
FAMILY *Reunion*

News for Descendants of Henry Hodge, Joseph Mobley, Burl Mason & Albert McAfee

In This Issue: *Henry Thomas "Jack" Mason*

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Catching Up

Things have been hectic in Bastrop since Christmas. We are 80% moved into our new digs at 137 Briar Forest Drive. We still have a small mountain of boxes to unpack and closets to clear out at one of the old houses, but we've legally divested ourselves of one house and hope to have the other one on the market by May 1st.

We are enjoying our new surroundings--pine trees on three sides and only one set of neighbors anywhere close by. I can actually see stars at night from the deck. We have regular deer and crow visitors, and a resident roadrunner couple. Quite a change from our previous location two blocks from the railroad tracks.

Everybody come by and see us sometime.

The Life and Times of Henry Thomas "Jack" Mason

by Gene O'Quinn

[Jack Mason was the half-brother of Lucy Mason Hodge. She never knew what had become of her brother. Recently I met up with Jack's grandson, Gene, on the Internet, and he provided me with some memories of his grandfather. Sounds like he would have fit in with the rest of the family. --LW]

Sgt. Friday of the TV series *Dragnet* insisted on "just the facts, ma'am".

Jack Mason was the son of Burl and Pinkie Farris Mason, born in Bastrop County, Texas, on November 10, 1891. He died on November 10, 1962 in Humble, Harris County, Texas, and is buried there in the Rosewood Memorial Park Cemetery. He married

Ruth Daffern in Bastrop County on June 23, 1912.



Henry "Jack" Mason

These are the bare facts, but as Paul Harvey would say in his newscast, "Now, for the rest of the story..."

One family story relates that Burl Mason sent young Jack into Bastrop in a wagon to pick up some freight at the train depot. He spied Ruth arriving by train from Oklahoma to live with her brother Lexie Daffern. As the story goes, Jack took one look and vowed that this was the girl he would marry.

Jack and Ruth had four children: J. B. born 1913, Lucille born 1916, Lorraine

born 1920 and Harold Eugene born in 1923, all in Bastrop County.

But in the mid 1920s, they pulled up stakes and followed Lex Daffern to Liberty County, Texas.

Jack Mason and family lived in the tiny oil town of Daisetta. Jack got caught up in the oil boom at the urging of his brother-in-law, Silas Williams, and began "firing boilers" on a steam drilling rig. From my boyhood I can remember a picture of Jack in his sweat-stained Stetson and bib overalls, standing next to one of those old riveted boilers.

My mother, Lucille, told me that in 1927, when her brother J. B. was fourteen, he went hunting and shot himself while climbing through a fence. He was laid to rest in the Guedry Cemetery near Batson, Texas.

For whatever reason, J.B.'s death, the Great Depression, or something took its toll on Jack and Ruth's marriage and after twenty plus years of marriage they were divorced about the time that I was born.

Daughter Lucille married Elmer O'Quinn in 1933 in Liberty County. In 1937,

Lorraine married Clovis Hebert, also in Liberty County. Shortly afterwards, Jack Mason remarried to Mrs. Gladys Die.

Grandma Ruth and all three of the children separately relocated to Humble by 1941.

Memories dim with time but to my youthful recollection, I think Grandpa Jack was living in Houston and working at Todd shipyard. Harold had gone off to war but returned to Liberty County long enough to marry his high school sweetheart, Lucille Green, in 1943.

Further remembrances of Grandpa were visiting him in Houston's East End. I believe at the time he was married to a subsequent wife, Mrs. Thelma Thompson.

Later in my early teens he took me to the Farmers Market where he would buy fruit and produce which he sold out of his pickup. There may have been other marriages that I am not aware of. I do know the Farmers Market girls were quite fond of him.

In the fifties he returned to Humble and worked as a carpenter. To say that Grandpa Mason was a "character" is a gross under-

statement, but a couple of yarns about him will demonstrate that he was all of that and more.

When I was about seventeen or so I bought a beautiful long-legged sorrel mare, and as kids are wont to do, raced her against all comers and she never lost. She had a way of running just hard enough to beat the opponent by a head or at most a half of a length. She really seemed to enjoy barely winning.

Well Grandpa Jack heard about the mare when one of my friends complained of losing. So one Sunday afternoon he asked me to ride her out to a little dirt track where they conducted Quarter Horse match races. He was there in his old pickup, with the saw horses in the back. He bought me a coke and we were standing there admiring the race horses and talking when a gentleman walked up, looked the mare over and challenged me to a match race.

I tried to discourage him by telling him I had just ridden her some six or so miles to the track and that she had never run on a track and I weighed about 175 pounds and all the other

horses had lightweight jockeys and racing saddles, whereas all I had was a heavy roping saddle.

Grandpa intervened and they had a discussion and then Grandpa told me to ride the mare bareback and the race would only be for 350 yards.

The opposing horse looked like a champion to me, a gelding with a sleek and shining black coat and long legs, ridden by a young black man who may have weighed a hundred pounds soaking wet.

Well, I tried to talk my way out of the race, but Grandpa assured me everything would be all right. So I stripped the saddle off the mare and Jack helped me climb aboard and led me to the starting line.

When the starter fired his pistol, the black left us in a cloud of dust and I almost fell off the mare. But like I said, she loved to run and she overtook the horse and won by a neck.

The owner paid off, all the while complaining to Jack that the mare barely won and he wanted a rematch. Later Jack slipped me twenty bucks and I asked him how much he had won? He just grinned. I asked him how

much would he have had to pay if we lost? "Your horse!" he replied.

In his later years, after he retired, you seldom saw Jack in anything but striped carpenter's overalls. If you would have visited Humble in those days and asked someone where you could find Jack Mason, most likely you would have been greeted with a blank stare.

Now if you would have asked for "Pop" Mason, anyone could have directed you to the Humble Cafe. Grandpa ate most of his meals there and had a favorite table. If anyone happened to be sitting there when he came in, he was apt to ask them to move.

He loved to bet, and it didn't matter on what; a horse race, a football game, anything. Like I mentioned before, he wore those carpenter overalls all the time. In the upper right bib pocket was his gambling money; in the upper left, his social security money. And his money never changed sides.

I remember coming home on leave from the Navy and Grandpa Jack was sitting on a wooden bench in front of the cafe. A fellow walked up and asked Jack who he liked in Saturday's game? Jack

thought a minute and replied "take your choice." They bet a dollar or so and after the man left, I asked Grandpa what he knew about the two teams that were playing? "Nothing" he replied. But he won the bet.

Jack's son Harold served on the Humble ISD school board for many years and was President of the board for several terms. But every Friday night you could find him at the Humble High School football games working on the sidelines, operating the yardage chains or the down marker. Well Grandpa Jack decided that he would like to attend a few of these games, so he drove his old pickup to the stadium gate and the principal of the school asked Grandpa if he could help him. Jack told him to open the gate, he wanted to drive in. The principal asked him what he was delivering? "Nothing", Jack replied, "I want to watch the game". Of course the principal refused. Jack retorted that he was the father of the President of the school board and the principal was going to be fired if he didn't let him in. Well, the principal laughed but swung the gate open and Jack was present at

most of the home games after that, parking his old pickup next to the ambulance near the sidelines.

Once he went to Dr. Yount, a local dentist, and had a jaw tooth pulled. He swore that Dr. Yount broke his jaw when he pulled the tooth. Until his death, he would meet the good doctor on the street and his greeting was always the same, "How's the damned ol' tooth doctor?". I don't think he ever referred to him by name.

One of my favorite stories about Jack occurred during an election year. The Constable was known to have placed a bet or two with Pop Mason.

Well, Grandpa's son-in-law called Jack at home, disguised his voice and explained that he was a Harris County deputy and he was investigating the gambling that was going on in Humble.

He further explained that if the incumbent lost, they were going to crack down and clean up the town. The next day Pop Mason was parked in front of the Humble Cafe with a big sign mounted on his saw horses -- "Re-Elect Constable Clint Eddings".

Jack Mason was known to spin a yarn or two and he loved to talk, and I don't think he ever met a stranger. This legacy has been passed on to his son Harold, who my wife says is the only person that can talk more than I do.

Jack's health failed badly during 1960-61 and the family had a birthday party for him at daughter Lorraine's house in 1962. He was asleep in a chair with everyone around him when he died.

He was survived by three children, 12 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. Almost ten years later, in March of 1972, Lucille died in a car accident and was laid to rest next to Jack Mason.

Lorraine and Harold and their families still reside in Humble.

Now you know the rest of the story. . . .

Did You Know?

The 1910-1911 Austin City Directory lists the widow of Henry Hodge and daughter Rosa dwelling at 201 East 2nd Street. There is no longer a house at that location. Rosa was employed as a saleslady and bookkeeper at Bohn Bros. on Congress Avenue.

Death Notices

I would like to take the opportunity to note the recent passing of both of my step-parents. They were good friends to me and my brother and they will be missed.

Jo Ann (Smith) (Turner) Wilcoxon

Born August 5, 1935, and died October 3, 1999. For many years she was the City Finance Manager for the City of Bastrop. She also shared with me a great fondness for glassware and cookbooks.

George Sheldon West

Born February 22, 1917, and died February 11, 2000. George was already retired from the City of Austin police department by the time we met him and was spending his summers in Colorado. Without his influence I might never have discovered my intense love of the Rocky Mountains. Burial was in Gonzales.

McAfee Update

Information on our McAfee line is coming in fast and furiously. I fully intend- ed to begin sharing it with this newsletter; however, so many research irons are still in the fire that I decided to stall and see what else develops in the next few months.

The pension file I received for Albert has confirmed my theory that Albert's parents were Jacob and Lavinia McAfee and that Albert was born in Linn County, Iowa. It also has pointed us to a large nest of McAfees who resided in Livingston County, Missouri, at the turn of the Civil War and who I suspect will turn out to be uncles and cousins.

Maxine and I (mostly Maxine) are chasing census records and new leads in pension records. From all appearances, Albert's father Jacob fought for the Union out of Livingston County, Missouri, and had died by late 1862. I have no information as yet whether his death was service related. I am again twiddling my thumbs and waiting for the National Archives to cough up pension papers pertaining to an application of a

minor child against Jacob's service.

There are also probate records and other tantalizing tidbits of information coming to light that will have to be painstakingly extracted from various out-of-state clerks and librarians. And I know from experience how eager our government officials are to aid and abet genealogists. (They aren't.)

So stand by. And keep your fingers crossed for me.

Favorite Christmas Present

I don't know why people say I'm hard to buy presents for. Give me some old newspaper clippings or photos and I'm tickled pink. Give me another 2 names backward on my family tree and I'll be your devoted disciple for life.

In that vein, I thought I would share a couple of my "hand-me-downs". The first is a newly acquired picture of Burl Mason's mother, Mary. It came unexpectedly in the mail over the Christmas holidays and immediately laid claim as my favorite present of 1999.



Mary Harworth Mason

The original was dark and indistinct, but thanks to my scanner, I was able to lighten it. For those of you who are in the Mason line, I am enclosing a glossy copy. If you would like a copy of the jpeg file e-mailed to you, drop me a note at LWilcoxn@onr.com.

Following is a copy of an old newspaper article about the 1935 Mobley reunion. I think those of you in the Mobley line might find a few names you will recognize. This article dropped out of an old bible that was passed down to me by my grandmother. The pictures are from a later Mobley reunion (circa 1940s) that was held at the Ridgeway Church.

MOBLEY REUNION HELD AT OLD HOME PLACE NEAR McDADE LAST SUNDAY

Sixty-five members, relatives, and friends of the J. S. Mobley family gathered at the "Old Home Place" seven miles southeast of McDade on Sunday, July 21, 1935 to enjoy an all-day family reunion.

Guests had been arriving since Wednesday of the preceding week, and by an early hour Sunday every one was on hand and ready to enjoy the day.

The weeds had been pulled from around a grove of trees in front of the house and the affair was held outdoors.

The morning was spent in going over the many familiar spots of the house and place in general. Needless to say many happy memories were recalled of the times when "we were kids and mother and dad were

here". However, this happiness was mellowed by thoughts of the mother and father and one brother who have passed away during the years.

At noon many good things to eat appeared on the table as if by magic and disappeared in about the same manner.

In the afternoon every one was ready to rest in the shade of the trees and just talk. Some of the grandchildren and great grandchildren gave a few readings and songs for the entertainment of the others.

About 4 o'clock a picture was taken of the crowd, and after that every one enjoyed a feast of watermelons.

The oldest son of the family, Rev. R. A. Mobley of Marble Falls, Texas, spoke briefly and told of the family's plan to perpetuate this gathering on

this date every year, and to invite the family of H. M. Mobley, a brother of J. S. Mobley, to participate in the reunion. He gave a brief history of the struggles of the two families when they came to Texas from Georgia soon after the close of the Civil War. Mr. Mobley closed his remarks with a prayer, and then goodbyes were said and every one went home treasuring in their hearts much pleasure and enjoyment derived from this gathering.

Those present were: Rev. R. A. Mobley, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Mobley and children, Bertha, Ray, Nona Gay, and Pat, of Marble Falls; Mrs. T. M. Fariss of Lake Victor; Mrs. Beulah Sellers, Miss Cleo Mobley, and Mr. Jaeger of Austin; Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Mobley, Mrs. A. W. Black and children, Genelle and Jo Allie, Miss Helen Black, Alton Mobley, Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Hodge and daughter, Nettie, and Mrs. Nettie Mason of Red Rock; Mr. and Mrs. G. R. Mobley, Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Mobley and baby, Mr. and Mrs. Ira Mobley and baby, Mr. and Mrs. Elton Hart, Mr. and Mrs. Morgan Mobley, Mr. and Mrs. Abb Dungan and son Truman, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Clark, Mr. and Mrs. Willie Hawthorne and children, Wayne, Fayette, Winfred, Josephine, and Melba, Mrs. Cora Hodge, Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Branton and daughter, Jo, Mrs. M. E. Allen, Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Branton and daughter Verna Lee, Noah Harris, Jr., of McDade; Mr. and Mrs. Richard Dickerson and children, La Verne, Leona, and Marjorie of Giddings; Mr. Tom Reed and children, Leroy and Frances of Houston; Mrs. Blanche Strickland and children, Fred and Jimmie of Louisiana and Mr. John Deal of McDade.

As usual, if you have anything you would like to see or say here, send it along. I can be reached by phone at (512) 303-0638, by mail at 137 Briar Forest Dr., Bastrop, TX 78602, or by e-mail at LWilcoxn@onr.com.

Thank you, thank you, for the help I've gotten recently from Gene O'Quinn (without whom this newsletter would have been on the short side), to Nita B. Mason for the delightful Christmas surprise, and to Maxine Alcorn, who has been single handedly hauling McAfees out of hiding. I bet she shines at pulling hen's teeth, too.



Lucy Mason Hodge (L), Jo Branton & mother Fay Hodge Branton (back to camera)

Some Mobley men brew kettles of coffee



Bettye Hodge (L), Jo Branton (R), Larry Hodge (front)

