



RAMBLERS' RAMBLINGS

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'GETTING HITCHED' in EARLY TEXAS

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Groucho Marx, who got his comedic start in Nacogdoches, once quipped, "Marriage is a wonderful institution, but who wants to live in an institution?" Well, if you were to ask in Mexican Texas, the answer would have been, "Pretty much everybody." In addition to the benefits marriage brought in every other part of the globe, in Texas you got land. The colonization law of 1825 provided that a man, if head of a family, would receive one league and one labor of land (4,605.5 acres).

A single fella was only amount, but could have the hitched. That's what There was a problem, though. recognize marriages priests, who were as rare as Texan colonies. Stephen F. solution. The Father of Texas to get married could sign a bond, stipulating their intent declaring they would have priest just as soon as one



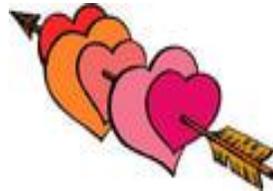
TEXAS 1825

entitled to a quarter of that full portion as soon as he got economists call an incentive. Mexican law would only performed by Catholic rocket ships in the Anglo-Austin came up with a allowed that couples wanting contract, called a marriage to be man and wife and their union solemnized by a showed up.

Austin had his own incentive. His colonization contract granted him 67,000 acres for every 200 families he settled in his colony. That incentive was so strong that Austin redefined "family." As Noah Smithwick, who resided in San Felipe de Austin, explained it: "Austin's rules provided that two single men might constitute a family for colonization purposes, many of the so-called 300 families consisted of a couple of old bachelors, a number of whom made their homes in town."

Things were working out pretty well as far as the Texas colonists were concerned. They could live together, get a fat land grant, and if the charms of matrimony were not as the couple imagined, the marriage bond would disappear up the chimney and they would go their separate ways.

And then the priest showed up. Father Michael Muldoon understood that the colonists, though they professed Catholicism to receive their land grants, were not Catholics in their hearts. Well, their hearts were their own affair, but Father Muldoon would see to it that Catholic form was followed, at least in regard to coupling. No more marriage bonds. It was time to pay the padre, \$25 to be exact, which is performing a marriage ceremony. But to some mass nuptials, which brought enjoy the spectacle and the



what Muldoon received for he offered group discounts. That led in everyone from miles around to barbecue that followed.

Henry Smith, who would later be provisional governor during the revolution, described one such marriage event: "The scene, take it all in all, was truly ludicrous in the extreme. Most of them had children, some five and six. To see brides on the floor, and while marriage rites are performing, with the bosoms open and little children sucking... and others in a situation really too delicate to mention, appeared to me more like a burlesque of marriage than marriage in fact. It was a fine scene for a painter and afforded much for amusement, and much more for serious and sober reflection."

Marriage views in the early days of Texas may have differed slightly from those of Quakers in the early days of Pennsylvania

QUAKERS' VIEW ON 'GETTING HITCHED'

BY HENRY HANSON

Squire Boone (Squire was his name, not his title) was the father of Daniel Boone and ten other children. He was married to Sarah Morgan, a Welsh Quaker. (The Boone's oldest daughter, Sarah Cassandra Boone's great great granddaughter, Lucinda Virginia O'Jane McGee, married William Clayton, my great great grandfather's half brother.)

Squire Boone was a respected a trustee of Oley Meeting, Berks October 27th 1739 Squire was made relationship with his church Daniel's sister, Sarah, married John husband was not a Quaker, not in married.



Sarah Boone

member of the Society of Friends, and County, Pennsylvania in 1736. On the an overseer. However, his good apparently began to deteriorate when Willcoxen in May 29, 1742. Sarah's good standing at least, when the couple

Consequently, Sarah and her parents were condemned by the Friends of Exeter Meeting for her act. She had married outside the unity of the Society. Friends Richard Lundy, John Scarlett and Thomas Ellis were appointed by the Society to speak to Sarah's father.

Squire Boone *declareth* he did not countenance or consent to the marriage, but *confesseth* himself in fault in keeping them in his house after their keeping company, but that he was in a great *straight* in not knowing what to do, and *hopeth* to be more careful in the future.

It is evident, from the wording of the confession of Squire Boone to the Friends of Exeter Meeting that John Willcockson and Sarah Boone had been living together in his house. He admitted that he had failed to keep them apart, "after their keeping company." Squire did not attempt to dignify the relationship by saying, "after they were married."

Squire Boone undoubtedly was saying that he did not approve of their intimacy, but that, after it happened, he was remiss in permitting them to continue their relationship without the benefit of the blessings of the law or the clergy. Marriage in this instance was probably spontaneous and by consent and intention, rather than by formal ceremony, a not uncommon procedure in the wilderness, where ministers and justices were scarce.

Had a marriage been anticipated, John Willcockson could have been accepted into fellowship with the Friends by a simple request for membership after professing belief in their principles. In this instance, it appears that Squire and Sarah Boone were subject to stronger criticism than is recorded in this portion of the church minutes because Sarah was pregnant when the marriage took place.



A FOLLOW-UP FOR "LINCOLN'S SATIRICAL WRITING" SPRING 2013

BY SHARON REINHARD

Sharon's story contains summarized information from *Lincoln's Boyhood, A Chronicle of His Indiana Years* by Francis Marion Van Natter, 1963, Public Affairs Press, Washington, DC and from information received from the National Grigsby Family Society.

Reuben Grigsby, Sr. was Sharon's great grandmother's 1st cousin once removed.

Reuben Davis Grigsby and his wife, Nancy Barker Grigsby, lived on a large farm on Pigeon Creek in Spencer County, Indiana with their children of whom there were seven sons: Aaron, Ruben Jr., Charles, Redmond, William, Nathaniel and James. Reuben was a successful farmer and used produce from his apple orchards in his distillery. His applejack whiskey had a reputation for being so dry that it "burned like a candle."

Tom and Nancy Hanks Lincoln and their children, Abraham and Sarah, lived in Kentucky. Tom was not happy with his Knob Creek farm and told a neighbor that he wanted to get out of the slave country, that he was also tired of finding his land titles to be worthless. He heard of free land in the Big Timber country of Indiana, made a scouting trip to the area and liked what he saw. Along the way, Tom happened to meet Reuben Grigsby on a forest trail and Reuben offered Tom a job as a cooper, making casks for his whiskey. He also provided a place for the Lincolns to camp until they could build a home.

In 1816, Tom and his family moved to Grigsbys and began a close, friendly and Abe Lincoln became good friends free time together. Aaron Grigsby, frequently available when Sarah and their relationship blossomed. 1826 and moved several miles away, and her baby died in childbirth. Abe deaths, believing they waited too long to call a doctor.



Sarah Lincoln

Spencer County, took up land near the relationship. Nathaniel (or "Natty") and seemed to spend most of their Nathaniel's brother, seemed to be Lincoln went to the spring for water Aaron and Sarah were married in but a year and one-half later, Sarah blamed the elder Grigsbys for their

As a result, the Lincolns weren't invited to the double wedding party of Rueben, Jr. and Charles Grigsby or later to the "in fare," which included feasting, dancing and the old-fashion rite of putting the bridal party to bed. Abe was miffed about being excluded by his friends and wrote a scripturally-styled story titled "The Chronicles of Reuben" (see *"Ramblers Rambling," Winter 2012*). In Abe's story, the bridegrooms were led to the wrong beds after the party was over, but the mix-up was quickly worked out. However, Abe shared his story with the community, causing much gossip and laughter.

Abe further promoted the quarrel by adding a verse about William (Billy) Grigsby's rejection by a girl he was courting. The verse implied that because he was bald and ugly, William was more attractive to other men. This did not go over well, so William picked a fight with Abe's half-brother, John D. Johnston, at a social event. When it became apparent that Grigsby was too much for Johnston, Abe broke in, caught Grigsby and threw him several feet away. Billy got up, claimed to be "the big buck of the lick" and if anyone doubted it, he should come on and "whet his horns."

Lincoln challenged him, but Billy offered a duel instead. Lincoln refused, saying that he would not fool away his life with one shot.

Cooler heads prevailed, the quarrel was settled and feelings were mended. When the "milk sick" disease, caused by drinking milk from tainted cows that had eaten poisonous plants, killed Abe Lincoln's mother in 1818, and returned in full force in 1929, Tom Lincoln and his adventurous spirit decided it was time to move to Illinois. It was 1830. His brother-in-law, John Hanks, had sent word that the land there was excellent with new sod that "had never had a plow point stuck in it."



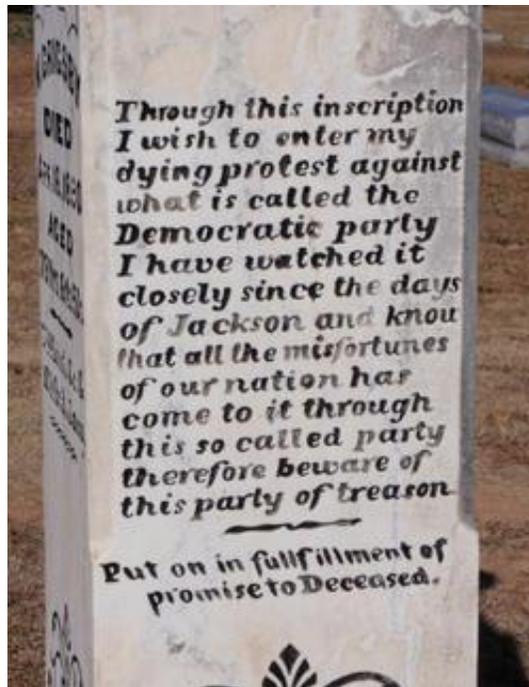
.....MORE ON NATHANIEL GRIGSBY

The following is Sharon Reinhard's story explaining the unusual inscription found on Nathaniel Grigsby's tombstone. The Grigsby tombstone pictures were originally submitted by Jerry Markowich for publication in the Spring 2013 issue of *The Ramblers Ramblings*.

Nathaniel Grigsby and family moved back to Spencer County, Indiana, where in 1864, he and his sons enlisted in Company C, 10th Indiana Cavalry. Even though he was 53 years old, he became a 2nd Lieutenant. His son, Henry Clay Grigsby, was killed only two months later.

Twenty -five years after his sons moved to Attica, April 6, 1890 he died.

In Nathaniel's mind the entity associated with the of the Confederacy, with a and other friends, and Lincoln, who was not only a States, but also a dear Time did not lessen his deathbed, he asked his shot" was carved into his



the war, Nathaniel and two of Harper County, Kansas and on

Democratic Party was an traitor secession and rebellion Civil War, the loss of a son with the death of Abraham president of the United childhood friend and relative. bitterness and on his sons to see that his "parting tombstone.

Carved on one side of Nathaniel's tombstone is the following: "*Through this inscription, I wish to enter my dying protest against the Democratic Party. I have watched it closely since the days of Jackson and know that all the misfortunes of our nation has come to it through this so called party; therefore, beware of this party of treason.*"

TEXAS TRIVIA;

WHEN WAS OIL FIRST DISCOVERED IN TEXAS?

Answer on last page of the newsletter



UPCOMING RAMBLER PROGRAMS

BY SHELBY ROWAN

June 26, 2013 - "What's Available at Montgomery County Memorial Library, Conroe" presented by Heather Kramer, Genealogical Librarian

July 31, 2013 - Officers' Election, Summer Brunch, Fellowship and Displays of Artifacts

August 28, 2013 - "Dating Old Portraits" presented by Rayna Dexter



GENEALOGY COMPUTER USERS GROUP

BY JERRY MARKOWICH

July 17, 2013 - "Exploring Ancestry.com" by Jerry Markowich

August 21, 2013 - "Finding Family in Texas" by Rambler Members



WHAT GENEALOGY TRIPS HAVE YOU TAKEN RECENTLY?

BY MARY JANE MILLENDER

Earlier this Spring, Jack and I drove to Alabama to research the Millender Family in the time period between their migration from Tennessee to Alabama in about 1802 to the time they moved to Houston and to the Matagorda Area c. 1860.

We started our research journey in Montgomery, in the State Archives Building, a very rewarding place in which to begin. The records there pointed us towards Autauga, Greene and Shelby Counties.

In Eutaw, Green County, we roamed around the Mesopotamia Cemetery, searching for the grave site of Capt. John Jones Winston, Jack's second great grandfather. We knew he was buried in Eutaw, but not the exact location. The county clerk's office helped us find the family plot after we finally asked for assistance. We were very interested in finding more about John Jones' life as his father was Captain Anthony Winston, Jr. the Revolutionary War ancestor Jack researched for his recent entry into the Sons of the American Revolution.

We had seen a photo of Winston's grave on Find-A-Grave, but we wanted our own photos on the Winston site. Genealogy brick walls might not exist if all our ancestors had grave markers such as the Winston Family in Mesopotamia Cemetery!

The beautifully carved Winston's marble slab, which of his grave, told us not only father's name, that his Winston, Jr. had fought in that John Jones was one of Alabama and the John J. had officer in the War of 1812 in At the top of his grave An ancestor's life is summed grave marker. A treasure



inscription of John J. covered the entire length his vital dates, but also his father, Capt. Anthony the Revolutionary War, the first settlers in served as a commissioned Colonel Coffee's Brigade. marker... a Masonic symbol! up in words inscribed on his for a genealogist.

Buried next to John Jones is John Milton Winston. Next Lucy, Norfleete, who died in intrigued Jack and I: it

one of his sons, Colonel to John Milton is his wife 1849. Her marble slab states that Lucy was the

reflect of John Milton. *Reflect?* What's a *reflect*? Jack and I were about to add a new word to our vocabulary: My iPad informed us that a *reflect* is a wife!

It was a great trip to Alabama....we made new friends, enjoyed lovely scenery, added more photos and family history facts to our Millender tree.....and then there was that new word, REFLECT.



IN 1918 A YOUNG MAN FROM MARLIN...

BY DAN LOUIS

In 1918 a young man from a farm near Marlin was killed in a WWI battle near Verdun, France, about a month before Germany surrendered. Ninety-four years later no one in his farming family had ever seen his grave.

Last October two Texas couples decided it was time that family went to see his grave and planned their trip, to include some travel in France and Germany. They were myself, Dan Louis, my wife, Joyce, and Pat and Don Kellen of Normangee. Pat is this young soldier's niece and I am his great nephew. Pat's friend, a woman from Normangee named J.P. Borah, traveled with us.

The young man was Pvt. First Class Will (Willi) Herman Drews, of the 360 Infantry, 90th Division killed September 28, 1918. The war ended soon after his death. Willie was the son of Daniel and Otilie Caroline Petrich Drews, who immigrated to Texas from Shokken, Prosen in Prussia about 1872.



Our trip turned out to take us to Willi's grave just two days after the 94th anniversary of his death. We traveled with a feeling that we were acting for the entire family, to honor this young man who died too young.

The cemetery is the St. Mihiel American Cemetery and Memorial, a bit southwest of Metz, in NE France. On line we found the exact location of the grave, and of those of two more young men with whom Don Killen had a connection. We had three graves to find, Willi's and those of John P. Killen, Private 319th Infantry, 80th Division and Private Joseph E. Gaskill, 145th Infantry, 37th Division, both of Pennsylvania.

We arrived at the imposing and well-cared-for cemetery about 5 PM on a breezy, rather cold October afternoon, just before closing time. We quickly found the site of Willie Drews' plot, and exactly as we turned to walk down his row the sound system began to play

That stopped us in our emotionally impacted while "taps" played. It always played at 5 PM certainly was more than



as we turned to walk down his row the sound system began to play

tracks. We were all and stood at attention turns out that "taps" is in the cemetery, but it just "chance" to us.

We were told that we could come the next day and see the office manager and learn a lot more about the cemetery and their files. We did just that. The manager of 30 years, took us on a vigorous tour of the four quadrants of the St. Mihiel Cemetery, which with just over 4,000 graves is much smaller than the cemetery at Omaha Beach. She pointed out the graves of Billy Mitchell's brother and a few other well-known people and gave us details on some of the statuary.

The manager wants for the cemetery archives, photos and files on Willie and his family. She had tears in her eyes upon hearing about his family and seemed to be very much personally invested in serving the visitors and the memory of the soldiers fallen in battle.

It seemed to all of us that our visit, in honoring Willi's memory, seemed to tie up a loose end in Willi Herman Drews' life and to say to his parents and those of the other young men that their great loss still matters to us, their descendents who have been blessed to live so long.



My Search for Emerson Williams' Gravestone

BY CLINT WILLIAMS

One of my recent projects was going through my pictures to find a photo of Emerson Williams' gravestone. I took the pictures in 1996 and was sure he was in that batch. He wasn't. I scheduled a trip to San Antonio and went by Blanconia on the way back. I took pictures of all three cemeteries in the area, but no Emerson. I was baffled because I was always told that Emerson was in the Blanconia Methodist Church cemetery. I found a younger Emmet, but no Emerson. I researched, read more family history and discovered that Elizabeth Winstead Williams, his mother, and Wayman, a brother, were also missing. I went online and found Elizabeth Winstead Williams at www.winstead.org. Most of the Williams family was on this free genealogy website, which said that she was buried in Refugio County. What? Not Bee County?

Although these two counties border each other, I had never considered this possibility. This had to be an error. I then tried Google Maps, typed in "cemeteries, Refugio County, Texas" and, to my surprise, there was a Williams Cemetery on the Mission River, which borders Bee County. Blanconia was on the opposite side of the river, north seven miles farther down where the Medio Creek and the Blanco Creek meet. This was hard to believe so I visited the TAMU Sterling Evans Library map room on the second floor and they found a 1973 USGS map of Refugio County with Williams Cemetery on it.

H. B. Williams buried his family on his property since there were no Baptist cemeteries in the area. Even though his brother, Henderson, was a Methodist, he didn't want to bury his wife and children in any place but a Baptist cemetery. When H. B. died in Bexar County, he was buried in a Baptist cemetery even though it was ten miles farther than the Methodist Church his son attended.

I scheduled another trip in April to see if that was all true. I drove to the area and tried to find the owner of the land. There was no one for miles and nothing but scrub brush and a dirt road. I left a note on my car with my phone number and said that I was going to read a cemetery. It was a mile and a half walk. I took my weed eater and my limb lopper as well; you never know what you are going to find on a dirt road. I could see the cattle paths through the brush, which was encouraging. As I topped the hill, I could see a little 8'x12' pen in the distance. I was amazed...there were Elizabeth (1823-1861) and Wayman Williams (1845-1867). It was a long journey, but profitable. After taking many pictures, I realized there was one person missing: where was Emerson? A cousin told me later that Emerson probably died in the battle of St. Charles Courthouse in Louisiana during the Civil War. He died after

October, 1863. My cousin also added that the family wasn't doing well financially at that time and doubted that they could afford having his body shipped back to Texas.

On the way back from the cemetery, I decided that I needed to go to the courthouse to find deed records for this property. If you've ever looked at deed records you know how heavy those huge 2'x2' record books are. I had to go through all the 1800's to find the family deeds. The Refugio County Clerk's Office was very helpful.

Three deeds were to H. B. Williams, Emerson's father. He bought one of the properties from Henderson Williams, his brother. Henderson was the relative that moved to Blanconia; it was his idea to move to Texas from Mississippi.



Flagging for Memorial Day, 2013

Over 94 Volunteers Placed 801 Flags on Graves



Front Row, L-R: Jane Cohen, Rhet Romero, Laura Harding and Tammy Tinner Harding



TRIVIA ANSWER:

July 1543 - The survivors of the De Soto expedition were slowly making their way along the Gulf Coast, dodging hostile natives and hoping to reach Mexico. On the 25th of that month, high seas forced their small boats on to the beach, somewhere between Sabine Pass and High Island. The mosquitoes nearly bled the small band of survivors dry, but they stayed on that beach for two days. Why? Because fortune had thrown them ashore near a natural oil seep. They endured the bugs and their bites in order to cover the bottoms of their leaky vessels with the tarry goo.



Texas oil saw them safely to Mexico.

*Remember...a pack rat is hard to live with, but makes a
great ancestor!*

Mary Jane Millender—Editor, Brick Walls

Henry Hanson--Pictures, Production

Joyce Louis--Queries & Programs

