

Recollections

of the

Burleson Family Research Group

Touring Burleson Beginnings



July 2023

Vol XXVI No 3

*In this edition join
Susanne Hollyfield,
JD Burleson,
Jim Burleson, and
Sarah Burleson Gower
as they recollect on their
Burleson tour through
Virginia, North Carolina,
Tennessee;
and continue the
Burleson trek from
Tennessee to Texas
with Gerry Booth.*

For more information on the Burleson Family Research Group visit www.bfrg.info

For opportunities to meet and share Burleson connections, join and follow Burleson Cousining on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/BurlesonFRG>

Locating Aaron Burleson's Virginia Land Grant

by Sarah Burleson Gower

Have you ever wanted to walk in your ancestor's footsteps? For me, it's fun to try to imagine what it would have been like to see their corner of the world through their eyes, in their time. To be where they were can help explain what challenges they faced and what their motivations were, in a way get to know them, centuries after they've passed. This Spring, I had the chance to help the BFRG do just that when I was asked to help locate the land granted by the King of England, to Aaron Burleson in what was then Lunenburg County, Colonial Virginia in 1749. The team and I used the following resources to piece together my hypothesis:

- 1) Plat Plotter <http://platplotter.appspot.com/> (converts deed "metes-and-bounds" into a Plat of Survey that can be viewed in Google Maps or imported into a mapping program)
- 2) John Hoyle Burleson's book "A Study of the Early Burleson History"
- 3) The original 1749 land grant to Aaron which included date recorded, landmarks of the parcel, as well as the metes and bounds of the parcel. (image a)
- 4) The original 1749 land grant to John Phelps which listed Aaron Burleson as a boundary description. (image b)
- 5) Record of the sale of the land to John Echols in 1755.
- 6) Historical Map showing Bedford County from Roanoke Historical Society - revealed that what is known today as the "South Fork of Little Otter River" was not known as such in the 1700s. (image c)
- 7) Other land grants that were also described as involving "the south fork of The Little Otter River", as found in the "Cavaliers and Pioneers" books.
- 8) "Early Bedford Land Patents and Grants", the lifelong-work of James Robert Tinsley
- 9) Deed Mapper Software and Bedford County Map set (image d and e)
- 10) Google Maps of modern Bedford Co. VA (image f)

Image a) The piece of Aaron's Grant showing how it is described.

*as give grant and confirm unto Aaron Burleson one certain Tract or Parcel of Land
containing one hundred and forty seven Acres lying and being in the County
of Lunenburg Including both Sides of the South Fork of Little Otter River and
bounded as followeth to wit Beginning at a white Oak on the north Side
Thence North seventy Degrees fifty six Poles crossing the River to a red Oak Thence
North twelve Degrees West one hundred and twenty six Poles to a Hickory
Thence north thirty Degrees East fifty seven Poles to a white Oak Thence North
twenty four Degrees West fifty four Poles to a red Oak Thence North eighty seven
Degrees West thirty six Poles crossing the River to a Hickory Thence South
forty four and an Half Degrees West ninety nine Poles crossing a large
Branch to a white Oak Thence South three Degrees East one hundred
and forty two Poles to a white Oak and Thence South sixty two Degrees
East seventy four Poles to the Beginning Withall Woods Under woods*

At the beginning of my research, I tried using Plat Plotter to place the polygon shape of the grant along what is modernly referred to as the South Fork of the Little Otter River, which is just north west of/enters the actual town of Bedford.

and confirm unto John Phelps one certain Tract or Parcel of Land containing four hundred and forty four Acres lying and being in the County of Lunenburg including some of the Branches of the South Fork of Little Otter River and bounded as followeth, to wit, Beginning at a white Oak just above Aaron Burlewons Survey Thence North thirty two Degrees West three hundred and twenty Poles crossing two large Branches to a red Oak Thence South thirty five Degrees West two hundred and thirty two Poles crossing a Branch to a white Oak Thence South thirty Degrees East three hundred and twenty Poles crossing two large Branches to a Hickory and thence North thirty five

Image b) the piece of John Phelps's grant mentioning Aaron's land

No matter which way I turned the parcel on the map, I could not make it and John Phelps's pieces fit their descriptions anywhere in that area. After consulting John Hoyle's chapter on the subject and looking over the historic map of Bedford County (image c), we decided to look more south east of the town of Bedford.

Further strengthening this hypothesis were several other grants, described similarly as being along the south fork of Little Otter that were easier to find using landmarks/names that remained the same to this day such as Falling Creek and Orrix Creek. I was able to add to this hypothesis using maps from James Tinsley's books of hand drawn maps including some of these descriptors and their chains of title.

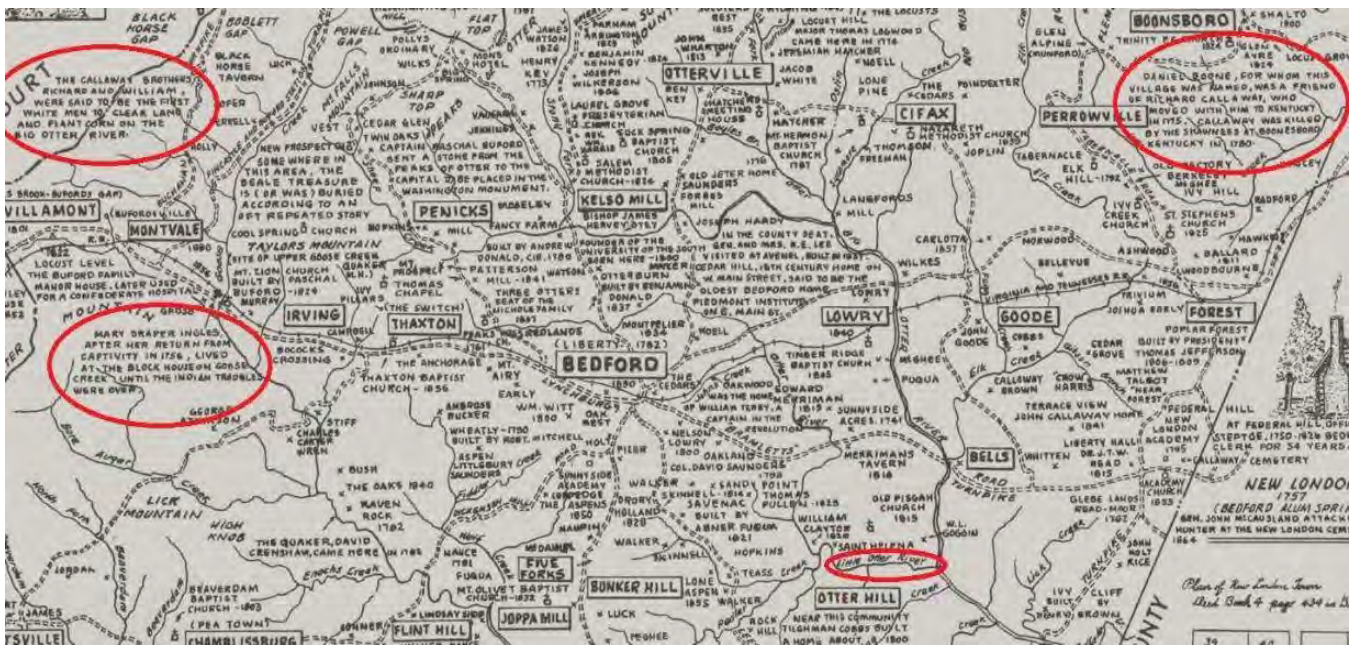


Image c) map of Bedford County, VA depicting locations and names from the beginning of the county, through the antebellum period.

Aside from contributing to our initial goal of locating Aaron's land grant, the Historic Bedford map (image c) also added many bits of adjacent information that have helped the team form a better idea of Aaron's life and motivations during this time period and spurred further research. Several are circled in red above. Tradition holds that Aaron was a colleague and friend of Daniel Boone, and details on this map of the naming of the town of Boonsboro in the NE corner of Bedford, support that theory in proving that they were both among the first settlers in the same area, at the same time period, in the same circles. Another piece of this map that fits into Aaron's puzzle: a few miles West of his proposed homestead, we see the location at which Mary Draper Ingles settled when returned from captivity in 1756, after escaping death as a hostage during the Draper's Meadow Massacre that occurred in 1755 at an outpost of the frontier approximately 50 miles West of Bedford in what is now Blacksburg, VA. This massacre of colonial settlers by Shawnee warriors was one event that was known to prompt many southwest VA settlers to uproot and move south to resettle in North Carolina. 1755 also happens to be the year that Aaron sold his land and moved his family down the Great Wagon Road into western NC. It is possible that the Draper's Meadow Massacre also contributed to Aaron's list of motivators to pick up stakes and move south. Despite all we were able to glean from the historic Bedford map, I was still unable to narrow it down any further and had hit many dead ends in attempts to track the sale of the land to modern day, from John Echols through chains of titles using the Bedford Co Register of Deeds Office. Our next breakthrough was reached when JD met a man in his travels who told him about Deed Mapper and did a quick search of the existing records that had been submitted to the software for Bedford Co, VA. His search returned that Aaron's land had been included but, as the company warned me, with some errors due to pieces of surrounding deeds being damaged/missing in the archives. So I used the suggested location with errors in the existing submitted research as a starting point to begin gathering clues from neighboring properties.

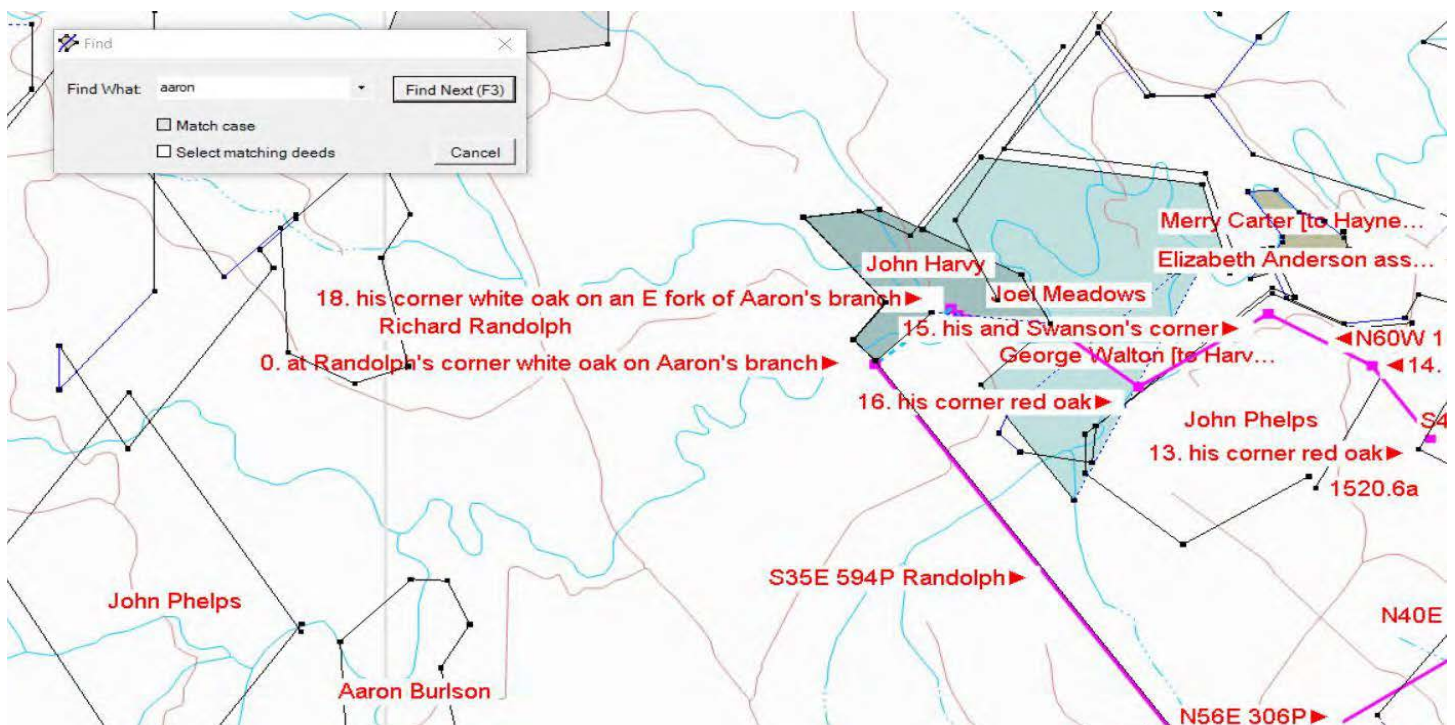


Image d) a screenshot of the Bedford Co maps in Deed Mapper, showing the search function as well as the descriptors of neighboring properties that refer to a branch of Little Otter as "Aaron's branch"

For a bit of background: Deed Mapper software allows the user to enter the metes and bounds detailed in the grant or deed and uses them to create a to-scale polygon in the shape of the parcel. The user can then move the

polygon around on the map of the area to fit with known neighbors/landmarks listed in the details, etc. Deed Mapper also allows the user to submit their own maps to the County's existing maps so that other researchers can find them when they purchase the County map set and use them for reference. The text search function lets the user search all entered deed descriptions and has a feature that can be selected to display descriptions from the document on the map itself. This feature is what ultimately led me to my conclusion about the land's location because it revealed that several nearby parcels included "Aaron's branch" as a description of the portion of the Little Otter River on which they were located. Given that Aaron Burleson was the only Aaron recorded on a grant/deed in the years prior to those mentioning the name, and given the proximity of these nearby parcels to other known anchor points in the map, I concluded that Aaron's land must have been the Aaron they were referring to. Placing his parcel on that branch also made it fit perfectly to the grant's description. This location also fits perfectly with the description of John Phelps's land in relation to Aaron's and the various branches of the river.

We also discovered that Jonathan Burleson's (Aaron's father) land was listed as a boundary line in a grant recorded to Nathaniel Williams in 1773, and the suggested location in the Deed Mapper Bedford Co Map Set seemed accurate based on surrounding grants and other known locations. Future work that I would like to do to help prove my hypotheses on these two men's land locations is to try to work backwards from modern owners back to Jonathan and Aaron through chains of titles when I am able to return to the Bedford Co Registrar of Deeds in the coming months.

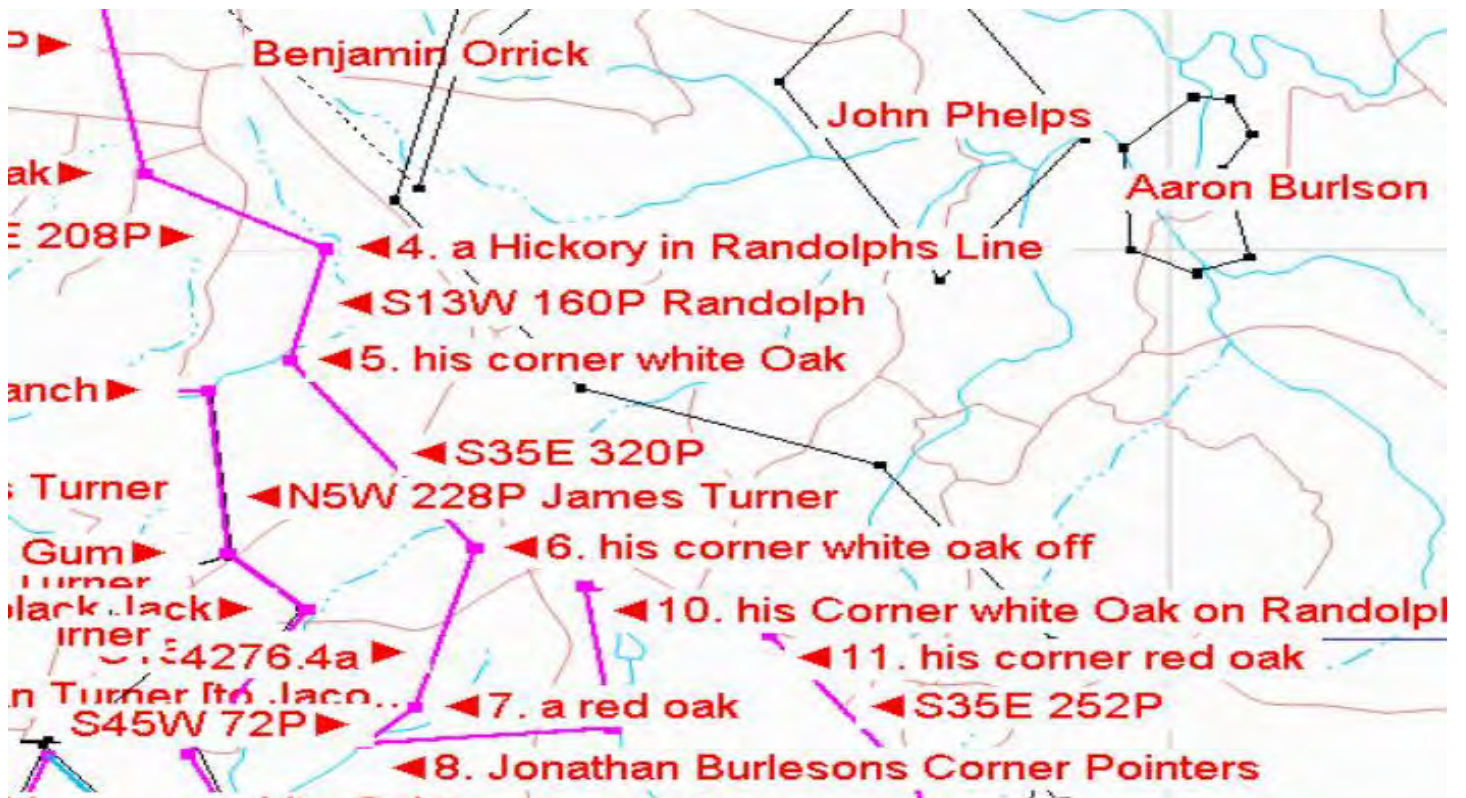


Image e) a screenshot from Deed Mapper showing the 1773 reference to Jonathan Burleson's property as a descriptor in Nathaniel Williams's boundary lines just to the southwest of Aaron's property

Deed Mapper has proven to be a valuable resource and I look forward to using it to further my other genealogical research endeavors in the future, so that I can see the world from the path those before me pioneered. If you are interested in using any of these resources in your own research and have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at sarah.a.burleson@gmail.com or on the Cousining Facebook page.

Other related images: image f) a to-scale map I created, showing where I believe the lands were located, overlaid on modern Google map of the area

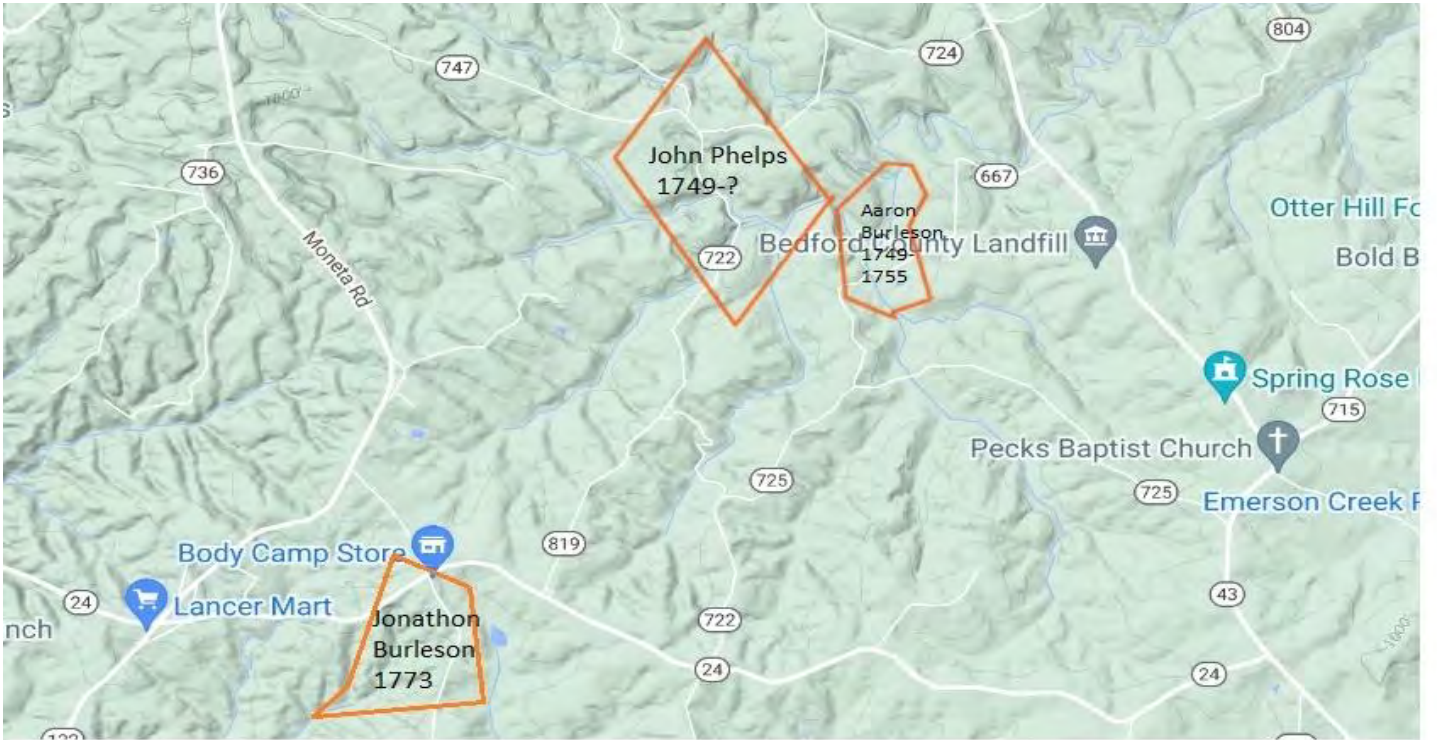


Image g) Photo of descendants of Aaron Burleson visiting the proposed location of the land that he settled in his early adult years.



Larry Dale , JD, & Jim Burleson with Susanne Hollyfield

About Me:

Sarah Burleson Gower

My family and I live in Orange Co, VA, on the farm on which I was raised. The Gower family includes my husband Matt, step-daughter Sarah Elizabeth(11), daughter Melanie(6) and son James(3). Growing up, I was very interested in finding out about our family history. Interest in genealogy partly inspired my pursuit of a BS and MS in Plant Breeding and Genetics at Virginia Tech. For 6 years I worked in a career in Crop Improvement through Soybean Breeding in North Carolina, which is where I met my husband. In 2017, we moved back to VA to be close to my family after my dad suffered a debilitating stroke. Now I am a homemaker, homeschool my children and enjoy hobbies including sewing, crafting, baking and genealogy.

My dad's was the first generation of my Burleson branch to permanently settle away from the "Big Ivy" area. Through Linda Burleson and Y-DNA testing of my dad, I have learned that we descend from Edward Burlison (born ~1780s) of Big Ivy, NC who, interestingly, was biologically a Sisco and therefore only a Burleson in name.



Cousining – Appalachian Style

May 2023

By Susanne Hollyfield

Jim Burleson

JD Burleson

Susanne: Months in the planning, this is the recollection of the back seat passenger, Susanne, on the first Cousining adventure with JD and Jim. JD drove and was in charge of loading, repacking, and all the necessary gear. Jim, the navigator and details person, the only one with Siri. I was very happy with this arrangement. My goal was to collect stories and documentation that could be included in the BFRG's first anthology. Volume One will hopefully inspire others to collect more stories and publish another volume!

My Burleson connection goes back to my third great grandmother, Volley, a sister of General Edward Burleson. They were children of Captain James Burleson (son of Aaron of Washington County) who came to Texas about the time of the Alamo and helped change the course of Texas and US history. Two of Volley's children married into the Hill family, and I came along through five generations of Hills.

Jim had spent previous months researching, identifying, and reaching out to present-day cousins, making new friends, while JD worked on their historical connection to the thousands already in his comprehensive tree, documenting each as they were entered. Those two are quite a pair! So many did they add to the burgeoning branches of the Burleson Tree. JD and Jim were able to find cousins exceptionally gifted at problem solving. Sarah Gower dived in with her diligence and expertise, took boundary descriptions from land deeds and translated them into modern ground locations. (She also sent this expedition off with two loaves of her homemade bread!)



Day One

Jim: Day one May 1st of the Burleson Cousining field trip went very well. “Inherit the Land” author [Gene Stowe](#) took us on a revisit to the Jonathan Burleyson land, Ross /Rone mansion and the burial grounds of much of the family. The home’s owner Sallie Patterson was most gracious in sharing her time with us marking many of the improvements in the Marvin, North Carolina property while honoring the recent achievement in attaining “historic “ status. Gene let us know the documentary is within \$50k of its fundraising goal for re-editing. Benefactor(s) are being sought for a final push. If you have yet to read this important book, we urge you to get it now.



JD: We took great comfort knowing that the Marvin area Eagle Scouts have taken on the cleanup of this Old Union County Methodist Cemetery. When these scouts complete the project, we will show you the cemetery improvements and of their earning Eagle status.

Day Two

Jim: In an interesting quirk today, we went in early to the Monroe Public Library genealogy room and met its curator, Gypsy Houston. We announced we were searching Burleson/Burleyson. She responded immediately she knew that name. We asked why? She said soon after she and her husband, Smokey Houston married she wanted to have matching frames put on each of their own baby pictures, just for fun. Smokey's mom found his and gave it to Gypsy. As Gypsy removed the old frame, she noticed an old photo hidden beneath Smokey's; it was of a home she recognized... the Rone/Ross mansion of Burleyson fame. She passed the picture on to Gene Stowe... the very picture used in the book cover!



Day two of the BFRG Cousining field trip proved successful. The genealogical society team at the Union County Heritage Room pulled out all the stops showing off the history making courtroom from "Inherit the Land." Additionally, Marian Morgan, Linda Vert and Susan Spanga generously opened the genealogical study room for our private inspection of records. Can't tell you how impressed we were.



JD: From there we traveled to Stanly County to interview John Hoyle Burleson regarding BFRGs new information about Aaron Burleson's travels, fresh technology mapping in Bedford,VA/ East Tennessee, Sarah Frances Burleson (Bugg) of Lunenburg and new insights about Aaron Burleson b. 1725/Jonathan Burleson b. 1704 associates identified (Boone, Skaggs, Callaway, Clark, etc.) from the mapping data. We celebrated by signing this year's new Cousining souvenir.



Day Three



Jim: May 3rd part one: JD, cousin Sarah Burleson Gower and Jim met at the Virginia State Archives in Richmond. Sources were aplenty for old Lunenburg (Bedford). We were very impressed with the level of service. We'll be back at length on the 5th so we've staked our finds for easy retrieval. Aaron, John and their father Jonathan are targets. Associates Henry Clark, Abel Lee and the Callaways are on the wish list. We're adding William Weatherford and family now found in New Kent. Who is the proven father of

Agnes? Ursula? Were they actually Indians? How were they brought into New Kent society? Our list grows every day. What's the real story on any Bugg marrying Susanne Frances Burleson? Where's her family? Where are sources? Any Burleson sources in 1730s Virginia? Now we need to add Daniel Burleson. Ann Burleson and Jon Burliston sailed into Virginia 1681 with 90 other passengers at the head right request of William Overton. He garnished 4600 acres for this. Who were they? Inquiring Burlesons(is that redundant?) want to know.



Jim: May 3rd- part two of the BFRG Cousining field trip we visited the Virginia Historical Resources Museum to view artifacts specifically from Jamestown. Laura Galke, a native Virginian with a Master's Degree from Arizona State University led our tour. Items relating to weaponry, hygiene and clothing were displayed. Much of the goods shipped to these settlers were obsolete surplus England no longer wanted.



JD: May 3rd- part three Debbie Noah presented more material about Jamestown regarding Cecily Bailey. Good opportunity to get to know some cousins. Discovered one that connected to Jim through the Lygon line. More recruits for [Susanne Hollyfield](#).



Day Four

JD: May 4, part one, our group went on to the Jordan's Point area near Jamestowne. We were able to explore the Kittiewan Plantation.



Jim: This portion of the tour gave us a real appreciation for the life style of early Virginia gentry. The construction of this home and regular upkeep was exhausting.



Day Four part 2

JD: May 4th part two of the BFRG Cousining field trip took place at the Berkeley Plantation near Charles City. This home hosted twelve presidents in its day. It was owned by the ancestors of President William Henry Harrison. George Washington played inside as a child. In unhappier times it suffered 140,000 troops occupying its grounds in the Civil War. Despite no actual battle taking place there, a cannon ball remains firmly lodged in a wall. It doubled as a surgery ward and temporary prison. In Revolutionary days Benedict Arnold raided the home burning its contents. Turn, Harriet, Moonshiners and Loving were filmed there. JD and I met Sue Bureson Forrest's daughter in law, Amanda Whitley Forrest who turns out to share lineage to the Magna Carta gateway family of Lygon. Later that evening JD and Jim scoured the search sites and database and were able to verify Amanda as a Bureson too.

This building served as the laundry and kitchen. The cannon ball lodged in its wall was fired from across the river some four miles away.



In peace time and in war this river frontage was used as the landing for water craft at Berkley Plantation



The Berkley Plantation interpreter explained the history of this mansion along the James River.

Day Four part 3

JD: May 4th part three of the BFRG Cousining field trip: Malvern Hills was the home of Jamestown ancestor Richard Cocke and Temperance Bailey and much later the Seven Days Battle of the Civil War.



Buried at Malvern Hill Cemetery

- *Richard Cocke 1597-1665
- *Temperance Baley Cocke 1617-1652
- *Thomas Cocke 1638-1696 son of Richard and Temperance
- *Agnes Cocke 1645-1718 wife of Thomas
- Richard Cocke II 1639-1706 son of Richard and Temperance
- Richard Cocke the younger 1660-1720 son of Richard Cocke and 2nd wife Margaret Woods
- Ann Bowler Cocke 1675-1705 wife of Richard the younger
- Elizabeth Cocke
- *Direct line to Harwoods



Day Five

Jim: May 5th of the BFRG Cousining field trip was at Jamestowne Settlement in Virginia. Mark Summers raised in nearby Jordan's Point and educated at Ole' Miss and Virginia Tech was our guide/interpreter. Burleson cousins were treated to incredible insights. Part one of today's trip was fantastic!



Day Five part 2

Jim: All aboard... for Day five, May 5th part two of the BFRG Cousining field trip at the Jamestowne landing in Virginia. Burluson cousins toured the Susan Constant, Discovery and Godspeed exhibits as well as the Powhatan village. I know it left JD feeling like the “king of the world”.



Day Six

JD: Overnight JD and Jim picked up Susanne Hollyfield at the Richmond Airport. We traveled from there to Bedford, VA. Susanne graciously made allowance for our long legs to oversee us from behind. We would like you to know in our hearts she takes a back seat to NO ONE. Then our target in Bedford was to walk the ancestral lands of Aaron Burleson born 1725 and his father, Jonathan born 1704.

Susanne: We had previously also commissioned a cartographer to assist with searches. Using his notes, and working with other computer programs, Sarah supplied us with X-marks-the-spot maps of Aaron's land near Bedford, VA. We also us knew that Jonathan had been there too. Thanks to the research of Sarah Burleson Gower, these four Burleson cousins walked upon those ancient holdings, with thanks to locals who knew grew up with area history and helped refine our search What a history making event for our family!

Jim: We would also like to note that our research and the mapping/land research done by Sarah was an extension of two decades of work by John Hoyle Burleson specific to the Life and Travels of Aaron Burleson. Without the proposed locations in John Hoyle Burleson's prior publications, Sarah's beginning points would have been impossible to establish.



Day Six part 2

JD: May 6th part two of the BFRG Cousining field trip took us to the land of Jonathan Burleson b. 1704. It was located very near his son's in Bedford, Virginia. Ground breaking find for the BFRG. [Susanne Hollyfield](#) dipped her toe onto the property.



The Burleson Family Research Group is incredibly proud to discover and walk upon lands owned by Aaron and Jonathan. BFRG is now able to concretely establish Jonathan living in Bedford as late as 1773. These two properties lie within a half mile of each other. Please refer to Sarah Burleson Gower's related article. We were able to verify Jonathan's sons, Aaron 1725 and John 1730 in Bedford until they both took their families to what was Anson County, NC.

Susanne: Intellectually, I knew this story. Standing on that ground was a whole new perspective. We were truly back in time, in our own history, akin to looking into a three-way mirror. Reflections back and back again!



Aaron Burlison's (1725) land in Bedford, VA

That afternoon we drove on to Elizabethton, where we would spend three days, rounding up cousins in East Tennessee. Surprised to find a huge Ingles grocery store that was about half deli-style, we ate well (and inexpensively) with selections daily from the many they offered. No restaurants! Jim and JD were very good sports at this new-to-them approach. We later had an appointment at the University library. That area of Tennessee was also where Aaron had been killed by Indians near his own land. Todd and Pam Bradley joined us for a morning walk across Aaron's ground, uniquely back to the Past again.

Day Seven

Jim: May 7th part one of the BFRG Cousining field trip found us at the Sycamore Shoals State park which highlighted Fort Watauga. Cory Franklin was our interpreter/ ranger, a man from Gates City, Virginia. He was educated at East Tennessee State University and assigned here just prior to his new assignment in Rocky Fort park. He was kind enough to hang around locally as his last assignment.

We met appropriately enough under a Sycamore tree. Cory said it was common to meet in the 1700s under “named” trees... treaty tree, hanging tree and the like. One wall of the triangle was under repair presently. Carter County’s [Lisa Germaine](#) was able to briefly meet us; she connects at McKinney and Blevins(a Longhunter).

Franklin described the environment at the time of the fort’s operation, attacks and rescues. In the museum we noted the participation of many ancient cousins who relate to Burleson: Greene, Henderson, Campbell, Dugger and Carter.

A conversation about the Over the Mountain Victory Trail and King’s Mountain ensued. Of course, our JD is an active participant.



Day Seven part 2

Susanne: The next day we had a nearby afternoon Cousining at the City Depot Church, fellowship hall, in Johnson City, TN, organized by Jeanne & Chester Stephens. She had rounded up seventeen cousins for us to meet, three even drove in from Ohio. In true Southern style, there were two tables of food and a lot of joviality to go around.

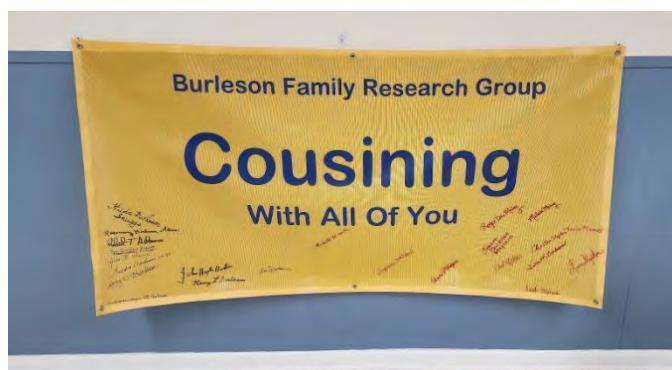




Susanne: Jim explained the BFRG concept of Cousining and how each of them could contribute vital information to our Burleson history. They all signed our large Cousining banner and we exchanged contact information.



Special thanks to Suzie, Suzanne, and Pam for traveling from Canton, Ohio.



The group seemed quite pleased that we had come to them, and they were so willing to share stories for our anthology and add their family trees to ours. Although I'm a Hollyfield, they did not seem to mind, all were eager to meet us three.

I would discover on this trip that the reason the cousins were comfy with Hollyfield is because it is a name that has always been there. They married and buried Hollifields. In fact, Jim and I have a closer cousin relationship through Hollyfield than we do through Burleson. Surprise!

We were to have two more afternoons similar to this one, with cousins coming in from far and wide, all pre-arranged by Jim months ago. We learned that it was a valuable time to listen because they all had stories to tell. We visited court houses and libraries, collecting contact information along the way, learning on the wing and refining as we went along. I was quite impressed that those who came as strangers left as friends, eager and happy to become part of the BFRG Burleson cousin project.

Day Eight

Susanne: Warned by Kim Sanders Pye to take bug spray (picture below), we walked that ground in the mid-afternoon of our first day together. Knowing that Aaron always cleared his own land, and seeing open fields against a backdrop of trees, I was quite mindful how hard this man and his sons worked to make it so. There is no guessing how many trees, how many horses or mules, or how



many men, or how many days. Here it was spread before us, nearly three centuries later we were standing there. Look, Aaron, here we are!

Jim: May 8th of the BFRG Cousining field trip put the “FIELD” accented. Following a series of very educated hints we arrived in what was Washington County in 1781. Based on these clues and armed with a modern topographical map BFRG commissioned, we found the likely burial spot of Aaron Burleson 1725-1781. Much more research is forthcoming but the odds are stacking in our favor. Washington County, alongside Lick Creek, hill very nearby, rocks for markers, first buried facing east in prominent location, Todd Bradley “doused” to find male... head... feet, on Aaron’s

property. There are other considerations but the odds are becoming increasingly positive.





Jim: This field work began with a briefing by Todd Bradley on his use of the dousing rods. Demonstrations were made at the Doty Chapel Cemetery. We were each allowed to practice indentifying male versus female and head versus feet. With use of a topographical map commissioned by BFRG we proceeded to the proposed burial site not far away. Trudging up the steep hill we arrived at our target. Todd was able to immediately locate 7 possible unmarked graves. Using a likely pattern for burials by Moravians and non-Moravians alike, he was able to add observations from the dousing to label each grave as male or female with head directions. Given the historical data he was able to state which belonged to Aaron Burleson (1725-1781). Pam Bradley was able to sketch a diagram as prescribed by Todd which graves were male, female or juvenile. Jim recorded this with a series of videos, capturing Todd dictation. Gary Forbes chronicled all of the events with copious 35 mm camera shots.

The group took a breather afterwards to pose for a victory picture, celebrating this momentous occasion. Our findings have been recorded to the University of Tennessee. BFRG has been provided a list of required additional investigative steps prior to further advancement. Expect much more on this to follow.

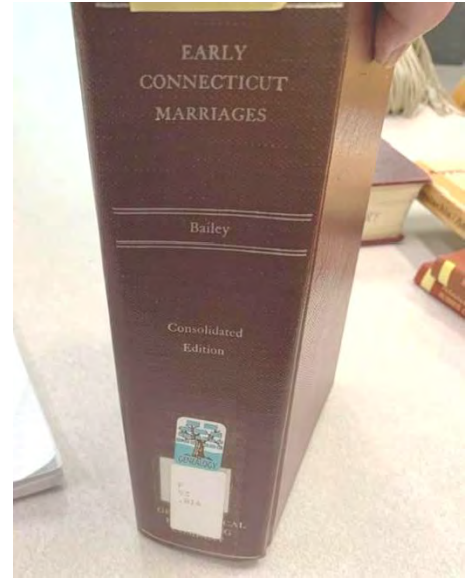


Larry Dale Burlison sported for lunch at diner not far from Doty Chapel.



Day Nine

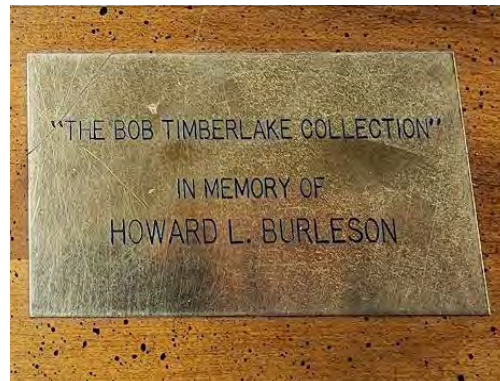
Jim: May 9th part one: the BFRG Cousining field trip began at the Sherrod Library at Eastern Tennessee State University. Our focus was Burlesons in the extended Watauga Settlement, Col. John Carter w/ the Washington County militia and a variety of primary source documents. While at the campus we began exploring the multitude of procedures required for exhaustive research of ancient remains. A long haul's a comin'. But... ya' have to start.



Our Burlesons Included

Jim: We were fortunate to locate many of the documents relating to the period we had just searched. Additionally we retrieved terrific information on two late professors there. David Sinclair Burleson and his daughter Christine were PhDs serving ETSU. Their stories will be presented in the next quarterly Recollections in October. There will be a special edition out in late August to be edited by Sarah Burleson Gower.

May 9th, part 2 was spent at the Spruce Pine NC Library. The focus of this stop was to gather information on Burlesons involved in the railroad and mica mining industries. **Howard Landon Burleson (1921-1988)** was a military hero in WWII and political leader in Spruce Pine after his military service.



Jim: May 9th, part 3 our field trip to Altapass Church of God near Spruce Pine to meet Burleson, Wiseman, Smith and McKinney cousins Gary Dale Forbes and his wife Joan were kind enough to secure the facility and arrange for refreshments. James (Jim) Horace Smith led our discussion on the historic connections between the Burleson and Wiseman families in Appalachia.

The Reverend Ted McKinney, PhD provided us with 2 flash drives and a book he authored regarding the Burleson and McKinney families. Ted also led us on a tour of hidden family cemeteries. Cousin Terry McKinney, famous Bluegrass musician, showed to give us additional background how the many long time mountain families relate.



Day Ten

JD: May 10th stage one was at the Historical Museum in Burke County (Morganton) North Carolina. Artifacts expert and board of directors' member, Sandra West (another cousin thru Burleson and Wiseman) assisted us.

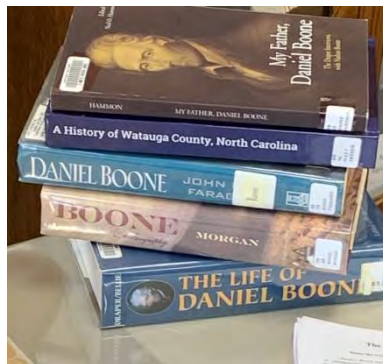
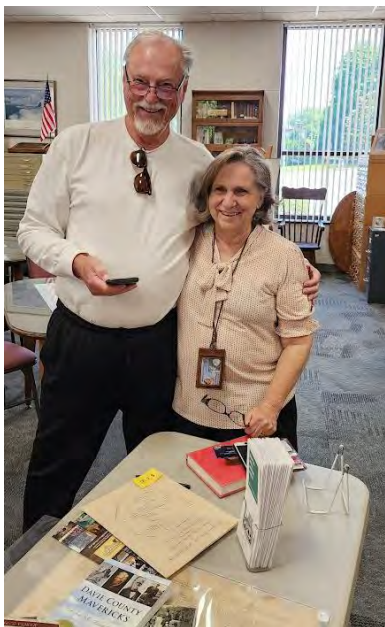


Day 11

JD: May 11th BFRG Cousining field trip began at the Boone Cave State Park in Lexington, North Carolina. We saw the cave sleeping area and the tremendous vantage of the Yadkin River, a real safety consideration. New clues have been revealed on this trip coupled with deed/mapping from Sarah show connection of Aaron Burleson to Boone, Callaway, Dugger, Carter and Blevins longhunters.



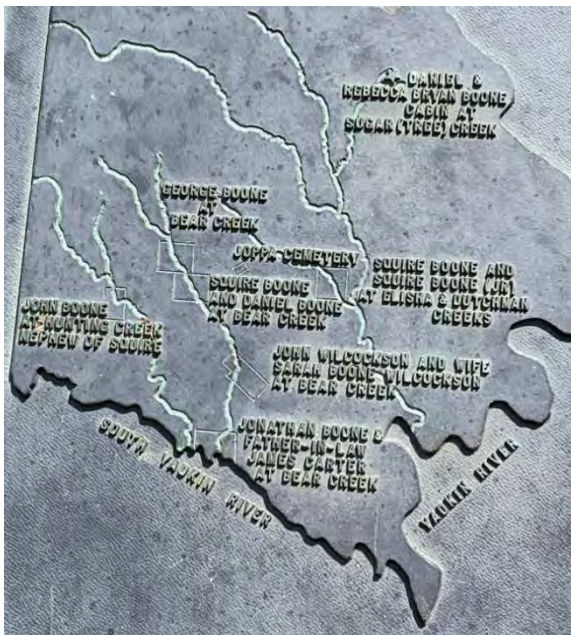
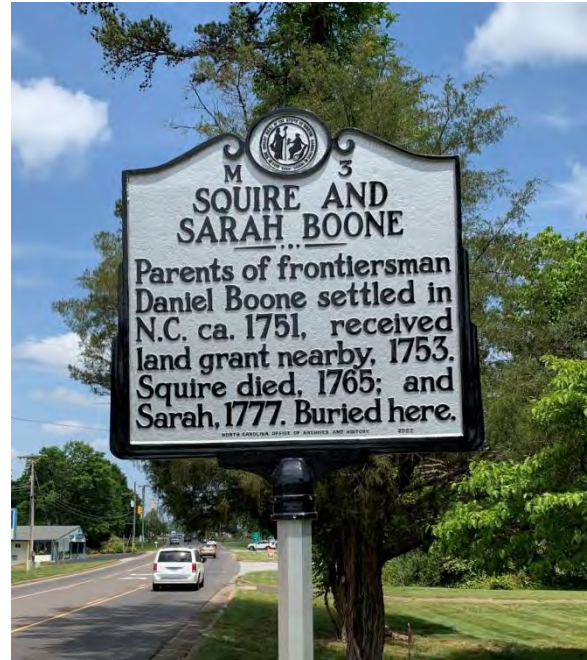
Jim: May 11 part 2, Second stop on May 11th, Day eleven of the BFRG Cousining field trip took us to the Davie County Historical Room in their museum. Marsha Phillips, research director hosted us with pre-selections on Daniel Boone and allied connections. Turns out Marsha is a cousin to Burlsons. We endeavored to clear up our genetic and genealogical connections from Burlson to Boone, Blevins and Ballew/Ballou. We took with us copies of her latest publication on Boone. Daniel lived thirty years of his life in and around Mocksville, NC. His in-laws, the Bryans owned a great deal of Davie County until their lands were seized for backing the king. Marsha has 100+ vertical files she has granted us access. We were additionally given contacts to acquire sonic imaging of the original homesite, smokehouse and outhouse for Squire Boone. She also put us in contact with their local genetics analyst... a great contact! She's kind enough to forward us more documents next week.



Marsha Phillips is nationally recognized expert on the Boone Family. Daniel lived the bulk of his life in Davie County, NC. Our study was to learn of Boone, Belvins, Ballou and Burlson connections. She has granted us permission to access their vertical files.



Jim: May 11 part 3 BFRG field took a stop the Squire & Sarah Morgan, Joppa Cemetery in Mocksville, NC.



This location offered us information from burial stones that contained additional Boone, Carter and Graves that bear much more investigation. Stay tuned.

Susanne: Day 11 part 4 Our trip closed after two days and nights in Mocksville, NC, at the welcoming home of Joan Hall and Gary Forbes. Their sons, daughter, and families gathered around. It felt like home. Such hospitality, more stories, evenings deep into dark time, talking. Gracious hosting seemed quite natural for them. We were so well taken care of. We thoroughly treasured this camaraderie as a Grand Finale to our journey!

It was there that we finished up Sarah Gower's bread. Enjoying it every night on the road, our way of saluting the day's adventures, it lasted us the entire trip. Very appreciative, Sarah!





Mark Twain observed, “Fish and company stink after three days.” Not so on this trip! It was quite energizing as we were brainstorming every day, meeting cousins and researchers, and learning as we traveled. Jim’s pre-planning and JD’s organization made a very smooth trip.

I was an only child growing up, no cousins around. A week with JD and Jim made me realize what I had missed in all those years. Brothers!

This is written in tremendous appreciation of those who helped us along the way. Sometimes THEY were the ones astonished. It was often said by Jim to the unsuspecting, upon hearing their last name, “Hey, you are my cousin too!”

Plans for the next trip Cousining II are underway. Stay tuned, all cousins!



Major Milestones

In this portion of the Recollections we titled Major Milestones, and we would like to document all of these, but mostly all we can come up with is obituaries. So this is where we need your help. You may not know, but this newsletter is going to be Archived and preserved for future generations. So we would encourage every member of the BFRG to contribute any and all Major events in your family's history. This would include but not limited to, obituaries, birth announcements, weddings, anniversaries and graduations, with pictures.

With much appreciation to Sarah Gower for her sustaining home-made loaves for our recent Appalachian journey, we three (JD, Jim, and Susanne) present Sarah with her blue ribbon so well earned! We loved a slice of bread at the end of each day. We also relied on her sharp mapping skills and enjoyed her good-natured sense of humor.

Sarah is our BLUE RIBBON all the way around!

Susanne, JD, and Jim

In addition to raising her beautiful family, home schooling these beautiful children, she finds time to assist the BFRG with her skills as a researcher, (see her article in this issue of Recollections, (Locating Aaron Burleson's Virginia Land Grant). Read all about how her wonderful bread sustained us on our 12 day adventure (**Cousining – Appalachian Style**)



Also believe it are not, Sarah is making a trip back to her grandfather's and other family cemeteries to clean and repair stones. (July 16, 2023) I have the pleasure of meeting her in Barnardsville, NC, to assist; the BFRG is always ready to help in this type of project.



Frank Russell Booth, Jr.

(Austin, Texas – September 20, 1930 to July 7, 2023)

Frank Russell Booth, Jr., a native Austinite, a distinguished veteran, and a valued member of the Texas Water community passed away at the age of 92. He leaves behind a legacy of service and devotion to his country, family, and profession.

Frank was born at home in Austin in 1930. He attended Austin High School and was an Eagle Scout. His father, Frank Russell Booth, died when he was sixteen leaving Frank, two sisters, Norma Jean and Sarah Francis, and his mother, Pearl *Duval* Booth. Frank continued his education at The University of Texas at Austin while working as a painter and paper hanger. While at UT, Frank joined the Marine Corps Reserve.

Upon graduating from UT in 1951, Frank entered officer training school. In 1952, he was assigned to George Company, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division. Frank's bravery and commitment to duty were evident during his deployment to Korea as an infantry officer.

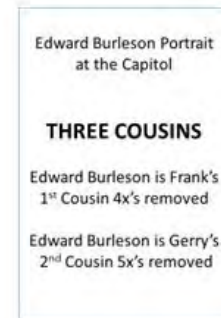
During his service, Frank was wounded twice, earning the Purple Heart on both occasions. The first injury occurred when his company was sent to reinforce another under heavy fire. Frank sustained shrapnel wounds in his right calf while successfully completing the mission. The second instance happened during a reconnaissance patrol behind enemy lines, where a landmine explosion left him severely injured as well as wounding and killing other members of his platoon. Despite his injuries, Frank called for assistance and assisted with evacuating the injured and dead before he was evacuated. For his exceptional service, Frank received the Marine Corps Commendation Medal.

After being hospitalized for a year, Frank, unable to pass his physical examination, retired as a second lieutenant. He married Evelyn *Davis*, the mother of his three sons Michael, Matthew, and Christopher.

In 1956, Frank entered the University of Texas Law School and received his degree in 1958. He dedicated his career to various organizations, including the Board of Water Engineers, later known as the Texas Water Commission, where he served as General Counsel and later Executive Director. Additionally, he held significant positions such as General Counsel of the United States Study Commission for Texas and as Assistant Attorney General of Texas.

After leaving state employment in 1969, Frank entered the private practice of law. Frank's expertise in water and environmental law was highly valued, and among his clients he represented the Trinity River Authority for 30

The BFRG lost a long time member and supporter this week. Frank is the husband of our Gerry Booth, author of the long running series “Texas Journey” in our Recollections Newsletter. Frank was a highly decorated Marine receiving two Purple Hearts in Korea. Frank also received the Marine Corps Commendation Medal. He also was a highly respected lawyer in the Austin, Texas area.



years as their General Counsel. Part of Frank's commitment to the water community was his chairmanship of the Water Laws Committee of the Texas Water Conservation Association, a nonprofit association of Texas Water professionals representing river authorities, water districts water users and organizations with water interests.

In 1996, Frank married Geraldine *Love* Moore. Continuing to practice law, he moved to the coast and enjoyed his passion for fishing while holding "Booth Camps" for the grandchildren. He retired full time in 2008 and moved back to Austin.

Frank Russell Booth, Jr. will be remembered as a loving husband, father, grandfather, and esteemed member of the legal profession. His courage, resilience, and unwavering commitment to serving his family, country and community will forever be remembered.

Frank's Burleson Family Line is, Frank & Pearl Duval Booth Sr., Samuel & Sarah Burleson Duval, Frank & Nancy Hutson Burleson, James R & Malinda Sevier Burleson, Joseph & Nancy Gage Burleson Sr., Aaron & Rachel Burleson

Enjoy this wonderful video Frank and Gerry provided

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bAk6uOCNGcCoL9i2zap35esqNhN_xITi/view

Congratulations to Cousin Ronald (Ron) and Carolyn Collins on their 50th Wedding Anniversary



Ronald & Carolyn Collins 50th Wedding Anniversary

Saturday, August 5, 2023 12pm-4pm &
Sunday, August 6, 2023 10am-3pm for mass, renewal of
vows, and small reception afterwards
Saturday: Creedmoore Community Center
Sunday: Holy Cross Catholic Church

The Glasscock Ydna Project Group just met two nights ago. That line is under a new review. Lee Haywood Glasscock m. Lena S. Burleson > Jefferson Warren Burleson> Aaron B. Burleson> James (Capt) Burleson > Aaron & Rachael Burleson are some of the highlights... much more to come. Two more Ydna Glasscock results will be in hand in two weeks. The Glasscock group is seeking another male to male descendant of Asa Sylvester Burleson to finalize findings. You can surmise the Collins connection traces through a series of Glasscock/Burleson folk in the Austin/Bastrop region.

Joshua Burleson

Joshua Lee Burleson, a West Virginia native, passed away unexpectedly on April 15, 2023 in Beijing, China. Family and friends from across the globe mourn his loss and celebrate his amazing life that was cut short too soon.

Joshua Burleson

Josh leaves a legacy of impact. Everyone who interacted with Josh was changed for the better. Josh, 33, is survived by his wife, Cindy Burleson; parents, Al and Mary Burleson; dogs, Avon and Kima; grandfather, Charles Huey Landry, siblings Charles Michael Burleson and Whitney Lynn Burleson; in-laws, Patricia and Paul Le; siblings-in-law, Steven and Nicole Le, and nephew Henry Le.

Josh was preceded in death by his grandparents, William Albert Burleson, Mary Theresa Landry, Paul Leo Dailey Sr., Rosemary Eleanor Dailey and his beloved pets, Bagheera and Lupe.

Josh cared so deeply about the people in his life. Memories of Josh are

marked by his consistent selflessness and support in all things, from the seemingly small (like how he always made sure his wife Cindy got to hear "Return of the Mack" at any bar she went to) to showing up and being there for his family and friends during their times of need, whether they asked or not. His love for Cindy is immeasurable; it was a privilege for anyone to bear witness to part of their story and glimpse what unconditional love could be.

A proud graduate of West Virginia University, the Mountaineers and the Tennessee Titans will forever be Josh's teams. He was a fervent fan, sporting team gear more often than not. He was competitive but always cared more about it being a really good game than winning. Even beyond sports, Josh brought this same energy to board games, video games and Dungeons and Dragons.

If Josh wasn't watching or playing a game, you could find him outside soaking up the sunshine or taking a walk with his dogs. Josh loved animals of all kinds and was an ardent supporter of animal rescues. Every trip Josh took included a visit to some

sort of animal rescue and he and Cindy created a home in which all animals are welcomed and showered with love. Nothing set his mind at ease quite like spending time with Kima, Avon, Bagheera and Lupe.

Josh was patriotic to his core and proud to be an American, especially while living overseas. He rooted for the U.S. teams in every world competition, even bringing his support to France for the Women's World Cup.

Josh served as president of Theta Chi Alpha Kappa chapter at WVU. His leadership and mentorship fostered and strengthened the lifelong bond of brotherhood. At Theta Chi and in so many areas of his life, Josh was the playmaker, never seeking the spotlight but always making moves and plans that helped others shine.

He loved wings slathered in buffalo sauce, hard-shell tacos, Miller Lite and a good tequila. He was hilarious, often sarcastic and his commentary while watching any of "The Bachelor" franchise shows was unmatched. Josh was creative and had a talent for executing an idea in unexpected ways, often building things by hand or working for months to see an

idea to fruition, like the time he cultivated a pumpkin patch in his backyard to make Cindy's dream Halloween decorations a reality for her favorite holiday.

Josh was the greatest friend, sweetest son and most incredible husband. He will be so missed.

A drop-by visitation will be held at Murphy Funeral Home 4510 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22203 from 5-7 p.m. on May 4. The graveside service will be held at Ivy Hill Cemetery 2823 King St., Alexandria, VA 22302 at 1 p.m. on May 5. A celebration of life will follow the service at Rock It Grill 1319 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

A celebration of life will also be held in Josh's hometown at Marilla Recreation Center 799 East Brockway Ave., Morgantown from 6-9:30 p.m. on May 8. The family asks that attendees honor Josh's lifelong love for West Virginia University by wearing WVU gear or casual clothing featuring blue and old gold.

In lieu of flowers, Josh's family asks that his community continue Josh's support of the Humane Rescue Alliance (HumaneRescueAlliance.org) by donating in his memory.

Birth Announcement:

The birth of my first great grandson son. WYATT THEODORE BREESE, born March 27, 2023 in Moses Cone Hospital, Greensboro, Guilford County, NC. Proud parents are ADAM SCOTT BREESE and AMBER DUDLEY

Wyatt's Burleson's Family Line is, Adam Breese, Patrick & Sheila Burleson Breese, JD & Karol Hilliard Burleson, Ray and Gladys Russell Burleson, Eben & Dora Hopkins Burleson, Billie and Sarah Harwood Burleson, Isaac and Catherine Castle Burleson, Isaac and Martha Clay Burleson (NC Soldier in American Revolution)



Wedding of my oldest grandson, Tyler Breese and Elizabeth (Eliza) Smith on June 5th 2023 at The Chateau Vie, Walnut Cove, NC.



Tyler's Burleson's Family Line is, Patrick & Sheila Burleson Breese, JD & Karol Hilliard Burleson, Ray and Gladys Russell Burleson, Eben & Dora Hopkins Burleson, Billie and Sarah Harwood Burleson, Isaac and Catherine Castle Burleson, Isaac and Martha Clay Burleson (NC Soldier in American Revolution)

Obituary for Charles Austin Burleson Sr.

September 12, 1938 ---- June 27, 2023

Charles Austin Burleson, Sr., 84, passed away peacefully on June 27, 2023, after battling a long illness.

Charles was born on September 12, 1938, to Rob and JoeMae Burleson in Avery County, where he lived his entire life. He served in the US Army (1962-63) and the US Army Reserves for an additional two years. After being honorably discharged, he worked as a builder, primarily hanging sheetrock.

An avid outdoorsman for his entire life, Charles loved hunting and fly fishing, and he greatly enjoyed tying his own flies. He loved gardening and caring for his many dogs over the years, a trait he shared with his family.

Charles was married to Maryanne "Susie" Burleson and they have 3 children, John Columbus Burleson, Charles Austin Burleson, Jr., and Dianna Burleson Horney.

Charles was predeceased by his father and mother, Rob and JoeMae Burleson, as well as his 3 brothers, RZ Burleson, Alex Burleson, and Joe Burleson. He is survived by his wife, Maryanne "Susie" Burleson, his two sons, Johnny (Debbie) Burleson and Charles (Robin) Burleson, and his daughter, Dianna (Mike) Horney. He is also survived by his grandsons, Charles Austin Burleson III and Dallas (Sabrina) Smith, granddaughter, Tabatha (fiancé Zach) Duckworth, and great-grandson, Oliver Burleson.

A graveside service will be held on Saturday, July 1, 2023, at 11:00 am at the Minneapolis Cemetery with Rev. Bryan Griffith officiating. All family and friends are welcome to attend.

The family would like to extend their sincere thanks and appreciation to The Waters of Roan Highlands and Gentiva Hospice.

Charles' Burleson Family Line is: Robert & Josephine Mae Strafford Burleson, Charles & Jane Elizabeth Tipton Burleson, William & Hannah Pore Burleson, Big Aaron & Elizabeth McKinney, Thomas & Margaret Jane Greene, Burleson, Aaron & Rachel Burleson.

Albert "Bert" Castle Britt

May 21, 1949 – April 19, 2023

Albert "Bert" Castle Britt, 73, of Grenada, MS, passed away April 19, 2023, as a result of a construction accident. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m., Saturday, April 22, at the Mortimer National Funeral Home Chapel in Grenada. Burial will follow in Parker Cemetery in Alva. Visitation will be Saturday from noon until service time at Mortimer National Funeral Home.

Albert was born on May 21, 1949, in Montgomery County to Ben Britt and Tena Britt. Shortly after graduating high school, he was drafted to serve his country in Vietnam and was awarded the Bronze Star. He also served Grenada County as a Reserve Deputy for the Sheriff's Department. He was self-employed as a grain hauler and auctioneer for over 50 years and owned several small businesses including The House Witch Company, AAA Fire Extinguisher Service, B&C Logging, and Champion Auction Company.

Albert was called to the ministry and pastored Bethlehem Baptist, Victory Family Worship, Bethel Methodist, he also served as an interim pastor. Bert loved hunting and cherished his extended family from Spike Hunting Club. He thoroughly enjoyed listening to a good dog "race."

He is survived by his wife, Kay Sullivan Britt, his son Benji Britt (Memory), and stepdaughters Teresa McCammon (Bill) and Susan Goodson (Auboy). His family and friends are heartbroken over the tragic loss of the man lovingly known as Albert, Bert, Uncle Bert, Papa, and Pawpaw. Mortimer National Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.



Albert Britt's Burleson Family Line is: William & Jewel Castle Britt, Farris Aaron & Kathryn Pullen Castle, John Fairfax & Laura Box Castle, William & Ora Finch Castle Jr., William & Jane Burleson Castle Sr.,

I never had the opportunity to meet this Cousin, but when I was at a Castle Reunion in 2022, I met Sidney Castle a uncle of Albert. Sidney and I went to the North Union Cemetery to clean and try to fix the Stones of William & Jane Burleson Castle. William's stone needed to be leveled up and with my limited tools we were not able. Sidney said he had a nephew (Albert) who could help and they were able to do the job with a jack.



Served his country in the US Army in Vietnam and was awarded the Bronze Star.

Birth Announcement: IRENE MARY BURLESON born 7 lbs 11 ounces on 7 July 2022 at 9:25 am to Jeremiah and Delaine Forbes Burleson. One year later Irene is shown here with two visiting Cousins at her 1st Birthday Party. Jackie and Brylie daughters of Geoffrey Burleson a brother of Jeremiah both sons of our Davis Burleson author of Noah's Ark in the Atomic Age



Irene Burleson's Family Line is Jeremiah and Delaine Forbes Burleson. David and Shelly Burleson, Ned and Mary Dupre Burleson, Holbert and Edna Wiseman Burleson, Asa and Judie Greene Burleson, Emaline Weatherman Burleson

Dave saw to it two of his granddaughters and my (Jim Burleson) two granddaughters got together last night at the Arrogant Butcher in Phoenix. Daughter in law Heighley, my son Jerod Todd Burleson, brother Dave Burleson and his granddaughters Brylie and Jacque... then my granddaughters Aleighna and Charlotte.

Because sometime Cousins live all across our country it takes great effort to get them together. This is what the BFRG's Cousining effort is all about and we want to encourage and celebrate this whenever possible. We encourage everyone to post on our Cousining Face Book page, with pictures, names and family information whenever possible.

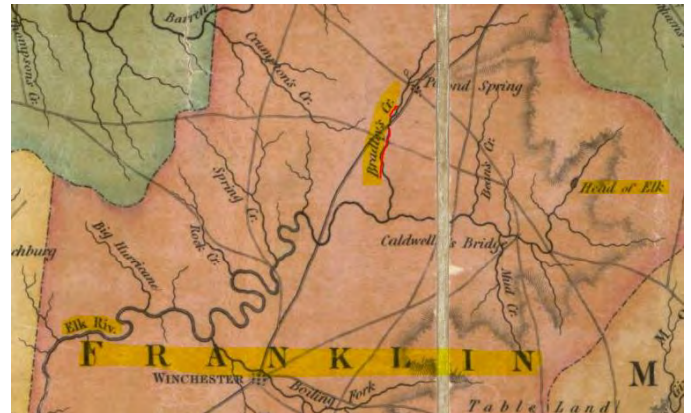


TEXAS JOURNEY

by Gerry Booth

Had to Leave Franklin County, Tennessee

In the last article, Daniel Shipman's account told of the feud between the Burtlesons and the Cherokees which resulted in James (1775-1836) and Jo Elizabeth *Shipman* (1770-1834) Burtleson's sons Edward (1798-1851), 17 years old, and Joseph (1800-1877) 16 years old, going to Moses Shipman's house located in Franklin County "on Bradley's creek, said to be the head branch of Elk River."¹ Daniel did not mention the date of this event but according to James Burtleson, the fight with the Cherokee happened on August 11, 1816.² [Bradley's Creek is underlined in red ink.]



Map of Tennessee, 1832 by Matthew Rhea

1816 was the year when there was no summer. The following article from the Clinton County, Historical Society describes the conditions in Illinois north of where the Shipmans were living and where they would soon be headed.

There was no summer at all, no crops. January and February were warm and spring-like, so balmy that most settlers let their fires go out.

March, instead of growing warmer, turned cold and stormy. Vegetation had gotten well underway in April when real wintery weather set in, with killing frosts. Snow and sleet fell on 17 different days in Southern Illinois during the month of May. Don't scoff. This is a statistic.

In June, unbelievable as it sounds, there was either snow or frost on all but three days. Even July was so cold that people slept under blankets.

The month of August was even worse for ice formed nearly an inch thick and killed all living vegetation.

There was great privation, and many settlers would have perished had it not been for an abundance of wild game, and grain left over from a previous year.

This 'winter in summer' was not only in this area, but throughout most of the nation.

All fruit was destroyed; ice was thick enough to walk on throughout New England and the east coast in July.

Scientists viewed the terrifying year as a result of sunspots. Corn held over from the preceding spring sold for \$10 per bushel, an unheard-of price in that day.

Birds were frozen on their perches, and young quail and rabbits were found dead on the prairie in midsummer. The Kaskaskia River (called the Okaw then) was sheathed in ice. A frozen crust on the plains prohibited planting of any kind. Snow and sleet pelted Illinois all through summer.

This freak year is buried in a few paragraphs in our history books, but if one researches the weather, it is there for all to see. It has never happened again, but 1816 was the freak year of the centuries, unexplainable, mysterious, terrifying.

¹ Daniel Shipman, *Frontier Life* (Abbotsford Publishing company, 1965) 3.

²Matthew Rhea, A Map of Tennessee 1832. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3960.tr000180/?st=image&r=0.465,0.3,0.079,0.037,0>

It would be more than a century before anyone understood the reason for the peculiar weather disaster: the eruption of an enormous volcano on a remote island in the Indian Ocean a year earlier had thrown enormous amounts of volcanic ash into the upper atmosphere.

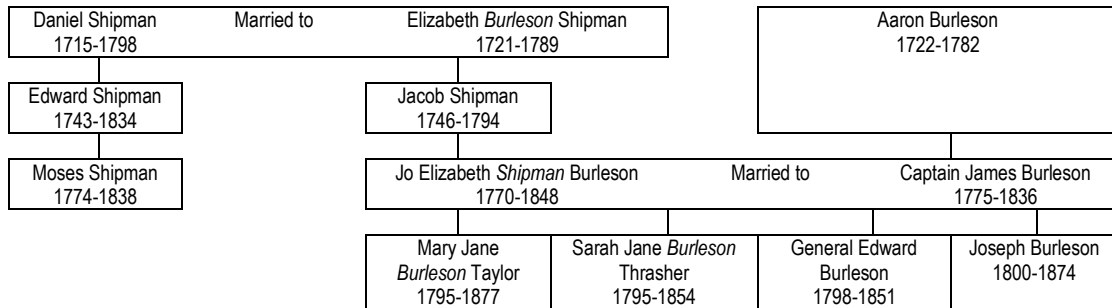
The dust from Mount Tambora, which had erupted in early April 1815, had shrouded the globe. And with sunlight blocked, 1816 did not have a normal summer.

As the summer went on and the cold persisted, crops failed. What’s important to note is that while 1816 wasn’t the coldest year on record, the prolonged cold coincided with the growing season. And that led to food shortages in Europe and in some communities in the United States.

Historians have noted that the westward migration in America accelerated following the very cold summer of 1816. It is believed that some farmers in New England, having struggled through a horrible growing season, made up their minds to venture to western territories.³

[Trivia: The bizarre weather of 1816 caused a damp and dismal summer in Switzerland where Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin and a group of writers including her future husband Percy Bysshe Shelly and Lord Byron challenged each other to write a dark tale inspired by the gloomy and chilly weather. Mary wrote a novel called “Frankenstein.”]

Daniel Shipman’s account of the event between the Burlesons and the Cherokees is brief. He mentions a son-in-law of “old gentleman Burleson,” a Robert Thrasher (1787-1851). Robert Thrasher was married to James and Jo Elizabeth Burleson’s daughter, Sarah Jane (1795-1874).



In the book, *The Early Settlers of Alabama*, we learn of another person involved in the incident, Martin Taylor (1785-1840). Martin was married to James and Jo Elizabeth Shipman Burleson’s daughter Mary Jane (1795-1877).

James Burleson settled with his family on the north side of the mountain on Fox creek. Here, near an Indian village called Moneetown, the family became involved in a feud in consequence of the imprudence of a son-in-law named Martin, and the consequence was that James Burleson and his son, Edward, killed three Cherokees and fled to Missouri. Of course, the circumstances attending the killing can not now be recalled. It is probable, however, that after the scalping, which occurred in East Tennessee in their own family, they had no love for Cherokees, and that it did not require much provocation to bring on a conflict.⁴

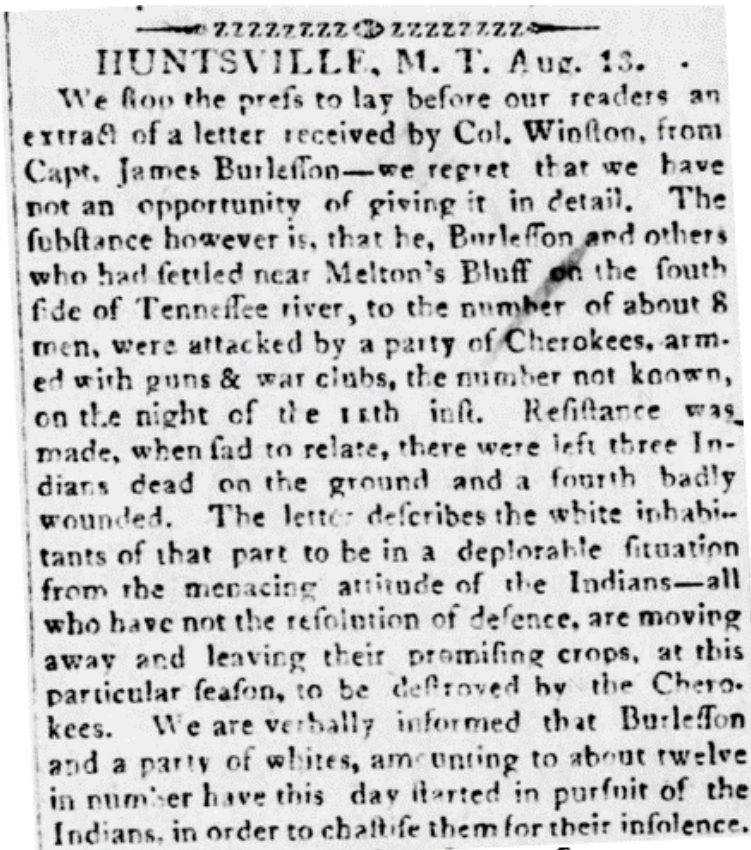
According to David Burleson of Decatur, Alabama, in a recent article published in the *Recollections*, this event was recorded on September 10, 1816, in the “National Intelligencer” from information at Huntsville dated August 17, 1816. David wrote that the article

³ Grover Brinkman, “Freakish weather? The year 1816 was terrifying,” *Illinois Wildlife* (March 19, 1980) quoted in “Chronicles from the Clinton County Historical Society,” *The Breese Journal*, (Thursday, April 28, 2016) 8E.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/592155468/?fcfToken=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiIsInR5cCI6IkpXVCJ9.eyJmcmVILXZpZXctaWQiOiU5MjE1NTQ2OCwiaWF0IjoxNjg2MTU1NTA4LCJleHAiOiE2ODYyNDE5MDh9.IsClmOoT37dGwFa1O1sYXmP8GnRyqHjTOxp8Ju6ESRs>
⁴ Co. James Edmonds Saunders, *Early Settlers of Alabama*, (New Orleans, L. Graham & Son Ltd. Printers, 1899) 72.
<https://archive.org/details/cu31924102201641/page/72/mode/2up>

delves even further into details concerning the disturbance, writing: 'It seems that a Mr. Taylor had rented a field from some Cherokees. In his absence, they offered some insult to Mrs. Taylor, who escaped to the home of her father, James Burleson. Burleson, Taylor, and others went to the Indian settlement, where they found a number collected. They demanded an explanation. The Indians raised a yell and said fight. An attempt was made by the whites to cut them off from their arms. This produced a conflict.'⁵

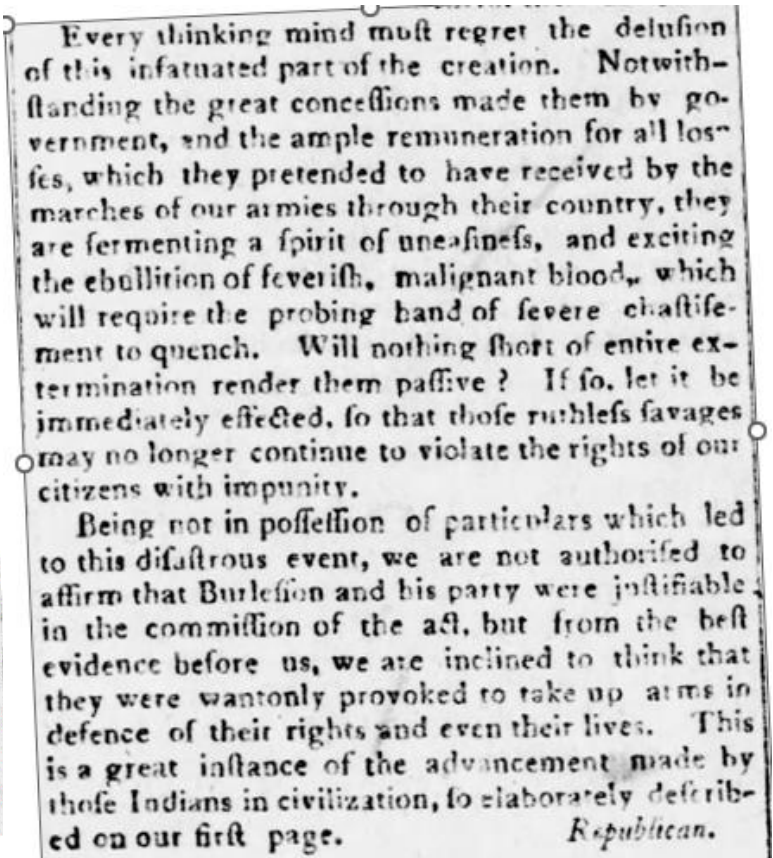
David Burleson also included in his article the letter James Burleson wrote about the incident which gives the names of all the men he knew of who were involved in the offense: James Burleson, John Burleson, Robert Thrasher, Martin Taylor, Charles Taylor, John Bird, Edward Burleson, and Joseph Burleson.

The following newspaper article is another excerpt from Captain James' letter as it appeared in *The Mississippi Free Trader* on Wednesday, August 28, 1816:⁶



HUNTSVILLE, M. T. Aug. 13.

We stop the prefs to lay before our readers an extract of a letter received by Col. Winston, from Capt. James Burleson—we regret that we have not an opportunity of giving it in detail. The substance however is, that he, Burleson and others who had settled near Melton's Bluff on the south side of Tennessee river, to the number of about 8 men, were attacked by a party of Cherokees, armed with guns & war clubs, the number not known, on the night of the 11th inst. Resistance was made, when sad to relate, there were left three Indians dead on the ground and a fourth badly wounded. The letter describes the white inhabitants of that part to be in a deplorable situation from the menacing attitude of the Indians—all who have not the resolution of defence, are moving away and leaving their promising crops, at this particular season, to be destroyed by the Cherokees. We are verbally informed that Burleson and a party of whites, amounting to about twelve in number have this day started in pursuit of the Indians, in order to chastise them for their insolence.



Every thinking mind must regret the delusion of this infatuated part of the creation. Notwithstanding the great concessions made them by government, and the ample remuneration for all losses, which they pretended to have received by the marches of our armies through their country, they are fermenting a spirit of uneasiness, and exciting the ebullition of feverish, malignant blood, which will require the probing hand of severe chastisement to quench. Will nothing short of entire extermination render them passive? If so, let it be immediately effected, so that those ruthless savages may no longer continue to violate the rights of our citizens with impunity.

Being not in possession of particulars which led to this disastrous event, we are not authorized to affirm that Burleson and his party were justifiable in the commission of the act, but from the best evidence before us, we are inclined to think that they were wantonly provoked to take up arms in defence of their rights and even their lives. This is a great instance of the advancement made by those Indians in civilization, so elaborately described on our first page.

Republican.

(remember f's were used for s's during this time)

The incident at Moonee Town was widely reported in newspapers and books. As is typical of any historical event, time changes the telling of the event. A more sympathetic recording of the event is recorded in the book, *Recollections of Early Texas* by John Holland Jenkins. He explains Captain James' view of the circumstance.

A peculiar chain of circumstances was linked and ran through the record of the family history of these Burlesons which is not without interest. In Tennessee, they were neighbors to a band of Cherokee

⁵ David Burleson, *Recollections of the Burleson Family Research Group*, Vol XXII, (Oct-Dec 2019): 987-991.

⁶ "Huntsville, M. T. Aug. 13." *The Mississippi Free Trader* (August 28, 1816) 3.

https://www.newspapers.com/image/235801156/?clipping_id=125827311&fcfToken=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiIsInR5cGU6IjV9.sYiE986aDcayCqDA3YEvdI04031RAK9pDTfi-LwjHyU

Indians, who by a persistent course of stealing, finally exasperated them to such an extent, that the old father with his sons and nephews went into the Indian village to adjust matters. The visit brought on a little skirmish, which was the beginning of a feud that followed them through life, so that even here in the new country chance or fate brought them constantly and unexpectedly together.

I have heard the old man give a detailed account of the difficulty, and have seen a scar across his breast which was left by the knife of the Cherokee chief, 'Bowles.' Jim Burleson was old in all the 'tricks and trades' of war – especially versed in Indian warfare, having served under General Andrew Jackson in the early days of frontier troubles, and the entire family seemed to consider that they owed a debt of vengeance to all Indians. This vindictive hatred was not entirely without cause, for many friends and even members of the family had perished at the hands of Indians.”⁷

The final newspaper article about the incident which I am submitting to you was written about 90 years afterward. Time had altered the focus of the conclusion of the event, and it seems to have added confusion to the relationships of the people involved in the incident.

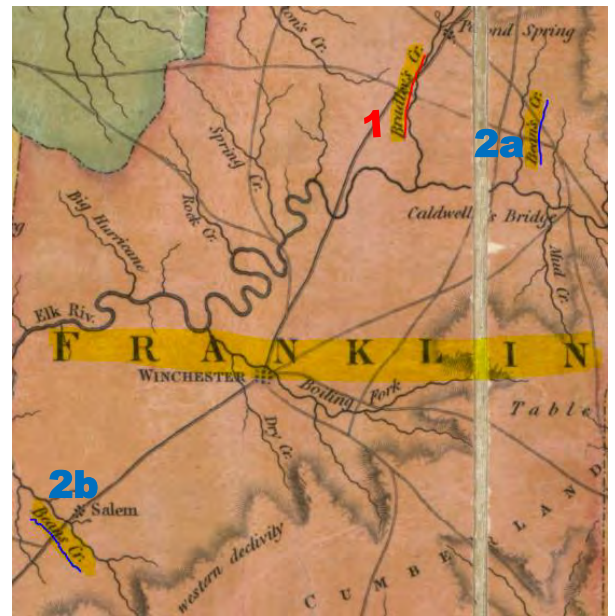
From The Moulton Advertiser, Moulton Alabama, Tuesday, March 30, 1909:

Old Joe Burleson put up the first tavern in the year 1816, that was before the land sales. Old Joe had a brother, Aaron, who made a crop that year down in the valley near where Hillsboro is now. He also had a young brother Ed Burleson. Ed killed some Indians down at Mouse town on Foxes' creek, east from Courtland. That is how Ed Burleson came to be General Ed Burleson, the commander in chief of the Texas army. He had to run away from Alabama for killing the Indians, who were robbing his brother Aaron of his corn.⁸

In the article, there appears to be some confusion about the family. James had children named Joseph, Edward, and Aaron. James had brothers named Joseph, and Aaron. I believe that Old Joe and Aaron were James' brothers and Ed was James' son and Old Joe's nephew. Aaron would have been James' brother since his son Aaron was born in 1815 and would have only been one year old. Despite the confusion about the family, the concept that Ed's killing of the Indians was the stimulus behind his becoming the commander-in-chief of the Texas army is an interesting interpretation of the event.

When I first read the account Daniel gave of this incident, my thought 200 years later was that General Ed killing the Indians caused the whole Cherokee nation to be on the warpath and that my family suddenly had to leave Tennessee. Therefore it was General Ed who was responsible for my family coming to Texas.

There were many Burleson kinfolks in this area of the country by 1816. In previous parts of this journey, I have written about numerous people with different surnames connected to the Burlesons that had migrated to Tennessee. Now it seems that with the Indians being relocated after the War of 1812, new lands were opened for settlement and regardless of the motivation, many of our family were once again looking westward. One person who migrated to Tennessee just like the Shipmans and Burlesons and who was now looking westward was Ed Burleson's old friend who lived close to Moses (1) in 1816 (Bradley Creek underlined in red)⁹. The connection between Ed and his friend began with their grandfathers owning land next to each other according to "land grant (No. 257) issued to Aaron Adair Burleson, in 1782, by the



⁷ John Holland Jenkins, *Recollections of Early Texas* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2008), 13.

⁸ J. C. Stephenson, "Looking Backward, An Essay on the Early History of Moulton" *The Moulton Advertiser*, (Tuesday March 30, 1909), 4. <https://www.newspapers.com/article/the-moulton-advertiser-joe-burleson-firs/126079548/>

⁹ Matthew Rhea, A Map of Tennessee 1832. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3960.tr000180/?st=image&r=0.465,0.3,0.079,0.037,0>

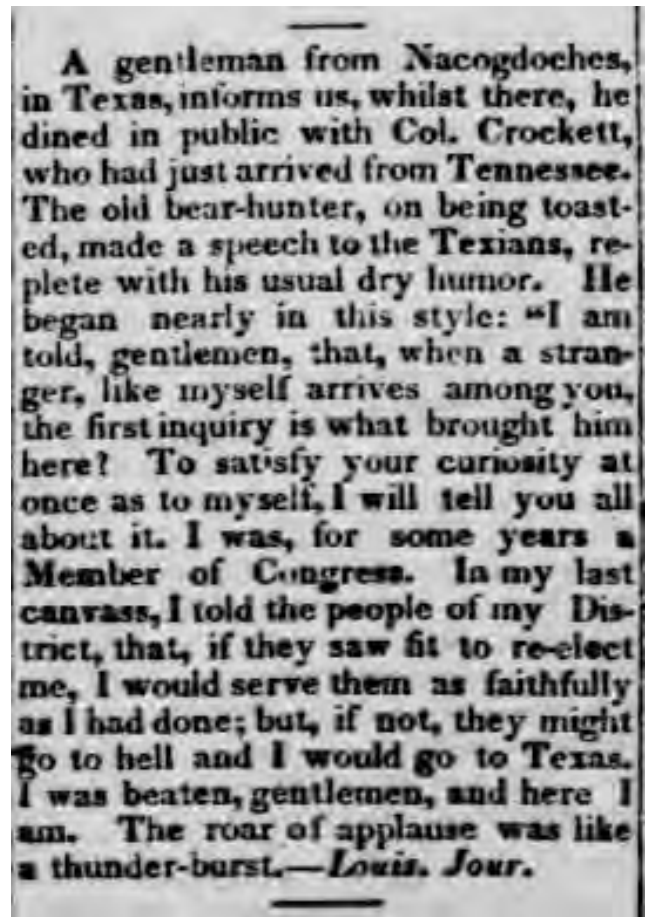
state of North Carolina, in territory which was later east Tennessee. The location is on Lick Creek and the Nolichucky River, in Washington County.”¹⁰ In the field notes of this grant, it states that the land adjoined David Crockett.

In 1816, Davy Crockett was living at Rattlesnake Spring Branch of Bean’s Creek, in Franklin County, at his wife’s farm. His first wife had died and Davy had remarried. His second wife was Elizabeth Patton. Davy and Elizabeth’s first son, Robert Patton Crockett was born September 8, 1816 in Franklin County, Tennessee. (On the map there are two Bean’s Creeks, underlined in blue ink [2a](#) or [2b](#). They are both in Franklin County.)

One cannot write about the history of Texas without speaking of Davy Crockett, and especially since Davy Crockett was a friend to the Burlesons, I must include his migration to Texas. Before heading west to Texas like the Shipmans and Burlesons, Davy Crockett took some time to represent Tennessee in the United States House of Representatives. After having difficulties with Andrew Jackson, and losing his election of 1834, he decided to head to Texas. When he was asked about why he chose to go to Texas, he answered, “I told the people in my District, that, if they saw fit to re-elect me, I would serve them as faithfully as I had done; but, if not, they might go to hell and I would go to Texas.”¹¹

According to the late Howard Burleson, a renowned genealogist and David Burleson’s uncle, “Davy Crockett visited his relatives in Morgan and Lawrence counties when he was contemplating going to help his friends in Texas, and that he visited the home of Jonathan Burleson near Flint to determine just where he could find Edward Burleson and his family when he reached Texas.”

I found no record of Davy and General Ed reuniting. Davy Crockett died March 6, 1836, at the Alamo. General Ed named one of his sons David Crockett Burleson (1837-1911).



On the 16th of October in 1816 the Shipmans started for Howard County, Missouri and that is where our story continues.

Two of them, Edward and Joseph, came to our house in Franklin county and persuaded father to go with them, which he concluded to do, and on the 16th of October we started for Howard county, Missouri. The Burlesons being in a hurry started sometime before we did, making the entire trip that fall and winter, we being later in the season. We did not get through that winter. Went at first in a northwesterly direction about twelve miles, and passed through a little place, I think called Murysville. There we saw what I thought a great curiosity. It was a mound, fifty or sixty feet high, on which appeared to be several graves, perhaps two hundred yards around. It has been so long and I having an idea of ever writing on the subject, that I have quite an incorrect idea of its dimensions. It was thought by some that it was made by people who inhabited the earth centuries ago, that they made it to lookout for their enemies. About a mile below this mound, on the same creek, stood a good water mill that I have carried many sacks of corn to, and had it ground into meal. On this same creek was old signs of an entrenchment, I suppose a mile square, so old as to have produced large pecan and other trees,

¹⁰ John Knox, “Then and Now” interview with Howard Burleson, ‘Ol Davy Crockett Had Morgan Kinfolk, *The Decatur Daily*, (Sunday Morning, April 23, 1966): 42

¹¹ *Richmond Weekly Palladium*, (April 9, 1836): 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/article/richmond-weekly-palladium-you-can-go-to/126083833/>

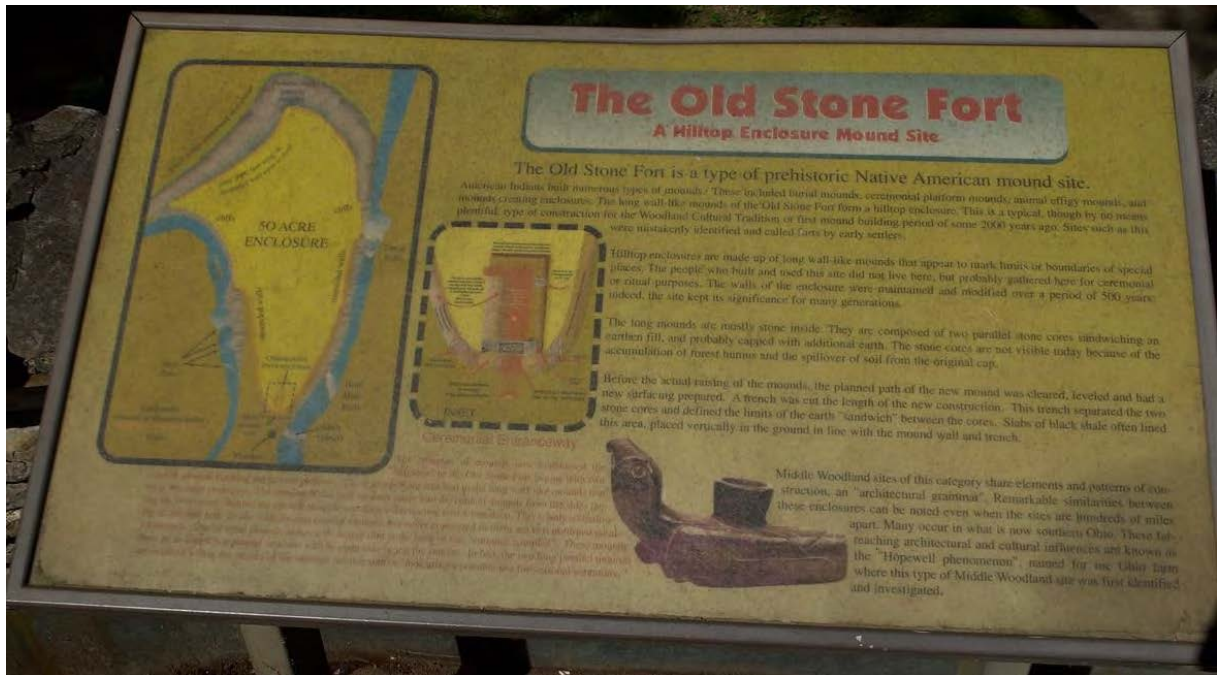
from two to two and a half feet though on raised ground thrown out of the ditches. I think this was in Bedford county.



[Map Explanation:¹²

1. Bradley Creek, a branch of the Elk River located in Franklin County, Tennessee. This was the description of the location of the Shipman's home in 1816.
2. Tennessee has many "mounds," some are Indian burial grounds and some were made by people who lived in the area, as early as 100 AD, and some around 1350 AD, depending on the group of mounds. I found this archaeological map and located three mounds approximately 12 miles from Bradley Creek. I believe these are the mounds that Daniel referred to in his account. If these are the mounds, they are a part of the Old Stone Fort State Archaeological Park near Manchester. This site appears to have some of the items Daniel described.

¹² Delancey Gill and William Edward Myer, *Archaeological Map of the State of Tennessee*, Washington, D. C.: United States Army. Engineer Reproduction Plant, 1923. <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll23/id/170/>



I could not find a city called Murysville.

3. Murfreesboro, the last populated area before they continued north and crossed the Cumberland River.]

I do not recollect much about the road or general appearance of the country after we left here, but I think we traveled about thirty miles more and passed through Murfreesboro, then about two and a half miles below we crossed Cumberland river at Erickson's ferry, and from there into Kentucky, to a neighborhood called Eddy Grove.

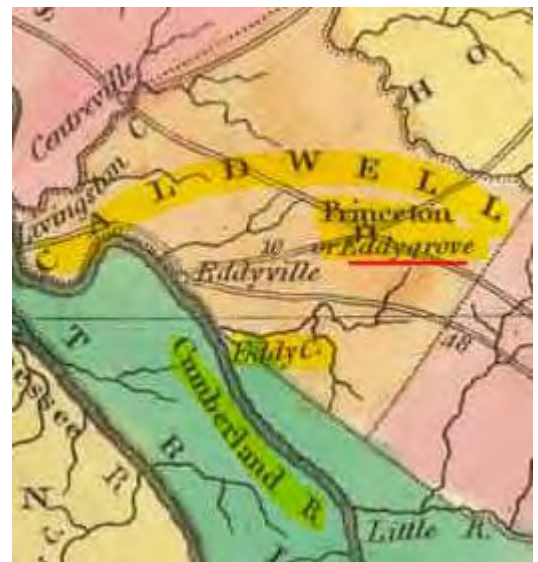
There we found an uncle of mine, a brother of my father, name George Shipman, who concluded that if we could wait a few days he would fix and go with us, which we did.

Eddy Grove was located on Eddy Creek and founded by William Prince. In 1817 the town became known as Princeton. It is the county seat of Caldwell County.¹³

Very little is known of George Shipman (1772-). In trying to research him to provide more information, I found a great many confusing statements about him. Wikitree states he died about 1789, which does not make sense considering he joined his brother Moses in 1816 to go to Illinois. Some have his death occurring more than a hundred years after he was born. If you have any information with documentation about George Shipman, it would be appreciated. Please send it to bfrginfo@gmail.com.

I found Daniel's statement "he would fix and go with us," an interesting way to describe his uncle's getting ready to join them. In Texas when we are preparing to do something, we say, "I'm fix'in to" If you are going to make a pot of coffee, you say, "I'm fix'in to make coffee."

I'm fixing to stop writing for now.



¹³ Henry Charles Carey and Issac Lea, *Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Map of Kentucky*, 1822.

<https://mapgeeks.org/kentucky/#Ifancybox/bcc44b8f/1822-Geographical-Historical-and-Statistical-Map-of-Kentucky.jpg>

Noah's Ark in the Atomic Age

The Story of the *USS BURLESON*

The call to serve in the war came late—in the Spring of 1944. She was readied and commissioned in Southern California. As such, she was given a Hollywood send off—literally. She was christened by Virginia Fox, wife of Warner Brothers movie studio executive and Twentieth Century Pictures cofounder Darryl F. Zanuck (e.g., *The Grapes of Wrath*, *How Green Was My Valley*, and *Winged Victory*).



Figure 1 Mrs. Darryl F. Zanuck christening the *USS BURLESON*

She was the *USS BURLESON*.¹ Named after Burleson County, Texas (which in turn is named after Gen. Edward Burleson²), she was one of 32 Gilliam Class Attack Transports built and was assigned to the Asiatic-Pacific Theater in World War II.³ Her purpose was to transport troops (849 maximum) and equipment in order to execute amphibious invasions. The *USS BURLESON* had a crew of 220 officers and enlisted.⁴ Lieutenant Commander B. Bartley and crew took possession of the *BURLESON* on 8 November—200 days after construction began—a testament to the wartime military industrial output of the United States.

After a brief period of training and “shakedown,” the ship and crew proceeded to Guadalcanal. Arriving at Guadalcanal on 11 February 1945, they trained with “embarked units of the Third Amphibious Corps” and learned they “were scheduled to participate in the invasion of Okinawa.”⁵ They dropped anchor six days later at Ulithi Lagoon where they “saw the crippled *USS FRANKLIN* just returning from battle. The crew recorded, “The threat of ‘kamikaze’ attacks became more real to our minds.”⁶

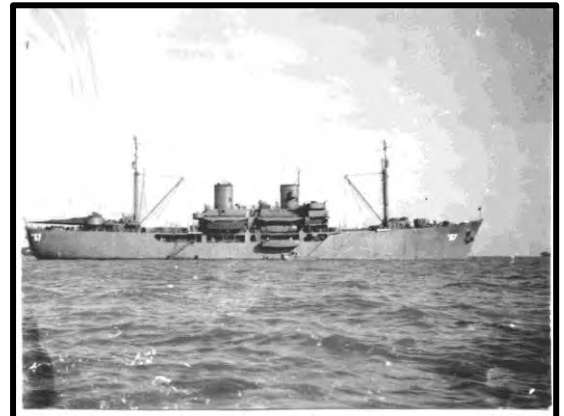


Figure 2 APA-67, *USS BURLESON*

¹ The keel was laid on 22 April, launched on 11 July, acquired by the Navy on 7 November, and commissioned on 8 November. Retrieved on 1 June 2023 from <https://www.navsource.org/archives/10/03/03067.htm>.

² Jackson, Charles Christopher, Texas State Historical Association, Handbook of Texas. Retrieved on 1 June 2023 from <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/Burleson-county>.

³ Mann, Raymond A. Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships (DANFS). Naval History and Heritage Command, *BURLESON* APA-67, 21 November 2005, published 29 June 2016. Retrieved on 2 June 2023 from Retrieved on 2 June 2023 from <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/b/Burleson-i.html>. The DANFS first entry for the *USS BURLESON* is “A county in east central Texas about 60 miles due east of Austin.” No explanation is offered as to the reasoning for naming the ship after the county, though other Gilliam-class ships are also named after counties including the *USS BERRIEN* (Georgia and Michigan), *USS CLEBURNE* (Arkansas and Alabama), and *USS GILLIAM* (Oregon). All Haskell-class Attack Transports (i.e., APAs) were also named after counties of the United States.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ U.S. Navy Cruise Books, 1918-2009, *USS BURLESON* APA-67, 1945, page 46. Retrieved on 1 June 2023 from Ancestry.com. *U.S., Navy Cruise Books, 1918-2009* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc, 2011. Original data: United States Navy. Various U.S. Navy Cruise Books. Navy Department Library, Washington, D.C.

⁶ Ibid.

On 27 March, the *BURLESON* departed “Ulithi as a unit of Task Group 51.11 en route to Okinawa, Ryuku Islands.”⁷ The *USS BURLESON’S* participation in the Invasion of Okinawa is detailed in the ship’s Cruise Book:

On the eventful morning of April 1, 1945, as a lazy protective haze hovered over our objective, we moved slowly towards the shore line as the dawn illuminated the scene of our advance. With the signal “Away all landing craft,” we became part of the largest invasion force ever to strike in the Pacific war as Okinawa trembled with the overwhelming might of our invasion forces. Here we experienced the tense excitement of battle as we saw enemy planes burst into flames, like burning matches, and crash into the sea. On April 6th these same “artists of the divine wind” performed suicidal attacks on our transports as they broke through the wall of our combat air patrol. Two planes, bent on glory, approached the vicinity of our ship and with shells flying from all quarters they too joined their ancestors. It was during one of these attacks that we lost one boat from uncontrolled gunfire and suffered one casualty wounded by flying shrapnel.^{8,9}



Figure 3 The *USS BURLESON* loading Chinese, VIII Army, Kowloon, China

Yeoman Second Class Acevedo, a member of the *USS BURLESON* beach party, ashore on Okinawa during the invasion, stated the ship had engaged and downed a Japanese Zero kamikaze aircraft that threatened the *BURLESON*.¹⁰ Seaman First Class Smith confirmed the downing of the aircraft, adding that he believed the ship had received half-credit in downing a second aircraft.¹¹

The *USS BURLESON* landed their troops and equipment in record time and on 7 April 1945, and with the *USS INDIANAPOLIS* commanding the task force, headed for Guam and Pearl Harbor where she remained for two months—the end of the *BURLESON’S* combat operations. On a tragic note, less than three months later the *INDIANAPOLIS* was sunk by a Japanese submarine triggering the worst sea disaster in the U. S. Navy – 1,195 men sailed, 316 survived.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid. pg. 47

⁹ Hammel, Eric, Battle of Okinawa: Operation Iceberg. Retrieved on 1 June 2023 from http://www.historynet.com/magazines/world_war_2/3035101.html.

¹⁰ Personal Narrative, Adelbert Acevedo, Yeoman Second Class, Adelbert Acevedo Collection (AFC/2001/001/58971), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Retrieved on 2 June 2023 from https://www.loc.gov/item/afc2001001.58971/#item-service_history. Mr. Acevedo served as part of the “beach party” aboard the *USS BURLESON* coordinating the disembarkation of troops and cargo from the ship to the land site during the Invasion of Okinawa.

¹¹ Personal Narrative, William C. Smith, Seaman First Class. William C. Smith Collection (AFC/2001/001/28292), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Retrieved on 2 June 2023 from <https://www.loc.gov/item/afc2001001.28292/#>. Seaman First Class Smith was a deckhand aboard the *USS BURLESON* and also served as a gunner.

Following World War II, the *USS BURLESON* was assigned to troop transport duties in Japan (i.e., Okinawa), Korea and China.¹² While General MacArthur had successfully negotiated peace with the Japanese, a civil war was raging in China between Communist and Nationalist forces. On the 26th of September 1945, she departed Okinawa with elements of the 1st Marine Division embarked, reaching Taku, China, on 30 September where the troops disembarked.¹³ The crew recorded the action in the Cruise Book, “With news reports of Chinese Communists fighting on the Chinwangtan railroad, we moved into dock at Chinwangtan, China. We were greeted by hordes of Chinese and units of our Marines who guaranteed a safe debarkation for the Nationalist forces.”^{14 15}



Figure 4 *USS BURLESON* is the fourth ship from the front.

The *USS BURLESON* traveled twice to China and picked up U.S. Marines for transport to the Philippines and San Francisco so that they could be discharged.¹⁶ She continued to provide support to occupation forces until November 1945 when she returned to Pearl Harbor. This ended the wartime and occupation responsibilities for the *USS BURLESON*. She transitioned from conventional warfare to the new age of atomic weapons.

The *USS BURLESON* was reassigned to the 14th Naval District in December 1945 to undergo modifications for her participation in the Top-Secret Operation CROSSROADS—the first post-war atomic bomb tests. Seaman First Class Smith recalled while the ship was at Pearl Harbor the crew converted the ship’s troop space

¹² NavSource Online: Amphibious Photo Archive, *USS BURLESON* (APA-67). Retrieved on 1 June 2023 from <https://www.navsource.org/archives/10/03/03067.htm>. Navy Occupation from 2-28 September 1945 and China Service from 30 September-11 October and 14-24 November 1945.

¹³ Mann, Raymond A. Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships (DANFS). Naval History and Heritage Command, *BURLESON* APA-67, 21 November 2005, published 29 June 2016. Retrieved on 2 June 2023 from <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/b/Burleson-i.html>.

¹⁴ U.S. Navy Cruise Books, 1918-2009, *USS BURLESON* APA-67, 1945, page 54. Retrieved on 1 June 2023 from Ancestry.com. *U.S., Navy Cruise Books, 1918-2009* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc, 2011. Original data: United States Navy. Various U.S. Navy Cruise Books. Navy Department Library, Washington, D.C.

¹⁵ Personal Narrative, Keith Penrose Burnham, Fireman First Class, Veterans History Project Service Summary, Veterans Outreach Interviews Collection Enterprise. Keith Penrose Burnham Collection (AFC/2001/001/100700), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/afc2001001.100700/>. Mr. Burnham details his experiences on the *USS BURLESON*, including the Invasion of Okinawa and service in China.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

into cages and pens in preparation of receiving the test subjects.¹⁷ The *BURLESON* was outfitted with an onboard research lab while stopped at Hunters Point Naval Yard in California.¹⁸ “At the time it had the most likely top notch onboard research facility in the world.”¹⁹

In June 1946 the *BURLESON* moved from Pearl Harbor to Bikini Atoll and in July 1946, she was assigned to Joint Task Force 1 for Operation CROSSROADS and the atomic bomb tests at Bikini Atoll.²⁰ ²¹ She was responsible for instrumenting all target ships and target areas and was equipped with laboratory facilities to service scientific instruments and record all data.²² As this was the first post-war test of the impact of atomic weapons, hundreds of experiments were planned.

...the operation would give military and civilian researchers the chance to test a nuclear attack's effects on airplanes, tanks, animals, radio and radar equipment, ammunition, food, clothing, and medicine. Scientific goals included diagnosing and measuring radiation sickness, and studying oceanic, seismographic, and meteorological changes wrought by the bomb.²³

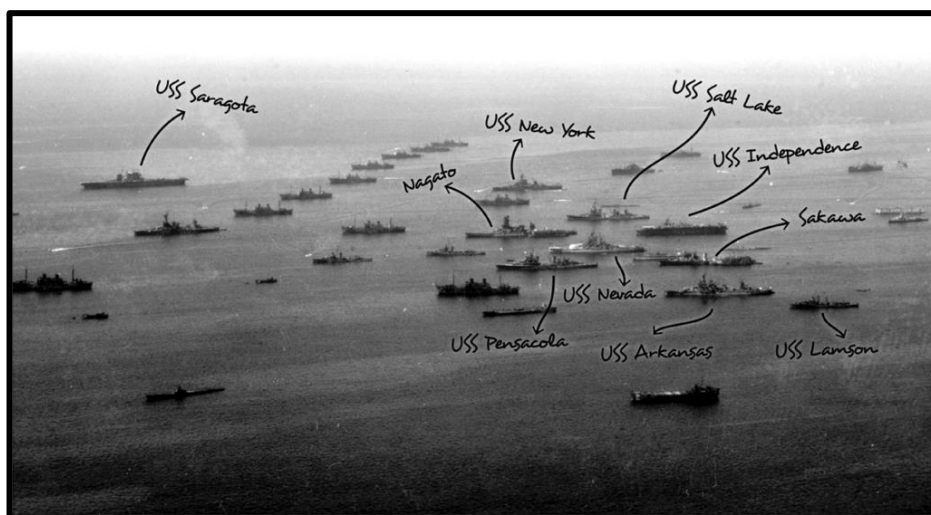


Figure 5 Target ships assigned to Task Force 1 Operation Crossroad.

¹⁷ Personal Narrative, William C. Smith, Seaman First Class. William C. Smith Collection (AFC/2001/001/28292), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Retrieved on 2 June 2023 from <https://www.loc.gov/item/afc2001001.28292/#>. Seaman First Class Smith was a deckhand aboard the *USS BURLESON*.

¹⁸ Dent, Paul, Operation CROSSROADS: Battleships vs Atomic Bombs, Nuclear Companion, last updated 21 May 2023. Retrieved on 3 June 2023 from <https://nuclearcompanion.com/operation-CROSSROADS-battleships-vs-atomic-bombs/>

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ NavSource Online: Amphibious Photo Archive, *USS BURLESON* (APA-67). Retrieved on 1 June 2023 from <https://www.navsource.org/archives/10/03/03067.htm>.

²¹ Mann, Raymond A. Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships (DANFS). Naval History and Heritage Command, *BURLESON* APA-67, 21 November 2005, published 29 June 2016. Retrieved on 2 June 2023 from Retrieved on 2 June 2023 from <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/b/Burleson-i.html>.

²² Operation CROSSROADS: Composition of Joint Task Force One, Naval History and Heritage Command. Retrieved on 4 June 2023 from <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/o/operation-crossroads/composition-of-joint-task-force-one.html#anchor108001>.

²³ Cannon, Jean McElwee and James Sam. A Bomb to Remember. Hoover Digest, Issue 1, Winter 2017, Hoover Institute. Retrieved on 3 June 2023 from <https://www.hoover.org/research/bomb-remember>

Ninety-five target ships were assembled for the test, including three captured Imperial Japanese fleet ships. "Navy officials were especially keen to include the Nagato, the flagship of Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto when he commanded the attack on Pearl Harbor."²⁴ The support fleet of more than 150 ships withdrew to approximately 10 nautical miles from the atoll.²⁵ The *USS BURLESON* was to take her place in among the support ships in what one journalists present dubbed the "Guinea Pig Fleet."

A month before the tests the Navy deployed the *USS BURLESON*, nicknamed "Noah's Ark," to Bikini, carrying animals as well as the veterinarians and seamen assigned to care for them and test them for radiation after the blasts. The military shipped five thousand rats, two hundred and four goats, two hundred mice, and sixty guinea pigs to Bikini Atoll. The pigs were selected because their skin and short hair was similar to humans'. The goats were included because their weight and volume of body fluid were close to that of an average adult man.²⁶

Figure 6 At right, the caption reads: This goat had a role in the CROSSROADS Operation too. Freshly shaved, here it gets a coat of protective ointment from Dr. R. P. Wager, Army veterinarian aboard the U.S.S. BURLESON at Bikini. This goat and other animals were aboard target ships when the atom bomb drops at "Mike Hour."



Author Paul Dent offered the following description of the *BURLESON* as it readied for the tests.

BURLESON was also equipped with dedicated rooms for the animals to drink, sleep, and eat. As a matter of fact, it transported around 90 tons of animal food like hay and grain and a large enough water supply from evaporators.

Big mammals, goats, and pigs even had their own wooden pens where before were quarters for transient troops. Each of these mammals had their ears notched and tails tattooed for numbering. Rats, for their part, had their cages racked in a separate room.

BURLESON'S deck, on the other hand, was specially adapted for the animals. It was covered with concrete for better footing and had drainage and disposal chutes aggregated. As a result, this ship became, in the words of an army general, a "great, dirtless farm, a palatial hotel for animals."²⁷

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Operation CROSSROADS, 1 July 1946, Naval History and Heritage Command. Retrieved on 4 June 2013 from <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/wars-conflicts-and-operations/cold-war/crossroads.html>.

²⁶ Cannon, Jean McElwee and James Sam. A Bomb to Remember. Hoover Digest, Issue 1, Winter 2017, Hoover Institute. Retrieved on 3 June 2023 from <https://www.hoover.org/research/bomb-remember>

²⁷ Dent, Paul, Operation CROSSROADS: Battleships vs Atomic Bombs, Nuclear Companion, last updated 21 May 2023. Retrieved on 3 June 2023 from <https://nuclearcompanion.com/operation-CROSSROADS-battleships-vs-atomic-bombs/>.

The Navy Historic and Heritage Command noted “The task force placed animal subjects on board the various ships to study for “diagnosis, treatment and general protection of possible future ship crews which may be exposed to this bomb.”²⁸

The Naval Medical Research Section was responsible for the medical and biological research during Operations CROSSROADS. Their final report details the responsibilities of the *BURLESON'S* crew.²⁹ In 2013, Greg Bischof of the *Texarkana Gazette* interviewed John Cary, a veteran of the *USS BURLESON* and Operation CROSSROADS. Cary stated, "I was in charge of the pigs."³⁰



Figure 7 Test Animal

Cary also had charge of 16 men attached to the Navy's Medical Research Institute in Bethesda, Md. This crew of 17 had to place these animals and rodents aboard various obsolete Navy combat vessels-all designated to be stationed in Bikini Atoll's lagoon-right at the watery epicenter of at least two atomic bomb blasts.³¹

Cary stated that his 16-member team were separate from the *BURLESON'S* crew and “were officially slated as a separate medical group.”³² Following the bomb detonations, the crew would have to retrieve all the surviving animals from these ships and carry them to Bethesda for lab tests and research to help study the potential radiation effects on humans. With respect to the radiation and safeguards of the time, Cary stated,

²⁸ Operation CROSSROADS, 1 July 1946, Naval History and Heritage Command. Retrieved on 4 June 2013 from <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/wars-conflicts-and-operations/cold-war/crossroads.html>.

²⁹ Analysis of Radiation Exposure for Naval Units of Operation CROSSROADS, Volume I, Basic Report, 3 March 1982, Science Applications, Inc.

³⁰Bischof, Greg, Veteran recalls 1940s radiation contamination study, *Texarkana Gazette*, 27 May 2013, updated 8 Jul 2015. Retrieved on 3 June 2023 from <https://www.texarkanagazette.com/news/2013/may/27/veterrecalls-1940s-radiaticontaminatistudy/>.

³¹ Ibid. Test ABLE was an air detonation. Test Baker detonated 90 feet under water. A third test was cancelled.

³² Ibid.

"Our vessel (*USS BURLESON*) had to pull back, with the other support vessels, about five miles southwest of the blast area," Cary said. "We had to cover our eyes with our arms and kneel down on our top deck. We could hear a roar and feel some of the shock wave and heat for about two minutes."³³

Figure 8 Atomic Pig And All Things Porcine and Epicurean – A study revealed that Pig 311 was able to survive atomic bomb test in 1946 and lived 4 years before its demise.



Figure 9 An Army veterinarian uses a Geiger counter to assess radiation in a test animal.

Unfortunately, at the time medical knowledge of radiation was limited and shortly after the atomic explosions, "Cary and his crew deployed to ground zero, to retrieve all the surviving animals off the ships. We had to make five or six trips out there to retrieve those test animals."³⁴ "Despite the few Geiger counters being used that indicated some substantial radiation levels aboard these target ships, Cary said there just wasn't enough known about radiation contamination to understand the seriousness of it." For the second atomic blast (Test BAKER), Cary said, "we put pigs and rats in the different ships' engine rooms and sick bays—everywhere people might be on a ship."³⁵

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid. Only pigs and rats were used in Test Baker.

The officers and enlisted of the *BURLESON* were among the 42,000 Navy personnel who participated in Operation CROSSROADS.³⁶ They too were part of the tests that were documented in *Analysis of Radiation Exposure for Naval Units of Operation CROSSROADS*.³⁷ Following both tests, Cary and the rest of his unit eventually returned to Norfolk, Virginia, before heading to the Naval Medical Research Institute to deliver the surviving animals for research in October 1947.³⁸



Figure 10 Animals exposed to the bikini atomic bomb blasts arrive at Washington Navy Yard, D.C., on board the animal laboratory ship *USS BURLESON* (APA-67), on 30 September 1946. Seaman Apprentice Dale Lipps is holding Pig311. Goat B.O. Plenty is held by Seaman Apprentice R.M. Williamson.



Figure 11 *USS BURLESON* arriving from Bikini Atoll upon completion of her deployment in Operation CROSSROADS.

Of the 32 Gilliam class ships built for the Navy to support World War II, all but five were sent to Pearl Harbor in early 1946 to prepare for Operation CROSSROADS. Of the 27, six were decommissioned before the test and not used, two were sunk in Test ABLE and 12 were so damaged they were deliberately sunk. The remaining seven ships were re-manned and remained in service for a time. All remaining Gilliam class vessels were decommissioned by 1947—the sole exception was the *USS BURLESON*, which was transferred to the Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia, for use as a training ship until 1 September 1968.³⁹ She was ingloriously sold for scrapping to North American Smelting Company, Burlington, New Jersey, on 8 November 1968.⁴⁰

³⁶ Operation CROSSROADS, 1 July 1946, Naval History and Heritage Command. Retrieved on 4 June 2013 from <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/wars-conflicts-and-operations/cold-war/crossroads.html>.

³⁷ Analysis of Radiation Exposure for Naval Units of Operation CROSSROADS, Volume I, Basic Report, 3 March 1982, Science Applications, Inc.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Gilliam-class attack transport retrieved on 1 Jun 2023 from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilliam-class_attack_transport.

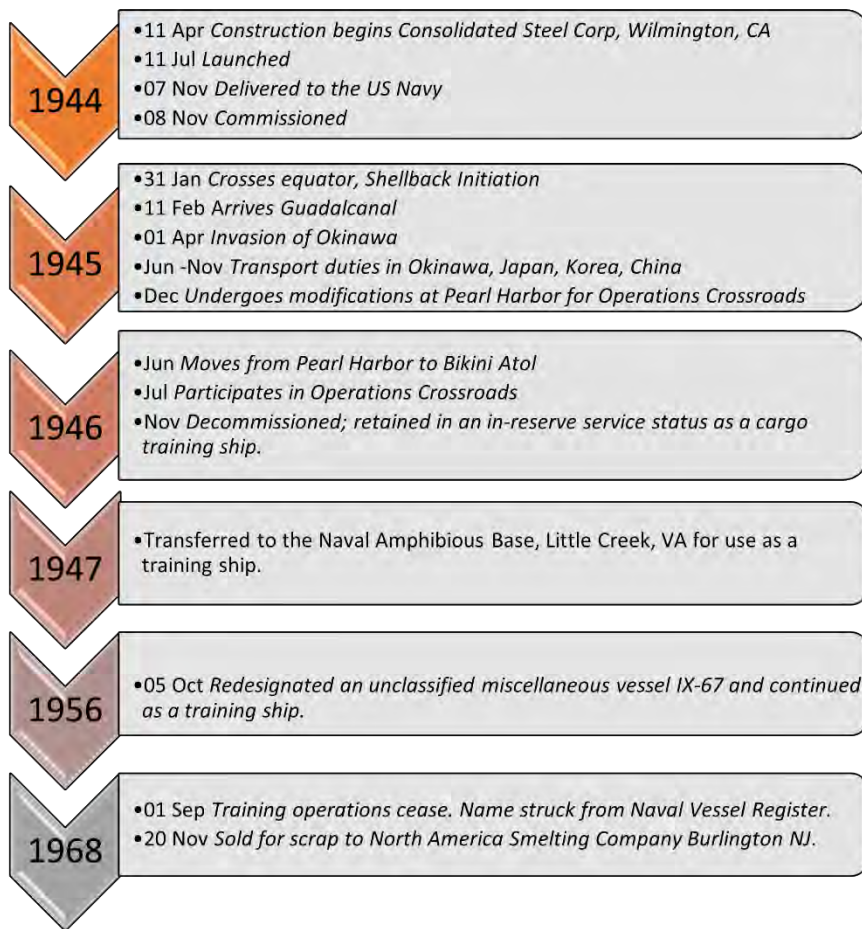
⁴⁰ NavSource Online: Amphibious Photo Archive, *USS BURLESON* (APA-67). Retrieved on 1 June 2023 from <https://www.navsource.org/archives/10/03/03067.htm>.

The *USS BURLESON* earned one battle star for the World War II service and the following awards, citations and campaign ribbons: China Service Medal (extended), American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal (1), World War II Victory Medal and the Navy Occupation Service Medal (with Asia clasp).⁴¹

Timeline of the *USS BURLESON*



Figure 12 *USS BURLESON*



⁴¹ NavSource Online: Amphibious Photo Archive, *USS BURLESON* (APA-67). Retrieved on 1 June 2023 from <https://www.navsource.org/archives/10/03/03067.htm>.

Author's Notes:

Much was written about the tests then and now. Considerable literature is available for readers desiring medical and technical information. Much was also written about the propriety of conducting such tests based on the use of animals, the impact on the environment and the displacement of the native islanders.

Operation CROSSROADS was not only one of the most expensive military operations of the twentieth century but also perhaps the best documented. More than one hundred and thirty newspaper, magazine, and radio correspondents from the United States, Australia, Canada, France, the Republic of China, the Soviet Union, and Britain came to the Marshalls to witness the tests. They were given their own floating press headquarters, the *USS APPALACHIA*. In addition, four newspapers for military and civilian personnel were printed on Kwajalein; rare copies of one of the newspapers, the Atomic Blast, are found in Hoover's Beth Flippen Scheel Collection. "Radio Bikini" was established for daily broadcasts and interviews with soldiers, sailors, officers, and volunteers. The military estimated that over fifty thousand photographs and two hundred and eighty-four miles of film were taken at the Bikini testing site and its surroundings.⁴²

Some readers may question the fate of the 42,000 sailors and native islanders who witnessed or were in the vicinity of the tests. Kati Engel, National Historic and Heritage Command (NHHC) Communications and Outreach Division posted the following extract on the NHHC website.

During Operation Crossroads, only 15 percent of personnel received film-badge dosimeters, designed to measure their potential exposure to radiation. These measurements were later used to model the effects on personnel, but the secrecy of nuclear weapons testing prevented many veterans from communicating knowledge of potential exposure to their doctors. In the 1970s and 1980s, veterans began speaking out. The Department of Defense (DOD) began studying the potential exposure to radiation among the military and civilian personnel who participated in these tests. In early 1978, the DOD organized a Nuclear Test Personnel Review (NTPR) to identify DOD personnel who had taken part in atmospheric nuclear weapon tests and to determine the extent of their exposure to ionizing radiation.

Ten years later, Congress passed a bill to provide additional compensation to "atomic veterans" with specific types of cancer resulting from exposure to radiation. In 1994, President Bill Clinton initiated an Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments. The President issued a formal apology to the victims of these experiments, stating, "When the government does wrong, we have a moral responsibility to admit it."

In 1996, Congress repealed the Nuclear Radiation and Secrecy Agreement Act, removing the last barrier to the victims of these experiments to speak out without fear of

⁴² Cannon, Jean McElwee and James Sam. A Bomb to Remember. Hoover Digest, Issue 1, Winter 2017, Hoover Institute. Retrieved on 3 June 2023 from <https://www.hoover.org/research/bomb-remember>.

reprisal. In 1997, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) advised against any permanent resettlement of the Bikini Atoll under the present radiological conditions. The natives of Bikini Atoll remain exiles from their homeland, destroyed by radiation.

The name Operation CROSSROADS and its association with the *USS BURLESON* continues to the present—over seven decades after the atomic tests. Kathleen Flenniken included a poem titled Operation CROSSROADS in her 2020 book *Post Romantic*.⁴³ Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Walter Pincus included the *BURLESON* and her role in the atomic tests in his 2021 book, *Blown to Hell*.⁴⁴

About the Author



David Burleson is a retired USAF Lieutenant Colonel, son of the late USAF Chief Master Sergeant Ned Garner Burleson, and father of the late USA Staff Sergeant Geoffrey Lance Burleson, USAF Major Jeremiah Burleson currently stationed in Anchorage, Alaska, and USAF Staff Sergeant Micah Burleson currently stationed in Tacoma, Washington.

He is pictured with his sons Maj Jeremiah Burleson and SSgt Micah Burleson.

⁴³ Flenniken, Kathleen, *Post Romantic, Operation CROSSROADS Book*. University of Washington Press. (2020) Retrieved on 3 June 2023 from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv17db3x3.41>.

⁴⁴ Pincus, Walter, *Blown to Hell: America's Deadly Betrayal of the Marshall Islanders* (2021). Diversion Books, New York City

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FATEFUL DECISION

A WEST POINT STORY

The Jan.-Mar. 2023 issue of “Recollections of the Burleson Family Research Group” was enjoyable particularly the information on the several Burleson’s who have attended the United States Military Academy at West Point. Of special interest was the article on Colonel Richard Coke Burleson who graduated from West Point in 1906. As pointed out in the article he was the grandson of Richard Byrd Burleson (1822-1879). NOTE: Gravestone incorrectly shows 1880 as his year of death. Richard Byrd Burleson and his father Jonathan Burleson (1789-1866) are both pictured on page 1268 of the “Recollections” issue. Few people today know Richard Byrd Burleson was approved to attend West Point in the spring of 1838. However, his father, Jonathan Burleson made the decision to waive his son’s appointment in favor of the son of a widow who was living in Morgan County, Alabama at the time. His decision affected the ultimate fates of two young men who both were destined to make their mark in Southern history.

After his appointment was waived, Richard went on to complete his early education at The Somerville Academy located in Somerville, then the county seat of Morgan County. He was baptized in 1839 at Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church located two miles west of his father’s plantation. He entered Nashville University in 1840 and stayed three years. He was licensed to preach in 1841, by the First Baptist Church of Nashville. In 1842, he became pastor of the Athens Baptist Church in Athens, Alabama. He stayed there two years before becoming pastor of the Tuscumbia Baptist Church in Tuscumbia, Alabama. He held that position for four years. Richard married Sarah Leigh 19 Nov 1847 in Franklin County, Alabama. They eventually had three children before her death in the 1850’s. NOTE: Richard remarried in 1856. His bride was Mary Frances Halbert and they eventually had three children. In 1849 Richard became principal of The Baptist Female Institute in Moulton, Alabama. While in Moulton, he also served as pastor of the Moulton Baptist Church. He held both positions until 1855 when he resigned and moved to Texas where he



became pastor of the Baptist church in Austin. In 1857 he became professor of Natural History at Baylor University in Independence, Texas. His younger brother, Rufus Burleson was President of Baylor at the time. In 1861, they both moved to Waco, Texas where Rufus became President of Waco University and Richard became Vice President. During the War Between the States, both Richard and Rufus served the Confederate States as chaplains for the Texas cavalry. After the war, Richard continued to teach at Waco University until his death 21 Dec 1879. Richard and Sarah’s oldest son was Leigh Burleson (1848-1927) who was the father of Richard Coke Burleson (1881-1960). Leigh moved his young family to San Saba in San Saba County, Texas in the late 1800’s. Richard Coke Burleson was born there in 1881. Descendants of the family still live in San Saba today.



You can see from the above, that Richard Byrd Burleson, even though he missed out on West Point led a productive and honorable life with many accomplishments.

At this point, we will trace the early life and career of the widow's son who received the appointment to West Point after Richard's acceptance was waived in 1838.

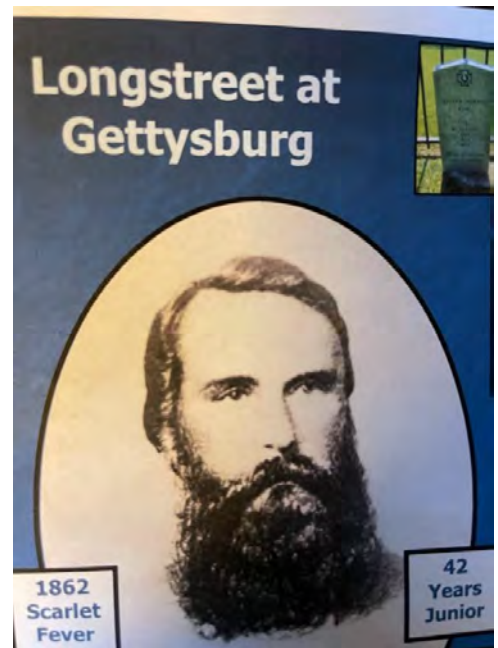
The widow's maiden name was Mary Ann Dent (1793-1855). She had been born in Maryland and was the daughter of Thomas Marshall Dent and his wife Anne Magruder Dent. Thomas Marshall Dent was a brother to Frederick Dent (1787-1873) who was the father of Julia Dent (1826-1902) who in 1848 married Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885). She had been introduced to Grant by her brother, Fred, who attended West Point with Grant.

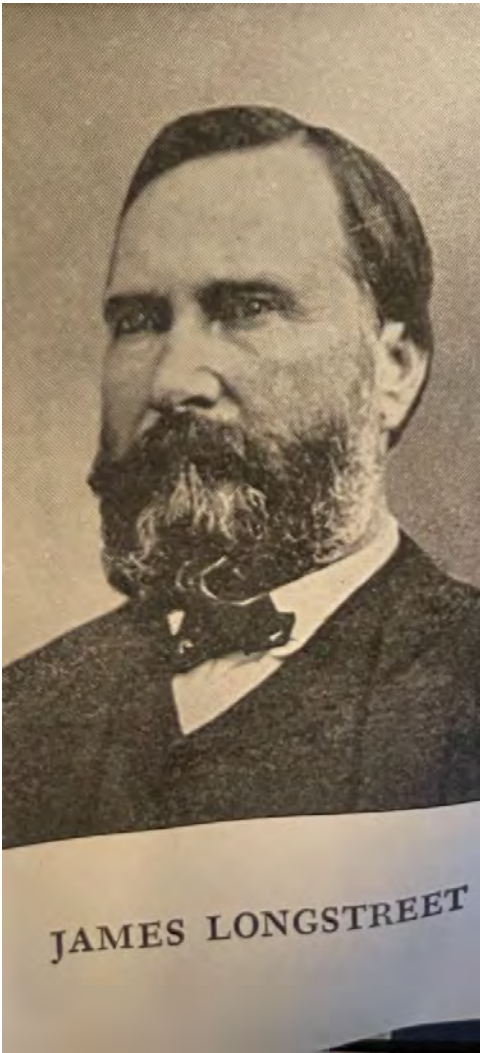
Julia Dent and Mary Anne Dent were not only cousins, but friends and they visited each other as often as possible over the years. Mary Ann married James Longstreet 14 Dec 1814 in Richmond County, Georgia. They had ten children together before James' death in 1833. Their fourth born child was named James, for his father. The younger James Longstreet (1821-1904) spent his early life on his father's farm and after his father's death lived and worked on his uncle's farm near Augusta, Georgia. When James Longstreet Senior died in 1833, his wife, Mary Ann moved, along with her six young daughters, to Somerville, Morgan County, Alabama to live with her oldest daughter, Anna Randolph Longstreet (1814-1839). Anna had married a cousin, Hutchinson Dent and by the early 1830's they lived on a 400-acre farm located less than one mile south of Somerville. Historians do not agree on whether Mary Ann's son, James, ever lived in Somerville. It appears he spent most of his time on his uncle's farm near Augusta. However, his appointment to West Point came from Alabama. After Jonathan Burleson waived his son's acceptance, Reuben Chapman, U S Senator from Alabama got the appointment for James Longstreet. Reuben Chapman maintained a home in Somerville and was a distant relative of the Longstreet family.

James Longstreet attended West Point from 1838 to 1842, graduating near the bottom of his class. He finished 54 out of a class of 56. His early rough and tumble life on the frontier farms of his father and uncle had not prepared him for the regimented life expected at West Point. He earned a record number of demerits during his four years at the Academy. However, he was considered the best horseman and marksman of all the cadets, plus he possessed a trait that served him well later in his military career. He had a "rocklike" character and a determination to complete any job he had undertaken. While at West Point Longstreet became friends with U S. Grant, who attended the Academy from 1839-1843. When Grant married Julia Dent in 1848, Longstreet attended the wedding.

Longstreet served in the U S Army from 1842 until the spring of 1861. He served with distinction during the Mexican-American War (1846-1848) where he rose from the rank of lieutenant to major. He participated in several important battles including Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterrey, Contreras, Churubusco, Molino del Rey and Chapultepec. While leading a charge at Chapultepec, Longstreet received a serious leg wound, requiring several months to heal. He later took part in the landing at Vera Cruz and the capture of Mexico City.

In 1848 Longstreet married Maria Louisa Garland (1827-1889). They eventually had five children, four sons and one daughter. After the Mexican War, Longstreet served mostly on the western frontier. He held posts in Texas and the New Mexico Territory. When the Confederate States of America formed in 1861, he resigned from the U S Army and joined the Confederate Army. During the War Between the States, he quickly rose to the rank of Lt. General and became General Robert E. Lee's top military aide. Lee called Longstreet his "Old War Horse." General Longstreet commanded the First Corps, Army of Northern Virginia. He was considered one of most prominent Southern generals. He served at the major battles of Antietam, Gettysburg, Chickamauga, Chattanooga, the Wilderness, and was at the siege of Petersburg and the surrender at Appomattox in April 1865.





After the war, Longstreet lived for a while in New Orleans. His friendship with General Grant, who became the 18th President of the United States in 1869, greatly benefited Longstreet during his career after the war. At different times, he served as a railroad commissioner, Postmaster in Gainesville, Georgia, and in 1880 was appointed Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. By 1900 he was living in Washington D C with his second wife, Helen Dortch Longstreet who was more than 40 years his junior. General Longstreet died 2 Feb 1904 and was buried near his beloved first wife, Louisa, in the Alta Vista Cemetery in Gainesville, Hall County, Georgia.

We do not know if James Longstreet and Richard Byrd Burleson ever met personally. However, their fates met at a crossroads in the Spring of 1838, where a decision made by Jonathan Burleson, sent two young men on different paths as they each marched forward to meet their destiny and become a part of our great American history.

David A. Burleson
June 15, 2023

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Information on James Longstreet including his parents and his military service taken mostly from Wikipedia articles. Ancestry.com provided information on the Dent family. Also, most of the many books written about the War Between the States contains stories about General Longstreet and the contributions he made to the South's struggle for independence.