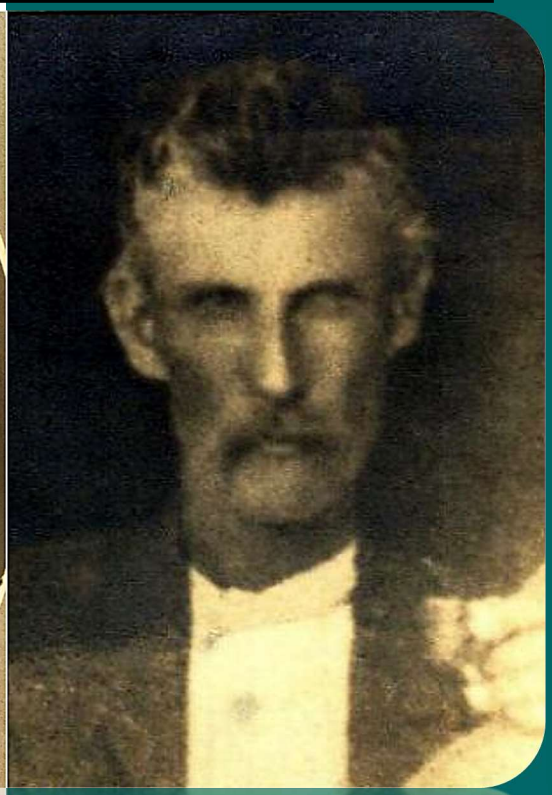
AUSTIN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
RESEARCH • EDUCATION • PRESERVATION
Founded 1960

FALL 2019 Vol. 60 No. 3



WHAT'S INSIDE

On the Cover:

Mary Jane Alford Green & John Marion Green

Photo courtesy of AGS Member Angela Doetsch

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

AGS Members and the public are encouraged to submit material for publication to:

Angela Doetsch
quarterly@austintxgensoc.org

FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings AGS Members,

DNA has become one of the hot topics in the genealogical world. While having thousands of DNA matches can be intimidating, it only takes one to make a difference in a person's life.

DNA has helped investigators to solve crimes that have gone cold over decades. On the flipside, DNA has helped organizations like the Innocence Project to exonerate individuals wrongly convicted of crimes; Many, who have spent over half of their adult lives incarcerated.

In school, we learned how DNA can determine certain physical traits such as eye and hair color, and if your earlobes are attached. You can compare these traits with your family to see how alike you are. But DNA goes beyond the physical traits that you share with another person on the surface. Have you ever realized not only how you look similar to other family members, but also have the same smile or mannerisms, and how you share a love for art or music going back generations?

A few months ago, I was contacted through *Ancestry.com* from a DNA match (let's call her Jane), who was placed for adoption at birth. Here is a part of her message to me:

Ancestry DNA has shown us as second cousins. I'm trying to find relatives that lived in Northern Indiana in the early 60's – South Bend, LaPorte, Michigan City, Mishawaka and all the area in between. If you would be willing to help find where I might fall into our tree, it would be greatly appreciated. I would love to learn my history. For myself and my family.

Even though adoption can be a sensitive and emotional topic, the "armchair detective" in me couldn't wait to help Jane. After a few weeks, I was able to narrow down our connection to a few potential lines based on our shared DNA matches. From Jane's date of birth (give or take a few years), and state where she was adopted, I eliminated anyone that couldn't be her biological parent based on age and geography. In turn, Jane has provided details that might help in the search. One day, she emailed a series of photos of her over the years, and that is when it really hit me. Jane IS without a doubt family.

I am currently helping Jane build her first family tree (albeit with a few holes), by sharing names and pictures of who we are fairly confident to be her ancestors and stories that have been passed down through the generations; Meanwhile, Jane eagerly awaits her original birth certificate from the State of Indiana – who made it possible for adoptees to obtain identifying records as of July 1, 2018. I can't wait to see the story unfold.

In the pages that follow, you will read how the true meaning of family transcends beyond the physical ties that bind us together and how bonds remain unbroken even in the darkest hours.

Angela Doetsch
quarterly@austingensoc.org

GERMAN HERITAGE IN LETTERS

AGS Member Liz Hicks

Genealogy Editor, German Texan Heritage Society

www.germantexans.org

German Historical Institute of Washington
Attn.: Dr. Atiba Pertilla
1607 New Hampshire Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20009

"German Heritage in Letters," a new research project of the German Historical Institute, Washington DC (GHI), is gathering German-language correspondence sent from Europe to immigrants in the United States that is currently in private hands.

As part of the 2019 Year of German-American Friendship, the GHI is seeking collections of letters that shed light on the effects of emigration to the United States on family and relatives in the German-speaking lands.

The GHI is working with both individuals and institutions who have preserved this historic correspondence to digitize their letters, enhance their accessibility in the long term, and expand the number of primary sources available for scholars of the German-American experience and the history of immigration more broadly.

The project's website can be visited at germanletters.org, where visitors can view and transcribe digitized letters and also upload their own letters independently.

For information about sharing larger collections of letters, or for further details, please get in touch with project manager Atiba Pertilla at contact@germanletters.org.

TRAGEDY IN THE BULL FAMILY

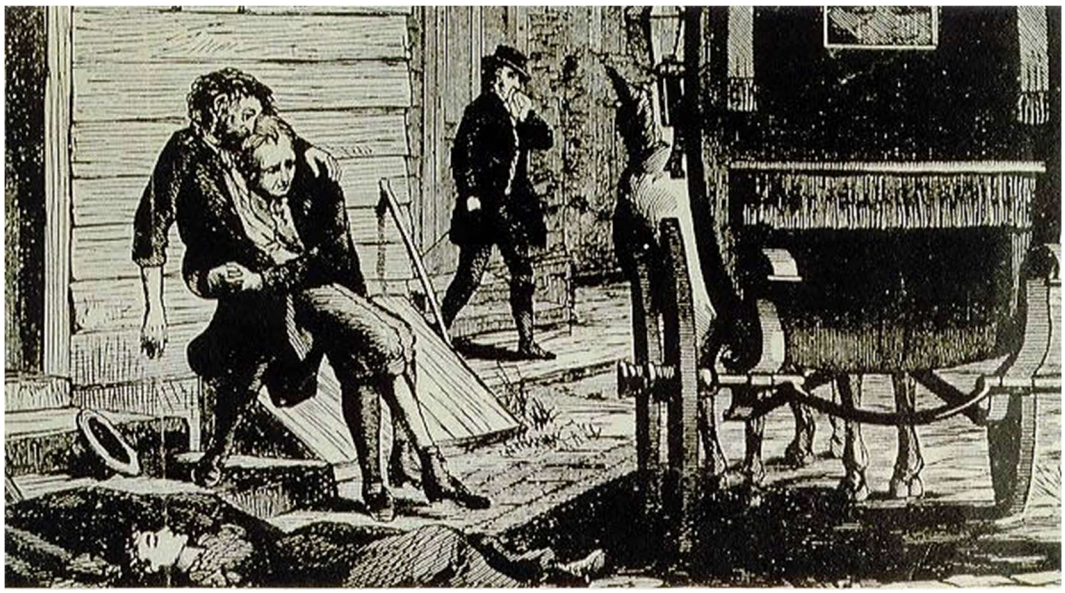
By AGS Member Peter Flagg Maxson, Architectural Historian

In the 21st century, we know little of the numerous, deadly epidemics found in many American cities circa 1800. Cholera, yellow fever, smallpox and typhus took lives at a rate inconceivable to us today.

On October 31, 1798, Mr. Samuel Wells wrote to my 4th Great-Grandfather Judge Jonathan Bull (1746-1825) of Hartford, Connecticut describing the horrific yellow fever epidemic then raging in New York City:

[We] hope we shall soon be clear of the pestilence...the fever has been beyond description distressing almost all who have remained in the eastern half of the city have been sick. Many of my neighbors are dead…

Mr. Firman [?] ...informs me that…he supposes that upwards of a Thousand Persons were sick, that so many died that it was impossible to get them all buried on the same days although many were employed to Carry them away & what added greatly to the distress of the poor out of employ and consequently almost in a State of Starvation…They sometimes found them in the Agonies of Death - in some instances whole families were swept away…



Yellow Fever Hauling Dead

Mr. Wells closed his letter on a more upbeat note regarding a recent visit to the ample Bull House: *I cannot conclude without most cordially thanking you for the very Friendly treatment I Received at your House, from yourself & Lady & your most Amiable Family…that peace may long continue to abide with you.*

Judge Bull kept that letter, which would have greater meaning to him a decade later. It passed with family papers from mother to daughter in the Bull family for almost 200 years, when the collection dating back over 300 years was given to the Connecticut Historical Society in Hartford.

The Bull family was one of the oldest and most distinguished in Connecticut. Captain Thomas Bull (c. 1605-1684) settled in what became Hartford with Thomas Hooker and others in 1636 and his name appears on the Founders Monument in the Ancient Burying Ground on Main Street. The following year he fought in the Pequot War, and his life was saved when an arrow hit a piece of hard cheese in his pocket.

In 1675, New York Governor Edmund Andros announced his intention to annex the Connecticut Colony. Confronted by Captain Bull, then in command of the fort at Saybrook, Andros relented and returned to New York.

According to his findagrave.com entry, Captain Bull's grandson Dr. Jonathan Bull (1696-1765), "studied medicine and surgery in Boston for seven years and was one of the first highly trained doctors in the state."[1] He married widow Hannah Wooster Beach, sister of General David Wooster, who was killed in 1777 at the Battle of Ridgefield in the American Revolution.

In Memory of Dr. Jonathan Bull

Photo used with permission from Find A Grave™ member, Mary Louis Reynolds https://www.findagrave.com/user/profile/47664956e

[1] https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/15300006/jonathan-bull.

The headstone inscription reads,

In Memory of Dr.
Jonathan Bull Who
Departed this life
April ye 1st AD 1765
In ye 70th Year of
his Age
Death is a Debt
To Nature Due
which I Have Paid
& So Must You

In Mary Louise B. Todd's *Thomas and Susannah Bull* (1981), we learn his son, Judge Jonathan Bull (1746-1825) was a stalwart citizen of Hartford:

Jonathan Bull had a very distinguished career in Hartford. He went to Yale College in 1765; served as quartermaster of Col. Enos' Regiment at Greenwich in 1778; lieutenant and acting captain of the 15th Militia Regt; capt of the Governor's Foot Guards 1777 to 1785. The first company of the Foot Guards under Capt. Bull answered the Burgoyne Alarm at Saratoga, but arrived too late. Atwater's History of Kent *names Jonathan Bull as the man who led Washington's horse over the stringers of an incomplete bridge at Bull's Falls on the Housatonic.*

Jonathan Bull was a representative in the General Assembly from 1782 to 1797, alderman of Hartford 1784; judge of the County Court from 1798 to 1817; Justice of the Peace, Clerk and Judge of Probate between 1790 and 1808; Connecticut Commissioner of Loans from 1808 to 1817. He was a member of the 2nd Church of Hartford; Clerk from 1771 to 1798…In 1771 he was Collector of Hartford and ratemaker in 1791…The will of Jonathan Bull, signed 4 July 1823, [totaled] $8,161.85.

Judge Bull's oversized vellum certificate confirming his appointment as Commissioner of Loans for Connecticut was signed by President Thomas Jefferson and Secretary of State James Madison (CHS).

Judge Bull married Delia Seymour (1752–1830), scion of another ancient Hartford family believed by many to be descendants of the Duke of Somerset, brother of Henry VIII's third queen, Jane Seymour.

Delia's mother and many female family members were named Deliverance[2], but perhaps the name sounded Puritanical making *Delia* a more palatable substitute for a stylish 18th century Hartford lady.

Jonathan and Delia had many children – sons David, Henry and Charles; And daughters Hannah, Rebecca, Nancy, Cornelia, Delia and Elizabeth; as well as several children who died young.

In March 1809, Judge Bull wrote of a family tragedy to a friend:

The office of Postmaster became vacant this morning by the Death of Mr. Dodd of the Spotted fever, His wife died of the same disorder on Wednesday. This disorder prevails much in the Quarter of the Town. On Monday noon my family were in usual health and on Thursday morning three of my Daughters were dead. Our situation is very distressing.

A more detailed account was printed in the *American Mercury*, March 9, 1809:

In our last paper was a remark that it was rare indeed that we are called upon to record so distressing an occasion as be had then to make public. Since that time, however, a similar event has made it our melancholy duty to depict a new and unexampled scene of affliction in the family of Jonathan Bull, Esq of this city. The sudden death of three amiable daughters has spread a gloom the sorrows of which is our happiness that few have the misfortune to experience. In the afternoon of Monday last week, Miss Nancy Bull was seized with the prevailing fever - before noon on Tuesday she was a corpse, aged 28 years. Miss Hannah Bull was seized on Tuesday and died Wednesday, just as her deceased sister was going to the grave, aged 32 years. Miss Rebecca Bull was seized on Wednesday night and on Thursday was buried in the same grave with her last deceased sister, aged 22 years.

[2] I have an interesting association with the name Deliverance. My ancestor Susannah Bassett and her sisters' in-laws were accused of witchcraft. Her sister Elizabeth Proctor was a principle character in Arthur Miller's play "The Crucible" about the Salem witch trials. Susannah was convicted of witchcraft, not in Salem, but in adjacent Lynn, Massachusetts. She was spared for the moment because she was pregnant. By the time she delivered, the conviction was reversed. Susannah named her next daughter Deliverance for the reprieve pregnancy had given her.

Reflecting upon so melancholy a picture, what can we do but shrink into submission and expressive silence. After writing the above paragraph we had hope that our distressing task was at an end but, alas, how vain are all human expectations.

On Wednesday died Mrs. Mary Dodd, wife of Mr. John Dodd, Post-Master, after an illness of four days, age 56. The day preceding her death, Mr. Dodd was taken ill and expired on Sunday morning in the 66th year of his age. On the night following, died his oldest son, Mr. John Dodd, Jr., merchant, after a short illness. And on Monday died Capt. Josiah Dodd, nephew of the late Post-Master, aged 30 years.

The Bull sisters and their Dodd cousins all died of "spotted fever" according to the *Providence* (Rhode Island) *Gazette* of March 18, 1809. In this instance, spotted fever refers to typhus rather than Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever[3] and its variants.

That was not the end of family misfortunes that year. Seven months later, on October 23, 1809, the Judge's unmarried son David Bull died of Yellow Fever at age 25 in Augusta, Georgia, where he lived and worked as a merchant. Eleven days later, David's sister Delia Bull, who married Thomas Tisdall of Hartford in 1808, died in childbirth on November 3, 1809, at age 30. She was the fifth of her parents' adult children to die in 1809.

Her only child, also named Delia (1809-1831), married future railroad president Ezekiel McIntosh of Albany, New York. After her early death, McIntosh married Caroline Carmichael, who as a wealthy widow subsequently married President Millard Fillmore.

In 1815, surviving daughter Cornelia married her second cousin James Dodd (1786-1862), whose family deaths in 1809 are noted above. Dodd was an esteemed Hartford businessman and pioneer in the insurance business and lived at the nearby Steele-Dodd-Flagg House (1742, razed 1927) on Washington Street. He was a business associate of Samuel Colt, who presented Dodd with a fine cased

[3] "Rocky Mountain spotted fever (RMSF) is a bacterial disease spread through the bite of an infected tick. Most people who get sick with RMSF will have a fever, headache, and rash. RMSF can be deadly if not treated early with the right antibiotic." CDC. November 15, 2018. Retrieved September 21, 2019.

Colt pistol owned by descendants from 1855 until 1990.[4]

In the 1850 United States Census, he is listed as a farmer, with real estate valued at $25,000.

James and Cornelia Dodd were parents of at least five children –sons James Jr., Charles Bull and Tisdale; And daughters Mary Elizabeth (later Mrs. Morris Earle) and Cornelia. After Cornelia Bull Dodd's death in 1833 (by tradition in childbirth), he married her surviving sister Elizabeth. James died in 1862. Elizabeth, unlike most of her siblings, lived to old age, dying in 1869, aged 77-78.

Though other lines of the Bull family continued to prosper, Judge Jonathan Bull's male- line descendants are now extinct, although family pride caused Bull to proliferate as a middle name for several generations.

My Bull connection later achieved new meaning to me. I inherited a pair of dressed miniatures of Delia Seymour's brother Captain Frederic (Bedd) Seymour (1796) and his wife Prudence Minor Seymour (1799). They are miniature portraits whose faces are painted but clothes were of actual fabric. When my parents died in 1988, they were valued at $500 each. When the "Antiques Road Show" (PBS) came to Austin, Texas in 2000, I took the dressed miniatures. The appraisers confirmed the attribution to Mary Way of New London, Connecticut, and gave them a *very* handsome value. But unfortunately, they have been in a bank vault ever since.

Through this female line going back to the Seymours, there has been a tendency for ladies of the family to have twins for at least 200 years, including two sets of my first cousins.

American Mercury [Hartford], March 9, 1809; Connecticut Historical Society, "Bull and Dodd family papers: A Guide to the collection"; Hinman, R. R., Catalogue of the First Puritan Settlers of the Colony of Connecticut (Hartford: Case, Tiffany and Company, 1853); Peter Flagg Maxson, "The Steele-Dodd-Flagg House," AGSQ, Vol. XXXX, No. 2 (June 1999); Providence (Rhode Island) Gazette of March 18, 1809; Mary Louise B. Todd, Thomas and Susannah Bull. (Lake Forest, Illinois: Heitman Printers, 1981).

[4] When sold by the author's stepmother.

Capt. Thomas Bull (ca. 1605-1684)
m. Susannah ____

|

Maj. Jonathan Bull (bap. 1648-1702), of Hartford
m. Sarah Whiting

|

Dr. Jonathan Bull (1696-1765), of Hartford
m. Hannah Wooster (Beach)

|

Judge Jonathan Bull (1746-1825), of Hartford
m. Delia Seymour

|

Daughters Hannah, Nancy, Rebecca (all d. March 1809);
son David Bull (d. October 1809);
daughter Delia Bull Tisdall (d. December 1809);
daughter Cornelia Dodd (d. 1833) and Elizabeth Dodd (d.1869)
in sequence m. James Dodd, of Hartford,
whose father, mother, half-brother and 1st cousin also d. March 1809

|

Mary Elizabeth Dodd (1816-1894), of New York and Hartford, Connecticut
m. Morris Earle

|

Ellen Fanny Earle (1849-1920), of Hartford, Connecticut and Paris
m. Charles Noël Flagg

|

Marion Flagg Maxson (1887-1972), of Dallas and Athens, Texas
m. Harry Irl Maxson

|

John Sherman Maxson (1912-1989), of Dallas and Godley, Texas
m. Virginia DeGolyer

|

Peter Flagg Maxson (b.1947), of Austin, Texas and Duxbury, Massachusetts
m. John Charles Randolph Taylor V

From the *Albany Register*: "Epitaph on Mifs Hannah Bull of Hartford who died of Spotted Fever March 1st 1809"

On this sad spot where angel vigils keep
No fair untainted mind than blush to weep
For her, alas, in holy ruin laid
The hallowed form of a once gen'rous maid
So fair in life, so spotless was her fame
Envy ne'er spent its venom on the name; chaste was her mind,
with nature's noblest feelings glowed

She was a favorite of her father, who she loved with sincerest filial affection. Her death was preceded only one day by the death of a beloved sister, one was followed, only one day intervening, but that of another - all three victims of the same disorder

Dressed miniature of Captain Frederic (Bedd) Seymour (1796)

Photo courtesy of Peter Flagg Maxson

19TH CENTURY MOURNING PRACTICES

By Ken Giorlando – Reprinted with permission from the Passion for the Past blog *www.passionforthepast.blogspot.com* ©2011

At times during living history events I get the distinct pleasure of taking part in what I'm sure would be considered a very unusual scenario in modern society: 19th century mourning. Specifically, Civil War era mourning. At a couple of our living history events, one which took place at Waterloo Farms and one that took place at Charlton Park - both in Michigan - a number of us in the Michigan Soldiers Aid Society (MSAS) went all out in our mourning scenario and put together a very authentic and eerily realistic presentation.

Please allow me to explain a bit about a part of life in the 1860s that we here in the 21st century rarely speak of: death.

First off, as you probably know, death happened quite frequently for younger people during the "pre-electrical times" - it was much more commonplace at a younger age than today; infant mortality rate was extremely high, death during childbirth was the number one cause of a woman's death, and then there were the "everyday" causes: consumption (TB), influenza, cancer, pneumonia, etc., and even something as seemingly insignificant as a minor cut, if it became infected, could cause death.

A widow in mourning

Photo courtesy of Ken Giorlando

But let's get rid of this misnomer that "the average lifespan of humans in 1860 was 45 years old," or "...in 1900 the average lifespan was 50 years old," or whatever other fallacy the e-mails or statisticians say. I mean, it sounds like if you were 39 in the 1860s you had one foot in the grave, for Pete's sake!

Well, let's clear this mess up once and for all:

In general, folks in the 18th and 19th centuries lived nearly as long as we do today. Yes, it's true. If the statisticians would take the time to read journals of the period, or census records of long ago they would find a good majority of adults living to a ripe old age.

A widow in the graveyard
Photo courtesy of Ken Giorlando

As a genealogist I have found that all of my 1st, 2nd and even 3rd great-grandparents lived well into their 60s, 70s and 80s. Even my direct line dating back beyond the 3rd greats tended to have a long lifespan – well, at least of those I could find. And, yes, I have a couple that did die rather young – in their 40s and 50s – they were women and they died during childbirth.

So why is this false average lifespan information being passed around as fact? Because, technically, it is true – the average life span in 1860 actually was around 45 years of age. The average lifespan. Now, take into account that, up until the mid-20th century, the infant mortality rate was pretty high. Er...I mean, very high. As I stated, death was extremely common, unfortunately, for infants before their first birthday. So common, in fact, that many parents would not even name the infant until it reached 1 or 2 years of age. My 2nd great-grandmother, Linnie Robertshaw, practiced this custom in the later part of the 19th century.

So, with all things considered, death was more common, but it was due to disease, childbirth, and infant mortality rather than old age as is the misconception being spread.

Because of this, death in the 19th century was much more an accepted part of life. Of course, the religious faith played a major role in allaying that fear, for folks were openly religious – far more than anyone alive today has ever witnessed – and that was their comfort, for they believed strongly in an afterlife.

(I feel part of our thought process here in the 21st century actually harms our acceptance of death's occurrences. We feel we've come so far in medical technology that death should almost be an exception rather than the rule, haven't we?)

Anyhow, with that in mind, let's look at the era of the American Civil War:

As you probably know, during the Civil War death touched nearly everyone, whether it was an immediate family member, an extended relation, or one who lived in their community. For the soldiers fighting, death was not only caused from the wounds of battle, but from disease. In fact, from the over 620,000 soldiers that died during the four-year conflict, more died from disease than from bullets.

And, as stated toward the beginning of this posting, death was ever-present as well for those on the home front.

So, with death ever-present, how did folks deal with it during the mid-Victorian period in American history?

Here is a (very) basic mourning overview:

"Americans responded to death as a constant companion, and even embraced it with resignation and ritual. Americans...were intimately acquainted with death. Victorians embraced mourning as a sub-culture. It impacted how people dressed, how they behaved in society, and even how they decorated their homes."[1]

"Women were responsible for mourning in the family, and carried the responsibility of preparing mourning garments and making sure everyone was dressed properly."[2]

In preparation for the visitation and funeral services, the home of the deceased would have an outward appearance to show the community that there was a death in the family. Draping the front door and/or doorknob in a black crepe with ribbons (or in white if it was the death of a child) was the most common practice.

---

[1] Mehaffey, Karen Rae. *Rachel Weeping: Mourning in Nineteenth Century America*. Northville: Moss Rose Books, 2006. Print.

[2] *Ibid*.

Inside the home mourning took on an appearance that many here in the 21st century would consider morbid, for virtually anything reflective (or shiny in many cases) would be covered, such as mirrors and glass of any kind, including picture frame glass. Crepe could also be draped over fireplace mantels, windows, shelves, and other household items, especially in the bedroom of the deceased.

Clocks would be stopped at the time of death and would not be restarted until the burial was over. Ribbon or flower-covered black wreaths were hung on doors, windows, and mantels. Window curtains and shades were also drawn, and shutters closed.

According to Bernadette Loeffel-Atkins:

"The home was to remain quiet and calm, there was to be no confusion or loud talking while the body remained in the house. The departed loved one would be placed on viewing in the family parlor of the home."

As for death announcements and funeral invitations (yes, you heard me – people were invited to the funeral!), or even for personal letters from the mourners, stationary would be white with a black

Mourning wreaths

Photo courtesy of Ken Giorlando

border; "the wider the border, the deeper the mourning of the writer."

These announcements and invitations were hand delivered to the family and friends of the deceased.

Mourning pertaining to women was in three stages: deep mourning, second mourning, and half mourning.

A parlor set up for mourning
Photo courtesy of Ken Giorlando

Mourning a spouse generally would last one to 2 ½ years
For a parent: 6 months to a year
For children over 10 years old: 6 months to a year
For children under 10 years 3 to 6 months
Infants: 6 weeks and up
For siblings: 6 to 8 months
For aunts and uncles: 3 to 6 months
For cousins: 6 weeks to 3 months
For aunts or uncles related by marriage: 6 weeks to 3 months
Grandparents: 6 months
For more distant relatives and friends: 3 weeks and up

(Mourning for parents, children, grandparents, in-laws, and relatives such as cousins and uncles or aunts vary. One would need to read a book to learn about all of the differing types and lengths of the mourning process and customs. This posting is just an overview for the loss of a spouse).

Deep mourning was the first stage of mourning for a woman, and it immediately followed the death of a husband, wife, or child. Mourning clothes were expected to be plain with little or no adornment. A woman – let's say she's a widow – while in deep mourning would wear all black clothing and jewelry, including, while out in public, gloves and a black veil over her face. Hats were not to be worn for mourning; Bonnets covered in crape would replace them. She would not speak with anyone but her family or closest friends. She would not attend parties or gatherings and would basically seclude herself from the public in general. She would stay in this deep mourning for at least a year and a day, and sometimes longer, and there are instances where some women would never leave this stage.

Second stage mourning followed deep mourning and lasted around 9 to 12 months. Full mourning collars and cuffs were replaced by white, veils were taken off, crape was discarded, and jewelry of a wider variety was worn.

By this second year the woman could add lace. The veil was of black crape, and very long, but by the second year it could be shortened.

The widow's deceased husband comforts her

Photo courtesy of Ken Giorlando

Now we enter half mourning. This was the last stage of a woman's mourning ritual. It was during these last 6 months that the widow could include the addition of lilac, lavender, violet, mauve, and gray. She was no longer limited to just black with a touch of white. She would use black and white ornaments for evening wear, bonnets were white, lavender silk or straw.

Dresses with bold prints were also acceptable fashion.

Two different stages of mourning
Photo courtesy of Ken Giorlando

For specific periods of time, depending on their community mores, a widow would not leave her home and did not receive any visitors. After a respectable time, she would then send out black edged cards advising friends and family that her time of heavy mourning had passed and she could now receive visitors. Parties, weddings, and other social affairs were hands off to those in at least the first two stages of mourning, and many times in the half mourning as well.

In general, it took about two and a half years for a woman to complete the mourning process over her deceased husband. With each stage she slowly became part of society again. Once the three stages of mourning were complete, the widow could now store her mourning clothing and begin wearing her normal everyday wear and join into society functions completely.

For a man, mourning was quite different. Men were needed to take care of the family and the business; therefore, he was needed to return to his occupation as soon as the deceased was buried.

A male's mourning garb was his best (dark) suit with a weeper (made of crape) wrapped around the hatband of his hat. Although there are some differences of opinions, most agree that men also wore a black armband. A man might wear a black cockade[1] on his lapel as well.

[1] A cockade is a knot of ribbons, or other circular- or oval-shaped symbol of distinctive colours which is usually worn on a hat. Wikipedia, s.v. "Cockade," last modified September 21, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cockade.

The preacher and a friend - note the black crepe armband

Photo courtesy of Ken Giorlando

Once a widower's wife was buried, chances are he may look for a new wife soon after – especially if he had young children at home or if she died giving birth to a living child. Here's the kicker: if he re-married shortly after his deceased wife was buried, his new wife might then mourn for the first wife, wearing all of the mourning clothing and going through the stages as described above! Now, how about those who attended funerals and were not part of the immediate family?

Well, according to Heather Sheen, from the site Creative Cockades, "it is a common misconception today that people attending funerals in the 1860s wore the full black attire of widows and widowers. On the contrary, full mourning attire was reserved for the family of the deceased only. It was considered improper and even rude for non-family members to wear full mourning."[2]

Mourning attire had a specific purpose in the 1860s – To publicly create a "shield"

[2] http://www.creativecockades.blogspot.com/.

for the family during their time of deep grief. The mourning family was not required to make public appearances of any kind – the widows were even relieved from having to go out to do regular shopping. Heavy veils for women protected them from prying eyes who might see their pale faces and tears. A grieving family was given space and time to heal without the stress of dealing with the public.

Thus, it made no sense for non-family to wear mourning attire even in sympathy.

So, what did a person do to show public honor for the deceased?

The answer is they wore mourning badges!

Mourning cockades and badges were appropriate for men and women of all ages. They could be worn simply to the funeral or worn for several months thereafter. Photos and drawings show mourning badges of many designs being worn by a grieving public.

During our mourning presentation in Waterloo, we not only showed what mourning was like in the home, but we also held a funeral, with pall bearers, a procession to a graveyard, and a preacher reciting the 23rd Psalm – accurate except for the lack of a real body in the coffin and a burial.

This was a very realistic immersion of a funeral

Photo courtesy of Ken Giorlando

(A side note: At the Charlton Park mourning presentation we actually used an MSAS member volunteer as a "corpse" atop a slab in the parlor!)

We do our best to be as authentic as we can. We've had modern visitors tell us that we make them feel as if they've stepped through a portal to the past.

It's scenarios like what we in the Michigan Soldiers Aid Society present at Waterloo and Charlton Park that help to bring history to life (so to speak!). This is also why I reenact – this is my passion. Some folks have said we take it "too far."

That we are too serious.

That we take the fun out of reenacting.

Well, maybe you are quite wrong. This is our fun – bringing the past too life as accurately and authentically as we can is our high.

As a side note I'd like to add a bit of social commentary to this posting:

During our scenario in Waterloo, I had more than one patron comment on how the respect that, at one time, was shown to those in mourning as well as to the deceased is long gone, that people would rather "party" in our modern day and age instead of mourn, and the deceased is soon forgotten.

A weeping widow

Photo courtesy of Ken Giorlando

In many ways they are right.

Oh, yes, we have the three-day funeral and all that, but it is quite different today. I mean, I do believe that a party for the dearly departed is not such a bad thing. But there should be more time and more ritual for the mourning process. In fact, I believe a time for actual mourning is needed, contrary to popular contemporary belief.

A very good example of this is when my wife lost her mother back in 2008. A couple of weeks after my mother-in-law's death, we had a memorial service. In this gathering we had many friends and family, some who traveled quite a distance, giving their happy remembrances of my wife's mom. My wife then read a beautiful eulogy which brought nearly every visitor to tears, and our eldest son strummed the guitar and sang "Poor Wayfaring Stranger" in a special tribute. To complete the service there was a nice setting of food.

But even though this memorial was supposed to bring closure, I could see that it didn't, at least not for my wife. She continuously cried herself to sleep and had bouts with depression for months – even more than a year afterward, but she still couldn't mourn outside of our home it seemed. My wife has not truly, to this day, been able to mourn – to grieve – as she would like.

She has been told that "life goes on," and to "get over it." Society just does not allow for open mourning without strongly suggesting sending the mourner to a psychiatrist, who will invariably put them on some anti-depressant.

However, shortly after Christmas of that year of 2008 – just a couple months after her mother's death – we participated in our unit's Christmas party. It was a period dress Christmas get-together as is usual for us. But this year I noticed that, instead of wearing her nice flower-print brown day dress, she instead wore her lavender day dress with a mourning brooch I bought for her earlier that year.

The empty chair
Photo courtesy of Ken Giorlando

Not necessarily period correct, but it was a last-minute idea on her part.

Some there at the party noticed.

And they asked her.

She told me afterward how wonderful it made her feel that people not only were aware of her state but also gave her their condolences.

It helped her in her grieving and mourning.

I actually saw her smile.

And that lead me to finally fully understand the mourning practices of the 19th century: it gave one – including men, albeit a much shorter length and less rules – the opportunity to mourn, and to let others know how they are feeling. It gave the mourner the right to cry *whenever* and have others understand. It gave the mourner the right to be angry *whenever* and have others understand. It gave the mourner the right to be moody and have others understand.

It gave the widow the right to grieve whenever she needed to.

And, that's what we cannot do in this modern day and age. We need to mourn and to know it's OK to mourn without anyone saying things such as, "It's been a couple months, you should be over it by now!" and then having some doctor wanting to shove pills down our throats to help us "get over it." I don't necessarily mean we should go back to the mourning practices of our 19th century ancestors, but to give us the opportunity to actually mourn and not for three days; Not for a week or a month. But for however long it takes.

Our ancestors were much smarter than today's society gives them credit for.

I do not completely understand my interest in the mourning procedures of the 19th century, but I have found that I'm not alone in this infatuation. There are many folks – especially in the reenacting world – who also have a strong interest in this as well. But, as strange as this may sound, I had an opportunity to experience time as an 1860s widow myself. Seriously and respectfully, I might add.

Besides the information from the books and pamphlets listed below, I would also like to give thanks to Tonya Hunter for putting together the scenarios at Charlton Park as well as Waterloo Farms. You did an awesome job Tonya!

And many thanks to Sandy Root (see picture above of both Sandy and Tonya standing together in full and half stage mourning) for all of her knowledge about not only the mourning practices of

the 1860s, but her knowledge of 19th century social history in general.

Oh, and I cannot forget the mourning knowledge of my very good friend, Kim Parr, of the Crocker House Museum in Mt. Clemens. Kim, along with her good friend Stephanie, began the mourning presentation at the Adams House at Greenfield Village back in the 1990s.

Besides the information from Kim, Sandy, and Tonya, here are the three main books I used for this post:

Rachel Weeping II: Mourning in Nineteenth Century America by Karen Rae Mehaffey

The After-Life: Mourning rituals and the Mid-Victorians by Karen Rae Mehaffey

Widow's Weeds and Weeping Veils: Mourning Rituals in 19th Century America by Bernadette Loeffel-Atkins

Those of us who participated in the mourning presentation at the Sixberry House in Charlton Park. This photograph was taken with a tintype camera made in the 1880s.

Photo courtesy of Ken Giorlando

MARY JANE ALFORD GREEN

A Widow in Mourning

By AGS Member Angela Doetsch

I have always found mourning customs adapted from the Victorian era (1837-1901) to be fascinating – Especially, when it comes to elaborate art, apparel and jewelry made in memory of the dearly departed. You can find beautifully intricate wall-hangings and jewelry made with the woven hair of the deceased and lockets containing gem tin type photographs so one can carry their loved ones close to the heart.

I have collected a few examples of mourning jewelry over the years, but I never thought I would find a real example of one from my ancestors.

In 2017, I attended a reunion held for our Green family. One of my cousins brought a family album filled with amazing photographs collected by her family branch over the years. It was a joy to flip through the pages and see pictures of family from years past.

I was especially excited to come across an original photo of my 3rd great-grandmother, Mary Jane Alford Green. Years before, I came across a photocopy of the very same picture on a website a cousin created called, Our Texas Family.[1] It was of poor quality, but I cherished the find, nonetheless. The original showed more detail and was a beautiful sepia tone vs. the black and white photocopy I had. I had a rudimentary scanner app on my iPhone (better than a picture of a picture) and scanned a copy to replace the poor-quality photocopy I already had.

A few months later, I was backing up the photos from my phone to add to my computer and took a closer look at the photo. It appeared that Mary was dressed in black and seemed somewhat, sad.

I was amazed at what I noticed next!

Pinned at the top of Mary's dress was what appeared to be a small photo.

[1] Our Texas Family, s.v. "Green Family," last modified August 11, 2013, http://ourtexasfamilycom.ipage.com/Alford-Green-Williams/Green-Family-Texas.html.

Photocopy of mourning portrait of Mary Jane Alford Green
www.ourtexasfamilycom.ipage.com/Alford-Green-Williams/Green-Family-Texas.html

Scan of original mourning portrait of Mary Jane Alford Green
Photo courtesy of Angela Doetsch

I uploaded the photograph to photo-editing software and attempted to enhance and enlarge the photo. What I suspected was confirmed – there was a photo of a man pinned to her dress. I enlarged the photo even more, and while the quality still isn't perfect, the face was familiar. It was that of her husband (my 3rd great-grandfather), John Marion Green. The newly cherished photo of Mary Green was clearly taken while she was in the mourning period after the death of her husband.

Close-up of mourning brooch
Photo courtesy of Angela Doetsch

(l) Mourning brooch of John Marion Green
(r) John Marion Green
Photo courtesy of Angela Doetsch

Mary Jane Alford was born on November 26, 1852, in Washington County, Texas to parents Hatch Alford (1815-1866) and Martha Jane Elizabeth Longley (1830-1860). The Alford family lived in Burleson County, Texas, where Hatch was a farmer. Hatch and Martha Alford were married on December 23, 1848, in Austin County, Texas. They had three children together until the untimely death of their wife and mother, Martha in 1860. While, it hasn't been proven through documentation, I believe that Martha died during childbirth with their son, George Washington, who was born in January of 1860.

Hatch, now widowed, was left to care for his three young children – Mary Jane (aged 8); John Posey (aged 6); Caroline Ruth (aged 4); and George Washington (a newly born infant).

Hatch enlisted for the Home Guard during the Civil War and subsequently was left with a wounded leg. In 1866, while plowing a field, he re-injured the leg, got blood poisoning and died. His children, now orphans at the tender ages of 13, 11,

10 and 6 were sent to live with their uncle, Winfield Alford, in Gonzales, Texas.

Winfield Alford (1804-1877) and his wife, Eliza Derrington (1809-1867) were among the first families of Texas – listed in Stephen F. Austin's *Register of Families* as arriving on June 15, 1832. Winfield was a Veteran of the Texas Revolutionary War and Citizen of the Republic of Texas. "Prior to Texas independence, Winfield Alford served under Col. William B. Travis in San Antonio, fought in the Battles of Old Mill and Concepcion"[2] and was now a prominent landowner of 5458 acres along Peach Creek in Gonzales.

It was in Gonzales, that Mary Jane Alford met John Marion Green, whose father, James Green, owned land in neighboring Thompsonville, in Gonzales County.

On July 8, 1869, Mary Jane Alford married John Marion Green. As an interesting side-note, just five months earlier, John Marion's older brother William Green (1843-1912) had married Winfield's youngest daughter, Eliza Amanda Alford (1852-1930).

By the late 1880s, both John Marion and William Green, relocated their families to Williamson County, Texas, in what is now Georgetown.

John Marion and Mary Jane had nine children within 14 years – James Calvin (1870-1944); Lenora "Nora" (1872-1953); Callie A (1874-1874); William Calvin (1875-1939); Johnnie Anna (1876-1946); George Washington (1878-1881); A set of twins – Sarah Ann "Pinkie" (1881-1883) and Mary Ann "Candy" (1881-1968); and Adella "Della" (1884-1946).

John Marion Green died peacefully in his sleep on the Green family farm on October 30, 1901.

Mary Jane Alford Green, eventually went to live with her oldest son, James, who had moved to Brownfield, Texas. There Mary lived out her years, known lovingly by the community as "Grandmother Green," until her death on October 8, 1921.

"She made everyone better who knew her. Her room where she stayed seemed to be the brightest spot anywhere, because of her cheerfulness." In all of her

[2] Our Texas Family, s.v. "Winfield Alford," last modified August 11, 2013, http://ourtexasfamilycom.ipage.com/Alford-Green-Williams/Alford-Winfield.html.

affliction she never complained, resigning completely to the will of God, expressing the words again of the great Apostle, when he said: "For our light affliction which is but for the moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."[3]

As far as I know, Mary's mourning brooch of John Marion, has been lost to time, but now we have our own memento of her undying love for him through the discovery of a photo shared at a family reunion.

On the porch of the Green Family Farm, Georgetown, Texas, ca.1900
(l to r): James "Big Jim" Green, Adella Green, Mary "Candy" Green, Mary Jane Alford Green, John Marion Green
Photo courtesy of Claudia Doerfler

[3] Our Texas Family, s.v. "Green Family," last modified August 11, 2013, http://ourtexasfamilycom.ipage.com/Alford-Green-Williams/Green-Family-Texas.html.

GRIFF

Chapter XIV: Loss

By AGS Member Glenda Lassiter

Griff (Gordon Oscar Griffitts) was born in 1908, near Jermyn, Texas in Jack County. In 1990, at age 82, Griff recorded the story of his life on audio tapes. When he died the following year, he left the tapes to his daughter, Glenda Lassiter, asking her to write his memoir from them.

Chapters 1-13 are serialized in the Austin Genealogical Society Quarterly beginning in the winter edition of 2015.

Chapter 1 – "Sand" (December 2015 Vol. 56 No. 4)

Chapter 2 – "A Child in Texas" (June 2016 Vol. 57 No. 2)

Chapter 3 – "Graduation" (September 2016 Vol. 57 No. 3)

Chapter 4 – "Leaving Home" (December 2016 Vol. 57 No. 4)

Chapter 5 – "Denton" (March 2017 Vol. 58 No. 1)

Chapter 6 – "College" (June 2017 Vol. 58 No. 2)

Chapter 7 – "The Deal" (September 2017 Vol. 58 No. 3)

Chapter 8 – "Last Year of College" (December 2017 Vol. 58 No. 4)

Chapter 9 – "Exams" (Spring 2018 Vol. 59 No. 1)

Photographs from Griff's Life – (Summer 2018 Vol. 59 No. 2)

Chapter 10 – "The Monitor Top" (Fall 2018 Vol. 59 No. 3)

Chapter 11 – "A Christmas Robbery" (Winter 2018 Vol. 59 No. 4)

Chapter 12 – "Wed" (Spring 2019 Vol. 60 No. 1)

Chapter 13 – "In Business" (Summer 2019 Vol. 60 No. 2)

Griff's eyes reddened with tears and his nostrils filled with smoke as he wandered almost aimlessly through the smoldering remains of his ruined store. Blackened shells of what had been bright and shiny new appliances stood, still smoking from the conflagration. He was suddenly six years old again, walking with his father through the ruined cotton fields, broken and smashed by the hailstorm that destroyed the crop 21 years ago. The destruction of the fields had ended his father's hopes of farming, and the disappointment seemed to bring on the attack of appendicitis that took his life. His father's dream had been lost. He wondered if his own dream was now lost to this devastating fire.

His store had been in a large space he had rented on the ground floor of the old Jefferson Hotel. The fire had destroyed the five-floor hotel as well as his store. The hotel had been evacuated, and, miraculously, no one was hurt. The source of the fire had been in the hotel kitchen. He could not believe it was only last night that he, Desda, his employees, and their families were celebrating the success of the store on its first anniversary in a banquet room here in the hotel. He had opened his sparkling appliance store in July of 1934. Now, in July of 1935, it was all destroyed by the fire. Gone.

Desda stood on their front porch a few blocks away holding three-year-old Jeannine in her arms. She shuddered when she thought of Griff's sadness and their burned store, but she tried to pretend that nothing out of the ordinary had happened, for Jeannine's sake.

Griff finally came home from inspecting the damage at the store and fell into her arms. He had no tears left as she held him close. Finally, he stood on his own and looked into her eyes,

"Honey, I had just unloaded a train car full of appliances in the back of the store. We're lucky that they were still covered by the merchandiser's insurance, so we're not going to have to pay for those. But we have only $4,000 in insurance to cover the appliances and contents. We're not going to be able to save one thing," he said.

As he talked, she could see that his eyes were haunted by the guilt of not having purchased more insurance on the contents of the store.

"It will be okay. You will work it out. You always do," she said.

But that night she woke to find that he was not in bed. She found him hunched over at the kitchen table, holding his head in his hands. She quietly sat down at the table beside him.

Always a heavy smoker, he had become a chain smoker since the fire. He knew it

was bad for him, but he always had a cigarette hanging from his unsmiling lips. He was sure that this was all somehow his fault. When he tried to turn to the Bible for solace, all he could recall was the verse in Proverbs that said, "Pride goeth before destruction." He agonized about how proud he had been of his success in business.

But Desda's confidence in him ignited a ray of hope in him. Talking to her helped him think of what they still had. He would recite to her, "Well, we've got that little grocery store that we can sell. And there's that storefront over in Vernon with a few Maytags on the floor. We'll just have to work out how to cover our losses."

"I know everything is going to be okay. We'll just do what we have to do to get on our feet again," she said. "We've gotten this far, and we can do it again. We have each other and Jeannine. We can do anything together."

One day he came home looking particularly distressed. He said, "Honey, I never dreamed anything like this could happen. We may have to sell the house."

"There will be other houses," Desda said, choking back tears.

Time crawled by as every day Griff set about trying to resolve the problems created by the fire. He began to make deals to cover his losses. He owed a merchandiser named Sparks for the appliances that had burned.

Griff was trembling as he approached Sparks. He said, "I'm not going to be able to pay you for the appliances that burned in the showroom. I think my house can bring about $6,000 if you'll take it to pay my debt. We just need to rent it from you until we decide where we're going to move. Just til the end of the year."

Sparks replied, "Griff, it breaks my heart to have to accept your offer. I know how much your home means to you. But, of course, I have creditors too who will want their money."

Griff had financed purchases for customers at the store, and now he had to arrange to sell the notes for the money owed him to the First State Bank in Amarillo.

He felt he had to compensate his employees for any wages and commissions they had not received. He planned to borrow the money to pay off his employees. Furthermore, he knew if he did not reopen the store, his employees would all be put out of work. Griff felt awful about that. The country was in the depth of the depression and this was the worst time for people to lose their jobs. Times were hard everywhere. The Great Depression that

had begun in the United States in 1929 had become a worldwide depression as the world moved into the 1930s.

As he went about the little community talking to businesspeople and looking for solutions to his overwhelming problems, Electra seemed to have become a sorry town. People were even getting laid off from the oil fields. During this horrible Depression, the demand for fuel had fallen off.

Just being in Electra cast a pall over Griff's normally cheerful and optimistic disposition. He found himself sinking further and further into debt. When he came home each night, his outlook had become so dismal that Desda was becoming alarmed. Griff was really suffering. He did not know what he was going to do.

By the end of that year of 1935, Griff could not see a way to stay in Electra. He came home with a decision.

"Desda, we're not going to be able to reopen the store here in Electra," he said. "I've decided to sell the dealership here and move us to Vernon. We've got that little Maytag dealership over there, and I think we have a better chance in Vernon."

Desda was not too surprised. Several times since the fire they had talked about the possibility of moving. Desda had been content in Electra, but she didn't know any more about Vernon than she had known about Electra when they moved there seven years ago. Electra was the only place she had lived since they had married, and this is where she had had her baby. She had sentimental attachments to Electra.

"If you think we'll have a better chance in Vernon, we need to move there," she said. Desda was ready to move anywhere that would help restore Griff's peace of mind.

Griff had hired Desda's brother Ross to work in sales in Griffitts Electric before it had burned. After the fire Griff had moved Ross to Vernon to work in the appliance store there, so Desda's best friend, her sister-in-law, Zella Jo had already moved to Vernon.

Griff said, "Even though Vernon is only 21 miles from here, it's a lot different. It is about half again the size of Electra and is a more up and coming town. It is on the edge of the Waggoner Ranch which provides a lot of financial support. It's not an oil boomtown like Electra, but the oil boom is beginning to play out. Vernon is a farming town and is much more prosperous than Electra. They have a big Baptist Church. I think you'll really like living in Vernon."

Vernon had a more interesting history than Electra. It had originally been on the western branch of the Chisholm Trail which was used in the post-Civil War to drive cattle from Texas ranches to railheads in Kansas. In 1878, C. F. Doan and his wife and child became the first settlers in Wilbarger County. They built an adobe house on the Red River and a trading post and the Cowboy Saloon. This little community became known as the famous Doan's Crossing on the Chisholm Trail.

In 1880, fifteen miles south of the Doan's Crossing, two settlers shoveled out a dugout and called the place Eagle Flat because of all the eagles in the area. In 1881, Eagle Flat was awarded a post office. However, the postal department said there were too many communities with the name Eagle, so the residents chose to name the community Vernon. They selected this name in honor of George Washington's home of Mount Vernon. Vernon became the county seat of Wilbarger County in 1882. It was surrounded by miles of fertile red soil just waiting for farmers to plant and irrigate.

At the edge of the little town flowed Pease River, a tributary of the big Red River that separated Texas from Oklahoma where the Doan family had established Doan's Crossing. The river was named for Elisha M. Pease, the fifth and thirteenth governor of Texas. Famously, it was here on the Pease River that the Texas Rangers had recaptured the mother of Quanah Parker, Cynthia Ann Parker, from the Comanches in 1860, at the Battle of Pease River.

Griff, Desda, and 4-year-old Jeannine moved from Electra to Vernon in 1936. Desda did like living in Vernon. It was a much prettier town than Electra, with large houses with wide lawns and towering trees, quite unlike the colorless boarding houses and bland rent houses that lined the streets of Electra. While Electra was the spawn of the fast money and impermanent nature of the oil boom, Vernon conveyed substantial, long-term generational wealth built on land ownership.

They rented a small frame house on Wilbarger Street. Unfortunately, Griff found that the appliance business in Vernon was not prospering for him as it had in Electra before the fire. 1936 was such a dry year that nobody made any money on cotton. And Vernon was a cotton town.

Dust storms had been besieging the farms all around Vernon and all over the Great Plains throughout the decade. April 14, 1935, had come to be known as Black Sunday when an enormous cloud of dust rolled across the Great Plains. It was the largest of the dust storms that

had been regularly raging across and blowing away the topsoil of the farms.

Griff soon repossessed over 110 washing machines. Some of them were really beaten up and could never be resold. He had to rent a storage space from a businessman in Vernon just to store all his repossessed merchandise.

Even in Vernon things seemed to go from bad to worse. He finally made a deal to sell the Vernon dealership to a man named Moore for $5,200. Griff agreed to finance the appliances that Moore sold.

Moore started pulling some fast deals on him. He could not see a way recoup his losses and make a success of the appliance business in the midst of the desperation of the Great Depression. Griff's despair deepened.

He did not know what he was going to do.

(To be continued) …

PIONEER FAMILIES OF TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

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

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

http://www.austintxgensoc.org/pioneers/ or from Kay Dunlap Boyd, 3616 Far West Blvd. Ste. 117-247, Austin, Texas 78731. Each application is $20, and the certificates make nice gifts. You don't have to be a Travis County resident or a member of Austin Genealogical Society, although membership in the Society is another fine bargain at $25 a year.

INDEX

Austin Genealogical Society
3616 Far West Blvd.
Ste. 117-247
Austin, Texas 78731