

TEXAS JOURNEY

by Gerry Booth

1803 the Shipmans Go Back

200 YEARS

March 9, 2022, marked the 200th anniversary of my fourth great grandparents Moses and Mary *Robinson* Shipman and their nine children, ranging from twenty-one years to three months, crossing the Red River and entering Texas. Daniel Shipman, their oldest son wrote the following about the event:

We then turned down Red River nearly opposite Jonesborough, which stands on the west side of the river; and on the 9th of March, 1822, we crossed over Red River into Texas; and have lived in Texas ever since. It was a new country, new acquaintances, and new things generally.

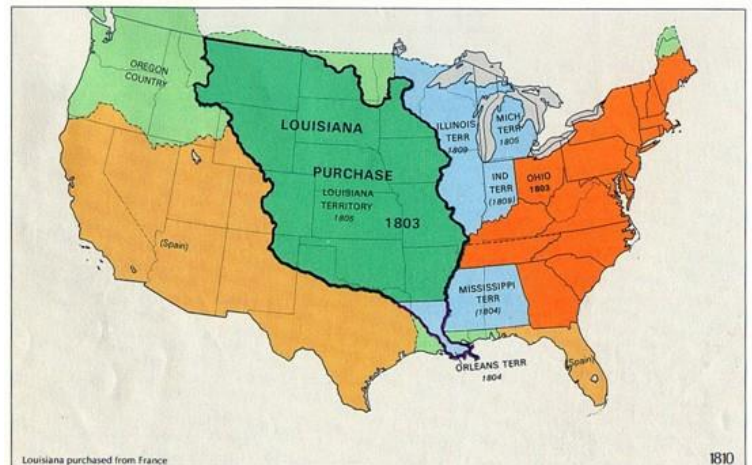
In the last article, Paul Sisco wrote about the Spring Creek Baptist Church in Tennessee. Moses and Mary *Robinson* Shipman joined the church in 1803. That same year the United States made a huge land purchase that doubled the size of the United States.

Two years earlier, in 1801, President Thomas Jefferson wanted to purchase the port of New Orleans. "To him, New Orleans was key: Whoever owned it would be America's natural enemy because that nation would control the channel through which produce from more than a third of the United States had to pass."¹ Jefferson offered France two million dollars. France rejected the offer. In 1803 Thomas Jefferson tried again, offering ten million dollars. France needing money for Napoleon's War countered his offer with New Orleans and the rest of the Louisiana Territory for 15 million dollars.²

This territory had been claimed in the name of France by René Robert Cavalier Sieur de La Salle. On April 9, 1682, La Salle named the region "La Louisiana" in honor of King Louis XIV. He claimed the Mississippi River basin, which included all the lands drained by the Mississippi River and all the rivers that emptied into the Mississippi River, and all the lands those rivers drained. A small part of Texas was considered a part of this purchase but most of Texas, parts of New Mexico, and a few pockets of land already controlled by the United States were excluded.



La Salle is also known for establishing Fort Saint Louis in Texas. Starting a colony in Texas was not La Salle's original plan. At the time La Salle claimed Louisiana, France was at war with Spain. La Salle presented to King Louis XIV a plan to establish a French base at the mouth of the Mississippi to conquer more Spanish territory and to take the silver mines in Mexico. King Louis XIV approved of the plan and supplied La Salle with two ships, men, and supplies. The King provided a small frigate *Belle* and an escorting warship *Joly*. La Salle leased two more ships, *Saint Francois*, and *L'Aimable*.³



¹ <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2003/spring/louisiana-purchase.html#:~:text=Jefferson's%20men%20were%20in%20Paris,United%20States%20had%20to%20pass.>

² <https://www.history.com/topics/westward-expansion/louisiana-purchase-video>

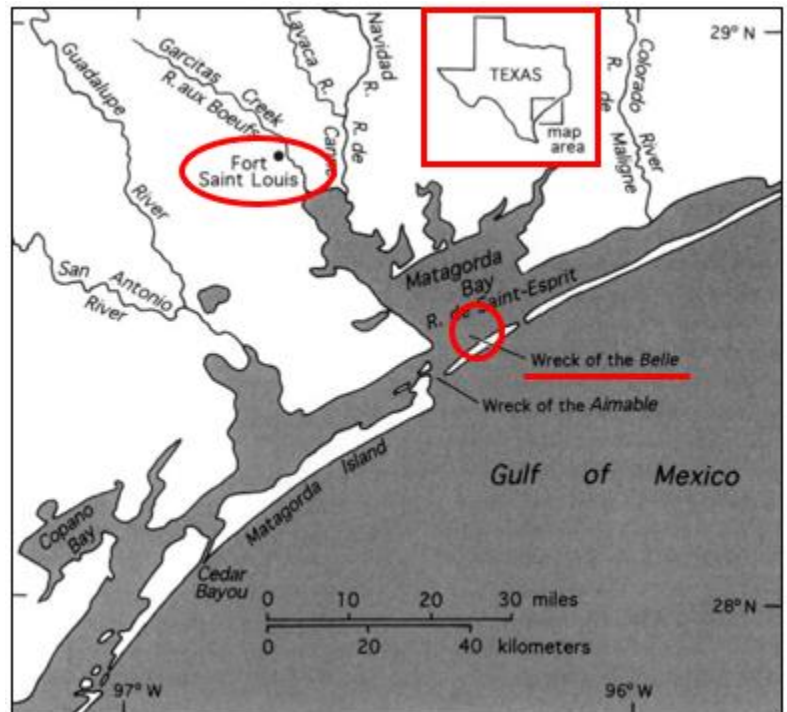
³ <https://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/belle/>

On July 24, 1684, La Salle set sail from La Rochelle, France. Misfortune plagued the expedition. *Saint Francois* was lost to pirates on the coast of Haiti. In the West Indies, La Salle became sick and his men began to desert him. Then because of poor maps and La Salle's lack of knowledge of the geography, he sailed past the mouth of the Mississippi thinking it lay further west.

In January 1685, La Salle landed his three remaining ships on the Texas coast. Unfortunately, this area of Texas was inhabited by the Karankawa Indians who were known to be cannibals. The next major setback was the loss of *L'Aimable*, the largest ship carrying most of the supplies. She ran aground while trying to enter Matagorda Bay and broke up and sank.

The *Joly*, was scheduled to return to France once La Salle reached his destination. She carried those settlers who refused to stay because they knew the colony was doomed and the crew of the *L'Aimable* back to France.

To protect themselves from the Karankawas the remaining settlers built a small settlement called Fort St. Louis forty miles inland from where they had landed, near present-day Port Lavaca. La Salle planned to go on foot to find the Mississippi. Before leaving, La Salle decided to prepare the *Belle* for sea in order to move the settlers once he returned from his search for the Mississippi. Bad weather and a bad decision by the captain to try to move the location of the *Belle* resulted in the *Belle* smashing into a sandbar. For three months, the crew was stranded on what today is known as Matagorda Peninsula. All the time the *Belle* was slowly disappearing beneath the muddy waters of Matagorda Bay. The men grew hungrier and set out to find a way to get off the peninsula. Fortunately, a canoe that had been lost by the French who were on the far side of Pass Cavallo washed up on the peninsula. The six survivors made it to shore.⁴



La Salle wandered around, going as far west as the Rio Grande before he realized the Mississippi was to the east. Finally, in east Texas, his men turned against him and killed him on March 19, 1687. Six of the seventeen men traveling with La Salle continued to Canada and eventually made their way back to France. One of those men was La Salle's brother.

A Spanish expedition was sent out to find La Salle. They discovered the *Belle* partially underwater. This discovery was recorded in 1687 in the diary of the pilot, Juan Enriquez Barroto, who recognized the ship.

Around Christmas 1688, there were approximately 25 to 30 settlers at Fort Saint Louis left. A band of Karankawa killed the adults but spared the children. These six or so, children were saved by Spaniards who took them to Mexico City.⁵

What happened to the *Belle*? The *Belle* remained mired in the mud of Matagorda Bay for 310 years. In 1995 it was located and excavated. The ship's hull and La Salle's cargo for his colony were slowly uncovered from the muddy waters of Matagorda Bay. The mud had held her together intact. "In the bow compartment excavators found: a fully articulated human skeleton lying atop a coil of anchor rope.



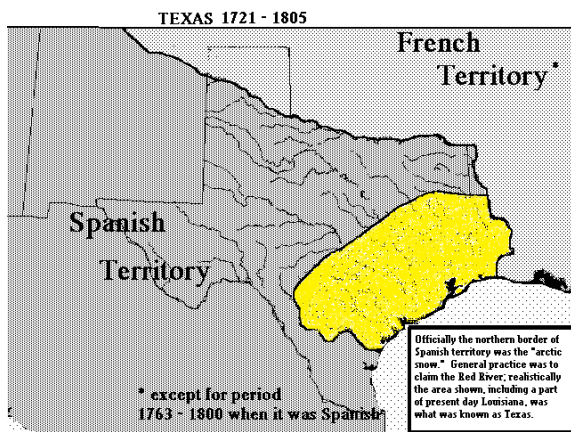
⁴ <https://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/belle/>

⁵ <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/la-salle-expedition>

The hull of La *Belle* is now housed in the Bob Bullock Museum in Austin, Texas. New techniques in preservation were used to be able to display the 310-year-old wooden hull. There were 1.6 million artifacts found. The artifacts are the property of France but more than 30 are on loan to the Texas Historical Commission and can be seen at the exhibit. Another part of the exhibit includes the story of the colonists which is presented in a 26-minute multi-sensory movie titled Shipwrecked. Visit the website to see pictures of the excavation, the artifacts, and the actual reassembled hull of *Belle*.

<https://www.thestoryoftexas.com/la-belle/the-exhibit>

Even though France never successfully established a settlement in Texas, they claimed Texas. La Salle's efforts made Spain focus on east Texas, turning their interests from the west. Spain began to reinforce Texas to protect its Mexican colony from its new neighbor, the United States.



The yellow part of the map is the way Texas looked in 1803. "Officially the northern border of Spanish territory was the 'arctic snow.' General practice was to claim the Red River, realistically the area shown, including a part of present-day Louisiana, was what was known as Texas." (Description in the box on the map.) In fact, the first capital of Texas was in Louisiana. From 1729 to 1770, Los Adaes, near the present-day city of Natchitoches, Louisiana was the official capital of the Spanish province of Tejas. This early Texas was filled with hostile Indians, pirates, outlaws, a few people from the United States, and Mexicans, known as Tejanos, who were making Texas their home. It will be another 18 years before Stephen F. Austin receives permission to bring settlers to Texas.

Even though Texas was not being colonized in 1803, many people were moving westward, especially after the purchase of the Louisiana Territory. However, Moses and Mary *Robinson* Shipman were not. Besides becoming members of the Spring Creek Baptist Church in 1803, Moses and Mary were also dismissed as members. Moses and Mary were members of the church from April 16 to September 17, a total of five months. Then they decided to go back home to the Carolinas where they both had family.

Exactly why they returned to the Carolinas is not known. Just before being accepted into Spring Creek Baptist Church, Mary gave birth to her third son, Edward L. Shipman on March 1, 1803. Her first son died, unnamed, in infancy. Her second son, was Daniel Shipman (1801-1881), the future author of *Frontier Life*.

While members of Spring Creek Baptist Church, Moses and Mary had been asked to counsel Jacob Francisco about his drinking and to speak to his wife Rebecca *Shipman* Francisco about the "evil company" she was keeping. Rebecca was Moses' aunt. On May 5, 1803, Rebecca gave birth to a son named Daniel Francisco. Moses and Mary may have been aware of the situation but it took 200 years and DNA testing to discover that baby Daniel was not a Francisco/Sisco but instead was a Gage.

A stressful situation at church, and being a young twenty-year-old mother who had lost a baby, and who now had a toddler and a newborn all in a matter of about three years may have been contributing factors to the decision to move back home to the Carolinas closer to family. There were still Shipmans and Robinsons in North and South Carolina.

Mary's family was located mostly in Pendleton County, South Carolina. Pendleton County existed from 1789 to 1826. In 1826, Pendleton was abolished and split into Pickens County and Anderson County. The red lines on the South Carolina map mark the Pendleton boundaries. The blue line on the South Carolina map is Barker's Creek. Mary's father, John Robinson (1749-1845), bought 572 acres of property on the east fork of Barker's Creek in 1824.

State of South Carolina } In Equity
Anderson District } to the Honorable the Chancellor of the said State -

Humbly Complaining Sheweth unto your Honors, your orator James E. Robinson, that John Robinson the father of your orator departed this life intestate on the day of February one thousand eight hundred and forty five seized and possessed of certain Real Estate situated in the said State aforesaid on Barkers Creek, waters of Little River bounding Lands of Laban Maybey, Masters Cobb & others containing five hundred and seventy two acres, more or less, which the said intestate had quietly owned and enjoyed, for some twenty years previous to his death - that the said Lands greatly exceed one thousand Dollars in Value - that the title deeds, are in the possession of some member of the family and will on examination be found legal & valid - that the said Lands, on the death of the said intestate, descended to Jane Robinson, his widow, who is entitled to one third part thereof, and fifteen children, to wit - Elizabeth McMinn who married one John McMinn, and the said John McMinn died before the said intestate; Mary Shipman who married Moses Shipman, and the said Moses Shipman also died before the said intestate; Hannah Shipman who married Edward Shipman; Rachel Armstrong who married William Armstrong; Nancy Smith who married William Smith, and the said Nancy died before the said intestate leaving two children, to wit, John Smith, and Elizabeth Cox who married Joel Cox; Moses Robinson; the Heir at Law of Andrew Robinson deceased, to wit, John F. Robinson, Hugh Robinson, and Elizabeth Armstrong who married William Armstrong Junior; Jane Cullins who married Charles Cullins; the Heir at Law of Anna Spruell who married Gabriel Spruell, and afterwards departed this life before the said intestate leaving some nine or ten children, whose names, ages, and sexes your orator has not been able to discover, as they reside somewhere in Georgia or Alabama; Rebecca Bigby deceased who married Thomas Bigby, and afterwards died before the said intestate leaving seven or eight children, who also reside in some of the western States and whose ages, sexes, and names are unknown to your orator; John B. Robinson; Isabelle Brock who married Meredith B. Brock; Deidamia Flowers who married Poliver Flowers, and afterwards died before the said intestate leaving five or six children somewhere in the State of Mississippi, whose names, ages, & sexes have not been ascertained; Samuel Robinson; & your orator - That your orator desires a Sale or division of the said Lands to be made so that he may enjoy his share in severalty which he believes will promote alike the interests of all parties.

For reasons aforesaid, and forasmuch as your orator is reliable only in this Honorable Court, may it please your Honors to grant your writ of Subpoena directed to all of the above named defendants requiring them by a day certain to appear & answer the several allegations herein set forth, as though specially interrogated as to each particular law; that the party having the title deeds in possession be required to deliver them up to the Commissioners for the security of the subsequent purchasers - that such order may be made as will protect the several interests of the Heirs at Law of Anna Spruell, of Rebecca Bigby, and of Deidamia Flowers till their names and Conditions can be discovered, by appointment of Guardians, and also such other precautions as your Honors may deem advisable - May it please your Honors to grant your writ of partition to be directed to five judicious persons acquainted with the Land, commanding them to go upon upon the premises and after being duly sworn that they view & appraise the said Lands, and make their return under their hands to this Court on or before the third Monday of June next stating whether in their opinions a Sale or division of the said Lands would be most advantageous to all parties or in fine, what ought to be done touching the premises - And may it please your Honors to grant your orator such other & further relief as to Justice & Equity shall appertain -

P. D. W. James E. Robinson Sol.

JOHN ROBINSON (1749-1845), Mary's father, had a wife Jane, and fifteen children. Over his lifetime he moved from North Carolina to South Carolina to Tennessee, then back to South Carolina. In 1803, he lived in South Carolina. "Some of the descendants state that the family lived in Chester County, South Carolina before coming to the Pendleton area Anderson County, South Carolina."⁸

In 1775 John lived in North Carolina and he served on Captain Abraham Kuykendall's Committee of Public Safety. This is a part of the minutes from one of the meetings:

September 14, 1775. The Committee of Public Safety met according to adjournment. Present: Charles McLean, Chairman, Thomas Espey, Fetty Mauney, Frederick Hambright, **George Russell**, John Morris, **Robert McMinn**, **Abram Kurkendall**, **John Robinson**, John Barber. George Black, James Logan, James McAfee, Andrew Neel, Andrew Hampton, William Thompson, Nicholas Friday, Benjamin Hardin, and Perrygreen Mackness.

Captain Andrew Hampton was authorized to apply to the Council of Safety at Charleston for what gunpowder, lead and flints as can be bought with 8 pounds, 17 shillings and 6 pence proclamation money of North Carolina for the protection of those living on the frontiers of Tryon County, against attacks of savage Indians.⁹

⁸ Ethel Speer Updike, *Chamblee, Fisher, Grubbs, Hughes, Robinson, Shirley, Speer and Tribble Families of the South*, (U.S. 1969), 38. <https://archive.org/details/chambleefishegr00updi/page/38>

⁹ William L. Sherrill, *Sherrill's History of Lincoln County, North Carolina* (n.d.), 24. http://www.bmgcn.com/document/pdf/History_NC_Lincoln_Sherrill.pdf

George Russell, Robert McMinn and Abram Kurkendall, with whom he served have been identified in earlier articles.

After the American Revolution, the first census for the country was taken in 1790. John Robinson refused to conform with the census law and give the list of his family to his militia captain. A suit, "State vs. John Robinson for refusing to comply with the Census," was brought against him. Many people refused to cooperate with the taking of the census in 1790 because they did not trust the government. The case was dismissed on November 9, 1799, with costs.¹⁰

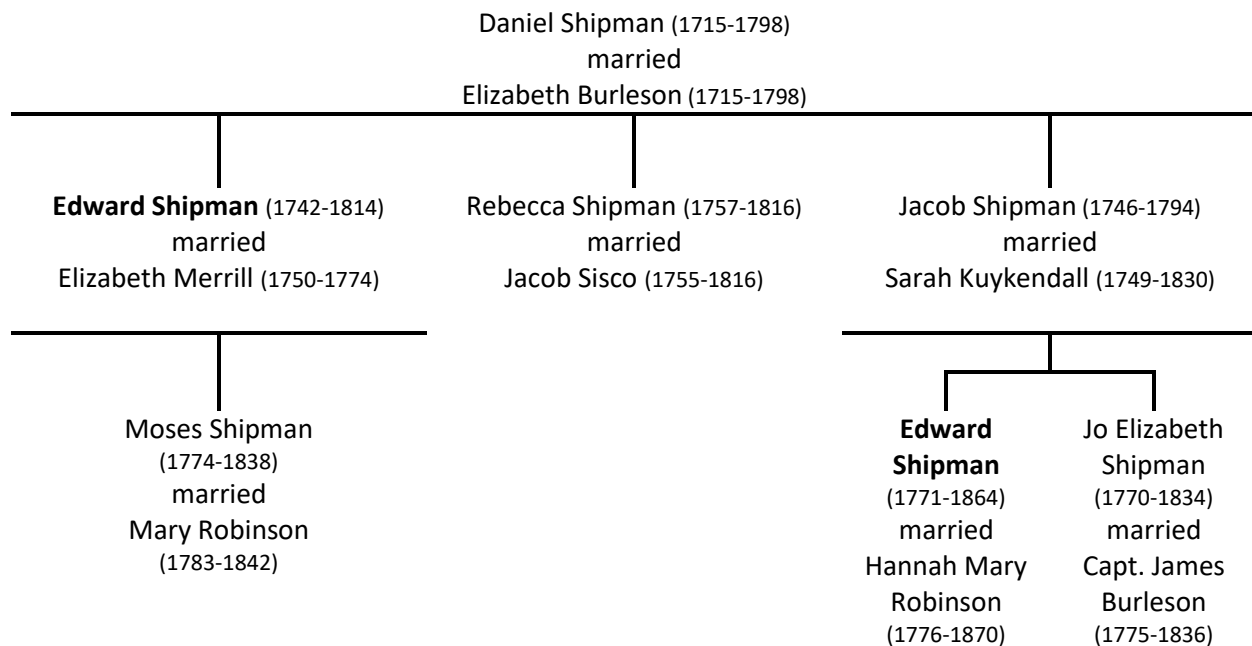
Jane [Gaines Barr] Robinson (1764–1855) was John Robinson's second wife and Mary *Robinson* Shipman's mother.

The following are the children and spouses listed in order as they appeared in the document:

(Underlined names appeared in the document. [Bracketed] information is additional information)

1. [Elizabeth "Betsy"] **Jane [Robinson] McMinn** (1780-1858) married John [Andrew] McMinn (1776–1808). John McMinn was the son of Robert McMinn (1750–1797) and Jane *Kuykendall* (1780–1858). When Elizabeth McMinn died, she was buried in Ebenezer Baptist Church Cemetery, Hendersonville, Henderson County, North Carolina. Her son, Jesse, and her grandson Jesse A. are buried next to her.
2. **Mary [Davis Robinson] Shipman** (1793-1842) married Moses Shipman (1774-1838).
3. **Hannah [Mary Robinson] Shipman** (1776- 1870) married Edward Shipman (1771–1864).

There are two Edward Shipmans in this part of our story. The Shipmans used a naming pattern when naming their children. This makes keeping up with them difficult. This is a chart placing the two Edwards in their families.



The first Edward Shipman (1742-1814) in this part of our journey was the son of Daniel Shipman (1715-1798) who married Elizabeth Burleson (1715-1798), according to family tradition. Edward's first wife was Elizabeth Merrill (1750-1774). Edward and Elizabeth were the parents of Moses Shipman (1774-1838). Edward had a brother, Jacob Shipman (1746-1794). Jacob Shipman married Sarah *Kuykendall* (1749-1830), the daughter of Abraham Kuykendall (1719-1812). Jacob and Sarah had a son, our second Edward in this story, born December 25, 1771. They were also the parents of Jo Elizabeth *Shipman* who married Captain James Burleson (1775-1836).

4. [Harriet] **Rachel [Robinson] Armstrong** (1785-1854) married William Armstrong Senior (1786–1856).

⁹ William C. Stewart, *Annotated 1800 census of Pendleton District South Carolina* (U.S. National Genealogical Society, 2016), 132. <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/408490/?offset=0#page=1&viewer=picture&o=search&n=0&q=robinson>

5. **Nancy [Robinson] Gant** married William Gant (1785-).
6. **Moses Robinson** (1788-1855) married Rachel *Butterworth* Robinson (1807-Abt. 1870).
7. **Andrew Robinson** (Abt. 1785-1820) married Jane *Gant* Robinson (1789-1873).
8. **Jane [Robinson] Cullins** (1794-1845) married Caleb Cullins (1806-1886).
9. **Anna [Robinson] Spruell** (1778-1840) married Gabriel Spruell (1770-).
10. **Rebecca [Anne Robinson] Bigby** (1797-1834) married Thomas Bigby (1795-1870).
11. **John B[arr] Robinson** (1800-1864) married Sallie *Robinson* Robinson (1799-1868). He married his first cousin.
12. **Adeline [Robinson] Brock** (1804-1883) married Meredith H[unt] Brock (1801-1871).
13. **Deidema [Robinson] Flowers** (1808-1845) married Toliver Flowers.
14. **Samuel [Jasper] Robinson** (1802-1853) married Louisa *Massie* Robinson (1813-1882)
15. **James E[dward] Robinson** (1791-1857) married Susannah E. *Bigby* Robinson (Abt. 1799-1870)

The following is a list of Moses' family:

Edward Shipman (1743-1814), Moses' father, was married twice and had twelve children. In 1803 Edward was living in Buncombe, North Carolina.

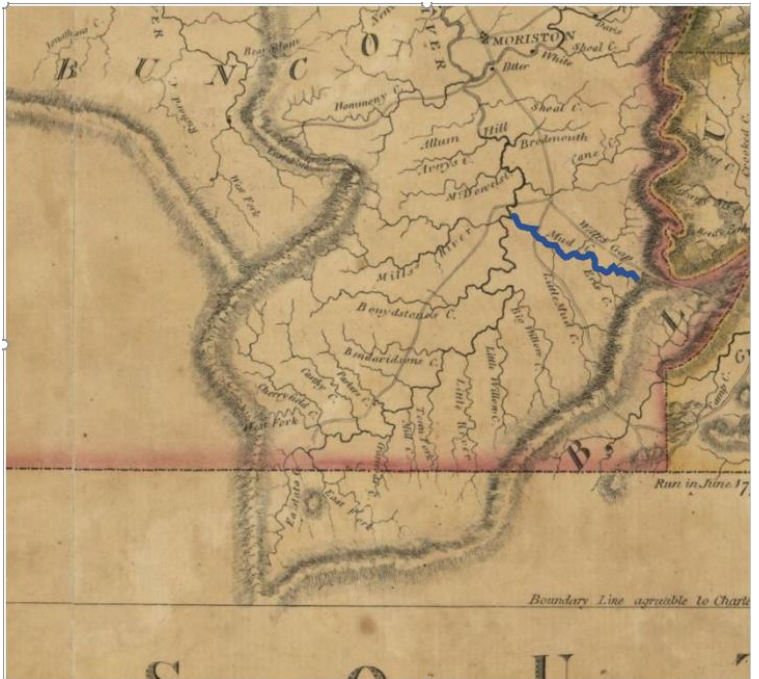
In 1796 Edward bought 150 acres of land a little below where Abraham Kuykendall lived. The property included some logs that James Burleson (husband of Jo Elizabeth Shipman, son of Aaron Burleson of the Washington County Will) had cut for a cabin. This tract of land was located on Mud Creek (blue line on the map of Buncombe).

Elizabeth Merrill Shipman (Abt. 1750-Abt. 1774) was Edward's first wife. She had three children:

1. **Elizabeth Shipman** (1770-1771).
2. **George Washington Shipman** (1772 -) married Nancy Hunter Shipman (1785-1860).
3. **Moses Shipman** (1774-1838) married Mary Davis Robinson Shipman.

Sarah Jane Williams (Osteen) Shipman (1747-1843) was Edward's second wife. She had nine children with Edward:

4. **Edward Shipman, Jr.** (1775-) married Mary Blackwell Shipman (1805-).
5. **John Shipman** (Abt. 1776-Abt. 1849) married Melinda Purcell Shipman (1800-1848).
6. **Rebecca Shipman King** (1777-1845) married Benjamin Sylvanus King (1777-1841).
7. **Hezekiah Shipman** (1785-1851) married Hannah Helena Rhodes Shipman (1790-1880).
8. **Jacob Shipman** (1786-1850) married Rebecca Pigg Shipman(1791-Bef. 1850).
9. **Daniel Shipman** (Abt. 1791-)
10. **William Shipman** (Abt. 1795-) married Amia MNU Shipman (1805-) and 2nd Martha MNU Shipman (1817-).
11. **Stephen Perry Shipman** (1801-1862) married Nancy Merrell Shipman (1805-1843) and 2nd Maria Morgan (1849-).
12. **Joseph Shipman** (1804-1890) married Elizabeth Merrill (1809-1884).



By 1803, the first generation of the Burleson, Shipman, Gage family: David and Abigail *Burleson* Gage; Aaron Burleson (of Washington County Will); and Daniel and Elizabeth *Burleson* Shipman were all gone. Some of the next two generations were starting to migrate westward and could be found in Kentucky and Georgia and Tennessee. However, some of the family, like Moses and Mary, preferred to be close together with family back home in the Carolinas.