



## RAMBLERS' RAMBLINGS

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### **DNA Bargain**

**By Dean Duncan**

If you or your cousins are considering getting a DNA test, now is a good time. A very popular lab is Family Tree DNA in Houston. They are having a holiday Special Sale on several different kinds of tests. The cost is \$119 until December 31<sup>st</sup> for the 37 marker Y-DNA test (for males). I paid almost \$200 for mine a couple years ago.

I've had very good results with mine and other "cousins" using this lab. To get the test kit, go to this website and type in your surname. [www.familytreedna.com](http://www.familytreedna.com) That will take you to the DNA Project page for that surname. Each surname has an administrator and probably a family association as well.

Application is done by email and credit card. A test kit is sent to the testee, who uses the little brushes to swab inside the cheeks for about 30 seconds. Put the brush back in the tube and mail it to the lab.

About 2-3 weeks later, FTDNA will email addresses of men who match DNA. Testee contacts them to find the common ancestor.

Call/email me if I can answer any questions.  
Dean Duncan [deanduncan@suddenlink.net](mailto:deanduncan@suddenlink.net)  
or 696-2108

### **My Great Grandfather Was William Frank Murray**

**OR**

### **Was He John Wilkes Booth?**

**By Lilabeth King**

William Frank Murray was born about 1850; the date has been determined from his age recorded in later censuses . . . if he was telling the census taker the truth. If he was not telling the truth, it's possible that he was born 10 years prior to that date.

The first record of William Murray that I have found was his marriage to great

grandmother Margaret (Margrett) Deskins, 3 February 1872 in Yazoo County, Mississippi. I have a copy of their marriage license.

In the 1880 census William is in Rusk County, Texas. William Murray is listed as age 30, working as a farm laborer. It's recorded that he was born in **Ireland** and both parents were born in **Ireland**. Listed with him are his wife Margaret, age 22, born in Mississippi, and four children - - Lula, age 7 (my grandmother); James, age 6; Jennie, age 4; and Griffin, age 2.

Inez, a relative in Meade, Oklahoma, said Frank left Margaret and their children in Texas and moved to Bryan County, Oklahoma between 1880 and 1900. Before he left, four more children were born - - Johnny, Andrew, Cambridge and Windburn. Inez says that Frank was a well-educated man who moved to Oklahoma to teach school in Indian Territory. Supposedly, he had studied music at New York City College; he also said he had served in the Union Army during the Civil War.

There is no 1890 nor 1900 census for Oklahoma; no records can be found again for Wm. Frank Murray until the 1910 census where he is listed in Bryan County, Oklahoma, age 59, born in **Ohio**, married for 10 years to Rebecca, age 53, his third wife. According to Inez, Rebecca Olson Murray was Choctaw Indian.

The 1920 census shows that Frank Murray and Rebecca are still in Bryan County and that he is 69; he was born in **New York**, his parents born in Ohio and Rebecca is 63.

The 1930 census for Bryan County lists Frank living with his son Griffin and Griffin's wife Ruthie and six children. He is 80 and stated that he was born in **Ohio**. Sometime after 1930, Frank moved to Dallas to live with a daughter-in-law and her children. Inez thinks that he died while living in Dallas and was buried there; no records can be found of his death or burial.

There are many family rumors and questions about William Frank Murray. Why did he leave Margaret in Texas to care for all their children? Who was his second wife? Where was he born . . . **Ireland, Ohio, New York, Texas**? Who were his parents and where were they born? Did he have a degree from New York City College? Was he a Union deserter? He would have been only 15 when the war was over. Did he have black hair and a mustache? Why did he go to Mississippi and then to Rusk County, Texas? If he was well educated, why was he working as a farm laborer in Texas? Did he teach music?

In an email, my new found cousin Frank tells me that his Aunt Edna, Wm. Frank's granddaughter, told him (just three weeks before she died) that Wm. Frank Murray was from a well-to-do family in Ohio, was well-educated and wanted to be a music teacher. Aunt Edna added that he was in the Union Army and met Margaret Deskins in Alabama after the war; they went to Mississippi and married. Wm. Frank's family disowned him for marrying a "southern girl." Aunt Edna continued that her Grandpa Murray wasn't really Wm. Frank Murray! He acquired that name because he was hiding from the government.

She said that on his death bed he “confessed that he was **John Wilkes Booth** and didn’t want to die without the truth being known!” My cousin Inez relates the same story to me and says her sister was there when he confessed to being John Wilkes Booth.

My cousin Frank, whom I located in Nebraska, sent me a picture of our great grandfather Wm. Frank Murray or “Old – What’s His - Name.” I have taken a picture of John Wilkes Booth as a young man and placed it beside the picture of W. Frank Murray as an old man and I can certainly see where the two might be the same man.



John Wilkes Booth (left) and William Frank Murray (right)

I contacted a prominent historian on the life of John Wilkes Booth. He was quite interested in my story, explaining that there are many who believe that Booth actually lived to be an old man and that it wasn’t Booth who burned in the barn that night.

My story interested him because of the deathbed confession and the trail my g. grandfather made from Mississippi to Texas to Oklahoma. He said John Wilkes Booth was living in those states during the times

that my g. grandfather was there. He also told me that if we could prove that my g. grandfather was really Booth, I would be famous as the person having both information and pictures of Booth in his later life.

Unfortunately, I have not had the time recently to pursue this so it’s a standstill for now. But William Frank Murray is a mystery that I continue to try to solve.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

The National Genealogical Society has announced the annual NGS Family history Conference will be 28 April – 1 May 2010 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The conference theme is “Follow Your Ancestral Trail” and will focus on migration across the U.S. To learn more about the NGS Conference, go to the NGS website at

[www.ngsgenealogy.org/cb/media](http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/cb/media)

## MYSTERY QUESTION ANSWERED

Beth Van Cleave was the first to e-mail The Little Mermaid as the answer to last issue’s mystery question! A very early e-mail answer – 7:06 a.m.!

Ellen Horner was later, but she added the following to her answer: “Actually, the answer was no guess. Charlie and I visited Copenhagen (and the mermaid) in the early 90’s. We visited Tivoli Gardens where Charlie and his army band performed in the 40’s after the war and the Summer Palace, where Charlie and the band preformed for

the King and Queen of Denmark. Our visit was nearly 50 years after Charlie had been there and he was able to stand on the exact spot where the band had played. A real "I was there" moment for him.



## A SMITH MARRIES A JONES!

(MY SUCCESS STORY)

By Beth Shilling Van Cleve

**STOP!** Don't throw that scrap of paper away you found in your grandmother's things.

My sister Sue Shilling Gibbs, and I have been searching 40 years for our g.g. grandfather SMITH, born in 1811. He first appeared at age 59 and was our g.g. grandmother's second husband. She was 29 at that time; her first husband had died, and her name was JONES. Finding a Smith that married a Jones - - how impossible is that !!

Recently we determined to get serious about him. The clue was found on an old envelope in our grandmother's writing: "*Thomas Smith's brother and sister were Lige and Martha.*" So we started in earnest to find "Lige" and "Martha." One of us

concentrated on Lige and one on Martha. We had looked for Lige, Elijah, etc. and finally the first clue came in *Eligah Smith*. We were able to follow his census trail that led us to other information. Likewise, we knew Martha's married name as she had married into a family that lived in the same area as a cousin. Using the brother's name we were able to find a family history on Rootsweb that led us to our *Thomas Smith* in his early years.

**EUREKA** - - he is found! Now just to solve the 20 - year time period when he disappeared between having his first family (we think) in Tennessee and a new family in Texas.

Moral to this story - - *read* and *save* every scrap of paper with names, dates or locations on it.

SWEDISH RESEARCH



FALKÖPING, Sweden-Family Search and Svensk Arkivinformation (SVAR), a division of the National Archives of Sweden, announced August 21 the launch of the largest online indexing initiative undertaken to-date. The two groups unveiled plans to engage Swedish volunteers throughout the world to help create a highly searchable, free online index to the historic parish registers of Sweden – 200 years of recorded Swedish history as documented in the Sweden church records-comprising over 400 million names.

## **MARY COLLIE COOPER LECTURE**

Lloyd Bockstruck, M.S., M.S., F.N.G.S., recently retired supervisor of the genealogy section of the Dallas Public Library, will be our guest speaker at the February 20, 2010 Mary Collie Cooper lecture.

Mr. Bockstruck, a widely-read author and sought-after lecturer, has been a facility member of Samford University's Institute of Genealogy Historical Research in Birmingham, Alabama since 1974. Prior to

that time, he was an instructor in genealogy at S.M.U.

Mr. Bockstruck will speak on **Identifying Maiden Names of Females, Researching Pennsylvania Before 1800 and Finding Records Created by Wars**. The presentation, to be held in the Activities Building at St. Mary's Catholic Church, 603 Church Avenue, will begin at 9 a.m. and will conclude at 2:30 p.m.

Registration fee is \$30, due by February 15, and includes lunch and handouts. At-the-door fee will be \$38.00.

### **FROM THE TELEGRAPH & TEXAS REGISTER, OCT 17, 1835**

It is gratifying to witness the public spirit which everywhere manifests itself in the service of the country. We know of one man who has taken the leaden pipes out of his aqueducts to furnish ammunition for the army; and a number of others who have melted up their clock weights (thus stopping, as it were, the wheels of time) for the same purpose. Even the ladies, bless their souls, volunteer their services in molding and patching bullets. . .

## **QUERIES**

I'm wondering if I can find whoever else might have some of the Ohio Genealogical Society Reports that were given out sometime last spring. I have three, one with an index, but not the issues with Hamilton (Cincinnati) and Butler Counties.

Ruth Shaw

## SEPTEMBER RAMBLER MEETING

The September Rambler meeting was a little bit out of the ordinary in that the program didn't pertain to genealogy research, but focused more on Brazos County History.



Anne Bovkin

Anne Boykin, coordinator of the Heritage Programs for the City of College Station, was our guest speaker. Anne told us about her great grandparents who settled near Steel's Store in the late 1880's.

## OCTOBER RAMBLER MEETING

In October Diana Houston, Interim Director for the State Archives and Library in Austin, presented a program on the extensive renovation project currently underway at the Lorenzo de Zavala State Archives and Library building.

Diana informed us what research material was available on a daily basis, what material would need to be pulled from storage for an out-of-town visitor researching and what material would not be available until the renovation was completed.



Diana Houston

## NOVEMBER RAMBLER MEETING

For the past 5 to 10 years, the Rambler's Computer User Group has shared its meeting time with the Research Ramblers during the month of November because of the conflict between meeting days and Thanksgiving. This year was no different. The program for the combined meetings consisted of reports from several members on their research success in Salt Lake City.

There was a total of 31 people attending the week long research trip in Salt Lake City. Twenty-one flew out of Easterwood. Novella Hronek drove her own vehicle and riding with her were Lillian Beasley and Pat

Barron; the remaining attendees were associate members from Boerne, Florida and Virginia.

Francis Martin reported about finding an Alabama will on microfilm that proved her g.g.grandfather; he mentioned his daughter by name in the will, and that was France's g. grandmother. Rod Martin reported on a new database at the Family History Library that you can't get at home; it's called "One Great Family."

Joyce Louis reported that while looking for relatives living in Galveston, Texas she found early Texas newspapers on microfilm.



Newcomers: Five first-timers who traveled to Salt Lake City



Old Timers: Six members who have made all Ramblers' trips to Salt Lake City.



Eighteen of the 31 Ramblers attending the recent Salt Lake City trip.

### Newsletter Staff

Mary Jane Millender – Editor and Brickwalls

Joyce Louis – Queries and Programs

Kate Thomas – Genealogy Lessons

Jane Maxwell – Websites

Henry Hanson - Photographs

## DECEMBER RAMBLER MEETING

In lieu of a meeting, the Ramblers met at the Old Glory Inn for a Christmas luncheon. Each member was asked to bring a Christmas ornament. After an update from

owner Mrs. Margaret O'Quinn, each member drew a numbers for their turn to choose a gift ornament.

## USING LOCAL FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY

Not everyone can make the trip to Salt Lake City to do research, but much of the material there is available locally for a fee. The local branch of the Family History Library is open to the public Tuesday and Thursday from 10:am – 1:30 pm and from 7 – 9:30 pm.

“This is very handy for a lot of people,” says assistant director Mason Rittman. There is no charge for using the library, located at 2500 Barak Lane in Bryan. The facility is incorporated into the temple of the Church of Latter Day Saints (LDS) and is easily entered through the southwest corner of the building.

Rittman says there are about 500 reels of film of microfiche on site on permanent loan available to the public. Others can be ordered for \$5.50 per reel from Salt Lake City for 30 days. It will take 1-2 weeks to get the reels. You need the title and film number to order. Once an order has arrived, a librarian will call to tell you. Copying is available for a fee as well. The card catalogue is online now at:

[http://www.familysearch.org/eng/Library/FHLC/frameset\\_fhlc.asp](http://www.familysearch.org/eng/Library/FHLC/frameset_fhlc.asp)

If you click on “Place” for instance and put **Brazos** in the top square and Texas in next and then select **Texas, Brazos**, all the things available for Brazos County will show up.

The local LDS library will be closed Dec. 21 – Jan. 4 and will reopen January 5<sup>th</sup>. The telephone number is 846-3516. Kenneth Higbee is library director.

## SUCCESS STORIES

### HISTORIC CEMETERY MARKER

By Dean Duncan

A cousin and I worked for about six weeks on an application to the Texas Historical Commission for a Texas Historic Marker for a family cemetery, located on IH 35 North of Georgetown at Jarrell in Williamson County. I submitted the application by email (as required) on October 10, 2009 to begin the approval process.

My g. grandfather and family started burying family members and neighbors in this area as early as 1863. The plot became a formal cemetery on April 1, 1886 and is “still in business.” I’m one of the board members.

On October 12, the WCHC representative replied that the application was “very well written” and he was submitting it to the THC in Austin, which accepted it. The WCHC generously paid the \$100 non-refundable fee.

The Texas Historical Commission will award 275 historical markers this year. The next communication from the THC will be either a “yes” or “no,” which I will receive



Nicholas Land Cemetery started in 1863  
in Williamson County, Texas

the first week of February, 2010. The historical marker, if approved, will cost us \$1500. The inscription, which will be written by the THC, will be based on information from my documentation.

Writing the narrative for the application is about like doing a term paper for a college course. Library research, foot notes, citations., references . . . about 20 pages, double spaced.

Thanks for listening. I'll listen to your success story, if you tell it.

## Editor's Note:

### Please tell your story!!!

## THE NEW PORTAL

### *DESIGNED WITH YOU IN MIND*

After months of conduction user studies, planning, testing and retesting, the University of North Texas Libraries Digital Projects Unit has erected a new **PORTAL TO TEXAS HISTORY**. The new Portal contains the same interesting materials you've come to expect, but in a redesigned web site with easier to use navigation and searching. In the new Portal you can :

- Target Basic Searches by material type or item record type
- View brief or full records for each item
- See any image in six different sizes
- Use enhanced zooming for maps and other large format items
- Get a suggested citation for an item
- Use the Share feature to send contents to Facebook, My Space, Twitter or other social networking sites
- Find Help in our extensive suite of help guides
- And much more

Behind the scenes, the Portal content now resides in a more robust system that ensures that we will be able to support ever-increasing numbers of users, add many more collections, and periodically provide new enhancements. For example, later this year we plan to roll out faceted searching that will allow you to filter your search results by category and find related collections or subjects. \* [unt.edu/news/2009July](http://unt.edu/news/2009July)



Glory Inn Christmas Party



Elmer Morning opening his gift



Mrs. Margaret O'Quinn giving the Ramblers our annual Glory Inn



More Christmas



More Christmas

*HAPPY NEW YEAR*