

Family Reunion

*A newsletter for descendants
of Joseph Mobley, Albert McAfee,
Henry Hodge and Burl Mason*

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Relocating your muse

It's been awhile since our last visit and I accept full responsibility for the break in communications. My genealogy muse decided to run away for awhile and it's only recently that I'm beginning to get back to work.

Grief takes on many forms. I was operating at full steam on a genealogy project at Christmas, only to have it jump the tracks when word came in early January that my last surviving great aunt had died suddenly. Aunt Ora was the last family representative of my grandparents' generation and was mentally alert and active right up to the end, when she died 3 months shy of her 97th birthday.

It wasn't like I didn't realize the inevitable end was nearing. I took all available opportunities in the last few years to visit with her and listen to her recollections. On a subconscious level, however, her death hit an unex-

pected nerve. Gone were the last memories of a generation, never more to be accessible. My genealogy muse went into shock, then denial, and then decided it was long overdue for a vacation, and abruptly skipped town, leaving no forwarding address.

So I spent a few months catching up on my reading and knitting and tried not to think about the piles of paper on my desk that were beginning to grow cobwebs. As hard as I tried, I couldn't focus on my research and I learned long ago not to force myself to research when my heart isn't in it. It's a sure way to drown in frustration.

The good news is that the hiatus has done me a lot of good and I'm beginning to feel the spark again. I made a genealogy road trip to Arkansas in April, attended a family reunion in May, and found some new Internet cousins in June.

I spent three days at a national genealogy convention held in Austin in September and have started to plan next April's trip to Salt Lake.

Yes, the muse has returned, though a bit subdued. I'm still regretful of having postponed a visit to see Aunt O at Christmas due to a bout of allergy related headaches. If I had had any idea that she would be gone two weeks later, nothing could have kept me away.

So I've said all that to say this: When you ask a seasoned genealogist how you should start working on your own family tree, they will tell you to interview your oldest relatives without delay. I'm lucky to have visited with Aunt O on numerous occasions and I have a video of her telling family stories. But I will always mourn the loss of a last visit with her.

Don't wait. Make that call or visit. You won't be sorry.

***I Walked Where Great,
Great, Great, Great
Grandpa Walked***

Since neither I nor my research buddy Lana felt up to a trip to Salt Lake this year, we decided it was time to take a road trip to see where some of our ancestors lived. We decided on a trip to Arkansas. She had ancestors located in Montgomery County, and I had ancestors who moved to Texas from Franklin, Johnson and Prairie Counties. We weren't quite sure what we expected to find, but we figured we would see a lot of pretty country along the way even if we did not further the cause of our research. So off we went in early April, with only a vague plan to visit courthouses, local libraries and hopefully some cemeteries.

What we found were not only family graves and musty books recording details of our forefathers' lives, but genuinely nice people at every stop who went out of their way to help two visitors feel welcome and to achieve success in their quest for family history. It was a most satisfying trip, especially given the horror stories that abound among

genealogists who encounter uncaring clerks and testy locals who would prefer that "foreigners" stay foreign.

In addition to the hospitality shown us, we experienced some beautiful scenery as we drove from courthouse to courthouse in the northwestern part of the state. We even asked ourselves at one point, "What could have possessed them to leave this and move to Texas?" But as we stood at the crossroads in Harmony, Arkansas, where the George Huddlestons lived, I realized that if you didn't count the mountain in the distance, the land was very reminiscent of the Lockhart, Texas, area, where they settled for many years. I'm sure the cold winters were a factor in making the move south, and who knows what other economic or environmental factors entered into their decision.

On the other hand, as we surveyed the land around Des Arc, Arkansas, where Albert McAfee homesteaded and where both of his marriages took place, my first thought was "What took him so long to leave this dismal place?" Our McAfee line took root in the eastern part of the state, with flat farmland as

far as the eye can see. The settlements are sparse and the buildings utilitarian. This is definitely not a part of Arkansas that caters to the tourist trade.

It was in Des Arc that we met one of the nicer clerks, who kept the records office open 20 minutes past closing time and helped me find a long-forgotten book of mortgage records that she didn't even know was still on her shelves. With not a trace of irritability at staying past her quitting time, she cheerfully made copy after copy of marriage and deed records so that we would not have to make the trip back the next day. Which was fortuitous, since the first suitable hotel we found that night was 1½ hours away. As I said, I don't think the folks in Des Arc expect many sightseeing tourists in their parts.

At the risk of being labeled "odd" (like I haven't been already), I'll mention that we both experienced the sense of being accompanied on our travels by unseen, interested parties. At every cemetery we walked directly to the graves we were seeking. At every courthouse and library, we found an interesting piece of our family puzzles that

we had not known would be there. And on the way home we snagged what may have been the last hotel room available within 100 miles of an area hosting a major drag race and a country-western music event that evening. We came to feel that there was a relay of guardian angel ancestors watching over us as we traveled, gently nudging us in the right direction. Rather a comforting feeling.

You really don't have to walk in the footsteps of your ancestors, but it does help you get a perspective of their environment. And in my case, it has paid off in another way. This summer I was fortunate to acquire a copy of a memoir written by one of the Huddlestons in which he speaks of their move to Texas. When he describes the home they were leaving, I can see clearly the mountain he mentions. I saw it as I stood on the side of the road in Harmony. I don't have to imagine the route they took to Texas. I've driven it. I don't have to wonder about the cemetery where my ancestor is buried. I've knelt by his graveside. I now feel a little closer to that branch of the family, because I've walked in their steps.

Rain on My Parade

There was one disappointment of the trip. I had set my goal for the Prairie County visit to find Albert McAfee's homestead and to bring home some kind of souvenir, if it was only a rock. Alas, it was not to be.

Our first stop when we reached Des Arc was the local library. Armed with the deed record description of the property, I began to study the township map. What a letdown to discover that Albert's land now rests under a reservoir. To add to my frustration, I was also unable to find any record of the burial of his first wife, my great-great grandmother.

What little scenic value the flat land there might have had was covered up with water from a torrential downpour the night before. The most interesting thing I saw in Prairie County was a big black snake crossing the road to try to escape the flooded field. I came away with a grateful feeling that Albert and Mary decided to relocate to Texas. I felt no regret at seeing Des Arc fade away in my rear-view mirror. I do regret not getting that rock.

He was a Reb –

No, He was a Yank

At this point, I can't really tell you how I came to speculate that my ggg-grandfather George Huddleston might have fought on both sides of the Civil War. I think the idea just finally jelled in my mind thanks to some odd records I had uncovered and an unexpected conversation with a local Civil War history buff in the Ozark, Arkansas, public library.

The gentlemen in question was one of those local characters who is more to be endured than enjoyed, but one thing he said stuck in my mind and finally helped get the thought process rolling. It seems that many of the men who served the Confederacy from Franklin County, Arkansas, were captured, released and then re-enlisted for service to the Union. Aha! Perhaps this explained why George was shown on the 1890 Union veteran census, even though I knew that he served for the Confederacy by virtue of his widow's application for pension filed with the State of Texas. I did some digging and uncovered an earlier Federal pension application filed by a George

Huddleston for service in an Arkansas Union unit. I knew there were other George Huddlestons running around, but this one was in the right place at the right time. I took the gamble and wrote to the National Archives for the pension application file and the military service file for this Union soldier George Huddleston.

What I got back was a treasure trove of information. Yes, indeed. My George Huddleston had fought on both sides of the conflict.

The whys of this circumstance, I don't know. What the records do tell me is that George never got that pension. Not only had he rendered support for the enemy, which might have ultimately been a surmountable problem, but his last months of service were spent in military prison under general court martial. He was serving a 6 month sentence at the close of the war and so ended up with a permanent black mark on his record that stood between him and a modest pension in his old age.

The charges and specifications which resulted in George's imprisonment (in Des Arc of all places, poor man) are preserved in his military records file.

George had the misfortune to run afoul of a 2nd Lieutenant Herman Hesse on March 27, 1865. Lt. Hesse had confined one of the men in George's company, Alex McCaskill, for "rebellious conduct" at roll call. For reasons that are not given, George organized the men of his company, getting them to fall in line and march up to the Lieutenant's quarters to demand the release of their comrade. George, wearing his arms, informed the Lieutenant that unless he freed the man, the company would do it themselves.

Now why do I suspect that Lt. Hesse was one of those unbearable authority figures who are overly impressed with themselves? I rather admire my ancestor for taking such a stand, though I'm sure he realized that it was a foolhardy action. And one with long-ranging consequences. He never received an honorable discharge, which automatically disqualified him for a pension.

A truly poignant item in George's pension file (and a real treasure to come across unexpectedly) is a handwritten letter to the pension bureau from his daughter, Mary Frances Hodge, pleading for help

for her impoverished parents. (A copy is included on the last page of this newsletter.)

After George's death in 1917, his widow Maria managed to secure a Confederate pension from the State of Texas.



*George & Maria Huddleston
After the move to Texas.*

Until recently, I thought that George was buried in an unmarked grave in Belton. Thanks to some new information posted to the Internet, I discovered that his grave was marked after all, and obtained a map that allowed me to drive right up to his burial plot. Also buried there is his daughter and son-in-law, Dora Ellen and Stephen Mayo. I spent four years at Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton and never knew I had a ggg-grandfather and a gg-

grandaunt buried within three miles of the college.

George Washington Huddleston first served as a private in Co. F, 12th Reg., Ark. Infantry, Confederate Army. He later re-enlisted for Federal Service in Co. K, 4th Regiment, Ark. Cavalry Volunteers.

More Huddleston Stories to Come

I recently made connections with two Huddleston cousins, the granddaughters of Cleburne Huddleston. You may remember from the last newsletter that Cleburne was Mary Frances Hodge's younger brother who helped her make her escape from the home of an abusive husband.

Joan and Carol have been most generous with their family archives and you will be hearing more of the Huddleston family saga in coming issues. The photo of George and Maria on the previous page is one of my newly acquired treasures.

I also acquired two marvelous cousins whom I am delighted to add to the family roster. Thanks so much, ladies, for your generosity and friendship.

Family Losses

There have been several deaths in our extended family over the past year and a half which should be noted.

The family of Henry "Jack" Mason has lost three of their number, all in the family line of his daughter, Pinkie Lorraine Hebert Griffin.

Pinkie's son Harold Edwin "Butch" Hebert died on April 15, 2002, at the age of 61. Burial was in Rosewood Memorial Park in Humble, Texas.

On July 23, 2003, Pinkie lost her second husband, Allen "Oop" Griffin. Allen, aged 82, was also laid to rest at Rosewood Memorial Park.

And Pinkie's grandson John James Hebert, died on December 13, 2003, at the untimely age of 26. He, too, was buried at Rosewood Memorial Park.

The maternal grandfather of Hodge cousins Ty, Tom and Trina was buried on January 17, 2004, in the McDade Cemetery. A. J. Hunter died January 15th at the age of 90.

Mary Maroney, age 90, passed away in Elgin on April 20, 2004. Mrs. Maroney, the mother of

Gail Hodge, was buried on April 23rd in Cainsville, Missouri.

Florence "Bird" Victor, mother of Sally Victor, died on September 1, 2004, after an extended illness. Burial was September 2nd at Seaside Memorial Park in Corpus Christi.

Cousin Beulah McAfee Martin died on September 5, 2004, and was buried on September 8th in the Upper Cedar Creek Cemetery. I will miss the phone calls and notes I received from Beulah after newsletters went out. She always complimented my efforts and encouraged me to keep at it. I have a lot of pictures and information that I received from her over the past few years. She was a dear lady and will be sorely missed.

And last, those of you who have attended the Hodge Thanksgiving get-togethers in years past, will mourn the passing of Sport dog, a major contributor to Larry's book *The Texas Dog Lover's Companion*. Sport died of natural causes in February at the ripe old age of 15.

Mourning in 1886

The adjustment to life after the loss of a family member in this day is something each person handles in his own way and on his own schedule.

A century ago, however, society dictated certain guidelines for the proper expression of grief. The April 17, 1886, issue of *Harper's Bazaar* magazine included an article on this subject. Following are some of the rules to be followed by a lady in mourning. I think we can be grateful that we no longer are subjected to such societal requirements.

A widow's mourning lasts eighteen months. For the first six months, the dress should be of crape cloth, or Henrietta cloth covered entirely in crape; collar and cuffs of white crape; a crape bonnet with a long crape veil and widow's cap of white crape is preferred. Dull black kid gloves are worn in first mourning; later silk gloves are acceptable.

After six months, the crape can be removed, and grenadine, copeau fringe and dead trimmings used. After twelve months, the widow's cap is left off, the heavy veil is exchanged for a lighter one, and the

dress can be of silk grenadine, plain black gros grain, or crape-trimmed cashmere with jet trimmings and crepe lisse on the neck and sleeves. {Bottom line—black.}

Jet ornaments alone should be worn for eighteen months. {You may remember Scarlett O'Hara's relief at a charity ball that widow's mourning kept her from wearing her grandmother's garnets set in gold. While others were donating their jewelry in support of the Cause, hers was safe and secure at home.}

Mourning for a father or mother should last one year. Mourning for a brother, sister, step-parents or grandparents can be of shorter duration. Mourning for children should last nine months, The mourning for an aunt or uncle or cousin is three months' duration.

Wives wear mourning for the relatives of their husbands just as they would for their own. Ladies of the family attend the funeral of a relative if they are able to do so, and wear their deepest mourning.

The guidelines were even stricter in England and the consequences for showing a lack of respect for the rules more severe.

Lavish displays of flowers are discouraged. Instead, flowers should be restricted to a simple wreath and possibly a small cluster of flowers in the deceased's hands. {It was considered more appropriate to give the money to aid in the burial of poor children.}

Basically a woman was in social prison for the duration of the prescribed period of mourning. Men also had guidelines for mourning dress, but it was the women who wore the heavy veils and were discouraged from attending parties during the mourning period. It occurs to me that during and following the Civil War, the production of colored cloth was probably a non-profit industry.

**Family Tidbit**

In the category of "We hope he's being reelly, reelly careful", cousin Ty Hodge has been several months in Baghdad, Iraq, working for Halliburton.

When I started this edition of Family Reunion, it was late summer. I had a complete draft ready by early fall. Editing took me to late fall and the final draft was ready just before Thanksgiving. At this rate, I doubt I'll get out my usual Christmas issue, so let me wish you here a "Happy Holidays". My early New Year's resolution is to get back on a quarterly schedule.

Thanksgiving is just a few days away now and I close with the Genealogy Beatitudes. They remind me of how fortunate I am to have had two grandmothers who passed along family documents, photos and legends. I am grateful for the wealth of material I have received from a large network of cousins, both near and distant. I am

thankful for kind clerks and helpful strangers in other states who have volunteered to acquire records that were not easily available to me. I owe a tremendous thanks to the network of volunteers who are steadily posting records to the Internet that I might never locate without them. And I am especially grateful to all of you, my readers, for your help and encouragement. Have a blessed Christmas and I'll see you next year.

Genealogy Beatitudes

Blessed are the great-grandfathers who saved embarkation and citizenship papers, for they tell when they came.

Blessed are the great-grandmothers who hoarded newspaper clippings and old letters, for these tell the story of their time.

Blessed are the grandfathers who filed every legal document, for this provided the proof.

Blessed are the grandmothers who preserved family Bibles and diaries, for this is our heritage.

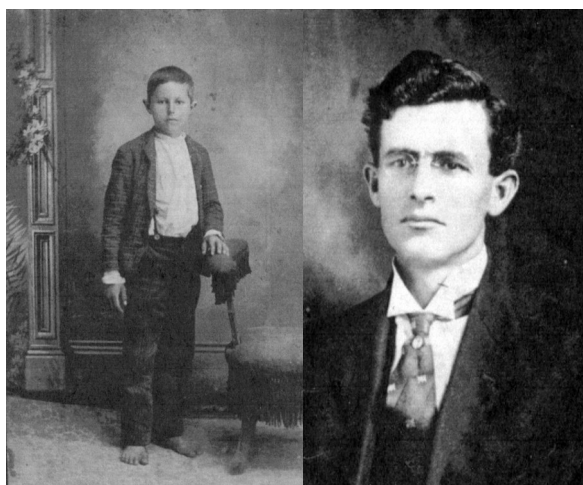
Blessed are the fathers who elected officials that answer letters of inquiry, for to some they are the only link to the past.

Blessed are the mothers who relate family tradition and legend to the family, for one of their children will surely remember.

Blessed are the relatives who fill in family sheets with extra data, for to them we owe the family history.

Blessed is any family whose members strive for the preservation of records, for theirs is a labor of love. —Author unknown

All in the Family



Cleburne Huddleston, as child & adult



*Grave of George Washington Huddleston
North Belton Cemetery, Belton, Texas*

Belton Texas Oct. 30.
 Pension Department,
 Washington D.C.
 Gentlemen:
 My Father, G. W. Huddleston
 served 4 years in the civil
 war and got an Honorable
 discharge, but through a
 flaw somewhere, he has
 failed to get a Pension,
 and now he and my mother
 are old and sick, and have
 nothing to live on in their
 old age. I am a widdow,
 with nothing but the house
 we live in, not even enough
 to furnish it comfortably,

2
 I can
 give good
 references
 if you want
 them

Father and mother have
 gotten so feeble I cant
 leave them to go out and
 earn money for them and
 my self to live on, and
 I want you to do something
 to help me care for them,
 and for Gods sake do it
 quick, for they are suffering
 for the necessarys of life.
 This Government justly
 owes them a living, and
 they ought to have it, send
 money to last a little while
 and get evidence later on
 for they need it now.
 Mrs. M. F. Hodge
 Bell Co. 1 Belton Texas.

Belton, Texas Oct. 30
 Pension Department,
 Washington, D.C.

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 Send money to last a little while and get evidence later on for they
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Mrs. M. F. Hodge
 Belton, Texas, Bell Co.
 I can give good references if you want them.