

AUSTIN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

2017 Vol. 58 No. 1



The Austin Genealogical Society Quarterly is published once each quarter of the year in March, June, September, and December by the Austin Genealogical Society. Deadlines for submissions are the 3rd Saturday of the second month of the quarter. The AGS Editor reserves the right to edit all contributed materials for style, grammar, and length. Contributors are solely responsible for accuracy and proper citation of consulted sources. In addition, contributors are responsible for adhering to all applicable copyright law in their works. AGS assumes no responsibility for content of submitted material.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings AGS Members,

Happy New Year!

At the beginning of every new year, we often find ourselves reflecting on the previous year and begin making improvements in our lives. At the beginning of January, I read an article posted on the *FamilySearch.org* blog entitled, *Define Your Dash: Start Writing Your Personal History with the #52Stories Project*. As genealogists, we find the dash everywhere. We find the symbol on headstones, separating an ancestor's date of birth and date of death. We find it in our documents, and in our databases. We aim to verify what comes before and what comes after...but what about the dash itself? The dash encompasses the most important details of a person's life – where they went to school, who they married, how many children they had, their profession, the hardships they overcame, and all the places they traveled to and called home. Unless we are lucky enough to find a journal or a biography written about/by our ancestors, we often have to put these pieces of their puzzle together ourselves to catch a glimpse of who they were and what kind of life they lived. Sometimes, we can only imagine what these lives were like - their struggles and accomplishments, perseverance and hope. In the end, these milestones are what we cherish and we begin to gain a real connection with our ancestors, beyond just DNA.

Fast forward 100 years to the future and someone may be researching you. What will future generations discover? What will they imagine your life was like? Will you be more than just a string of dates and lines on a census? What about MY dash; The life I am living right now and the legacy I am leaving behind for future generations?

Here's where the "#52Stories Project" come into play. The concept is simple. Grab a journal and write about your life, once a week for every week of the year. What is important to you? What makes YOU...well, YOU? One of the first things we learn about genealogy is to start with ourselves. So, I challenge and encourage you to become more than just the bookends of your dash.

To learn more about FamilySearch's "#52Stories Project," and get weekly questions, visit: <https://familysearch.org/blog/en/define-dash-start-writing-personal-history-52stories-project-2/>. When you have a few journal entries under your belt, I encourage you to join the AGS Writing SIG (Special Interest Group). The group meets the second Thursday of every month and is targeted towards helping members with writing their family histories. For more information, visit <http://www.austintxgensoc.org/special-interest-groups/>.

As always, I would like to thank everyone who submitted articles for this quarterly edition. You may notice it has a different look. I hope you like the changes that have been made. I am looking forward to what 2017 has in store!



Angela Doetsch

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SEARCHING FOR FAMILY IN THE HIGHLANDS

By AGS Member Ann Kippen

When my brothers and I were growing up, our father did not speak much about his childhood or his father, a Scotsman named Alexander Duncan Kippen (1874-1943). He did tell us our grandfather had served in the Second War of the Boers and had stayed on in South Africa as a royal mounted policeman in a diamond mine. We knew he'd then migrated to Canada in the early 1900s before crossing the border into the United States.

In Lowell, Massachusetts, my grandfather met Alma Marie Peterson (1877-1920), a Swedish immigrant who worked as a live-in cook in a private household. Like Alex, she was a deeply religious evangelical. They married in 1911, and their only child, my father, was born in 1913. Later, they moved to Boston, where, sadly, Alma died of pneumonia when my father was only seven. My father and grandfather moved to Denver a few years after her death.

According to my father, Alex spoke with a Scottish brogue and possessed a keen wit. When sober, he sold men's suits and studied his bible. Unfortunately, he wasn't sober very often and frequently changed jobs. In Denver, they lived in a succession of rooming houses, a hotel above a Goodwill and a Goodwill mission.¹ In 1929, the stock market crashed just four days after my father's sixteenth birthday and my father quit school to go to work.

Most of what I knew of my grandfather's origins fit on a small scrap of paper that for years I kept in an envelope in a drawer. On it, I'd scrawled "Aberfeldy," "Perth" and "Mackenzie Clan," as well as the year and place of his death "1943, state mental hospital, Pueblo, Colorado, aged 69." I have two photos, one of Alex as a very young, uncomfortable-looking child holding a



Alexander Duncan Kippen as a child

Photo courtesy of AGS member Ann Kippen

ball before a painted backdrop, and one full length as a dapper gentleman in suit and hat. The one object belonging to Alex that survives is his bible, where he'd penciled tiny notes and underlined thousands of passages.

I also have three letters Alex wrote to his brother in Scotland during the Great Depression - fascinating for his account of hard times and an expat's view of the World War, but nothing of his life before emigrating. A letter to my parents from his cousin, Jessie Brydson, offers only a few cryptic details - that his father had a draper's shop in Aberfeldy,² that her own father had

¹ United States City Directories, 1822-1995. <http://www.ancestry.com>; United States Federal Census; Year: 1930; Census Place: Denver, Denver, Colorado; Roll: 239; Page: 14A; Enumeration District: 0180; Image: 7600; FHL microfilm: 2339974. <http://www.ancestry.com>.

² A draper in Scotland sold dry goods, usually mens suiting materials, but sometimes finished suits as well.

taken in young Alex and his siblings after their father's death and "their mother died later in Leith."

For most of our lives, the rest was a mystery, until my brother John launched our family tree on The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) website *FamilySearch.org*. As John was busy running a business, I jumped into the research as well. An empty nester with excess time on my hands, I gathered dozens of digitalized original documents from the National Records of Scotland's invaluable website, *scotlandspeople.gov.uk*.

My Kippen great-grandparents and their parents before them had indeed been storekeepers in Aberfeldy, a small merchant town in the lower central Highlands.³ Alex's mother, Christina Anne Mackenzie (1840-1893), was born further north in Aviemore to a family of innkeepers.⁴ I even found mentions of her grandparents in a nineteenth-century memoir.⁵ Both the Kippens and the Mackenzies had belonged to a growing Scottish entrepreneurial class. I was lucky their middle-class status left a rich paper trail.

Solving some family mysteries can often uncover deeper ones. I was particularly curious about Christina Anne, my great-grandmother, who'd supposedly died in Leith, a port district on the north side of Edinburgh. Yet, according to her death register, she'd died in an apartment across a park from the University of Edinburgh, where her oldest son James William Kippen (1872-1956) was a student.⁶ She'd moved several times and one census found her living far from family.

After several months of digging, my research trail dried up here in the United States.

Naturally, I wanted to see the Scottish river valleys where my ancestors had lived and to search local archives and graveyards. I also wanted to find out anything else I could about my seemingly restless great-grandmother.

Since many older burial grounds are located far from bus routes, a rental car would be a necessity.⁷ Though neither of us had ever driven in the United Kingdom, my husband Louis was game to be the chauffeur. So, in early October, after flying all night and with next to no sleep, we arrived at Glasgow Paisley Airport to pick up our black Volvo wagon.

We knew driving on the "wrong" side of the road would be a little hairy at first, as well as negotiating British roundabouts instead of stop-and-start intersections. Indeed, it was. We'd hardly left the airport when we entered our first big roundabout, one of several in rapid succession. As Glasgow drivers whipped effortlessly around the traffic circles, we were both in a low-level panic.

Once out of the city, our Global Positioning System (GPS) directed us to a meandering route through a postcard landscape of emerald fields, grazing sheep, and softly rolling hills. Yet it was no time to relax. The road, like so many in Scotland, was just two lanes - both very narrow. Our rented Volvo suddenly felt like a "Mack Truck" compared to the almost universally tiny cars zipping past. There was no shoulder, just a foot or so of pavement between the lane and dirt. Often the road was edged with a low stone curb that we kept hitting.

Hedge branches swiped my side of the car and sheer stone walls were often just an arm's length away. I must've gasped, "You're too far to the

³ National Records of Scotland. Kippen, James (Census 1851 346/00 006/00 014). <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>.

⁴ National Records of Scotland. 1840 Mackenzie, Christina Anne (O.P.R. Births 096/0B 0030 0070 Duthil and Rothiemurchus). <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>.

⁵ Grant, Elizabeth. *Memoirs of a Highland Lady*. 1898. (Reprint, Edinburgh: Canongate, 2012).

⁶ National Records of Scotland. 1893 Kippen, Christina Ann [sic] (Statutory Deaths 685/05 0010). <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>.

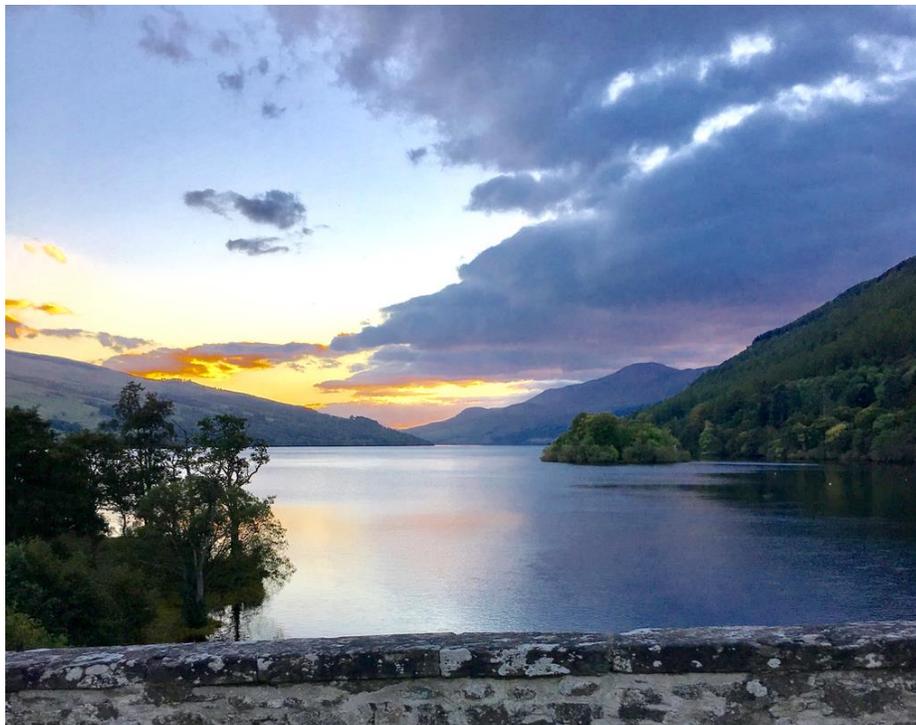
⁷ A comprehensive list of graveyards can be found at "Burial Grounds," The Scottish Association of Family History Societies, <http://www.safhs.org.uk/burialgrounds.asp>. Maps can be printed at <http://www.canmore.gov.uk>. I converted UK Ordnance Survey (OS) reference points to latitude/longitude with the mobile app GB Grid Converter.

left!" fifty times, to which Louis would retort, "I don't want to get in a head-on collision!" Somehow, we made it to our first stop, the village of Kippen, without a crash.

My surname, Kippen, is not a common one. I have never uncovered anyone named Kippen, living or dead, who'd actually lived in the tiny Stirlingshire village of the same name. Yet, because of the name's rarity, at some point centuries past my people had certainly hailed from Kippen.

stark landscape of steep, gray mountains stained with a burnt purple-brown vegetation I guessed might be heather. "So, this is what people mean when they describe the Highlands as 'bleak, but beautiful,'" I thought. The land seemed uninhabited for many miles, with no barns or houses in sight. Yet somehow, here and there, scatterings of sheep would appear grazing on the inhospitable slopes.

When we finally reached the Upper Tay Valley, we were suddenly back in lush green hills,



Loch Tay, Kenmore

Photo courtesy of AGS member Ann Kippen

Our brief stop was worth the detour. A quiet street of charming stone homes with gardens of late-blooming roses was backdropped by a lush valley. The serene blues of the Fintry Hills rippled to the horizon. Seriously jet-lagged, we popped into Rhubarb Lime, a quirky but cozy cafe, for Coca-Colas. The kind proprietor came running after me when I left my bag, with passport, credit cards and cash, hanging on the back of a chair.

Our actual destination was 50 miles north in my grandfather's hometown of Aberfeldy in Perth and Kinross. On our way, we drove through a

higher than those surrounding Kippen, and perhaps even more beautiful. The River Tay is the longest in Scotland and winds through the little town of Aberfeldy five miles from its widening at Loch Tay. Exhausted, we crossed the 300-year-old Wade Bridge and headed straight for our lodgings on the other side of the river.

Our bed and breakfast (B&B) was nestled on a hillside in the hamlet of Weem overlooking a lovely pastoral view. Happily, the room was comfortable and immaculate, with fresh lisianthus in the bathroom and crisp, white

linens on the bed. Our hosts kept their own hens who wandered freely on the lawn outside our breakfast table window. On our way into town the next morning, we passed a herd of majestic red deer in the neighboring field and the sixteenth century Castle Menzies.

Aberfeldy has become a tourist destination, not only for visitors from Glasgow and Edinburgh but from Europe and even America. The breathtaking countryside is full of walking and biking trails, and salmon and trout fishing on the River Tay is reported to be excellent. A local waterfall is immortalized in the song "The Birks of Aberfeldy" with lyrics by Robert Burns. Though some store fronts are empty, others sell rustic home decor items, fresh produce and artisan jams. The Watermill bookstore is a social hub with a busy coffee bar and an art gallery. The Birks Cinema was screening "Ben Hur."

In the center of Aberfeldy is a little commercial area called The Square, where both sides of Alex's family lived above their businesses. His father Duncan Kippen (1815-1880) and grandfather James Kippen (1784-1863) were merchants who ran what seems to have been both a draper's shop and grocery store on the "Southside" of The Square.^{8,9} Naturally, I was anxious to find its exact location.

Though armed with notes from old censuses, I was soon thoroughly confused. What the census referred to as the "Southside" of The Square was curiously in the north. Luckily, an attendant at the Visitors' Information Centre knew not only the directions to castles and waterfalls but the town's history as well. She pointed across The Square to a vacant corner building with steep dormers and large display windows that had once been the draper's shop.

I easily found one of the pair of hotels run by my great-great-grandparents William Patrick Mackenzie (1815-1866) and Jessie Fraser (1813-1885). The Breadalbane Arms Hotel still exists - a white stucco building prominently positioned on a corner of The Square. The adjacent Caledonian Hotel, however, has disappeared, in its place now a Royal Bank of Scotland.

According to *Memoirs of a Highland Lady* by Elizabeth Grant, William Patrick Mackenzie's father Hugh Mackenzie had been a butler to Sir John Peter Grant in Rothiemurchus in the Cairngorm Mountains. In 1806, Hugh married his co-worker Ann Lynch, who was lady's maid to Grant's wife.¹⁰ The newlyweds left the Grants' service to take over the Aviemore Inn, across the River Spey.¹¹ Hugh made improvements to draw a growing class of



The Doune in Rothiemurchus, where Hugh Mackenzie was butler to Sir John Peter

Photo courtesy of AGS member Ann Kippen

⁸ National Records of Scotland. Kippen, Duncan (Census 1871 324/00 005/00 004). <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>.

⁹ Perth and Kinross Council Archive; Valuation Register for Perth and Perthshire, 1874-1875; Roll: SCPERa022_018Vr18741875. <http://www.ancestry.com>.

¹⁰ London Metropolitan Archives. St Giles in the Fields: Saint Giles High Street, Holbrook, Camden, Transcript of Marriages, 1802 January-1809 March, DL/t item, 036/005: 313. <http://www.ancestry.com>.

¹¹ Grant, Volume 1, 58.

tourists attracted to the romance of the Highlands, as well as hunting and fishing.

He advertised fancy wines and liquors for his clientele.¹²

But the inn struggled financially in an ever-difficult region.¹³ The brutal climate ruined many crops and in 1829, the Spey overflowed its banks, causing massive damage. Hugh Mackenzie lost two oxen and several sheep in the Great Moray Flood, and some of his sheep were found stuck (while still alive!) in treetops.¹⁴

Elizabeth Grant described another tragic turn of events that affected the family's fortunes. Hugh, in consuming his stock of upmarket liquors with his guests, developed a devastating drinking problem. Poor Ann was left with the burden of her husband's work as well as her own.¹⁵ Eventually, their only son William Patrick took over the inn.

A "spirited" man,¹⁶ William Patrick was actively involved in local celebrations and once addressed visiting Prime Minister Lord John Russell at a fete in Russell's honor.¹⁷ He

organized fishing excursions for his guests, was tacksman (chief tenant) of two farms and was also a civil lawyer. In 1856, however, he went bankrupt and his assets were seized.¹⁸ Yet somehow, perhaps with the help of affluent in-laws, William Patrick was soon back on his feet.¹⁹ By 1857, he was running the Breadalbane Arms and Caledonian Hotels 70 miles south in Aberfeldy.²⁰

Under Mackenzie's management, the Breadalbane Arms offered "first-class accommodations," a bowling green and seasonal daily coaches to attractions like Killin and Loch Lomond.²¹ It was a gathering place for civic, sporting and social events.²² Mackenzie, whose "courteous and obliging disposition gained (their) respect and esteem," was embraced as a fellow townsman by the locals.²³

¹² Outram-Leman, S. "Ecosystem service provision in the Cairngorms National Park: case study of past and future management of geodiversity and biodiversity." *Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 554* (2013): 42-49. http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/commissioned_reports/554.pdf.

¹³ Outram-Leman, S., 49.

¹⁴ Wakeling, Ann. A report on Scotland's Rural Past: Easter Aviemore, Inverness-shire, 42. <http://her.hIGHLAND.gov.uk/hbsmrgatewayhighland/DataFiles/LibraryLinkFiles/251808.pdf>.

¹⁵ Grant, Volume 1,319-320.

¹⁶ "Arrival of Lady Reidhaven in the Land of the Grants," *Elgin Courier*, 6 September 1850. <http://www.genesreunited.co.uk/searchbna/viewrecord/bl/0000454/18500906/012/0002>.

¹⁷ "Rothiemurchus - Lord J. Russell," *Inverness Courier*, 19 September 1850. <http://www.genesreunited.co.uk/searchbna/viewrecord/bl/0000446/18500919/009/0002>.

¹⁸ National Register of Archives for Scotland. Concluded Sequestrations, 1st/2nd Divisions, 4th Series. 1856. CS280/42/190.

¹⁹ According to Chris Halliday of the Highland Archive and Registration Centre, Inverness, bankruptcy would leave a Scot with no assets, so a family member or other person with resources must have bailed out Mackenzie. His benefactor may have been his mother-in-law Christy Mackintosh Fraser, widow of my third great-grandfather William Fraser who'd been tacksman of Borlum and had left a fairly substantial will.

²⁰ Francis, Francis. *The Angler's Register*. (London: Trübner & Co., 1858): 9.

²¹ Murray, Alexander. *Scotland Described: A Series of Topographic Sketches*. (Glasgow: Alexander Murray, 1866), 420.

²² "Presentation to James Wyllie, Esq. Bolfracks," *Perthshire Advertiser*, 17 April 1862. <http://www.genesreunited.co.uk/searchbna/viewrecord/bl/0000458/18620417/075/0003>; "Bowling--Close of the Season," *Perthshire Advertiser*, 2 October 1862.

<http://www.genesreunited.co.uk/searchbna/viewrecord/bl/0000458/18621002/097/0005>; among others.

²³ "Death of a Townsman," *Perthshire Advertiser*, 9 August 1866. <http://www.genesreunited.co.uk/searchbna/viewrecord/bl/0000458/18660809/058/0003>.



Breadalbane Arms Hotel, Aberfeldy

Photo courtesy of AGS member Ann Kippen

In March 1871, Mackenzie's 31-year-old daughter Christina Anne married Duncan Kippen, a 55-year-old bachelor, at the hotel.²⁴ Sadly, the popular hotel keeper was not in attendance, having died five years earlier, also aged 55. The cause of William Patrick's death was tongue cancer,²⁵ a clue he'd had a taste for whiskey, like his father.²⁶

Above the store, Christina Anne gave birth to three children in three years - James William in

1872, Jessie Margaret in 1873, and our grandfather Alexander Duncan in 1874. Duncan, as town registrar, recorded his children's births.²⁷ Unfortunately, he died of cystitis in 1880 when Alex was only five.²⁸ After just nine years of marriage, Christina Anne became a young widow at 40.

²⁴ "Marriages." *Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser* (Banff, Scotland), Tuesday, 14 March 1871. <http://www.genesreunited.co.uk/searchbna/viewrecord/bl/0001195/18710314/211/0008>.

²⁵ National Records of Scotland. 1866 McKenzie, William Patrick (Statutory Deaths 324/00 0034). <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>.

²⁶ Mashberg, Arthur, D.D.S., Lawrence Garfinkel, M.A. and Suri Harris, M.P.H. "Alcohol as a Primary Risk Factor in Oral Squamous Carcinoma." *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*. Volume 31, Issue 3, May/June 1981, Pages: 146-155. [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.3322/\(ISSN\)1542-4863](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.3322/(ISSN)1542-4863).

²⁷ National Records of Scotland. 1872 Kippen, James William (Statutory Births 324/00 0015); 1873 Kippen, Jessie Margaret (Statutory Births 324/00 0036); 1874 Kippen, Alexander Dunca [sic] Statutory 324/00 0052). <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>.

²⁸ National Records of Scotland. 1880 Kippen, Duncan (Statutory Deaths 324/00 0025). <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>.

In her letter, Alex's cousin Jessie Brydson claimed, "When (Duncan) died they had no home...so my father looked after Jim, Jessie and Aleck [sic]." She implies the Kippen children quickly moved in with Christina Anne's sister Isabella and brother-in-law, draper William Brydson, at their parkside townhouse in Perth. Yet the following year Alex and Jessie were still living with Christina Anne at The Square, while



Marshall Place in Perth, where Alex lived with the Brydson family

Photo courtesy of AGS member Ann Kippen

Jim was staying with his grandmother, Jessie Fraser Mackenzie.²⁹

That the Kippen children had "no home" is curious, since Duncan had set up an annuity to leave his family financially secure.³⁰ Christina Anne held onto her house and store and by 1883 was the proprietor of two additional houses on The Square. She subleased one to her husband's ex-partner, with whom she was still working, and the other to a shopkeeper likely in their employ.³¹

It was not unusual for Scottish children to be sent to relatives, especially for the higher quality education valued by middle-class Scots.³² Yet Jessie Brydson's letter still casts a shadow and the children were shuttled off to Perth by 1884 at the latest.³³ In 1886, Christina Anne did lease an apartment in Perth, probably to rejoin them.³⁴ However, by 1891, 15-year-old Alex and 16-year-old Jessie were back living with the Brydsons, and Jim was studying medicine in Edinburgh.³⁵

Oddly, the 1891 Census revealed Christina Anne was neither in Perth nor in Aberfeldy. Though she'd held a 99-year lease, she was no longer proprietor of the houses or business in The Square. She was instead a lodger at a private home in Fintry, a tiny Stirlingshire village at least 50 miles from either Aberfeldy or Perth. She had no relatives in Fintry. An "annuitant of private means," she was not employed.³⁶

²⁹ National Records of Scotland. Kippen, Christina Anne (Census 1881 324/00 005/00 003); McKenzie, Jessie (Census 1881 324/00 004/00 002). <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>.

³⁰ National Records of Scotland. 1881 Kippen, Duncan. (Reference SC49/31/113 Perth Sheriff Court). <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>.

³¹ Perth and Kinross Council Archive; Valuation Register for Perth and Perthshire, 1883-1884; Roll: SCPERa022_027Vr18831884. <http://www.ancestry.com>.

³² According to a research assistant at the Perth & Kinross Council Archive, AK Bell Library, Perth.

³³ Perth and Kinross Council Archive; Valuation Register for Perth and Perthshire, 1884-1885; Roll: SCPERa022_028Vr18841885. <http://www.ancestry.com>. Christina Anne Mackenzie was still proprietor of two houses, as well as the business space, but was tenant of only a room.

³⁴ Perth and Kinross Council Archive; Valuation Register for Perth and Perthshire, 1886-1887; Roll: SCPERa022_030Vr18861887. Also *ibid.* 1887-1888; Roll: SCPERa022_031Vr18871888. <http://www.ancestry.com>.

³⁵ National Records of Scotland. Kippen, Alexander D. (Census 1891 387/00 019/00 005); Kippen James W. (Census 1891 685/05 087/00 015). <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>.

³⁶ National Records of Scotland. Kippen, Christina (Census 1891 480/ 002/00 007). <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>.

What she was doing in Fintry remains a mystery. Fintry had once been a weaving town, yet by 1891, its two mills and a distillery had been shut down and its population had dwindled to a few hundred.³⁷ Though I've wracked my brain many times, I've come up with only the usual sad possibilities - drained resources, failed romance, break with family, depression, alcohol. In Scotland, I asked historians in libraries, archives and information centers if they had any idea why she would be living in Fintry. Everyone was stumped. One gentleman's terse reply seemed to wrap up the discussion: "Some things are better off left in the past."

Less than two years later, Christina Anne died in Edinburgh at just 52 years old. The cause of death was "cardiac weakness, syncope," or heart failure. William Brydson traveled to Edinburgh and signed the death register.³⁸ Where she was buried was a puzzle I hoped would be easier to solve than the circumstances of her life. I was excited to begin exploring graveyards.

Both Duncan and James Kippen had been founding members of the Free Church at Aberfeldy during the Great Disruption of 1843.^{39, 40} Since the church site had never included a graveyard, I assumed the Kippens would be buried in the town cemetery. Perhaps the newcomer Mackenzies would be found there as well.

The Aberfeldy Cemetery is a neat, stone-walled clearing surrounded by trees on the east side of town. Louis and I started on opposite sides of the graveyard and began walking the rows. Within minutes I realized my search for family graves may be harder than I'd thought. Though the oldest of the stones dated no earlier than the second half of the nineteenth century, the tough Scottish climate had already done much damage. Older stones were heavily spotted with

lichen and many of their inscriptions were difficult to read, some impossible.

I'd worried my normally restless husband would become bored with such tedious work as prowling graveyards. But Louis turned out to be an avid search partner, keen-eyed and tenacious. When he called out, "Here's James Kippen!" I dashed over to see what he'd found. Unfortunately, this James Kippen had died fifty years later than my great-great-grandfather. Having no luck at the Aberfeldy Cemetery, we headed across the Tay to where three parishes - Kenmore, Weem and Dull - had recorded earlier Kippens' births and marriages.

In the ancient, hillside churchyards of Weem and Dull, lichen damage was more rampant than it had been in town. Some of the stones had toppled forward and lay face down in the grass. Tramping across the uneven ground, I felt certain unmarked graves lay beneath, their stones long crumbled. Many of the inscriptions of stones still standing were unreadable. We learned to scrutinize them from an angle, as faded letters could come through more clearly when cast in a side shadow. But we turned up nothing in either Weem or Dull.

I had but one option left, the Kenmore Parish Church. Kenmore was the earliest parish to which the Kippens of the Upper Tay Valley had belonged. There, in the early 1600s, my seventh great-grandfather Andro Kippen had been head gardener of Balloch Castle. He'd been brought to Kenmore from Glenorchy in Argyll by Sir Duncan Campbell of the powerful Breadalbane Campbell Clan.⁴¹

³⁷ *Tenth Decennial Census of the Population of Scotland Taken 5th April 1891*. Volume 1. (Edinburgh: Neill & Co., 1891): 11.

³⁸ National Records of Scotland. 1893 Kippen, Christina (Statutory Deaths 685/05 0010). <http://www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk>.

³⁹ "Aberfeldy," *Perthshire Advertiser*, 7 December 1843. <http://www.genesreunited.co.uk/searchbna/viewrecord/bl/0000458/18431207/040/0003>.

⁴⁰ The Great Disruption was the secession of the evangelical Free Church from the established Church of Scotland.

⁴¹ Gillies, William A. *In Famed Breadalbane*. 1938. (Reprint, Ellon: Northern Books, 2005): 358.



Fallen gravestones at Kenmore Parish Churchyard

Photo courtesy of AGS member Ann Kippen

Sir Duncan had contracted Andro to landscape and maintain the castle grounds. In exchange, he'd been granted a land tenancy.⁴²

With the afternoon's end bearing down, I almost abandoned the search. After all, my ancestors had moved from Kenmore centuries earlier. The graves of any Kippens buried there were likely to be unmarked or their stones degraded beyond hope. Besides, why would nineteenth century Kippens, converts to the Free Church, choose to be buried in an established Church of Scotland graveyard?⁴³ But we had perhaps an hour and a half left of daylight and Louis was game to go on.

The village of Kenmore on Loch Tay is one of the prettiest spots we visited in Scotland. Wooded hills surround the tranquil Loch, whose surface sparkled with a warm, late afternoon

light. A fancy golf club stretches between the lake's banks and Taymouth Castle, built on the site of the much older Balloch Castle.⁴⁴ Kenmore Parish Church is perched on a high jetty overlooking the Loch.

For the last time that day, Louis and I searched ragged rows of ancient gravestones, some crumbling and fallen, others illegible. My concentration lagging, I found myself staring at the scenery, imagining what life had been like there in centuries past.

Suddenly Louis hollered, "I FOUND THEM!" In the church's north yard, he was pointing at two monuments which towered over the rest. One was a classic obelisk, its apex reaching perhaps eleven feet above the ground.

Though sprinkled with lichen, inscriptions were clearly legible. "In Memory of James Kippen, Merchant, Aberfeldy, who died there on 7th April 1863 aged 80 and of Margaret Marshall his wife who died there on 21st April 1861." Buried with them were three adult children (out of their seven) who'd never married - daughters Margaret and Vere, and son James who'd been a minister in the Free Church near Loch Lomond. Beneath the minister's date of death was a quote from Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

Next to the James Kippen family monument stood a second obelisk, this one seven feet of polished granite topped with a decorative urn. Light reflecting on the glossy surface rendered its inscription almost invisible. But when viewed at an angle, words materialized: "In Affectionate Remembrance of Duncan Kippen, Merchant of Aberfeldy, who died 31st of July 1880 and of Christina Anne Mackenzie his wife who died 1st of January 1893."⁴⁵

⁴² Innes, Cosmo. *The Black Book of Taymouth*. (Edinburgh: T. Constable, 1855): 424-425.

<https://archive.org/details/blackbookoftaymo00inneoft>.

⁴³ According to a research assistant at the Breadalbane Community Library, Aberfeldy, Scots often buried their dead at their traditional family plot, even if they'd changed their faith or parish.

⁴⁴ Balloch Castle, more a sixteenth century tower house than a castle, was built in 1550 and torn down in 1799 to make way for the larger, more opulent Taymouth Castle.

⁴⁵ The statutory register records Christina Anne's date of death as 3 January 1893, contradicting the January 1st date on her tombstone. Considering the discrepancy between the civil record and Jessie Brydson's letter as to her place of death, I leave open the question of exactly where and which day she died.

Duncan Kippen lay next to the father he'd worked alongside and whose business he'd carried on nearly twenty years after he was gone. The body of my enigmatic great-grandmother had been returned from Edinburgh to a final resting place with her husband. In such a beautiful setting, her troubles of long ago did seem better left in the past. I was struck with the realization that my brothers and I, our children and our children's children, are the only descendants of Duncan Kippen and Christina Anne Mackenzie.⁴⁶ That we live far from their graves was bittersweet, but I was thrilled to have found them.

Later, Louis and I would drive further into the Highlands to where Christina Anne was born. There, we'd find a plaque marking the site of the old Aviemore Inn, torn down to widen the road a hundred years after the bankrupt Mackenzies left town.⁴⁷ We would search a graveyard near Aviemore, then several more along the shores of Loch Ness for the Frasers of Christina Anne's maternal side.⁴⁸ Unfortunately, we were not to find any more of my ancestors' graves.⁴⁹

But in the quiet of the Kenmore Parish Churchyard, I wanted to sit as long as possible

with this family I had never known - those so grandly memorialized in front of me, as well as others whose unmarked graves doubtless lay within the same walls. I found it hard to fathom that my father, a motherless boy raised in urban slums, was just a generation removed from this once-prosperous family. Yet the struggles and achievements of my own family, which had seemed so isolated when I was growing up, now made more sense, as did my grandfather's tragic fall. We were just episodes of a much longer story.



Kippen Family graves

Photo courtesy of AGS member Ann Kippen

⁴⁶ James William married a widow with a daughter and had no more children. Jessie Margaret married Robert Steele in World War I (WWI) but he was killed six months later and she never remarried.

⁴⁷ Dempster, Walter. "Rothiemurchus." St Andrews Church, Grampian Road, Aviemore, <http://movingiton.com/church/rothiemurchus.shtml>.

⁴⁸ 1813 Fraser, Janet (O.P.R. Births 092/00 0010 0026) Boleskine and Abertarff or Fort Augustus. <http://www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk>. The same page also records the births of all eight of Janet's (Jessie's) siblings. (The names Janet and Jessie are interchangeable in Scotland.)

⁴⁹ I later found a 9 August 1866, *Perthshire Advertiser* obituary for WP Mackenzie which reports his body was conveyed by train to Forres for a second funeral. Though the obituary claimed he was a native of Forres, his birth was recorded in Duthil and Rothiemurchus parish which includes Aviemore. I have never uncovered birth records for his father, but it's a clue Forres may be Hugh Mackenzie's birthplace.

COELESTINE MARIE AUGUSTE DE CASIS NEE SACK

By Jon Todd "JT" Koenig

Marie de Casis, as she was known in her adult life, was born on 22 October 1832, in the city of Düsseldorf, Germany, which at the time was part of the Kingdom of Prussia. She was the youngest child of Eduard Wilhelm Hieronimus Maximilian Sack (1794-1866) and his first wife, Dorothea Catharina Elisabeth Sack *nee* Ficker (1799-1832).



Marie de Casis

Photo courtesy of Jon Todd "JT" Koenig

The Sack family was a well-to-do and well-connected family in Prussia. At the time of Marie's birth, Eduard was serving as the Regierungsrath and Justiziar to the Directorate of Köln, which was the equivalent of being Chief Counsel and Legal Advisor to the local

authority of that region of the Prussian Kingdom. Immediately prior to Marie's birth, her father had served as the Chief Prosecutor for Düsseldorf. Her great Uncle, Simon Heinrich Sack (1723-1791), was the Privy Councilor to King Friedrich the Great of Prussia and was at that time second in wealth only to the King himself. Marie's mother, who sadly died as a result of giving birth to Marie, was likewise from an important patrician family - the Ficker/van Hemmis family of Paderborn and Osnabruck, Germany. Dorothea's father, Wilhelm Anton Ficker (1768-1824), was a noted physician in Paderborn. Her maternal grandfather, Johann Conrad van Hemmis (1727-1786), was the Kapellmeister at the Cathedral in Osnabruck and a younger contemporary of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), with whom he collaborated on a number of compositions.

Marie was one of twenty-three children of her father by two wives. She was deeply loved by her father as she was the youngest child of his first wife. All of the children were afforded a highly intense education in Düsseldorf and like many of her sisters, of whom nine lived to adulthood, she studied music, art and literature. Marie would later emigrate to Texas with some of these sisters. Also, like a number of her sisters, Marie was afforded the privilege of travel. This was deemed highly unusual for the time. Two of her half-brothers were ship captains and it is suspected that this allowed Maria (as well as some of her older sisters) safe passage to any number of far-flung locales.

One of those destinations was the island of Jamaica. It is there, in Kingston, on 23 February 1867, that Marie married a native of Kingston, Jose Marie Salome de Casis (1822-1888). Jose's father, Pedro Nolasco de Casis was a native of Panama, and his mother, Maria Luisa Garel, was a Kingston native like her son. Pedro Nolasco was a government official for the British Crown, which controlled Jamaica at that time. Jose followed in his father's footsteps, also serving the reigning monarch at that time, Queen Victoria.



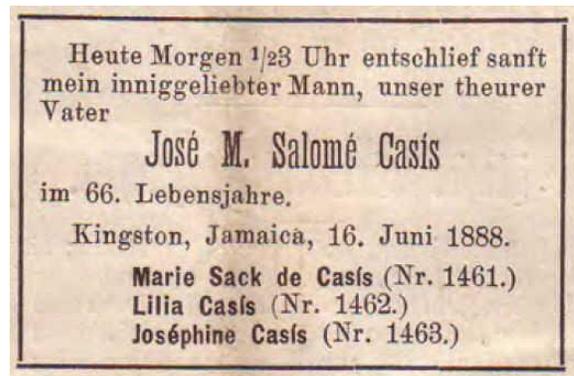
Jose Casis

Photo courtesy of Jon Todd "JT" Koenig

Marie and Jose resided in Kingston through the full extent of their marriage and were blessed with two daughters; Maria Louise Charlotte Lelia "Lilia" de Casis (1869-1947) and Josephine Ramona Wilhelmine de Casis (1873-1947), both of whom were born in Kingston. Marie was widowed when her husband died in Kingston at the age of 65 on 16 June 1888. It was shortly thereafter, in August of 1890, that

Marie and her daughters emigrated to Texas via Galveston.

The reason for her emigration to Texas was due to the fact that she had family in Texas at that time. Her sisters, Otilie Sack Ploeger and Theodore "Dorchen" Sack von Rosenberg (1829-1904), were living in Round Top with their families. Marie first settled in Round Top and lived with her sister, Dorchen, and her sister's husband, Carl Eugen von Rosenberg (1830-1913). She then later moved a few miles away, to Warrenton in Fayette County, where she and her daughters taught lessons to the community's children. It was in Warrenton where Marie passed away, two years after her arrival, at the relative young age of 59 on 26 July 1892.



Jose Casis' death notice from the Sack Family Newsletter, *Die Taube* (The Dove)

Photo courtesy of Jon Todd "JT" Koenig



Marie's death notice from the Sack Family Newsletter, *Die Taube* (The Dove)

Photo courtesy of Jon Todd "JT" Koenig

Coelestine Marie Auguste de Casis nee Sack

A few years after their mother's death, in 1894, Marie's daughters relocated to the thriving and bustling capital city of Austin, Texas, where they followed their mother's path and became full-fledged educators.

Lilia Casis, as she was then known, became a tutor and then professor at the University of Texas, where she later became the school's first tenured female instructor. Josephine taught at

Austin's Palm School for 33 years. Casis Elementary School in the Austin Independent School District (AISD) is named in honor of these two pioneer educators. It was these two sisters who ultimately had their mother, Marie de Casis *nee* Sack, buried in Oakwood Cemetery, in Austin, Texas.¹ Lilia and Josephine are buried in the newer section of the cemetery, Oakwood Annex.



**Marie's grave marker –
Oakwood Cemetery**

Photo courtesy of Jon Todd "JT" Koenig



**Josephine and Lilia's grave marker -
Oakwood Cemetery Annex**

Photo courtesy of Jon Todd "JT" Koenig

¹ NOTE from the Editor: The author confirmed that "originally, Marie Sac de Casis was buried in Fayette County (we think in Florida Chapel cemetery) where her sister Theodore Sack von Rosenberg is buried), but she was later moved to Austin."

REALLY? AN APACHE?

By AGS Member Joyce Arquette

When I was young I used to spend a lot of time with my maternal grandmother who lived in Kerrville. She liked to talk about her childhood and how she and her sister had married two brothers. They remained in close contact over the years, and she told me that I would be double cousins with her sister's grandchildren. The thing I remember most is how my grandmother would talk about her great-grandmother, and that she was an Apache Indian. She didn't go into many details about the relationship, nor was I interested enough at that time to ask for more information. Apparently, none of the other family members asked either.

After my grandmother's death in 1959, I did begin to wonder about the Native American ancestry that she had talked about. It occurred to me one day – many years later – that if I had some Native American blood in me, I might have enough to claim some part of the many casinos owned by the Native Americans. I started becoming excited about the whole idea.

After talking to several people about the prospect, I was told that I would have to prove my ancestor was Apache and also a distinct line connecting us. I had no idea how to do anything of that nature and kept postponing my research until I finished working, raising kids, and retired. I then took some classes in genealogy. That was when the work began, and since it was all new to me, I asked my son for help.

My grandmother had always enjoyed talking about her past and her relatives. She was born and raised in a small farm house located in Kerr County, Texas, between Kerrville and Center Point. She had six sisters and one brother and lived her entire life in Kerrville after her marriage to Harvey Mosty, my grandfather. Her name was Margaret Leann Hodges, but soon after her marriage to Harvey she was known as "Mamie". Harvey chose that nickname for her after one of his favorite cartoon characters in the Snuffy Smith cartoons. So, for all her children

and grandchildren, she was hence known as Mamie.

After a few weeks of research, I became disgruntled after tracing one side of Mamie's ancestry – her father's side, the Hodges clan - all the way back to the 1700s. I found several ancestors on the Hodges' side. Their surnames were Yates (born in Virginia in 1727), Shirley (born in 1764 in Virginia), Preuitt (born in 1714 in Alabama), Cavette (born in 1734 in Scotland), and Ozment (born in 1733 in the United Kingdom). No Native American heritage was to be found on this side in any of these ancestors.

I found two great-grandmothers on the Hodges side of the family. One was Isabel Murchison who was born in 1810 in North Carolina and was married to Jasper Ozment, also from North Carolina. No Native American heritage was found on her side of the family. Another great-grandmother was Nancy Ann Preuitt, born in 1811 in Lawrence, Alabama, and was married to John Tolbert Hodges. Still, no link.

At this point, and before I furthered my research on Mamie's mother's side of the family, I thought I should find out something more about the Apache Nation.

According to what I discovered on the internet, the Apache are Native American tribes from the Southwestern United States and have traditionally lived in eastern Arizona, northern Mexico (Sonora and Chihuahua), New Mexico, west Texas, and southern Colorado.

Their tribes settled in high mountains, sheltered and watered valleys, deep canyons, deserts and the southern Great Plains. They fought Spanish and Mexican invaders for centuries. There were several groups of the Apaches, including Western Apache, Chiricahua, Mescalero, Jicarilla, and Lipan. They currently live in Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona and Texas on reservations.

I discovered, again from the internet, that the Apaches were fierce fighters and skillful strategists. And then came the disturbing information that the only federally recognized tribes in this era are the Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, the Chiricahua Apache Nation, Fort Sill Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Jicarilla Tribe of New Mexico, Mescalero Apache Tribe of New Mexico, San Carlos Apache Tribe of Arizona, Tonto Apache Tribe of Arizona, the White Mountain Tribe and Yavapai-Apache Nation of Arizona. Alas, there are no federally recognized Apache tribes from Texas. So, my casino inheritance was looking grim unless I could prove that I am related to one of the Arizona, New Mexico or Oklahoma tribes. Since none of my ancestors (specifically, my 3rd great-grandmothers) are from any of those states, I began to come to the realization I may have lost all claims to benefits.^{1,2} I grew tired of investigating Apaches and decided that there could be a possibility my grandmother's great-grandmother was some kin since the Apaches had been in the Southwest and in Texas for many years. I proceeded to see what I could find on Mamie's maternal side of the family.

Emily Adeline Rees, Mamie's mother, was born in 1861 in Kerr County. Since Mamie was born in a house in the country between Kerrville and Center Point, I assumed that Emily was also born in that locale. There was no address given for either of them other than Kerr County. Emily died in Texas in 1928. Mamie's great-grandmother was Julietta Minerva Burney who was born in 1814 in North Carolina and died in Kerr County in 1897. She was married to John Milton Tedford.

On Emily Adeline Rees' paternal side, her father was Sidney Benner Rees, and his mother, Mamie's great-grandmother, was Henrietta Lowrance who was born in North Carolina and died in Kerr County, Texas. Her date of birth was shown to be 1800 and death to be 1882. Henrietta Lowrance was married to John Rees.

I thought it was interesting that I knew one of the Burney descendants who was Justice of the Peace in Center Point in the 1980s. Betty Burney and I were friends and often discussed our ancestral background. I was also friends with Sidney Rees who was the pastor of a church near Kerrville. I knew others to whom I was related and who had remained in Kerr County for several decades and even centuries. I'd seen the farm house where Mamie was born when I rode my horse on the country backroads between the Bandera Highway and Camp Verde. It was still inhabited when I saw it, but I didn't stop to find out who was living there at the time.

None of the four great-grandmothers were of Apache descent according to their ancestry records, but there could have possibly been a relationship with some of the Apache women that were not documented because there was no marriage. Unfortunately, Mamie's relationship with her "Apache" great-grandmother was never brought into question, and no one was interested until years after Mamie's death in 1959. Harvey Mosty had died one year earlier; therefore, he was not available for providing more information. However, I doubted that he paid much attention to her claims to be part of the Apache Nation or any other ancestry claims. In those days, when I was young, being related to a Native American was common and no one really cared. Genealogy was a thing of the future. All we cared about was earning a living, raising kids, school, and making sure the crops and/or farm animals were healthy.

Although Mamie enjoyed mentioning her great-grandmother, she never gave details and no one ever asked. The question of her relationship to the Apache great-grandmother she spoke of is possible, but not proven according to my research or any other person's research that I have identified. I hope more will be found in the future and I continue to hope I will inherit part of a casino.

¹ <http://www.texasindians.com/ap2.htm>

² <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/bma33>

COUSIN EDITH

By AGS Member Craig Peterson

It was a Sunday evening in December and I was determined not to work on family history but to clean the study instead. On the shelves, I saw a stack of photos and documents I thought had been previously scanned and needed to be put away. Going through the stack I realized they had been scanned before but I looked over them again anyways. Here was the 1914 marriage certificate between my great-uncle, Walter Peterson, and his wife, Edith Peterson. It was odd that their surnames were both Peterson but maybe it was filled out afterward. Deeper in the stack, I find a picture of Edith. On the back is written, “From Edith Peterson 11-24-06, To Uncle & Auntie” and at the bottom, “Custer Park, Illinois.” So, Edith had an Uncle and Aunt in Illinois. I thought to myself, I’ll have to check into her background one day.

Wait, the dates...could Edith’s name have been Peterson before she married Walter? I quickly found her death certificate and a John Peterson was named as her father. Peterson among Swedes is common, like Smith or Jones among the English. There was still no reason to jump to conclusions.

The next morning while sitting in traffic on the way to work, I’m still thinking about Edith. I recall a picture I retrieved from California of my grandfather and Edith at the ruins of the old dam in Austin, Texas. On the back it says “Cousin Edith and myself...”. I always thought it was an affectionate nickname or something but could Edith have really been a cousin? Then I thought, what if Edith’s picture really meant to say from Edith in Custer Park to Uncle & Auntie in Texas?

A look at the family tree that evening showed that when my great-grandfather emigrated in 1870, he left a brother in Sweden named Johan Peter Peterson who was born in May 1840. An email to my distant relative (that I count on for all things concerning Swedish records) confirmed he could not track Johan beyond a move to Stockholm in 1870, and that the birth month was the same.



**Back of photo of Edith Peterson
“From Edith Peterson
11-24-06
To Uncle and Auntie”**

Photo courtesy of AGS member Craig Peterson

He also confirmed the year was one year off from what was recorded on the 1900 Illinois census record. A visit to the website, *FindAGrave.com* confirmed the census birth year was wrong and the Swedish record matched.¹ The death index for John Peterson from Custer Park said his middle initial was P.

To further confirm, I called my oldest cousin from that side of the family and quizzed her about Aunt Edith. Did she know her maiden name was Peterson? She responded that “no one in the family talked about it, but Walter & Edith were cousins.” She only knew because she overheard her mother mention it one time. John (Johan) Peter Peterson was my great-grandfather's brother who immigrated to the United States in 1873. He lived in Chicago where all three of this children, Frank, Edith and Florence, were born before moving to Custer Park.

He became superintendent of the Knickerbocker Ice House where they cut ice from the lake and stacked it in a large building. Frank later joined him at the ice company. John died in 1907 and Edith went to visit an uncle, aunt, and cousins in Texas. Walter and Edith married and lived their lives in Houston and Austin. They are buried in the Oakwood Cemetery Annex in Austin.

Back to the family photos that passed from uncle to uncle and finally down to me. One extremely old photo of a man taken in Chicago is probably John. Another is a young man with a stringer of fish in front of a lake with what I now know to be an “ice house” in the background. The back says “Pa & I caught these bass....” It is signed Frank. I was able to match a few other photos to Frank and pulled them from the “unknown” picture file.

After two trips to Sweden meeting cousins on my grandmother's side, I now find I have a whole new set of cousins in Illinois from my grandfather's side.



Frank O. Peterson with fish

Photo courtesy of AGS member Craig Peterson

¹ FindAGrave.com memorial for John Peterson in Custer Township Cemetery: <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=peterson&GSiman=1&GScid=322758&GRid=132869705&>

MARY JANE BOWLES FESSENDEN

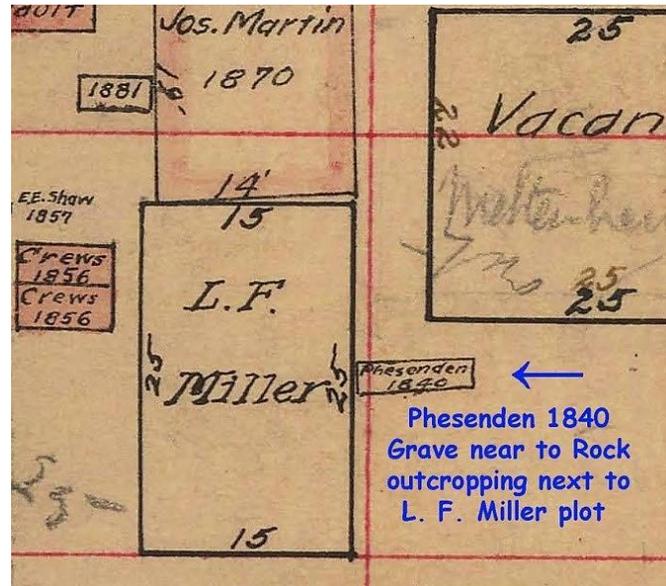
By AGS Member Kay Dunlap Boyd

In 2005, I became a member of Save Austin's Cemeteries (SAC), an organization dedicated to preserving the historic city-owned cemeteries of Austin, Texas, including the history and stories of the people buried in them. These cemeteries are Austin Memorial Park, Evergreen, Oakwood, Oakwood Annex and Plummers.

My husband and I have many generations of our families buried in Oakwood as well as two of the other cemeteries. His family goes back to Thomas McKinney, a citizen of the Republic of Texas, who died in 1873; and mine to Adolph Nelson, a Swedish immigrant who died in 1886 shortly after coming to Texas. I spend many quiet hours walking the grounds and studying Oakwood Cemetery, the history of Austin and the many people buried there. We refer to it as an outdoor museum.

Several years ago at the Austin History Center, Dale Flatt, the founder of SAC, located a map of City Cemetery (before it was known as Oakwood) dated 1911 with field notes showing graves identified by city engineers. This map includes the names and dates of graves they found at that time. Many of the plots marked then are no longer readable or standing. Between the names of others such as Green, Ziller, Martin, Donnan and Miller was Phesenden. Who was Phesenden? This name is not in any of our other records.

The notation for the Phesenden grave was dated 1840, making it one of the first burials in Oakwood. When working on topics this early in Texas history, a good place to start researching is the Portal to Texas History website,¹ which has a collection of many newspapers from across the state. I found nothing looking for the name Phesenden, so I looked to possible alternate spellings starting with Fessenden. I found something on my first search. There were



1911 Oakwood (City Cemetery) map

several newspaper articles on Fessenden found in the 1830s and 1840s. The one that stood out most was an obituary printed in 1840. It was for Mary Fessenden who died 8 November 1840. The *Texas Sentinel* printed her obituary notice and identified her as the wife of Joseph Fessenden. Obituaries for this time are rare to find. It read:

“Departed this life, on 8th inst, [8th of this month] after a short illness, Mrs. Mary Fessenden, wife of Mr. Joseph Fessenden, of this city, in the 22nd year of her age....Mrs. F. was too well known to require any flattering comment upon her memory; but it is but justice to say that she was beloved by all who knew her, and in her death, society has met with an irreparable loss.”²

Mary would have been born in August 1818.

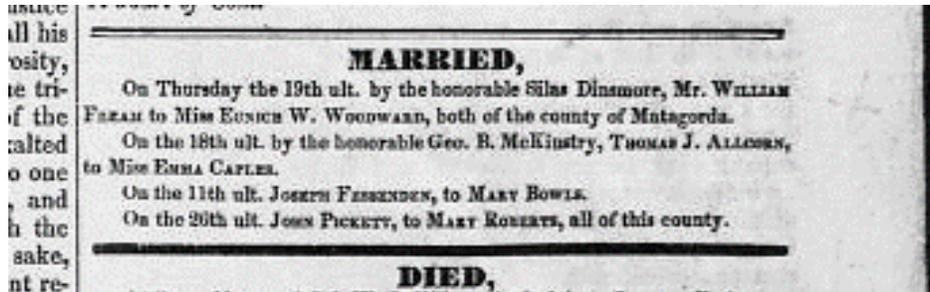
¹ The Portal to Texas History website: <https://texashistory.unt.edu/>

² *Texas Sentinel* (Austin, Texas) Saturday, 14 November 1840, page 1.

I continued to search for more information. The *Daughters of the Republic of Texas Patriots Vol. 2*³ states that Mary Jane Bowles married a Fessenden. I determined that Mary's parents were Benjamin and Betsy Smith Jeffries Bowles who came to Texas in 1827 from Missouri after leaving Kentucky and Tennessee. Betsy was a niece of Henry Smith, the first Governor of the Republic of Texas, making Governor Smith a great-uncle of our Mary. The General Land Office records show that Benjamin immigrated to Texas in 1835.⁴

followed these two after they moved, however, there are still in Fessendens in Texas.

*The Telegraph and Texas Register*⁶ newspaper mentions a lost note (loan) from Joseph. In the 13 June 1840 *Texas Sentinel*⁷, the notice states Fessenden is a member of a "military organization of the citizens, for the better guarding and protecting of the town (Austin) by night, so as to render a surprise next to impossible."

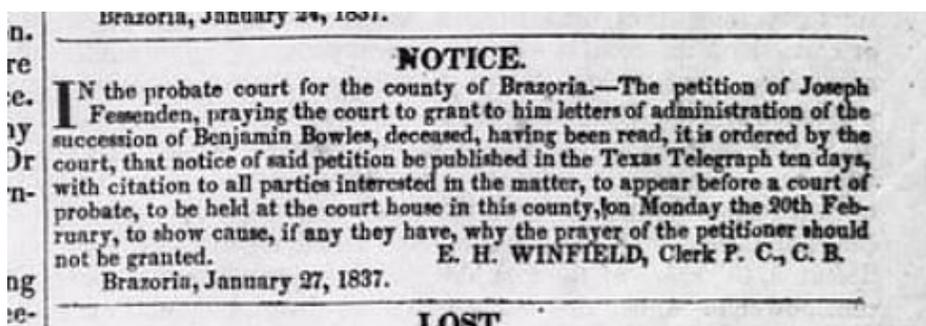


Joseph Fessenden and Mary Bowls[sic] marriage notice

*The Fessenden Family in America*⁵ states the family was from Maine and that brothers Isaac, Joseph, and William moved to Texas, possibly in 1827. It gives Joseph's birth as 13 March 1808. The parents of these brothers were Isaac and Mary Doane Fessenden. Both the Bowles and Fessenden books on Mary and Joseph ended with "moved to Texas." No researchers

A marriage notice appeared in *The Telegraph and Texas Register*⁸ that included "on the 11th ult [previous month] Joseph Fessenden to Mary Bowls[sic]."

Lower on the same page is a notice where Joseph Fessenden is petitioning the court applying for probate of his deceased father-in-law Benjamin Bowles. That notice is dated 27 January 1837, in Brazoria County.



Joseph Fessenden probate notice petition

³ *Daughters of the Republic of Texas Patriots Vol. 2*, Turner Publishing Company, 2001

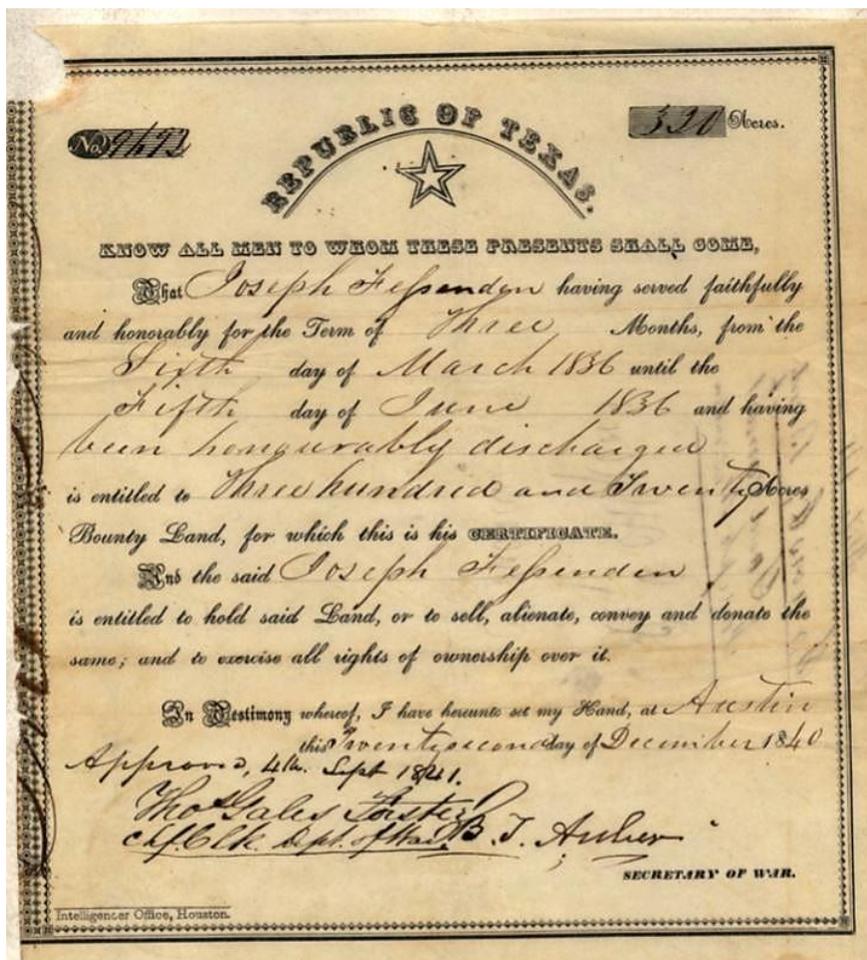
⁴ http://www.glo.texas.gov/ncu/SCANDOCS/archives_webfiles/arcmaps/webfiles/landgrants/PDFs/1/0/6/0/1060569.pdf

⁵ *The Fessenden Family in America*, Fessenden, Edwin Allan, 1882-1963; Washburn, Mary Elizabeth Fessenden, 1914-

⁶ *The Telegraph and Texas Register* (Columbia, Texas) Vol.1, No.30, Ed.1, Tuesday, 20 September 1836, p.3.

⁷ *Texas Sentinel* (Austin, Texas), Vol. 1, No. 26, Ed. 1, Saturday, 13 June 1840, p.3.

⁸ *The Telegraph and Texas Register* (Columbia, Texas) Vol. 2, No. 4, Ed. 1, Friday, 3 February 1837, p.3.

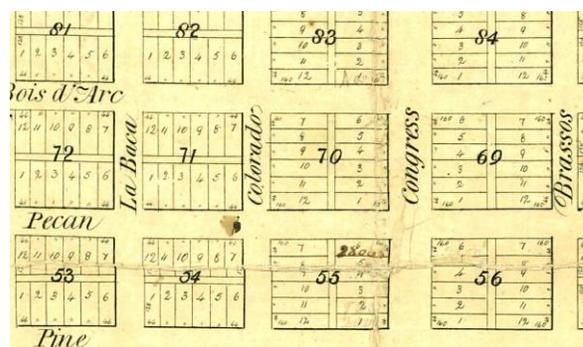


Joseph Fessenden land bounty certificate

Joseph was enumerated on the 1837 tax rolls in Brazoria County with 500 acres of land and livestock.⁹ Later, he was also listed on the tax rolls in Austin County and Travis County.

General Land Office records list ten land transactions for Joseph Fessenden. The Republic of Texas had little money and paid those who served in the military with bounty land grants. Fessenden received his land bounty of 320 acres in Travis County with Warrant #9672¹⁰ for serving his three months in the Texas army from 6 March to 5 June 1836. The land office records also state that Joseph arrived in Texas in May of 1835.

Fessenden and his partner, Coleman Denman, purchased lots #4 and #9 in block 69 of the recently platted town of Austin. They owned the “Travis House” on Congress Avenue for boarders and travelers. A land patent in Travis County appears in September 1841.



1839 Austin map from Texas State Archives

⁹ www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575

¹⁰ The Telegraph and Texas Register (Columbia, Texas) Vol. 2, No. 4, Ed. 1, Friday, 3 February 1837, p.3.

An article giving more details on Mary's grave was found in *The Austin Statesman*.¹¹ This gives us complete information on her tombstone inscription.

What is said to be the oldest grave in Oakwood is that of "Mary W. Fessenden, late consort of Mr. Joseph Fessenden, who departed this life November 8th, 1840, aged 21 years and 3 months." The grave is marked by a thin upright slab, rather ornate, and better preserved than some, though it is chipped in places. The length of the grave is covered with a rounded tapering stone, which is also shattered at one end.

The inscription is very obscure and was laboriously made by tracing with a pointed instrument. The virtues of the deceased are told in the following verses:

"Plain as her native dignity of mind,
Arise the tomb of her we have resigned,
Unflan'd[sic] and stainless to the marble scroll,

"Emblem of lovely form and candid soul;
But of what symbol avails to tell
The kindness, wit and sense, we loved so well;
What scripture shows the broken ties of life
Here buried with the parent, friend and wife."

According to an entry on the website, *FindAGrave.com*, Joseph died 31 December 1847, in Galveston, aged 31 years, 8 months and 17 days. His grave marker was located in the Bernardo Cemetery at Hempstead in Waller County.¹² Since Mary died before photographs were common and we found no children who might have passed down any portraits, enough facts were found about her life to put some "flesh on her bones." We now know more about her life and the location of her limestone marker and the remnants that still exist. Having these details, we can give Mary Fessenden her proper recognition in the history of Oakwood Cemetery.



Gravesite of Mary Fessenden, Oakwood Cemetery

Photo courtesy of Hal Mohrlök

¹¹ *The Austin Statesman*, 10 April 1910, p. 5

¹² <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=fessenden&GSiman=1&GScid=5704&GRid=174160839&>

Section V: Denton

By AGS Member Glenda Lassiter

Sections I-IV of this article were printed in the AGS Quarterly in 2015 and 2016 issues. The article is based on the author's father, Griff (Gordon Oscar Griffiths), compiled from audio-taped memories of his life beginning in the new town of Jermyn, Texas (founded in 1902).

This section recalls his arrival in Denton in 1924 to attend North Texas Normal School.

When we last left Griff, he was on his way to Denton for school with The Jones family and his best friend, Dutch Lorenz, when the new Model T Ford they were riding in crashed into a ditch.

Violet Jones stood trembling and sobbing as she looked at the crumpled fender of the Tin Lizzie which was leaning into the ditch by the dirt road. Although the road up ahead from Jacksboro to Denton was designated as an "improved" automobile trail on the 1924 Texas, Gulf Oil directory of automobile trails and highways, the road from Jermyn to Jacksboro where they had crashed did not even earn a place on the map. This was the very year that the state of Texas had responded to a federal mandate of 1921 to take full control of maintaining the state highways away from the counties. Apparently, since the dirt road from Jermyn to Jacksboro hadn't qualified to appear in the directory, it was still more compatible with horse and buggy than with the new-fangled automobiles.

Orville had been visibly shaken as he had half-lifted the frightened Violet out through the driver's door of the Lizzie which now opened skyward. He had gently placed her where she now stood. The four boys in the back seat untangled themselves and scrambled over bags of beans and suitcases to get free of the car.

No one was physically hurt even though the Lizzie had been traveling at her maximum speed of 40 miles per hour when she had hit a pothole and gone slamming into the ditch. The greatest hurt was, no doubt, to Orville's pride. The collision had knocked the right front wheel off the car and Griff had watched it roll down the road.

This was not Griff's first experience at losing a wheel from a vehicle even though it was his first

ride in a Ford automobile. Unlike the other occupants of the Lizzie, he had spent many hours of his young life struggling with an old second-hand Fordson tractor his mother managed to purchase for him to use on the farm just three years before. From completely reconstructing the tractor's engine to rebuilding and remounting the tractor tires, he had learned about gas propelled Ford vehicles. Fordson was a brand name of a range of mass-produced general-purpose tractors manufactured by Ford Motor Company from 1920 to 1928. The Fordson tractor did for farming what the Ford Model T had done for automobiles. Because the tractor was affordable for farmers and there was a widespread dealership network, it helped people appreciate how soon tractors might replace horses in farming just as the "T" was gradually replacing the horse and buggy on the nation's roads.

Griff didn't wait to be told what to do. He was running down the dirt road to retrieve the giant wooden-spoked wheel before the other passengers in the car were aware that he was gone. He confidently rolled the big 30-inch wheel back to the car.

"Now what do we do?" Orville said.

"Well, we bolt it back on the axle. The tire didn't even demount from the wheel. And all the bolts are still here. I can't tell you how many times I've had to put a wheel back on my tractor driving it in these rocky old fields. There should be a tool box in the trunk. "

The four boys rolled the Lizzie back up on the road. In a few minutes, Griff had selected the tools he needed to reattach the metal hub to the end of the axle. He went to work as confidently as if he'd been out in his own field with his old familiar tractor.

The five other passengers gazed at Griff as though he had some magical knowledge that was going to save them. "How did you learn how to do that?" asked Dutch.

"If you've got an old broken-down tractor like ours, you have to figure out what to do to keep her running."

"Before we leave, we might as well check to see how much gas we have." Griff lifted the front seat of the T revealing the gas tank. He took the dipstick from the tool box, removed the gas tank cover, and measured the gas. "We have 5 gallons. That will take us about 100 miles which is more than we need to get from here to Denton." They had almost traveled the 14 miles from Jermyn to Jacksboro and had only 64 miles to go before arriving in Denton.

Suddenly Griff didn't feel as lonely and out of place as he had felt before the crash. The six of them climbed into the Tin Lizzie, now, while a bit battered, restored to her former travel capability, and Orville uneasily started her up. He had left the key in the ignition which was the practice in those years. Back then there weren't so many people who thought it was okay to steal things. Soon they were bouncing down the road to the noisy rhythm of the T's engine. Orville was driving slower, more carefully, and was keeping his eyes on the road for potholes. His singing and chatter even stopped for a few miles. The crash into the ditch had been a sobering experience, but it had convinced him that letting Trotty persuade him to include Griff in their adventure in Denton had been a brilliant move on his part.

Soon, when they drove through the farming community of Jacksboro, population 1373 in the 1920 census, the road became paved. While not a "hard surface," the macadam paving provided the travelers with a steadier ride for the car and

a more regular rhythm in the clatter from Lizzie's engine. By the time they reached the outskirts of Denton two hours later, the sinking late afternoon sun was sending beams streaming from behind them and setting windows, roofs, and weather vanes of the town gleaming against the darkening evening sky. Griff gazed at the glowing silhouette of the town that was to be his future. It would bring changes to his mind and heart that he could not imagine as they rattled into the small university town. Crowning the flat Texas horizon was a magnificent six-storied Victorian building that was the Denton County Court House. Built in the Baroque style in 1896, the court house reigned over the businesses of downtown Denton, lending the community of 7,626 an elegance that was new to Griff's eyes, accustomed as they were to the flat fields and tiny buildings of Jermyn. Competing for a place in the panorama was the four-storied peaked roof of the Normal Building on the college campus.

The house that Orville Jones had bought for his family in Denton had been one of the several boarding houses that lined the streets around the campus. There were no campus dormitories for student housing at North Texas Normal College in 1924. Students lived either in privately-run boarding houses or they rented rooms from families who lived near the campus. The Jones' house stood on Highland Street directly across from the school's first football field which had opened in 1913. On the north end of the field was the new Harriss Gymnasium, opened one year ago. The gym's name was used informally due to a policy of not naming buildings after still-living individuals. However, the structure was named for Beulah Harriss, the first woman hired as a member of the Physical Education Department. She is now also remembered for founding The Green Jackets Club, a female-only spirit and service organization. The second gym was known as the Men's Gym and had opened in 1913. During World War I the structure served as a barracks for men in the Student Army Training Corps. At the end of the war, the building began its life as a gym. To Griff, the entire complex looked brand new.

Standing on the front porch of the Jones' house, Griff was in awe of the dim outline of the athletic complex across the street. Orville had described the gyms and football field to Violet and the boys several times before they had set out on their journey from Jermyn. The house itself was a 20-year-old clapboard two-story frame house that needed painting. Weeds were growing in the unkempt flower beds that lined the porch among the overgrown Texas Lilac bushes and the scattered Victoria Phlox that had once bordered the bed. A wooden porch swing quivered in the evening breeze on the front porch that extended across the front of the house.

The house had indoor plumbing. There was a small bathroom behind the kitchen downstairs. Since the house had been built about 1904, the bathroom had a toilet, tub, and sink that had been added years after the construction of the house. It was installed with pipes for running water on an enclosed back porch. This seemed to be quite a luxury to all of the new tenants from Jermyn, who had always lived quite happily where indoor plumbing remained outdoors. In fact, there still was an outhouse in the corner of the back yard left from the days before indoor plumbing.

There were three bedrooms upstairs and two downstairs. Griff and Dutch moved their things into the front bedroom upstairs that had two windows looking out on the front yard and onto the campus. They put their homemade feed sack sheets and pillowcases on the old mattresses of the single beds. Orville had bought the old boarding house with the worn-out furniture that had seen use from many students. Despite the aged furnishings, Griff felt quite comfortable in his new home. Compared to the farmhouse in Jermyn that his father had built in 1906, this house with its smaller rooms seemed cozy.

Orville had stocked the kitchen with a few canned goods, and Violet opened some canned peaches for them to eat before taking their turns in the bathtub. The boys had to be ready for orientation on the campus early in the morning. Before bedtime, Violet put a batch of beans in a big pot of water to soak overnight to be cooked the next day.

"It really does seem like we're a long way from home even though we're just here in Denton," Dutch commented as they were in bed waiting for sleep to overtake them.

"I like it here, but I sure am glad that you came with me," Griff said. "I really can't wait to see what it's going to be like going to class. I feel like this is where I should be, but I worry about Mother trying to run that farm and work."

"She'll be all right. Your mother knows how to manage. She's been single a long time, and she's done pretty well. Maybe she'll get married again."

That was a thought that had truly never occurred to Griff. But he knew from experience that his mother was full of surprises.

As Griff drifted off to sleep, he felt the night breeze wafting through the open windows. The night was filled with the chirping of cicadas and crickets and with the fragrance of the Texas Lilacs in the front flowerbeds. He said his nightly prayer, and, even though this wasn't home, he felt content. He was filled with both excitement and apprehension wondering what experiences this new home held for him. Both expectations would prove to be correct.

(To be continued...)

Searching for the Land of Greenberry Lackey

By AGS Member Angela Doetsch

One of my recent projects has been to locate land patent deeds for my ancestors who settled in Texas in the 1800s. Texas land deeds are defined as “grants of land issued by the sovereign of the soil—that is, one of the governments of Texas: Spain, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, and the State of Texas.”¹

There are many online repositories that have digitized copies of the original land deeds. For Texas land owners, I often turn to The Texas General Land Office (GLO) online portal.² Their database has 670,878 records to date.³ Another comprehensive website I use for other states, is the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) General Land Office (GLO) Records.⁴ The final site I will be highlighting this issue is *HistoryGeo.com*.⁵ With their online database, you can not only view a link to the original land grant document, but also a direct link to the GPS⁶ coordinates in Google Maps.⁷ With these maps, you can get directions to an ancestor’s land, and can even take a virtual trip without ever leaving your home with Google Earth.⁸

One of the most interesting elements of land deeds is the survey. The Texas GLO summarizes that Texas “Land Office surveys

define the boundaries of all Permanent School Fund land, all 254 Texas counties, and Texas itself.”⁹ There are a few terms you should be familiar with to decipher these surveys. Texas Land Grants utilized three main Spanish units of measurements – the league, the labor, and the vara. A league “is equivalent to about 4,428.4 acres.”¹⁰ A labor “is equivalent to about 177.1 acres.”¹¹ A vara is the equivalent of 33.3333 inches as “adopted by the state of Texas in 1919.”¹²

Physical land markers are often utilized to designate boundaries of the land survey. These can include stone mounds, creeks and rivers, and various kinds of trees; such as the post oak (often abbreviated P.O.) and the black jack (often abbreviated B.J.). While interesting, these markers often don’t make sense to us today. Trees described as 14 inches tall have grown, and creek beds may have dried up.

So, how do we go about hunting down the actual land of our ancestors today?

Each quarter we will examine an original land grant and will attempt to map out the land as it is today. If you have taken a similar journey, please feel free to submit your case study to the editor so we can feature it in a future edition.

¹ <http://www.glo.texas.gov/history/archives/land-grants/search-help/index.html>, accessed 13 March 2017

² www.glo.texas.gov, accessed 13 March 2017

³ <http://www.glo.texas.gov/history/archives/land-grants/index.cfm>, accessed 13 March 2017

⁴ www.glorerecords.blm.gov, accessed 13 March 2017

⁵ “...HistoryGeo.com is a family history software service for linking old maps and land records to your genealogy research.” www.historygeo.com, accessed 13 March 2017

⁶ GPS is an abbreviation for Global Positioning System which “is a space-based radionavigation system owned by the United States government and operated by the United States Air Force.” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Positioning_System, accessed 13 March 2017

⁷ www.google.com/maps, accessed 13 March 2017

⁸ “Google Earth lets you fly anywhere on Earth to view satellite imagery, maps, terrain, 3D buildings, from galaxies in outer space to the canyons of the ocean.” <https://earth.google.com/>, accessed 13 March 2017

⁹ <http://www.glo.texas.gov/land/land-management/surveying/>, accessed 13 March 2017

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_customary_units, accessed 13 March 2017

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² https://wiki.ppdm.org/index.php?title=Texas_Land_Survey_System, accessed 13 March 2017

I clicked on the “Patent Image” link to view the original document. The patent showed the original patentee, Charles R. Berry, was paid in full by Greenberry Lackey for:

“...the east half of Lot number one, of the North West fractional quarter of Section five, the Township twenty seven, of Range twenty six West, in the District of Sands subject to sale at Springfield, Missouri containing thirty nine acres and eighty six hundredths of an acre...”¹⁷

Accession Nr: MO5230_.094 Document Type: State Volume Patent State: Missouri Issue Date: 6/1/1845 Cancelled: No

Patent Details Patent Image Related Documents Printer Friendly

Names On Document		Miscellaneous Information					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LACKEY, GREENBERRY Military Rank: ---		Land Office: Springfield US Reservations: No Mineral Reservations: No Tribe: --- Militia: --- State In Favor Of: --- Authority: April 24, 1820: Sale-Cash Entry (3 Stat. 566) General Remarks: ---					
Document Numbers		Survey Information					
Document Nr: 5675 Misc. Doc. Nr: --- BLM Serial Nr: MO NO S/N Indian Allot. Nr: --- Coal Entry Nr: ---		Total Acres: 39.86 Survey Date: --- Geographic Name: --- Metes/Bounds: No					
Land Descriptions							
Map	State	Meridian	Twp - Rng	Aliquots	Section	Survey #	County
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MO	5th PM	027N - 026W	E½NW¼, Lot/Trct 1	5		Lawrence
⚠ Due to data limitations, we could not map the aliquots or lots of this land description. The township and section are shown.							
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Greenberry Lackey land record MO5230_.094 from the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management General Land Office

¹⁷ United States. Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records. Automated Records Project; Federal Land Patents, State Volumes. <http://www.gloreCORDS.blm.gov/>. Springfield, Virginia: Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States, 2007.

I now knew Greenberry purchased 39.86 acres in the “E^{1/2}NW^{1/4}, Lot/Trct 1” of land in Lawrence County, Missouri, in the “5th PM Township 27.0N Range 26.0W” of Section 5.”¹⁸

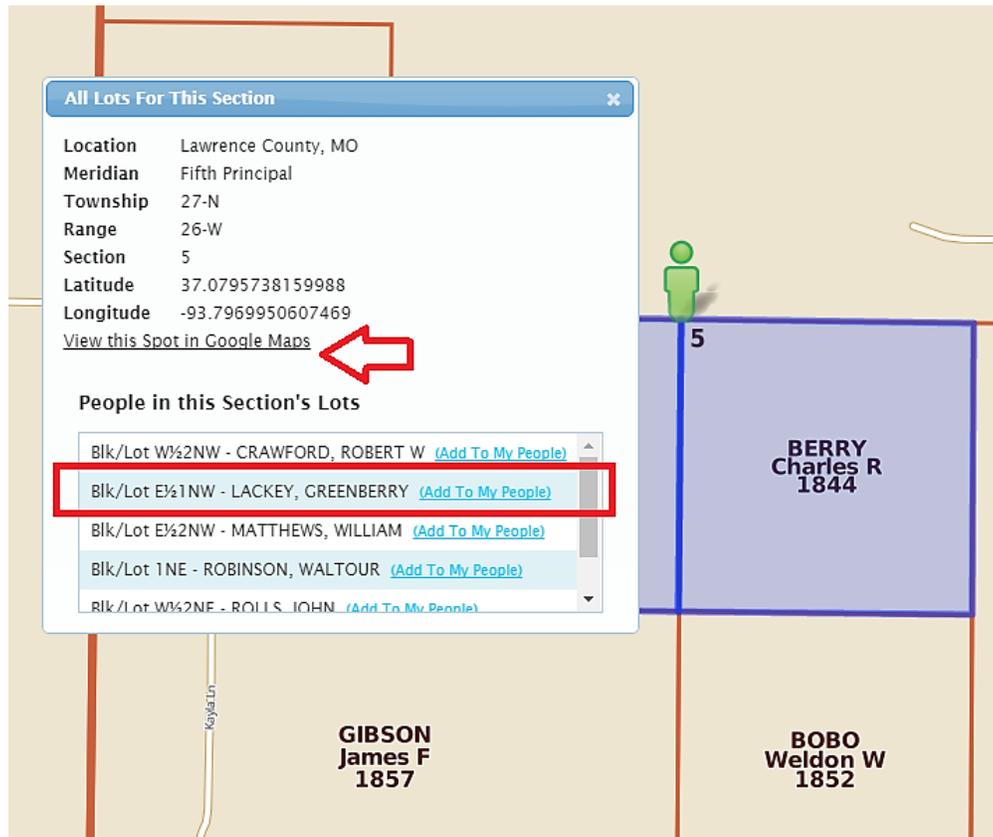
Next, I needed a map showing me where this is. I clicked on the “Map” checkbox under “Land Descriptions” on the “Patent Details” tab. I zoomed in to get a closer look at the roads and creeks near the parcel of land. The map showed the land is located south of Highway 44 on County Roads 1150 and 2140, about three miles Southeast of Mt. Vernon, Missouri.

To get the exact coordinates and see the land as it is today, I turned to the website, *HistoryGeo.com*. I searched by “Surname” (Lackey), “State” (Missouri), and “County”

(Lawrence). This returned the same results as the BLM had, so I knew I was in the right place.

HistoryGeo.com marks the location of a search result with an icon in the shape of a green peg-person. My search result marked land in Sec 5 of Twp 27-N and Rng 27-W. I clicked on the green icon to see the parcel details. I selected the link to “view this Spot in Google Maps.” From Google Maps, I selected the feature “Google Earth” view. The rural farmland appeared mostly undeveloped and I could almost imagine how it must have looked in 1845.¹⁹

Now, I could see (through the gifts of modern technology) the land my ancestor once owned. I even obtained the GPS coordinates (37°04'40.0"N 93°47'41.1"W) if I decided to visit in person one day.



HistoryGeo.com search results for Greenberry Lackey in Lawrence County, Missouri

¹⁸ https://gloreCORDS.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=MO5200___.286&docClass=STA#patentDetailsTabInd ex=0, accessed 13 March 2017

¹⁹ <https://www.google.com/maps/place/37%C2%B004'40.0%22N+93%C2%B047'41.1%22W/@37.0771861,-93.7957586,904m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x0:0x0!8m2!3d37.07777!4d-93.7947605>, accessed 13 March 2017

But, how long did the Lackey family live in Missouri, and when did they gain land in Texas?

By 1848, all of Greenberry's children (except Elizabeth) and all of his brother Henry's family had left Illinois and/or Missouri for Texas.

Through earlier research, I had learned that Greenberry lived for a short time in White Mound, where his mother and brother had moved a few years before. However, Greenberry's sons, Greenberry Jr., James, Martin, Nelson, and Thomas had decided to keep searching for land further south. The brothers all eventually settled upon the waters of the Pedernales River in then Gillespie County, in what is now Blanco County, Texas, around 1850. Greenberry soon followed.

Greenberry is first documented on the Blanco County non-population schedule of 1850,²⁰ having land along Grape Creek. There are only 40 names listed on the Grape Creek agriculture schedule for 1850. Five of the names belonged to my Lackey family. This area eventually became known as Sandy, Texas, and is still sparsely populated. Sandy has not had over 30 residents since 1925.²¹ I had successfully tracked my Lackey ancestors to the Texas Hill Country. Now I just had to find out where.



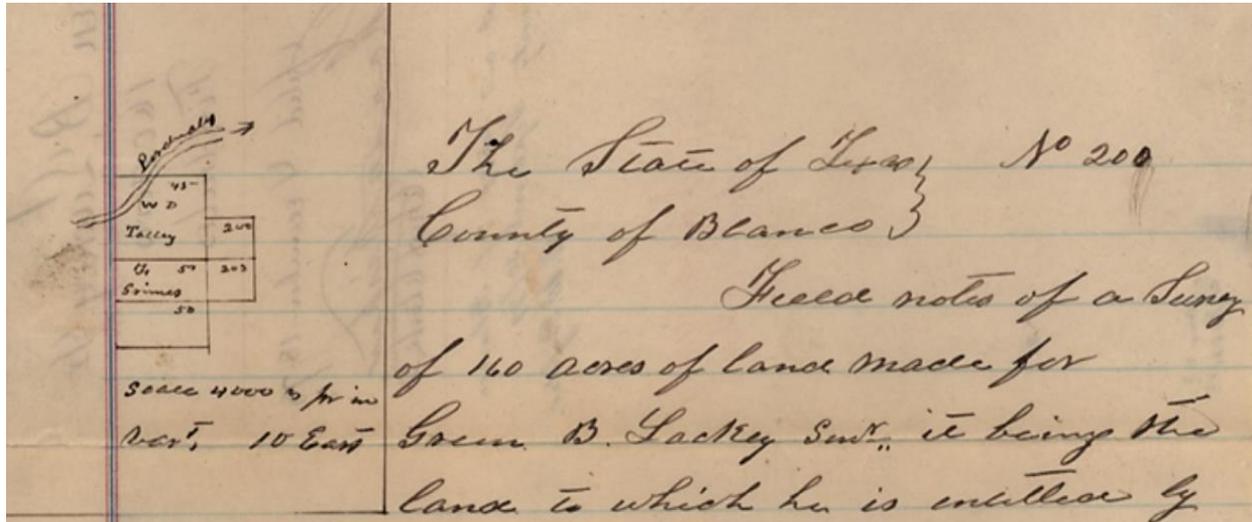
Google Earth image of Greenberry Lackey's land in Lawrence County Missouri

²⁰ Census Year: 1850; Census Place: Grape Creek, Blanco, Texas; Archive Collection Number: T1134; Roll: 3; Page: 14; Line: 1; Schedule Type: Agriculture www.ancestry.com, accessed 13 March 2017

²¹ <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hns17>, accessed 13 March 2017

I once again turned to the GLO and successfully located a land patent for Green B. Lackey, senr[senior]. The patent was issued on 26 May 1873, and was for 160 acres of Travis Preemption land. In the survey field notes, you could see the parcel of land is situated right along the Pedernales River.

Going off the land survey, field notes, and the land description, I had a good idea of where the land was. Now all I needed were the exact coordinates. I opened *HistoryGeo.com*, and entered the search parameters: “Lackey”, “Texas”, and “Blanco.”



Survey Field Notes for the land Greenberry Lackey purchased in Blanco County, Texas

The survey field notes described the land as:

“...on the South Side the Pedernales river, and about 12½ miles N16°W from Blanco. - - Beginning at the SE corner of No45 of 640 acres in the name of WD Talley[sic], thence North with the East line of said Tally survey 950 vs.[varas] to a Stone Mound for the NW corner of this survey, from which a P.O.[Post Oak] brs[bears] S59 E21½ vs.[varas], another 4 inbrs[bears] N37°E 7 vs.[varas] Thence East 950 vs.[varas] to a Stone Mound from which a cluster of Spanish Oaks, brs[bears] S35°W5 vs.[varas] the top of Tow Head Mt. brs[bears]N69W – Thence S 950 vs[varas] to a Stone Mound for the S.E. corner. Thence West 950 vs.[varas]to the place of beginning.”²²

Right away, I noticed there were eight search results. I already knew that there were many Lackey family members that lived and owned land in Blanco County, Texas. I “zoomed” the mouse to the property closest to the Pedernales River. The link to the GLO record matched the one I had found on their website. I opened the link to view the property in Google Maps and selected the Google Earth view. From there, I noticed a farm and home where my ancestor’s property once was. I wondered if any of the structures existed back then!

I had located the Texas land of my 4th great-grandfather, Greenberry Lackey.

²² http://www.glo.texas.gov/ncu/SCANDOCS/archives_webfiles/arcmaps/webfiles/landgrants/PDFs/5/4/6/546786.pdf, accessed 13 March 2017



Google Earth image of Greenberry Lackey's land in Sandy, Texas

Optical Character Recognition or Oops Can't Read?

By Mary Kircher Roddy

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MKR Genealogy <http://www.mkrgenealogy.com>

Optical Character Recognition technology is both a blessing and a curse. It allows us, with a computer's help, to scour through hundreds of historic newspaper pages in a trice, picking out all the instances of an ancestor's name. It would take us eons to read through those same pages ourselves, and we just might need a new eyeglasses prescription when we were done!

But OCR technology gives us a false sense of security that we've wrung out those pages and found every time Grandpa's name appeared. A myriad of reasons exist as to why our computer's "eyes" can't find what we're looking for. To start with, a big-city newspaper could afford to buy new type and dispose of it before it became too worn and raggedy. But often a small-town newspaper would purchase used type, and a crisp "c" in the big city begins to look like a smudged "e" out in the country.

The digitization process inserts potential glitches into the OCR mix as well. If a computer camera takes a picture of a newspaper page and digitizes it, that's one pass. But if the digitization process takes a spool of previously microfilmed newspaper pages and digitizes it, that's two passes and has the potential for twice as many errors. We also have to consider the appearance of the newspaper when it was scanned – were there folds, smudges, lightly-inked type? All these factors can wreak havoc with the computer's "eyes."

The trick for thorough newspaper searching is to become familiar with these variations and include those variants in our searches. For example, a smudged "s" might be read by the computer as an "a" or a poorly inked "d" might read as a "cl."

Each newspaper site has its own way of displaying results. Some sites present the date, geographic location, newspaper name and article type (newspaper article, advertisement, etc.) along with a 1" x 3" preview image of the newspaper which displays the search term. When you click on the preview, you are taken to an image of the entire page and the search term(s) are highlighted. No information is displayed as to how the computer deciphered the newsprint to come up with the hits. You can't tell if the computer read and displayed one instance of the word "Roddy" correctly, but didn't display a hit where it read the word as "Rocldy."

Other sites will present the results by giving the newspaper title, date, page and column along with 20 to 50 words of text. A click will take you to the article page or image, and perhaps show you the full text as read by the computer. Comparing the text as read by the computer with what appears on the actual newspaper page will allow you to compile a "cheat sheet" of letter variations. Study and learn from these mistakes to find the most common ones. Even if you are using a newspaper site that doesn't display the actual text, play around with other sites that do display text to help you expand your understanding of OCR errors in general. Below is an example of a "cheat sheet" I developed from following this procedure.

Lower Case				Upper Case			
<u>Actual</u>	<u>OCR read</u>						
a	s u n r i	n	h t i	A		N	
b	h	o	p q n	B	R	O	G Q C
c	r	p	o	C	O	P	F
d	d l	q		D		Q	O
e	c o	r	c	E	F	R	K l i
f	t l	s	a c n 9	F	P E	S	3
g		t	f i	G	O	T	l l
h	b n l i	u	n a v	H	M	U	l l l l
i	l	v	u	I	l	V	Y
j	i	w	m	J	l l	W	
k		x		K	R	X	
l	l 1 J	y	v	L	l	Y	V
m	r n r a n	z		M	H	Z	

OCR Table

I find it helpful to track my newspaper searches using an Excel spreadsheet. Across the top, I can list my surnames (Roddy), the actual spelling variants (Rody, Roddey, Rhody, Rodney), and the OCR variants (Rocldy, Roclclly, Rodcly, Roddv, Rocldv, etc.). Then down the side, I can list what newspaper or index I searched. In the various cells, I can make a notation as to the number of results, and insert a link to the results

page. When I find a new location for the Roddy family or a new newspaper index that I haven't searched before, it's very helpful to have my pre-set list and just run through the names one by one.

If you understand OCR you won't ever again say, "I can never find anything about my ancestor in newspapers!"

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PIONEER FAMILIES OF TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

The Austin Genealogical Society will issue a pioneer certificate to those who can prove their ancestors lived in Travis County, Texas, prior to the close of 1880. To qualify for the certificate, you must be a direct descendant of people who lived here on or before 31 December 1880, proved with birth, death and marriage certificates; probate, census and military records; and obituaries and Bible records.

Applications for Pioneer Families of Travis County can be found at:

<http://www.austintxgensoc.org/pioneers/> or

from Kay Dunlap Boyd, P.O. Box 10010, Austin, Texas 78766-1010.

Each application is \$20 and the certificates make nice gifts. You don't have to be a Travis County resident or a member of Austin Genealogical Society, although membership in the Society is another fine bargain at \$20 a year.

Austin Genealogical Society
Travis County Texas
Pioneer Families Certificate

This is to Certify that

_____ is a descendant of _____

who was living in Travis County, Texas
before the close of _____

_____ Certificate No.	_____ President
_____ Date	_____ Pioneer Families Chairman
	_____ Registrar

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