellow or sun-burnt; about 6 feet high, very slim and will weigh about 130 or 133 pounds. Jim White is about 23 years old, dark hair and rather blue eyes; about 5 feet 8 or 9 inches high, well made, and a great talker, and one of his arms (thought to be his left) is crooked from being once broken. They all formerly resided in Texas. This resolution was put and unanimously sustained, signed by and request to be published in the *Bossier Banner* and *Public Sentiment*. Jas Ford, J. P., Elijah Hudson, A. McIntyre, S. Richardson, E. W. Knight, E. Dortch, N. C. Dortch, Wm. Hylton, Geo. Reid, D. B. Doyle, W. F. Boon, J. H. Sanders.

Published 14 August 1867: Fifteen Hundred Dollars Reward: By reference to an advertisement in another column, it will be seen that a number of prominent citizens of Bossier Parish have offered a reward of \$1500 for the arrest of Kit and Ben Gregory, and Jim White, charged with the murder of Mr. W. D. Vanarsdel on the 1st of August. We learn that Jim White was seen in this place last week, and that the Gregory boys were trailed to the swamps of Bossier Parish on Mack's bayou. Another rumor has it that all three were in this city last Friday night, and that one of them disposed of a six shooter. Our informant thinks they are trying to make their way to southern Texas.

Published 11 March 1868: Murderer Arrested: A man named McGregor was arrested during the week by our efficient sheriff, Jack Meill. McGregor is accused of murdering a man near Shreveport, La. for his money. He was sent off yesterday to New Orleans heavily ironed. (*Brian (TX) News Letter, 29th ult.*) This is probably one of the murderers of Mr. Vanarsdel, of Bossier Parish, from whom a reward of \$500 is offered. Since the above was put in type we have conversed with Mr. J. H. Nash, sheriff of Brazos County, and A. D. Neal, who arrested the prisoner, and were bringing him to this place, heavily ironed, on the last trip to the National. When near the plantation of Mrs. Merrywether, by some means, the prisoner succeeded in breaking his irons, jumped overboard on the Bossier side of the river and made good his escape. When he left the boat he was barefooted and bareheaded and had the broken shackles on his ankles and wrists.

Published 18 March 1868: Arrest Again: The *Bossier Banner* says Ben Gregory, one of the murderers of Wm. D. Vanarsdel, of that parish, is now in jail at Bellevue. This is the man spoken of in our last issue as having made his escape from the steamer *National* near Mrs. Merrywether's plantation.

DEATHS OF PROMINENT CITIZENS

Contributed by Brenda Custer Randall

Published Saturday, 20 September 1873
in *The Ouachita Telegraph*, Monroe, LA, Page 2, Column 2

“Shreveport, Sep. 14 – The following is a list of prominent citizens who have fallen victims to the scourge: Rober Craig, merchant; S. D. Pitts, an old resident; Joe Howell, Dave Weil, merchants; J. H. Williamson, professor in academy; G. J. Riddle, butcher; Dr. Hibbett; Julius Kahn, merchant; Mrs. W. E. Hamilton; Robert Wheaton, a hatter; Chas. M. Pomeroy, steamboatman; John Numday, merchant; W. T. Brooks, hotel keeper; Mrs. Fannie Fleming, wife of a druggist; T. D. Walker, a merchant and family; Simon Kahn, merchant; J. W. McCoy, butcher; L. Asher, brother of a banker.”

FIND A GRAVE listings in Oakland Cemetery, Shreveport, LA.

Craig, Rober, Memorial #153807888
 Pitts, S. D., #153812745
 Howell, Joe, #153812862
 Weil, David K. “Dave”, #48487323
 Williamson, J. H., #23880555
 Riddle, Gideon J., #97442404
 Hibbette, Dr. ?, #153812999
 Kahn, Julius, #11023773
 Hamilton, Virginia (Mrs. W. E.), #49275407
 Wheaton, Robert, #97442495
 Pomeroy, Chas. M., #153812644
 Mundy, John, #152994352
 Brooks, W. T., #153812389
 Fleming, Mrs. Fannie, \$48236163
 Walker, T. D. (and family), #153809076
 Kahn, Simon, #48312324
 McCoy, J. W., #153808966
 Asher, Levi, #47207696

Note: an interesting history of the 1873 Shreveport Yellow Fever Epidemic can be found [here](#).

Prepared and contributed by Brenda Custer Randall, and taken from old newspaper found at estate sale by son, Jim Randall.

CITY HAS HAD 43 MAYORS

Published Friday, 02 July 1976 in *The Shreveport Times*

During Shreveport's history the city has had 43 mayors, whose lives and careers have frequently provided the material for colorful and sometimes sensational newspaper stories.

The mayors have come from a variety of backgrounds. Some have been career politicians. Others have been businessmen or professionals in other fields who spent a term or two in public office and then returned to private life.

Among those whose names are still familiar to long-time Shreveport residents were John McW. Ford, mayor from 1916-1922, acting mayor for several months in 1932 and finance commissioner for 35 years prior to his death in 1965. Also, George W. Hardy, Jr., mayor from 1932-1934, and Sam S. Caldwell, mayor in 1934-1946.

Mayor Caldwell was succeeded by Clyde E. Fant, a former utilities commissioner, whose popularity and record in number of years served as mayor is unparalleled in the city's history. Fant served as mayor from 1946 to 1954, stepped down and then returned to regain the office in 1958 and served until his retirement in 1970.

James C. Gardner was mayor from 1954 to 1958 and is still active in local business and political circles.

L. Calhoun Allen Jr. has been mayor since 1970.

The following list of Shreveport mayors was provided by Don Wiegand, retired personnel manager for the city, who has devoted many years to the study of local government.

In the 1840s, John O. Sewall, 1839-1840; W. W. George, M.D., 1840-1841; Samuel W. Briggs, 1841-1842; W. W. George, 1842—1844; J. N. Howell, 1844-1845; J. C. Beall, 1845-1846; Lawrence Pike Crain, 1846-1847; R. N. Wood, 1847-1848; John M. Landrum, 1848-1849; R. N. Wood, May 2, 1849-Dec. 5, 1849.

In the 1850s, John Bryce, Jan. 15, 1850-April 2, 1850; Robert Cooke, 1850-1851; J.C. Beall, 1851-1854; J. W. Jones, 1854-1858; Jonas Robeson, 1858-1859; John W. Pennall, 1859-1860.

In the 1860s, Jonas Robeson, 1860-1863; J. C. Beall, 1863-1864; Samuel Wells, 1864-1865; John L. Gooch, 1865-1866; Alek Boarman, 1866-1867; L. S. Markham, acting mayor, Nov. 14, 1867-Dec. 14, 1867; Martin Tally, 1867-1869; J. B. Gilmore, 1869-1871.

During 1870-1900, W. R. Shivers, 1871, mayor de facto; Moses H. Crowell, 1871-1873; Dr. Joseph Taylor, March 14, 1873-Aug. 21, 1873; Samuel Levy, Aug. 26, 1873-Dec. 16, 1873; M. A. Walsh, 1873-1874; Sam J. Ward, 1874-1875; N. W. Murphy, 1875-1879; Andrew Currie, 1878-1890; R. T. Vinson, 1890-1896; R. N. McKeller, 1896-1900.

In the 1900s, Ben Holzman, 1900-1902; Andrew Querbes, 1902-1906; E. R. Bernstein, 1906-1908; S. A. Dickson, 1908-1910; John H. Eastham, 1910-1914; W. A. Dickson, 1914-1916; R. H. Ward, acting mayor, June 21, 1916-Aug. 22, 1916; John McW. Ford, 1916-1922; L. E. Thomas, 1922-1930; J. G. Palmer, 1930-1932; John McW. Ford, acting mayor, Jan. 23, 1932-April 26, 1932; George W. Hardy Jr., 1932-1934; Sam S. Caldwell, 1934-1946; Clyde E. Fant, 1946-1954; James C. Gardner, 1954-1958; Clyde E. Fant, 1958-1970; L. Calhoun Allen Jr., 1970 to current.

For additional information about the men who served as mayor, go to www.findagrave.com and type in the Memorial # listed after the name:

1860's

Beall, Joseph Clinton, Oakland Cemetery, #33230894

Gooch, John L., Oakland Cemetery, #11020060

Boarman, Alexander 'Aleck', Oakland Cemetery, #6954438

Tally, Martin, Oakland Cemetery, #87094657

Gilmore, Jerome Bonaparte, Greenwood Cemetery, #10610943

1870-1900's

Shivers, William Rabun, Oakland Cemetery, #11025238

Crowell, Moses H., Oakland Cemetery, #5684266

Taylor, Dr. Joseph, Oakland Cemetery, #107374502

Levy, Samuel, Oakland Cemetery, #14532255

Ward, Samuel J., Oakland Cemetery, #11038543

Currie, Andrew W., Greenwood Cemetery, #6919704

1900's

Holzman, Ben, Hebrew Rest Cemetery, #10503855
Querbes, Andrew, Forest Park East, #93737168
Bernstein, Ernest Ralph, Forest Park East, #113304438
Dickson, Dr. Samuel Augustus, Greenwood Cemetery, #31834894
Eastham, John Henry, Greenwood Cemetery, #116208167
Ward, Robert Hodges, Forest Park East, #43638193
Ford, John McWilliams, Greenwood Cemetery, #47475258
Thomas, Lee Emmett, Forest Park East, #103942683
Palmer, James George, Forest Park East, #149618692
Hardy, Judge George W. Jr., Forest Park East, #57289153
Caldwell, Samuel Shepherd, Greenwood Cemetery, #47475193
Fant, Clyde Edward Sr., Forest Park East, #47475144
Gardner, James "Jim" Creswell Sr., Forest Park East, #57799623
Allen, Littleberry Calhoun III, Greenwood Cemetery, #15591441

THOSE NOT LISTED HAVE NOT YET BEEN ADDED TO FIND A GRAVE.

Listings often connect spouse/parents/children/siblings, plus military service and often a picture of the mayor.



Image found [here](#)

Rodessa Storm

Contributed by Denise Chesson, Brenda Custer Randall and Elaine Johnson

Northwest Arkansas Times (Formerly the Fayetteville Daily Democrat); Fayetteville, Arkansas; Friday Evening, February. 18, 1938; Page 1, Column 1.

22 KNOWN DEAD, 100 INJURED IN RODESSA STORM

- Estimate Property Damage Between \$250,000 and \$300, 000.
- Derricks Topple
- Quick Action by Volunteers Provides First Aid for Oil Town Residents

Rodessa, LA, Feb. 18 (AP)-This stricken oil town counted its dead and injured today as relief workers hampered by a steady downpour of rain sought to give aid amid the shambles that once was "supply row" of this bustling municipality.

Twenty two persons were known dead as a result of the devastating storm that struck without warning at 9:45 o'clock last night. A definite count of the injured could not be obtained but it is estimated that it will run about 100. Eighteen injured are in Shreveport hospitals. Some of the dead have not been identified.

The property damage was estimated from \$250,000 to \$500,000.

The storm struck at 9:42 p.m. The hands of a big electric clock in the path of the twister stopped at that time. It blew in from the north and roared like a freight train, witnesses said.

For two minutes it swirled along Supply Street leveling practically every structure in a block and a half square area. The small frame houses collapsed like cracker boxes, tumbling in on their occupants. Larger business houses swayed and fell under the terrific blow, filling the air with huge splinters, tree limbs and other debris.

The power system failed, throwing the town into darkness and adding to the confusion. Communication and power lines snapped, crackled and dangled dangerously throughout the area. Oil derricks toppled. One fell across a highway, blocking traffic. Another, uprooted and carried from the well, permitted oil to blow wild.

Volunteers rushed to the stricken area carrying lanterns, flashlights and torches. They dug into the wreckage blindly, guided in some instances by the cries of those trapped under the demolished homes.

Trucks Drag Away Fallen Walls

Trucks from the oil fields were rushed in and quickly converted into ambulances. Some were used to drag portions of fallen walls and heavy timbers from the victims.

Within 30 minutes after the storm hit aid arrived from Shreveport, Vivian and Atlanta. Lack of facilities here prompted the transfer of the dead and injured to the neighboring towns.

Louisiana and Arkansas highway police converged on the area and kept the highway open for the passage of the injured-laden trucks.

VICTIMS of STORM

(*Shreveport Journal*; Friday, 18 February 1938; Page 1, Column 8 and continued on Page 19, Column 5.)

There are 25 persons dead as the result of the Rodessa storm, according to a check by the Shreveport Journal.

Rose-Neath Funeral Home, Shreveport, LA

Mrs. Bessie Trevillan, 33
 Patricia Bess Trevillan, 4
 James Allen Trevillan, 18
 Mrs. Alice Clark, 30
 Laura Lee Clark, 7

Hanna Funeral Home, Atlanta, TX

B. E. Crowder, 51
 Mrs. B. E. Crowder, 45
 Mrs. Annie Crowder, 75
 George Rogers, 35

Allday Funeral Home, Atlanta, TX

Terry Perry, 1 year old
 Girl named Thatcher, 9
 W. L. (Bill) Young, 40
 Mrs. James Davis, 35
 George Blackwell, 30, died at hospital
 Mrs. Bernice Blackwell, his wife, 25

Missing and believed dead:

M. L. Clark, a truck driver, her father
 Charles Nolan

Other dead reported at Rodessa were:

Homer Brizzell Davis *
 James Davis
 L. E. Haddock
 Mrs. L. E. Haddock
 Unidentified man, 30
 L. B. Stubblefield
 Vernetta Haddock
John Colby *

Colby girl *
 Mary Louise Clark, 9

**The Abilene Reporter-News*; Saturday Evening, February 19, 1938, Page 2, Column 1

Trio Reported Dead in Rodessa Storm Turns Up Alive

RODESSA, LA, Feb. 19 (AP) Sam Goldman, Chairmen of the Caddo Parish chapter of the Red Cross, said today that three persons reported as dead in the tornado, which struck here Thursday night turned up alive this morning.

The three were **John Colby, his daughter** and **Homer Brizzell Davis**. Their names had been included in the Red Cross list of dead.

The mangled conditions of the bodies, the fact that they were brought to hospitals distances apart and duplication of identities may cause one or two more names to be deleted from the list of dead, Goldman said, but the estimated death toll was at somewhere between 20 and 25.

Nineteen were being buried today.

LIST OF INJURED

(*Shreveport Journal*; Friday, 18 February 1938; Page 1, Column 8 and continued on Page 19, Column 5.)

The list of known injured at Shreveport hospitals follows:

Highland Sanitarium

W. C. Davis
Mrs. W. C. Davis
Irene Walston, 15
Donald Ray Stubblefield
Roy Edward Fuller, 10
Billie Ernene McGee, 21

Schumpert Sanitarium

Mrs. W. L. Young
Glenn Young, 11
M. Antoine, 30

Tri-State Hospital

Mrs. R. H. Jackson	H. A. Stubblefield
R. L. Fuller	Mrs. H. A. Stubblefield
Jeane Jackson	Hazel May Stubblefield
Robert Jackson	

North Louisiana

H. C. Baulknight

Charity Hospital

Mrs. Opel Marie Perry, 17

Ellington Memorial Hospital, Atlanta, Texas

Frank Perry, 7	Bobby Eugene Richards, 8
Miss Beatrice Perry, 17	Mrs. G. M. Richards, 30
Mrs. C. M. Perry, 30	Mrs. Gertrude Fuller, 24
Billie Fay Haddock, 7	Gwendolyn Fuller, 15
Miss Inez Riggs, 34	Albert Fuller, 13

Others reported injured at Rodessa are:

Baby Fuller	Radcliff Langston
C. W. Thomas	Pete Fuller
Beatrice Perry	H. Crockett and wife and five children

Many others suffered minor injuries.

This [link](#) is an aerial view of Rodessa Louisiana after the tornado of February 1938.

Genealogy is Not Just About Your Direct Ancestors

By Elaine Johnson



Finding the death date and place for my ggg grandmother Agnes Moreland was interesting. I had consistently found William and Agnes Moreland on the 1860, 1870, and 1880 Census in Hillsdale County, Michigan. I found Agnes Moreland as a widow, living with her son Robert Moreland on the 1900 census in Hillsdale County, Michigan. I could not find her on the 1910 census.

I knew from cemetery records and her tombstone in Jerome Cemetery, Hillsdale County that she died in 1911. Online family trees only showed that she died in 1911. I had written to the state of Michigan to try to get her death record, but they did not find one. So for many years I only had 1911 as her date of death and I had no place of death.

My husband Jim and I took a trip in Sept, 2012, to Hillsdale County, Michigan. I did not find death or probate records for her at the courthouse. I also looked at digitized newspapers at the local Library. Again I found no record of her death, but I found several articles about her family. One of the articles, dated April 6, 1939, was about the 50th wedding anniversary for her son Robert Moreland and his wife Mattie Carpenter Moreland. It mentioned celebrating their golden anniversary in Richmond, Indiana, at the home of their brother-in-law George Logan.

I wasn't too interested in Robert Moreland (especially something that happened in 1939), so while we were in Michigan I had just quickly read through the article. When I got home, I decided to do some additional research based on this article. The name George Logan was not familiar to me and I was not sure which side of the family he was on.

I did not find him on the 1940 census, but the 1930 census showed that his wife was Eva Z. Logan. I knew from previous census records that she was probably the daughter of William and Agnes Moreland. On the 1870 census they had a daughter named *Eve* Moreland. On the 1880 census she was listed as *Ena Zilla* Moreland. I was not able to find her after 1880. I had searched for marriage records previously using *Eve* and *Ena/Ena Zilla* Moreland, but did not find a marriage record for her. I didn't know if she had married or died, but I assumed she died young. Again, I was not really interested in her, so at that time did not pursue it any further.

After I found the 1930 census record, I searched familysearch.org for George Logan and "Moreland" and found the marriage record which showed George Logan and *Eva Zilla* Moreland married August 16, 1885 in Jerome, Hillsdale County, Michigan.

I then continued to search census records for George and Eva Zilla Logan. In 1920 they were living in Richmond Ward 6, Wayne, Indiana. When I looked the 1910 census, I found them living at Woodruff Place, Marion County, Indiana with mother-in-law NANCY Moreland. Prior to this census record, all the census records showed her name as "Agnes" Moreland. However, probate records for her husband William Moreland listed "Nancy" Moreland as his wife -- so I knew this was a nickname that she used.

Based on the 1910 census and the fact that there was no death record for her in Hillsdale County, Michigan, I wondered if she died in Indiana. I knew from her tombstone that she died in 1911. I searched online and found an Agnes Moreland that died April 22, 1911 in Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana-- but according to everything I found online, it was for an 8 month old baby. Since several online sources had this same information, I didn't think it was the one I was looking for. I thought it might be a grandchild named after her.

In June 2014, Jim and I took another trip to Michigan. On the way home we stopped at the Allen County Public Library at Fort Wayne, Indiana. I gave the information that I had to the librarian. He told me they had a death index¹ for Marion County. I found the book, opened it to the M's, and immediately found Agnes Moreland, died April 22, 1911 in Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana at the age of 81 years - 8 months. I knew that I had found her and that all the online databases had missed the "81 years" part of her age. Using that information I was able to request her death record, get her obituary, and solve the mystery of when and where she died.

When I first started my genealogy research I was primarily interested in my direct ancestors. I did not do much research on their siblings or children. As I have run into "brick walls" I have found more and more how important it is to research everyone in the family. If I had not followed through on the article that I found about her son Robert Moreland, I probably would not have found my ggg grandmother living in Indiana.

Any good book about genealogy research always emphasizes the importance of collateral research -- researching aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. It is something I totally ignored when I first started researching. Now that I have more time to spend on research, I have started researching the children and siblings of my ancestors -- and have greatly enhanced what I know about them. So, if your direct lineage research gets a little slow or you are stumped, start researching those collateral lines. Who knows what you will find.

Here is an interesting side note with regard to relying on internet information -- I had copied the whole page of the death index that contained the death information for Agnes Moreland. I was curious, so I looked up the rest of the names on the list in ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org. Every one of them that had ages that contained "years" and "months" only had the "months" transcribed into the online databases. I have no idea how this could be corrected or how pervasive it is. But, based on this error, I wonder how many people relying only on the internet, are not finding death dates for their ancestors.

Everyone knows the internet is a real boon to genealogy and family research, but it also opens the door to misinformation or conflicting information. I love having access to the internet. All of my research is in the north, so I have found it to be a wonderful tool -- and I have found so much information that I cannot find locally. But I always try to verify what I find with another source, because I have found so many errors that I have been able to "disprove". You must be diligent, and as with anything found online, check it carefully. I now have firsthand knowledge about how important that is. Sometimes you just have to get away from the computer and take a trip!!

¹ *"Indiana, Death Index, 1882-1920," Marion County. The source of this record is the book H 14 on page 44 within the series produced by the Indiana Works Progress Administration.*

BANNS, BONDS, AND BRIDES

An Overview of Marriage Customs & Records

By Peggy Suzanne LaCour

Customs and records regarding marriage in the United States from Colonial times to today have evolved greatly over time. The marriage ceremony may be either civil, religious, or a melding of both. Records may include the following: a marriage contract, a city or county register, banns published in a church bulletin, bond posted at the county/parish clerk of court's office, consent statements written by a parent of an underage bride or groom, application for a marriage license, the issue of an actual marriage license, documentation of the marriage having been performed (by the minister of the gospel, rabbi, judge, or justice of the peace), or the return to the clerk of court documenting the marriage so it becomes part of the legal file.

As you begin family research, it is important to be aware of whether the information you review is primary or secondary information. Primary information is provided by someone with direct knowledge of the event. Secondary information is provided by someone who does not have direct knowledge but rather is relying on what another person has reported. Whether the information is direct or indirect, you must consider carefully the circumstances and the identity of the informant. Aspects such as personal bias, embarrassment, shame, and even greed can affect the information an informant provides.

A thorough understanding of the history, as well as the laws or lack thereof in the place and time you are researching, is vital. A wonderful resource to help you better understand the county and/or state where your family members married is found at www.familysearch.org. This free site will prompt you to search by place or topic. Simply click on the GUIDE to the county of interest to you. You will see a listing of CONTENTS that will lead you directly to your topic of interest. Click on MARRIAGE to learn when records began, location of original records, online resources, microfilmed records, and resources/books and/or index marriage information. You will see topic areas such as QUICK DATES listing the beginning dates for various government records, including birth, marriage, death, census, land, and probate. Other topics include Courthouse, History, Boundary Changes of the county, Record Loss, Church Records, and much more.

Banns have long been a part of religious customs in many churches, including the Church of England, the German Lutheran Church, and the Catholic Church. Banns were either published or posted on the church door or announced from the pulpit for three consecutive Sundays or weeks. The purpose was to inform the community of the impending marriage. This practice allowed for anyone to come forward with an objection if there was a legal reason why the marriage could not or should not take place. Typical impediments could include such things as an underage bride or groom, a bride or groom already married to someone else, or prohibition because the couple was too closely related. (legalgenealogist.com)

The practice of posting of a bond varied from state to state and, at times, was done in lieu of banns or was used when people were marrying away from where they were known. Posting a bond was done to express an intention to marry (an “official” engagement) and was a form of guarantee that there was no legal barrier to the marriage. Bond was posted by the groom in the Clerk of Court’s office. No money was paid when the bond was posted, but the promised sum might be forfeited if an impediment to the marriage was later found. The date on the bond is not usually the actual date of marriage, but marriages often occurred soon thereafter. Bonds were most common in the 1700s and early 1800s continuing in the South and Mid-Atlantic States well into the 19th century or early 20th century. Most jurisdictions began to rely on a written application for a marriage license. (legalgenealogist.com) Keep in mind that a bond could be posted but the marriage still not occur.

Written Consent: Sometimes one will see a consent note along with the bond (or the application for a license) written by the parent of a bride or groom. This is usually because either the bride or the groom was under the legal age of marriage.

Recently, however, one may notice more common practices, such as an application by the groom or couple, a license issued by Clerk of Court, the performance of the marriage by church or civil official, or return by the official to the Clerk verifying that the marriage was performed. This completes the process and documentation.

Some marriages were never formalized legally because of cost or some other difficulty. Such marriages are called Common Law Marriage, Informal Marriage, or Marriage by Habit & Repute. In some areas, the posting of banns was considered the equivalent to a marriage ceremony, and the couple was considered legally married without having formally registered through civil or religious avenues. Others “held themselves out to the community as married” constituting an informal marriage or common law marriage. Today, states with common law provisions include Alabama, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, and D.C.

Whether civil or religious, marriage customs and laws were related to property and reproduction. As such, slaves were not allowed to legally marry. Free African Americans were allowed to marry but not across racial lines. Such laws continued in many states well into the 20th century. Many couples were validated by their community and treated as a couple. The term “jump the broom,” which emerged in England in the mid to late 18th century and was mentioned in Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations*, was revived by Alex Haley’s *Roots* and has become part of the wedding ceremony for some couples. (learnnc.org)

Indirect Evidence of Marriage may be available in other records when you cannot locate the more traditional records:

- 1) Dower Release (Quit Claim): Dower or curtesy rights are derived from common law which required a man to support his spouse. A wife had the right to receive income or

other interest from her husband's estate after the husband's death. She would "relinquish my right of dower" prior to a second marriage. Such a record confirms there was a first marriage.

- 2) Legal suits
- 3) Land records
- 4) Probate records related to the legal process to prove a will and administer the estate of a deceased person,
- 5) Newspapers
- 6) City directories

One is strongly encouraged to explore the marriage customs in the area and time in which your family members' married. Some customs may surprise you. For example, Puritan marriage was a civil contract celebrated by a magistrate. In Quaker settlements, the bride and groom would write their own vows. In Scottish-Presbyterian communities, friends would kidnap the bride, the groom and friends would "rescue the bride," then they would redeem her with a bottle of whiskey. To bring good luck, there is even a custom of going to the community or to the family bee hives to "Tell the Bees" of the marriage.

A poem reflecting Colonial brides' thinking on choosing the day to marry:

Monday for health
 Tuesday for wealth
 Wednesday the best day of all
 Thursday for losses
 Friday for crosses
 Saturday no luck at all.

Colonial weddings were not usually conducted on Sunday, although a smaller family wedding might occur in the late afternoon or evening.

Take a moment to notice the resources listed below. Explore state government sites as well as university libraries in your location of interest. Google "marriage laws and customs in ___" (the state or county of interest). When I took this step for North Carolina, New Jersey, and Virginia, I was quickly intrigued at the similarities and differences found.

Resources

www.chroniclingamerica.org (free digitized newspapers)

<http://www.learnnc.org> North Carolina Digital History

<http://www.legalgenealogist.com>

<http://www.state.nj.us> New Jersey State Archives has a searchable index covering marriages from 1665-1799

<http://www.lva.virginia.gov> The Library of Virginia

<http://www.wiki.familysearch.org>

Ark-La-Tex Genealogical Association

Presents Lisa Louise Cooke

www.genealogygems.com



Join Lisa for a conversation about the modern face of genealogy and technology.



Ark-La-Tex Genealogical Association

Location: St. Jude Catholic Church, The John & Rose Miciotto Center, 4700 Palmetto Rd., Benton, La. (north on Airline Dr., south of Benton)

When: Saturday, March 12, 2016

Registration: 8:15 am

Time: 9:00 am-4:00 pm

Fee: \$10 Members \$20 Non-members



*Bring a sack lunch or visit several close by sandwich shops for lunch break

Lisa leads the conversation for "capturing our past with technology" with the following topics:

1. Google Tools & Procedures for Solving Family History Mysteries
2. How To Reopen & Work A Genealogical Cold Case
3. Ways to Enhance Your Genealogy Research with Old Maps
4. The Great Google Earth Game Show

Come hear national speaker Lisa Louise Cooke, who is the host and author of GenealogyGems and FamilyTree Magazine Podcasts; also known as the Google Guru and the author of four books.

Registration at : www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~laaltga OR download Registration form and mail to P.O. Box 4463, Shreveport, Louisiana, 71134-0463 Make checks to Ark-La-Tex Genealogical Association

OAKLAND PLANTATION IN BOSSIER PARISH, LA

By Dale Jennings

Doctor Abel Skannal was a successful planter, with Oakland being his most successful plantation. Skannal apparently had no biographer, nor did his descendants preserve the family narrative. We know that he and his wife, Elizabeth, were both born in Edgefield District, South Carolina; the doctor on April 9, 1802, and his young wife on May 9, 1821. This is made known by their grave-stone inscriptions. Other information can be gleaned from available sources.

Indications are that the Skannal family completed the migration from their native state to northwestern Louisiana in 1839 or 1840. Abel Skannal had evidently preceded the other members of his family. He began establishing his plantation six miles northwest of Lake Bistineau on a part of Claiborne Parish that would become Bossier in 1843. He would be making improvements on U.S. government land, as the survey of this area – a prerequisite to private ownership – had not yet been completed.

This survey of the 36-square-mile Township 17, Range 11, on which Dr. Skannal was locating was not approved until May 1842. The surveyor at some point observed “Dr. Skinner’s field,” showing it on his survey map. (Abel’s surname was misspelled more often than not, except on documents that required his signature.) The large field straddled the section line between the western part of Section 17 and the eastern part of Section 18. His “improvement” was located between Foxskin Bayou and the present Oakland-Sligo Road or LA State Highway 612 (see attached map).¹

Abel Skannal represented the sole presence of any habitation on the vacant Township 17, Range 11. He was very much a pioneer. A few other hardy souls were shown to have improvements on survey maps of adjacent surveys. Some appeared as Abel’s scattered neighbors in the 1840 census.

Doctor Skannal bought the first 600 acres of his Oakland Plantation in October 1843. It included part of his aforesaid field in the Northwest Quarter of Section 17. The following year, he purchased much larger quantities of land. This included the Northeast Quarter of the same section containing his home site.² The house, said to have been built by Skannal in 1838, can be seen on a modern topography map, sitting on top of a little circular shaped knoll (just southwest of the present tiny, crossroads community center of “Oakland”). The knoll sits atop an expanse of slightly elevated plateau. The oaks on the knoll may have inspired the plantation’s name as suggested, but “Oakland” was a familiar name. Dr. Skannal would continue to purchase land until his plantation attained an eventual 3,946 acres. It was no doubt the largest in the expansive “Bossier Point,” the wedge shaped southern end of the parish, and among the largest in Bossier Parish.

¹ This map was designed by Dale Jennings to help the reader see the layout of Oakland Plantation.

² Skannal purchased the Northeast Quarter of Section 17 through the U. S. Government Land Office in Natchitoches, LA, in two parcels in February and March 1844. His patents indicate only the date each was signed in Washington, September 1, 1846, a typical lapse of time between the two events.

The late Samuel J. Touchstone in his book, *Bossier Parish History*,³ and through a map he later donated to the Bossier Parish Library Historical Center⁴ (accessioned as #1999.071), suggested that the present site of Skannal's Oakland house might not be the original site. He thought it might have been near the Skannal cemetery, near an old field on Foxskin Bayou, just less than one-half mile southwest of the present house site. A fervent relic hunter and seeker of old Confederate camps, he said he had found artifacts near the cemetery indicating that some sort of old log house had once been located there. It would not be too imaginative to think that the cemetery might have started as a slave burial place.

The presence of the Abel Skannal family in Louisiana in the year 1840 is documented by that decade's census for Claiborne Parish. Their household consisted of Abel, another adult male (probably the overseer), his wife, and one female child under age 5. Their slaves numbered twenty. In all, eleven persons were engaged in agriculture and one was classified in the "learned professions and engineers" category, which included physician. Dr. Skannal was said to have been a graduate of the Medical College of South Carolina.⁵ That profession may have brought him his initial wealth, but he seemed now to be more seriously pursuing that of a planter. He would be identified as planter on subsequent censuses. On some census reports, and sometimes on other documents, he is identified as "A. S. Skannal."

The Skannal family cemetery was evidently begun in 1844 with the death of the Skannals' oldest daughter. Her grave stone inscription reads: "J.S. Skannal....Born in So. Cn. June 12th 1839....Died Sept 11th, 1844." This is the basis for the conclusion that Elizabeth came to Louisiana with the little girl between the child's birth in 1839 and the 1840 census. Their little daughter, full name unknown, is missing from the next census.

Oakland was Dr. Skannal's first, but not his only Bossier Parish plantation. He also created the Bluff and Sligo plantations, each of comparable acreage. The oft-repeated claim that he had a total of five plantations is false. The 3,286-acre Chalk Level Plantation, between the three he did own and the Red River, was never a Skannal property. He is also said to have owned the misidentified "Cave Bend" plantation in Range 12. Cane Bend was the name given by subsequent owners to the 1,220-acre western part of Abel Skannal's Oakland Plantation.

The greater eastern part of Oakland Plantation in Range 11 was made up primarily of land purchased from the U.S. government between 1843 and 1858. A small part, just less than 600 acres, was Section 16 land bought from the Bossier Parish School Board. It was the part of the section that was on the west side of the Greggs Landing road. The road ran from Bellevue to Greggs Landing on Lake Bistineau (now the location of Camp Bistineau).⁶ Other sections of the

³ Samuel J. Touchstone. *Bossier Parish History* (Princeton, LA: Folk-Life Books, 1989), 37.

⁴ This facility is also called "The History Center." It is located at 2206 Beckett Street, Bossier City, LA, 71111.

⁵ *Find A Grave*, database and images (<http://findagrave.com>; accessed June 1, 2015), memorial page for Dr Abel Skannal (1802-1876), Find A Grave Memorial no. 115068718 citing Oakland Plantation Cemetery, Sligo, Bossier Parish, Louisiana.

⁶ Lake Bistineau's Greggs Landing and Murrells Landing, which serviced Oakland Plantation and the region, were accessed off of the Red River through Coushatta Chute or Loggy Bayou, but only during the high water season.

plantation's eastern tract, given as 2,606 acres at the time of Dr. Skannal's death, also had irregular configurations.

Large blocks of land in Section 19 were given to the Vicksburg, Shreveport, and Texas Railroad Company by the U.S. government, detracting from the plantation's symmetry. Such grants were financial incentives to the railroads to build railways and foster regional commerce and population expansion. By the time the railroad was constructed through Haughton in the northern part of Bossier Point in 1884, the company was optimistically calling itself the Vicksburg, Shreveport, and Pacific (VS&P).

A block of 120 acres in the middle of Section 18 was retained by the U.S. government. It may have initially been railroad reserve as well, but it was allowed to remain vacant and unclaimed. Dr. Skannal bought the acreage around it, and it was retained by the government until allotted to individuals under the Homestead Act in the 1880s. Sections 20 and 21 were also irregular. Only Section 17 containing the house and cemetery had a regular 640-acre, square mile configuration.

Abel and Elizabeth Skannal's Oakland Plantation house was likely constructed in or about 1838, as thought.⁷ The claim that it was built in 1832 is unsubstantiated and is highly unlikely. As far as can be determined, this claim was first made by C. W. Price, Jr. It is found in an incomplete newspaper clipping about Oakland Plantation, from a paper identified only as "The Progress," dated May 26, 1939.⁸ Price also stated, erroneously, that Abel Skannal had owned the "Cave Bend" and Chalk Level Plantations, and that his son, John Andrew, had gone off to war. The original house – later added onto – was a one-story wooden structure, with brick chimneys on each end rising above the more than ample attic. It had a typical "dog-trot" feature, an open hallway with rooms off either side. Galleries are said to have run the full width of the house, both front and back. The kitchen would have been a separate building at the rear of the house. This sufficed until 1848, by which time the Skannal family had grown to five. The household included their three daughters, with a son to follow.

In the year 1848, by all accounts, the Skannals built a larger two-story house at the front of the older one.⁹ The front gallery is said to have been modified to be another dog-trot hallway coupling the two houses. The original dog-trot was extended out through the front of the new addition. These cross breezeways each had open entrances. Later, doors were put on the front and rear entrances, closing in that hallway. This was almost universal upon the availability of electricity, except when the owner deliberately set out to preserve the originality of the house. An old, undated photograph from the S. Darrell Overdyke book, *Louisiana Plantation Homes, Colonial and Ante Bellum*, shows that the second breezeway's west entrance has been closed off flush with the house.¹⁰ It appears that an earlier doorway there was converted to be a window. The house was said to have had eleven rooms and seven fireplaces.

⁷ Clifton D. Cardin. *Bossier Parish* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1999), 42

⁸ A copy of the clipping, which is missing part of the masthead, text and page numbers, was in the Oakland house and given to Dale Jennings by the current owners.

⁹ W. Darrell Overdyke. *Louisiana Plantation Homes, Colonial and Ante Bellum* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., Inc. 1965), 142.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Abel Skannal had an older brother, Lloyd Skannal, who came to Louisiana by a circuitous route. Born in South Carolina, he came by way of Tennessee and western Florida. He began buying land in Bossier Parish in 1845, and he accumulated a large amount of land for his several plantations. Abel shared his family graveyard for the burial of one of his brother's deceased family members, a daughter, Adele. Brothers William and Lloyd Stidham came to Bossier quite early as well. They seem to be somehow related to the Skannals, probably cousins. Abel Skannal's parents were said to be Andrew Skannal and Frances Stidham.¹¹

The Township 17, Range 12, land west of Dr. Skannal's Oakland Plantation opened up for sale later than that in Range 11. Most was low lying land drained by the large Red Chute Bayou that had been classified as "swamp" by the federal government. This marginal land was transferred to the State of Louisiana for further distribution and reclamation. It was put up for sale by the state in the late 1850s, and Dr. Skannal purchased thousands of acres of this land, both directly and from individuals. He had already bought 443 acres in the area from Lloyd Stidham in 1854. Finally, in 1860, he bought Section 16 from the parish school board (Section 16 of each township being allotted to the school boards to generate funds for public education). With his new acquisitions, Doctor Skannal created the detached extension of his Oakland Plantation, his Bluff Plantation on its north side, and Sligo on the south. Most of the Bluff Plantation would later be taken in to the Barksdale Air Force Base as part of its 22,000-acre range and cantonment area. The little community center of Sligo would evolve on its namesake plantation. The Skannals' forebears are thought to have come to America from County Sligo in Ireland.

Elizabeth G. Skannal is believed to have borne Dr. Skannal seven children. They were daughters, J.S., Matilda Caroline, Sarah Jane and Sexta (age two in the 1850 census);¹² also, "W.S." and "A.H." (gender unknown) and John Andrew. Sexta is the "S.F. Skannal" in the family cemetery, who was born on May 7, 1848, and died on January 18, 1860. Buried with her are her siblings: "W.S. Skannal," born January 15, 1841, and died September 12, 1844, and "A.H. Skannal," born January 27, 1845, and died October 22, 1846. John Andrew's burial place is unknown. He was incorrectly shown to have been age six in the 1860 census, but correctly as eighteen in 1870. His birth date of August 1852, as indicated by the 1900 census, is probably correct.

On February 22, 2002, Betsy Trammell, a resident of Bossier City, LA, having been born there in 1913, gave an oral history interview to personnel of the Bossier Parish Library Historical Center.¹³ As a preliminary to the interview, she identified herself as the daughter of Jonas Bryant and Eliza Edwards Bryant. Her grandfather on her mother's side was Arthur Edwards, the son of Betsy Ball, a slave of Dr. Abel Skannal on his Oakland Plantation. She was named for her great-grandmother.

¹¹ *Find A Grave* memorial page for Dr. Abel Skannal, accessed June 1, 2015.

¹² 1850 U.S. census, Bossier Parish, Louisiana, population schedule, p.143, dwelling 1199, family 1199, Abel Skannal; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>; accessed 10 June 2015); citing National Archives microfilm publication M432, roll 230.

¹³ Transcript, Betsy Bryant Trammell Oral History Interview, February 22, 2002, by Nita Cole, Archivist and Jerline C. Craig, page 69, Bossier Parish Library Historical Center. Online: <http://bossier.pastperfect-online.com/36091cgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=92E59ADE-1A52-48BC-B853-144769829> (December 7, 2015)

In the interview, Mrs. Trammell said that her great-grandmother, Betsy, worked in the “big house” on the Skannal plantation. She told how Betsy had gone to the smoke house to get the meat to cook, and how the master forced himself on her there, the result being the birth of her mother’s daddy. The master’s wife, Elizabeth, also had a baby at the same time. She told him she was pregnant, and she called him a “low down dirty dog.” He said, “He will not wear my name.” He had an overseer whose name was Edwards, so he named the boy Arthur Edwards. Mrs. Trammell said she didn’t know what he named “the white brother.” She said they lived in the house with them in those times.

The 1850 census for Bossier Parish identified Gabriel J. Edwards as Abel Skannal’s overseer and a member of his household. The 1880 Bossier Parish census shows 28-year-old Arthur Edwards as a mulatto farmer, computed to have been born in 1852. He gave his mother’s and father’s place of birth as South Carolina.

Elizabeth Skannal died prematurely at age thirty-one on January 18, 1853, making her husband a widower at age fifty. Dr. Skannal, who never remarried, continued to prosper. The agricultural census of 1860 shows that he had just harvested 7,000 bushels of corn and 552 bales of cotton.¹⁴ He has 144 slaves and 40 slave dwellings.¹⁵ He purchased 2,668 acres of land that year, giving him a total of 9,899 acres spread over his three plantations. This would have made him one of the largest landowners in Bossier Parish at the eve of the Civil War.

The entry of Louisiana into the Confederacy and the Civil War in early 1861 would have its effect on the Bossier home front and the Skannals. Dr. Skannal was too old to serve, and his son too young. It might be assumed that Abel, being a native of South Carolina and a planter, would have fully supported the war effort. He would have typically contributed with loans through CSA issued “cotton bonds” and by way of levies for corn, fodder, hogs, bacon, etc.; also, by the use of his slaves for civil and military construction projects.¹⁶ In the latter part of the war, the government ran short of funds and issued promissory vouchers for these goods and services. They, nor the bonds, would ever be redeemed. Besides its material support, Bossier Parish contributed six companies to the war effort.

Austere conditions during the war, and now its aftermath, were mitigated by the reopening of the cotton markets. Postwar politics and adjustment to the new labor system would require some swallowing of pride. As the first step toward regaining his citizenship and the vote, Abel Skannal took the loyalty oath at the military provost marshal’s office in Shreveport in June 1865.¹⁷ He swore to defend the Constitution and abide by the laws pertaining to the emancipation of slaves.

¹⁴ Joseph Karl Menn, M.A. *The Large Slaveholders of Louisiana-1860* (New Orleans: Pelican Publication Co., 1964),156.

¹⁵ 1860 U.S.census, Bossier Parish, La, slave schedule, p. 9-11. Dr.Abel Skannel, owner or manager; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 10 June 2015); citing National Archives microfilm publication M653, 1,438 rolls.

¹⁶ The bonds, typically for \$500.00 (Confederate), were issued in exchange for bales of cotton. Each had eight coupons attached that could be redeemed at 7% interest semi-annually until the bond matured.

¹⁷ Ancestry.com for Confederate Applications for Presidential Pardons, 1865-1867. Record of Abel Skannal. [database online], Provo, Utah, USA: Operations, Inc, 2008.

On January 15, 1866, Dr. Skannal wrote President Andrew Johnson from “Oakland near Fillmore P. O. Bossier Parish La” requesting a pardon.¹⁸ He said he had three children, two daughters and the youngest, a boy of tender age, and that he himself was near sixty-four, feeble and in bad health for several years. He hoped that he would qualify under the restriction of his worth exceeding \$20,000. He said that his stake was less than that, in that his wife was deceased, and the children had their mother’s entitlement. Abel said that he never held office civil or military in the “so called Confederate States” (an obligatory term) or served in its armies. He was granted a full pardon in a form letter signed by Secretary of State Seward for President Johnson dated April 20, 1866.¹⁹

There is no record that Abel Skannal ever sold any of his Oakland property. He did make a curious lease of a tract of land in 1873 that was not recorded at the courthouse until 1877, after his death. He leased 120 acres of his Section 20, Range 11, land to Bettie Barron, a mulatto woman, age about forty, on November 25, 1873. Bettie was married to Ben Barron and they had a son, also Ben, age approximately four (ages computed from 1880 census). Abel Skannal wanted this vague lease to extend to Bettie’s children after his death. Bettie, who signed the lease with her “X,” may have previously been one of Abel’s slaves. It is perplexing that we know so little about the Skannal slaves. Their eventual number apparently resulted from the natural increase of the original twenty that he brought from South Carolina. He did not subsequently buy, sell, or otherwise convey any slaves (at least not within the parish) from the time of their arrival until they were freed at the end of the Civil War. We know only a few of their names through incidental disclosure after they were freed (to include Betsy and her son Arthur).

The lease between Abel Skannal and Bettie Barron would be disclosed after Abel’s death in 1876. It seems to have been properly executed, having been signed by Justice of the Peace Arthur Edwards. Sarah Jane, who would inherit Oakland, signed at the very bottom with her married name, “S. J. Wilson,” and it was honored. The lease document was filed at the courthouse as a public record, and the 120 acres were excluded from the succession. Thus, the acreage of Oakland was effectively reduced from 3,946 acres to 3,826.

Rumors persisted concerning Dr. Abel Skannal and his servant and former slave, Harriet. It was said – true or not – that she became Abel’s mistress subsequent to his wife’s death. She died before Dr. Skannal and was buried in the family cemetery among the white Skannals. Her grave marker reads, “The Faithful Harriet. Died Jan 7, 1871.” Supposedly, she and Dr. Skannal were buried side by side.

Abel Skannal had written his will prematurely on September 14, 1870. It was a simple testament not revealing much about himself. He wanted his property divided equally among his children, Matilda Caroline, Sarah Jane, and John Andrew, all of whom he appointed as executors of the will. And if they were unable to agree, they were to call on the assistance of such disinterested persons that they might choose. He ended his brief will with, “I emancipate John Andrew should he be a minor at my death.”

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ancestry.com for U.S. Pardons Under Amnesty Proclamations, 1865-1869. Record of Abel Skannal. [database online], Provo, Utah, USA: Operations, Inc, 2008.

Doctor Abel Skannal died on May 11, 1876, and was buried on Oakland Plantation in the family cemetery. His will was probated, with his property to be divided under the terms of his will. The probate judge ordered that the executors be administered the required oaths, and later that the succession be filed with the court.²⁰

The Skannal siblings chose Elias Skannal, a cousin, and two others to assist in the partition of the property.²¹ It was agreed that the names of the three plantations would be written on pieces of paper and drawn for. The three heirs each signed that they agreed to these terms. This was witnessed by Elias Skannal, having been sworn to and subscribed before the local 6th Ward Justice of the Peace, Arthur Edwards. Sarah Jane, now Mrs. Sallie J. Wilson, drew first in the plantation lottery. Her slip of paper was for the Oakland Plantation. Matilda Hamilton, nee Skannal, wife of E. J. (Jack) Hamilton, drew next and drew the 2,578-acre Bluff Plantation. John drew the 3,375-acre Sligo Plantation. (This method of settlement was unusual in that all property was not appraised, and then monetary adjustments made between the heirs. However, their father had allowed such latitude and all agreed to this luck of the draw. Acreage did not necessarily equate to value.)

Sallie Skannal married James W. Wilson sometime in the mid to late 1860s. In the 1870 census, they are living in Homer, Louisiana, the parish seat of adjoining Claiborne Parish. Wilson is 34 and an attorney at law. Sarah is 22, and “Abram” S. Wilson is one year old. In 1880 Mr. Wilson is shown as a 42-year-old Ward 6 farmer, and Sallie a housewife. They and their 11-year-old son, Abel Wilson, are living in their Oakland Plantation home. Also in the household are Sallie’s brother, John A. Skannal, age 28, his wife Carrie, 22, and Noemie, age 7 months.

The May 19, 1881, *Bossier Banner* announced that, “James W. Wilson, recently a citizen of Bossier Point, this parish, died at the Louisiana Lunatic Asylum, at Jackson, on the 8th Inst.”²² On April 5, 1882, Sallie remarried to Napoleon Bonaparte Murff. Napoleon “Pole” Murff was born in Mississippi in 1843, and in the war had served as a young captain commanding a company in a Mississippi regiment. In 1886, they sold the western division of their Oakland Plantation to the big land trader, Reuben N. McKellar.

The Murff’s adult son, Abel Skannal Wilson, died in San Antonio, Texas, on November 1, 1898. His remains were returned to Shreveport for burial in Greenwood Cemetery. Thirteen days later, Sallie made her will. She declared that her son having died, she wanted her entire estate to go to her husband, Napoleon B. Murff.

Napoleon Murff inherited Oakland Plantation upon the death of his wife in October 1906. In 1912, he sold 2,126 acres to Wilbur A. Jones for \$17,000. In 1930, Mr. Murff sold the last 200 acres, containing the house, to his brother, Charles Murff. That same year, Charles transferred the property to the Continental Securities Corporation. The deal, in part, involved an exchange of the plantation for property in Shreveport.²³

²⁰ Bossier Parish, Louisiana, Succession of Abel Skannal, May 19, 1876; Office of the Clerk of Court, Benton.

²¹ Bossier Parish, Louisiana, Conveyance Book 10:470-472, “Partition,” Clerk of Court, Benton.

²² The *Bossier Banner* was a local newspaper beginning in 1859 with periodical gaps in its printing.

²³ Bossier Parish, Louisiana, Conveyance Book No.102, p. 158; Deeds, Parish Clerk of Court’s Office, Benton.

Staff members of Bossier Parish Library Historical Center recorded an oral interview with Melinda McCallon Coyer on February 24, 2000.²⁴ She said that her great-grandfather, Eswald Pettet, had worked for the government's Parks and Recreation. This involved traveling around the country developing public recreational facilities, including Shreveport's SPAR (Shreveport Parks and Recreation, with its Princess Park). While in this area he discovered the Oakland house and its plantation property. He purchased it, Melinda thought, from a bank.

In actuality, Mr. Eswald (Ted) Pettet entered into a sales agreement on the 200-acre "C. D. Murff Place" with Continental Securities in 1932. The sale was for \$10,000 with a mortgage that involved the absorption of a small \$500 bank mortgage on the house. Family members in the Pettet-Hughes line of descent related that Mr. Pettet began fixing the house up for occupancy. Soon the extended family of Ted and Grace Pettet, their daughter, Elizabeth, and husband, Frank K. Hughes, with the first of the couple's eventual four children, moved into the house. They clarified that Ted Pettet had been the southwest regional manager for the National Recreation Association, a private non-profit that helped cities develop parks and other facilities, to include acquiring government grants. And, that he was still working for the company in 1935 when at the age of only 51, he was tragically killed by a drunk driver while in commute to a project in Dallas. As a matter of interest, the family cleared up any doubt about a photograph in the Oakland house of an older gentleman beside a fireplace. It is not Dr. Abel Skannal, but, that of Ted Pettet's father in Chicago, Dr. Jonathan Pettet. It is now in the possession of Dr. and Mrs. Frank B. Hughes. They all agree that the servant, Harriet, is buried at the foot of Dr. Skannal's grave.²⁵

Melinda's father, Stanley McCallon, had given an interview at the Bossier Parish Library History Center in 1998.²⁶ He said that the Pettet-Hughes family vacated the old house in 1941. They rented it out, but it got so run down that they could not keep it rented, and it was empty a lot. Courthouse records show that in 1936 the widow Pettet and sole surviving child, Elizabeth, had paid off the mortgage. They were adjudged equal owners of the estate property. Records also show that in 1966 Judith Hughes McCallon, married to Stan McCallon, acquired 40 acres of the Oakland property from her grandmother, Grace, and mother, Elizabeth, as subsequently did her siblings, Merrilee, Ted, and Frank. "Judy's" acreage contained the old house, now long vacant.

Stan said that he, Judy, and their two little daughters, Melinda and Melissa, moved into the house in 1966. He said that the house was in very poor shape, especially the rear section. They had wanted to remove and save it. However, because of the expense and its deteriorated condition, partly due to termite damage, they had to tear it off.²⁷ They did salvage much of the material to use in their rebuilding project. The remaining structure is still one of three antebellum homes yet existing in Bossier Parish.

²⁴ Transcript, Melinda McCallon Coyer Oral History Interview, February 24, 2000, by Nita Cole, page 55, Bossier Parish Library Historical Center. Online: <http://bossier.pastperfect-online.com/36091cgi/mweb.exe?request=field;fldseq=125637> (December 7, 2015).

²⁵ Letter to the writer from Mary Sorrows Hughes (wife of Dr. Frank B. Hughes) dated December 12, 2015, and subsequent conversations with Mary Hughes, Frank Hughes, and Gary Warren, husband of Merrilee Hughes Warren.

²⁶ Transcript, Stanley McCallon Oral History Interview, February 1998, by Shanna Faulk and Kay Gammill, page 10, Bossier Parish Library Historical Center. Accessed by the librarian for Object ID: 1998.021.001A

²⁷ Ibid, p. 6.

Melinda told of the family's living in the front (1848) part of the house while remodeling and upgrading it to modern living standards. It had no closets, nor modern kitchen or bathroom facilities. All this while, they were building a new rear addition, replacing that torn off the back.²⁸ It was a difficult, inconvenient time, but was borne with tolerable good humor, and was laughed about later.

Melinda was the family chronicler of Oakland's ghostly happenings, for which the place has become well known.²⁹ Dr. Skannal's old house had gained the reputation of being haunted long before it became vacant in the late 1950s. Local African-American people saw ghostly horsemen galloping through the dog-trot hallway, and other apparitions. People who had lived and worked in the big house so long ago told Melinda's grandparents and great-grandparents that it was Dr. Skannal's ghost that haunted the house. He liked to play practical jokes on people, a habit that persisted after his death. Their descendants would still come by during Melinda's time and tell stories about some of the same paranormal incidents that her family was experiencing. One of the stories told was that Dr. Skannal kept his coffin in the attic and had a habit of lying down in it for a nap. There is nothing strange about his acquiring a coffin as part of his funeral preparations, or keeping it in the attic, but napping in the coffin is a little creepy.

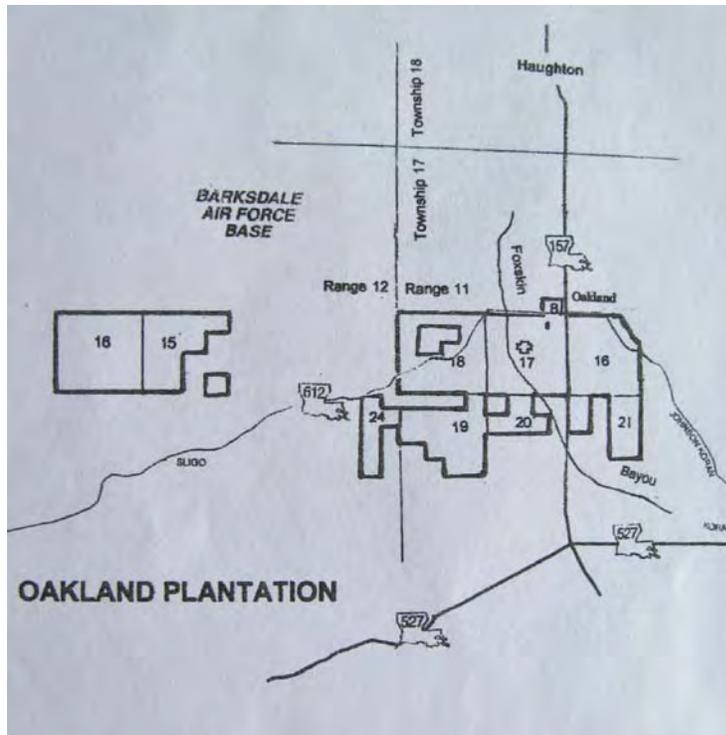
Melinda recounted many strange things witnessed by her family and by Melinda, herself.³⁰ On one cold night, she and her sister woke up thinking that they must have kicked off the covers they knew they had gone to bed with. They reached down to pull them up to find they weren't there, but were folded up over in the corner of the room. Her grandmother said the same thing happened to her when she lived in the house. They would sometimes wake up to find the thermostat turned way down. Something unseen would fiddle around with their stereo knobs. Things would mysteriously fall off flat surfaces, move around or disappear, only to reappear later. The rocking chair would be seen rocking with no explanation. Her mother and grandmother said that things like that had always happened. Her mother, Judy, saw Dr. Skannal as a fun-loving prankster, rather than a malevolent figure. It was, "Oh, that's Dr. Skannal again," or "Dr. Skannal, stop doing that." The sisters once woke up to see a lady in "gauzy white" in the room. When they told their grandmother next day she said, "Oh, you've seen her, the lady in white. We saw her when we lived there."

One by one the McCallon sons and daughters went off to school and then married. Judy died in 1984. Stan would remarry and go to live in Shreveport. He thought one of their children would someday live in the Oakland house, but none wanted to. In 2002, the family sold the house along with twenty acres to Shaun and Dawn (Sassy) Williams. They are continuing with the preservation of the Oakland home, adding their own touches. The Williamses – with her parents next door – are enjoying country life in Dr. Abel Skannal's historic home under the big oaks.

²⁸ Transcript, Melinda McCallon Coyer Oral History Interview, p. 55 and 56.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 56-66.

³⁰ Ibid.



This layout of Oakland Plantation was designed by Dale Jennings. The small, dark symbol in Section 17 beneath a part of Section "8" represents the Oakland Plantation house of Dr. Abel Skannal.



W. Darrell Overdyke in his 1965 book, *Louisiana Plantation Homes, Colonial and Ante Bellum*, shows this photo of the Skannal home. He states, in part, "Built of wood, its floors were two inches thick. On each end there was a brick chimney rising above a gabled story-and-a-half-high roof. There was a wide open hallway with rooms on either side. Back and front galleries ran the entire width of the house. An enclosed stairway ascended to the ample attic

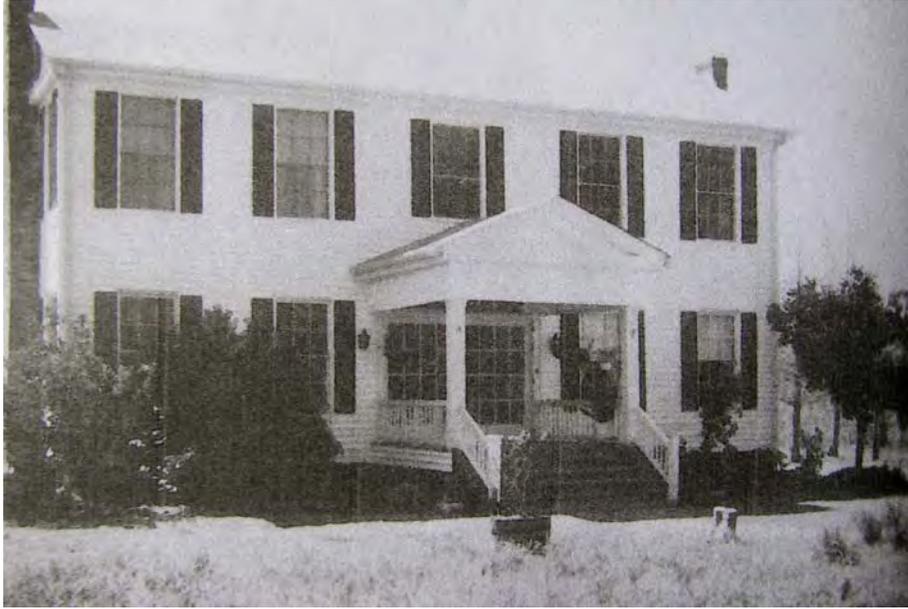
from the front gallery. In a separate building to the rear were the kitchen, the dining room and the nursery. In 1848 Dr. Abel Skannal [sic] erected a two-story building directly in front of the older one, converting the former front gallery to an open cross hall running the entire width of the house." W. Darrell Overdyke, *Louisiana Plantation Homes, Colonial and Ante Bellum* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., Inc. 1965), 142.



Abel Skannal's Oakland house, west-rear view, 1932. Figures are believed to be Grace Pettet, Elizabeth Pettet Hughes and her first child, daughter Merrilee. Note the kitchen is not attached. Photo courtesy of Dr. Frank and Mary Hughes.



East-front view of Oakland Plantation house in 1961. Pictured are Judy Hughes McCallon and her brother, Ted P. Hughes. Note the kitchen building was attached to the back of the building sometime after 1932. Photo courtesy of Dr. Frank and Mary Hughes.



This photo image of Dr. Skannal's Oakland Plantation house is found in Clifton Cardin's book, *Bossier Parish*. He stated that "the rear part of the home was built in 1838, but had to be disassembled in the 1960s. The front part was built in the 1840s and is still standing. Its owners are currently restoring the house for the second time." Clifton D. Cardin, *Bossier Parish* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1999), 42.



Oakland Plantation c. 1832
The Shaun & Sassy Williams Home
4846 Sligo Road - Haughton

This photo was copied from a program hosted by the Bossier Restoration Foundation. The presentation, "Changes in Time in Homes of the Past and Present" occurred December 14, 2003, in Bossier Parish. This program was given to Dale Jennings and it is in his possession.



The tombstone of Dr. Abel Skannal is located in the Oakland Plantation Cemetery in Bossier Parish, Louisiana. This photographic print was obtained from the Bossier Parish Library Historical Center in June 2015, catalog #2000.108.111. Photographer was Shanna Faulk.