

905 Meadowlark Lane
Stephenville, Texas 76401
January 14, 1984

Dear Cousins,

It is cold this afternoon with the threat of ice or snow. We had 3 weeks of the worst weather ever beginning Dec. 16, then a week of unusually warm weather. Now back to bad weather. If you do not like Texas weather, just wait, it will change. The last few years have gone from winter to summer and summer to winter without much spring or fall. That gives me something else to complain about.

As you read Bill's stories, you will learn that Obediah's "galloping consumption" was brought on by exposure during recovery from the measles when he was forced to flee the Carpet-bagger. Ann Guffey says 6 sisters died and Bill says 4. The family sheet shows six died by 1880. The two married ones were probably also helping take care of the ill and contracted the disease also. Whether 4 or 6 is still that many too many in one family, especially since it was one of our ancestors.

All of that may have influenced some of the families to leave Tenn. & others to leave that country.

We are not far from the Brazos River. The real name of the river is Brazos de ~~San~~ Dios meaning "Arms of God". It is hundreds of miles long - going into the Gulf of Mexico at Freeport. Do you know where on the Brazos your great grandmother was buried?

Concerning Robert Mansell, Jr., he did die in Bethaniel NC at the home of his sister in 1831. He had a will in testament from his father and he had not claimed any money of his own, and evidently did not tell his brothers & sisters about his wife & "Patsy". After many years of waiting for his family, ^{to appear} his estate was finally divided between brothers & sisters. They don't know whether there was a divorce - misunderstanding or what. But Robert went to his sister Elizabeth & died there a month later - Evidently Martha White never knew or something prevented her from going to claim her inheritance. - Something she really needed.

The tombstone picture Ann sent of James Shell's mother says Charity Martin on it. ^{She} had been born in 1806 but she was born 1796, the best I can read the death date is July 1876. The Hubble Shell Cemetery is 7 miles from Athens. A cousin Lewis Hubble owns the old place. There is also a Mansell Cemetery about 7 miles W of Athens off the old Decatur Pike. 16 graves but one cannot read any inscriptions if they are there. In the mid 1800's Obediah and Martha moved near Jellico Plains in Monroe County.

Ann says tradition has it that Obediah's father and his brother came from Virginia down the Ohio River - stopped and made a crop on Maysville Ky. The brother went on to Ill. near Chicago & Obediah's father came up the Tennessee to Mc Minn. Co. One of Obediah's ancestors was governor of Virginia. Why don't you trace that side & clue? When you find the governor's name, you may find the White genealogy already

traced for us - It is often done for public officials (with or without their consent).

I remember all eight of Great grandfathers & Whites' children & loved them very much - I worshipped my grandfathers - I began teaching Sunday School & doing church work while I was very young. We attended all churches in the Community for we were part of a Christian Community (ecumenical, but didn't know it at that time) When I began teaching School had to do my church work at the Baptist and Church of Christ churches, because there was no Methodist Church there. I wrote my grandfather about it. I still have the penny postal with his reply - It shouldn't hurt them or me & would be good for all. Last fall the local church honored me for 53 years of Sunday School teaching.

* Mrs. Cleo Joyner lives in Athens. One of Bill Guffey's sisters, and Ann said she would be happy to show me around and I'm sure the same would hold for you.

I'm voiding your check. Your intentions were good - but you spoil my gifts of love when you do that. If I should ever land in the "poor house" you can send me a letter to cheer me up - Meanwhile I'm thrilled to have Cousins to share family history. As I said Whites are few and far between - so I cherish each one.

I will copy some of Bill's letters as soon as I have time. Last Tuesday my daughter in law fell on the stairs at home. She crushed one vertebrae and squished another. She is in the hospital in a brace (for 3 mos) but we

think she'll be able to come home Monday or
Tuesday. Meanwhile Jim Cook, Topi to the grand-
daughters, errand runner, dispenser of advice &
pills to which the girls say "Aw, Grandmother,"
They don't know I laugh behind their back, for
I've dealt with teen-agers for over 50 years -
They are repeating their daddy's cycle -
You may need a glass of seven up after
you have digested all this -

Love,
Lillie Ruth Laird

Francis Marion McKenzie, variously called "Frank", "Mack", "Crockett" and "Crock" was born at Riceville, McMinn Co., Tenn. 17 Dec. 1851, fifth child of Francis Marion McKenzie, born N.C. c. 1820 and his wife Amanda, born Tenn. c. 1825. The 1860 Tenn. census dated 27 June, Riceville shows Francis (Jr.) aged 9. He was only 8 at this time. The 1870 Census shows Francis aged 18 living at home with his parents. On 16 Oct 1870, still aged 18, he married in McMinn Co., Nancy Abigail Shell, called "Nannie", born 17 Jan. 1852 at Spring Creek, McMinn Co., sixth child of James B. Shell (11 March 1817 - 8 Dec 1897) and his wife Lucinda White (26 Feb. 1824 - 16 Sep 1903), second child of Obediah and Martha (called "Patsy") (Manwell) White. Francis McKenzie clearly was not a soldier during the Confederate War, being only aged 13 when that war ended in April 1865.

Charity Rebecca Shell (11 June 1846 - 29 May 1933) who married 20 Dec. 1866 George Washington Coffey was the second of the nine Shell daughters. She and Nancy Abigail were the only two to escape tuberculosis which their brother Captain Obediah White Shell, CSA (28 Mar 1844 - 24 Mar 1875) apparently contracted while on military service 1861-65 and transmitted to his sisters.

In 1881 Francis Marion ("Crock") and Nancy Abigail (Shell) McKenzie emigrated to ^{where he was elected Sheriff of Franklin Co;} Arkansas ^{their only surviving child.} James Obediah McKenzie, Spring Creek, McMinn Co. 12 Mar. 1872. Nancy Abigail (Shell) McKenzie died in Franklin Co., Ark. 14 Aug. 1913; Francis Marion McKenzie died in Norman, Okla. in 1927.