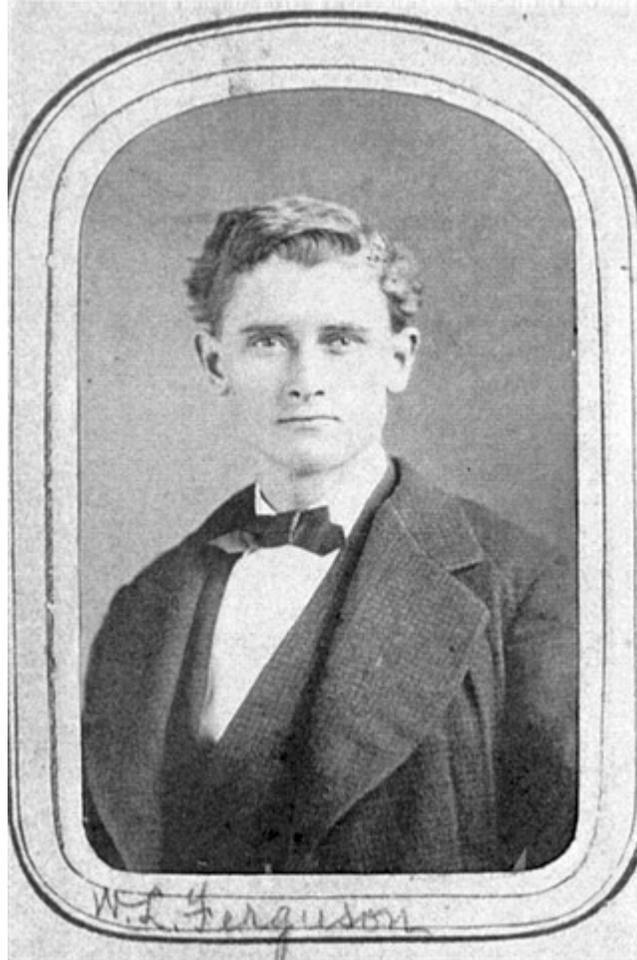


Reminiscence or Family History
by W. L. Ferguson

(This was written in either 1917 or 1918 & contributed by Sherry Winter)



My people moved from Miss. to Ark during the years from 1840 to 1845. Of my father's family there were twelve brothers and sisters of whom my father whose name was Joe, or Joseph, was the oldest. My mother's maiden name was Hatchell. Her people lived in La. There was made a Ferguson Township in Drew Co. Ark where my people settled, but after they had been settled there a number of years, there was a lot of sickness among them - chills and fever with much malaria which caused the death of so many that there was quite a scattering out of many others. My mother and then father died in the time between 1856 and 1860. My uncle and aunt, Pleasant D' Lafayette and Annie Roberson took the two youngest brothers - Benjamin Franklin and myself to raise. There were ten of us boys and girls, several of whom died in infancy or quite young. Brother Edwin the oldest to live to be grown joined the Confederate army and was killed at the battle of Gettysburg in July 1863. My Uncle Pleasant left Drew Co. in 1859 or 60 and moved with his family to Phillips Co. Ark and

settled near the mouth of Spring Creek where it empties into Big Creek. I remember that one of his near neighbors was Uncle Billie Daugherty's family. Sister Mat was married to W. H. Baldy of Ashley Co. which joins Drew Co. They afterward moved to Monroe Co. and lived neighbor to us till sister Mat died. She left one child, a daughter whose name was Susie, of whom I will speak again later on. Susie's father, William Baldy afterward married a Miss Rosa Rawlings, moved to Miss. and then to Tenn. and died there in 1913 an old man. He was a large stout man in his best days and followed carpentering and farming. I was very fond of him during my sister's lifetime.

Sister Mollie was taken to La. by Uncle Frank Hatchell and lived with his family until she married Louis T. Watson of Livingston Parish, La. I spent the year 1875 with them. They then had two children, but I think before sister Mollie died she had three more. After her death Louis Watson married again and I have not known much of them since though I corresponded with one of the boys who was merchandising at some place in La. He wrote me that one of his brothers was a doctor.

After Brother Leonadas grew up to be a man he left Drew Co. and came with other relatives to Phillips Co. where we lived. He afterward married a Miss Mag Polk near Marvell. She gave birth to one girl, Etta, and one boy, John who died young, and died. Bro. Lee afterward married Miss Mildred Scott, to whom were born three boys-Will, Pleasant (or Bunk) and Henry; and two girls, Jennie and Josephine, and two infants who died. Mildred the mother of these children died while they were living in Monroe Co. Bro. Lee afterward married the widow Leila Bounds who had quite a family of boys and girls. They lived some seven or eight miles east of Clarendon. Their two children were born to them, a boy and girl, not to live long, however, for they both died young. Bro. Lee died there in Feb. 1894. His widow moved to Clarendon and has lived with her son Jno. Bounds ever since. Of Lee's children, the oldest girl Etta, of the first wife was a cripple from childhood, one leg perished away; however, she was a pretty girl and after she was grown went to Texas to visit some of her mother's people and, I am told, married and did well out there. The next girl, Jennie, was married to Skip Holloway, to whom were born some seven or eight children all of whom died quite young except the three youngest. Jennie, the mother died in Clarendon while her husband was County Judge there. The father is dead now and the children are scattered among relatives. Joe the youngest sister of Jennie married Richard Newby and lived in Clarendon. Will, the oldest boy married Jim Seals' oldest daughter, Bertha Seals. They have six children, three boys and three girls and live up in Crawford Co. Ark near Dyer.

Bunk the next boy married a Miss Miller- a girl from Drew Co. Ark and lived on a farm near Clarendon till his wife died. I have just learned that his has married again to a Miss Dooley. Henry the next brother married Miss Virginia Hurst of Clarendon. She died about five years ago leaving one child, a girl. Henry still lives in Clarendon with Mr. and Mrs. Hurst who have the little girl and are raising her for Henry.

Bro Ben went back to Phillips Co. after we had moved to Monroe and married Lucy Shackleford, daughter of old man Dick Shackleford. To Ben and

Lucy were born one boy and three girls. One of the girls died young. Ella, the oldest married George Bonner of Lee Co. They have several children and live in Lee Co. Viola married John McGrew, they have two or three children and live in Phillips or Lee Co. Joe, the boy, married a Miss Thompson, I think, and lives near Mariana in Lee Co. and Bro. Ben died in 1894 while living not far from Clarendon near where Bro. Lee died. Ben's widow- Lucy- is now the wife of William Chappel, living on the old Chappel farm in Phillips Co. (near her daughter Viola McGrew) When Susie Baldy, sister Mat's daughter, of whom mention was made, grew to womanhood, she married J. W. McGuffey, a Christian preacher who lived in Phillips Co. To them was born one child, a girl, soon after which its father died. Susie, the mother then went to live with her father W. H. Baldy. She afterward went to Texas and married again and since I have lost sight of her.

The next move my uncle made was across Big Creek onto Uncle Billie Brown's place where the little town of Aubrey now is. He and Aunt Annie had one son and two daughters. The son died before they left Drew Co. and I think the younger daughter died while they lived on the Billie Brown place. Uncle next moved onto Major Ras Black's place, and from there to Mr. Jno. Gatewood's place to oversee his negroes for Mr. Gatewood while he was in the army. In about the year 1865, or 66 we moved on to the Thornton place adjoining the Gatewood place. We lived there till about 1869, or 70 when we moved near old Capt. Slaughter onto the Wilks place. Uncle Pleasant was a Christian preacher and he would go, sometimes on Friday afternoon and sometimes on Saturday afternoon, to his appointment to preach and leave Bro. Ben and me to look after the farming interests. So, in his ministerial work he found a community in Monroe Co. where he thought he would like to live, and he and W. H. Baldy bought forty acres of land a piece joining each other. We then got ready and moved to Monroe Co. When we got to the community where he had bought, they found the house that had been built for him was not on his land, so the family had to stop at Capt. Jones' till the house could be rolled across the line onto Uncle's land, then we moved in. The land was all in the woods heavily timbered. But we went to work and cleared up a small farm.

Sister Mat died and William Baldy sold his place and left there. Bro. Ben went back to Phillips Co. to live and I helped uncle to farm.

In the summer of 1874 William Baldy, Susie, myself, and two or three other relatives went through the country in a wagon to Drew Co. Among those who came back with us was a cousin Will Bain. That fall Will and I cleared ten acres of Land for Mr. Bill Benton near where we lived. In Dec, Wm. Baldy went back to Drew Co. in a buggy to get his little daughter Susie whom he had left down there in the summer. I went with him, and from there I went to Gain's Landing on the Miss. river, took a steam boat and went to LA to see my sister and other relatives. I stayed down there and farmed with my brother-in-law and returned to Ark the following Dec. William Baldy returned to Monroe and married as I have before stated.

During the spring and summer of '76 I worked for Billie Gill in the Newby neighborhood. In the spring of '77 Uncle Pleasant and I rented from Jno. Kerr of Holly Grove, the old Sutton place, five miles below Clarendon on the Holly Grove

road. Uncle had sold his place to James Reynolds. After our crop was gathered and sold Uncle moved back into the Park neighborhood into a house on the Brown, or Park place and there my Aunt Annie Roberson died, after which Uncle broke up and went with his daughter Mittie across White river to live in Ark. Co. And while they lived there Mittie and Bark Trim were married. Bark had lived near the family in Monroe Co. They came back to Monroe and spent most of their subsequent lives either at Clarendon or Brinkley, Uncle making his home with them till his death in the latter part of the 80's.

Of this union (the marriage of Bark Trim and Cousin Mittie) there were three children born two boys and one girl, Mamie. The boys were Sam and Parker. Mamie lived to be a young lady and died in Clarendon. Soon after the father died, and in less than two years the mother followed, leaving to two boys about grown there in Clarendon. Sam began preaching a little, went off to school somewhere in Ms. but the last time I heard from him he was somewhere in Ohio. Parker continued about Clarendon till he married one of W. C. Jones' daughters, and I believe is now located at Joplin, MO. And thus we have the family facts of Uncle Pleasant (Uncle Bunk) and Aunt Annie Roberson; two of the most worthy of imitation of any persons it has ever been my pleasure to know. They were Christians.

In 1878 I worked for different parties, among whom was Sullivan Hemingway whose first wife was a cousin of mine. Sullivan, at this time lived not far from Clarendon. In the spring of 79 I engaged to make a crop with Mr. T. P. McCreight who lived on his place near Shiloh church. I made, gathered and sold my crop and prepared to go off to school. I might mention, however, that during the summer after our crops had been laid by, Mr. McCreight and I went to Brinkley and built him a house on property he had bought there. Then his family moved into the house and the old people have lived there ever since.

After some investigation, I decided to enter Burritt College located at Spencer, Tenn. on Cumberland Mts. You can imagine the great treat the trip was to me to see the mts. and the rocks, as I had up to this time never seen a rock bigger than a wash kettle. And especially the last twenty miles of the journey, for we had to leave the railroad at the town of McMinnville and go by stage up the mt. over rocks across swift running mt. streams to get to the little village of Spencer. I could write pages, many of my college life, but must suffice to mention only a few things. I had no idea of spending more than five months at school, thinking that would be as much time as I could spare for educational purposes. However, I soon found myself interested in my books; the association I found there was just to my liking, the teachers were kind and encouraging, and I soon realized that I had made no mistake in my venture. I became a member of one of the two very helpful literary societies composed of the young men of the college.

At the close of the ten months term, I returned home fully determined to go back. Dr. T. W. Brints was president of the college, and he and other members of the faculty had become interested in my efforts to get an education, and insisted on me making great efforts to continue my studies. And so at the beginning of the next term, I found myself there ready to enroll for another term.

In all I spent about twenty-five months in old Burritt's halls and classrooms, which time I shall never regret as they were among the most enjoyable and profitable months of my life. On leaving Spencer I passed through my home country and proceeded on into Texas and stopped with some relatives that I had been corresponding with and soon found me a country school.

I stopped with an old gentleman and his family, by the name of Driskill, while I taught my first school. When I left there to return to Ark. I parted with my fourth sweetheart. You ask, how is that? Well you see when I was a school boy in Phillips Co. I found my first, while living in Monroe I found my second, and of course among the many pretty girls and young ladies at Burritt College I had no trouble in selecting my third; and one member of the Driskill family where I boarded was a beautiful brunette who became my fourth. You see how prone the boy the man is to be attracted and won over by the opposite sex; and isn't this as God the creator intended it should be?

So as I have stated when my school was out I returned to Monroe Co., Ark and visited my relatives and friends, and on into Phillips Co. and stopped with one Stephen Reynolds who had once been a visitor at my uncle's when I was a boy. Mr. Reynolds lived neighbor to Dr. J. H. Vineyard who had been the family physician of my uncle years ago. It so happened that they were ready for school but had no teacher. And so the Dr. said he had been waiting for Providence to send him a teacher. I was soon engaged for the term and took up my abode with the Dr.'s interesting family, consisting of himself, four bright boys and an afflicted niece Matt Moore. Here was begun the trend of a new life that has led on to a Providential destiny. The Dr. had a big country practice and he was soon telling, as he called to see his many patients, that he had a Natural born teacher. I soon had a house full of bright boys and girls and was made to feel like that I was doing good work, as the people seemed to be pleased with my efforts. I found this school to be in a central, prosperous community, a people anxious to improve their educational and church privileges. They had been having some ten months terms though taught in an old log cabin situated on the public road on Dr. Vineyard's land. J. W. McGuffey whom I have mentioned as having my niece, Susie Baldy, preached in this house during a part of his ministerial work in Phillips Co. So I found there was a growing feeling among the people for a better school house and a church building.

My school began in March and in the summer after it was out I attended the State Teachers Association which met that year at Morrilton. While on this trip I found a model for seats, for our school house that the Dr. had promised us. (Patent seats were not so plentiful and common as now) so on my return home I drew up a pattern, or model for a house; the Dr. got material and a carpenter to build; they looked at my model, laid it aside and went to work and built a great big barn of a house. However, it answered our purpose and with the new seats made after the pattern(sic) I gave them, all were ready with renewed zeal, and a greater community interest aroused to begin our second session. After this it was not difficult to arouse a greater interest for a church so the same carpenter (a Bro. Russell of Haynes) was employed to build the church house for the Christian denomination. This seemed to have shown the Baptist people what

could be done by a little cooperation, and who were using an old shell of a house, just up the road a short distance, for a church. So they pitched in and built a nice commodious house to worship in. So in less than three years the community had a good school house and two good church buildings and a school growing in attendance and interest. In fact, it increased till we had to add another teacher and fitted up an upstairs room for the primary work.

Among the students who attended the first session was a Miss Cornelia Huckaby, the daughter of Elder John J. Huckaby a Baptist minister who lived in the community. Miss Cornelia had taught one term there, but during our second term she went to Marianna and became a student in Prof. Woodson's High School.

At the end of the term she came home and in July her father died. On Oct. 7 of that year (1884) she became my wife, Elder Freeman, a Presbyterian minister, saying the ceremony. And this union with the best woman I have known since my mother died, is what was meant where I said, Here was begun the trend of a new life, etc. We remained in the neighborhood till I had taught three or four terms at the Vineyard school, one term at old Midway church across Big Creek, and one term at Oak Forest up in Lee Co. Before leaving this part of my story I wish to mention that while I stopped with the Dr. and boys, I became very much attached to them. The Dr. was a busy man and he took great interest in his boys' advancement in their books. The oldest son was Hodge, who afterward married his cousin Willie Bolick, a widow, settled in Helena and is one of the respected business men of the city. John the second son finished his literary education at Oxford, Miss. studied law at Lebanon, Tenn. and began practice at Marianna in Lee Co. Ark.

He afterward went to the legislature from Lee Co. Subsequently he was making the race for County Judge when he sickened and died. Ras the third son married a Miss Cook and settled at the old place in his father's old residence. Jesse, who was the youngest and just a half brother to the other boys, studied law and became a partner with his cousin Hon. Jno. I. More of Helena Ark.

The old Dr. Suffered a stroke of paralysis lay a long time but finally got up and was able to do a little more practice. But when he had the second stroke he did not last much longer and died.

The old Dr. had been a useful citizen in his community, one of the leaders of educational and progressive enterprises and one that has been very much missed by his neighbors. The last year that we lived in the Vineyard neighborhood, we resided upon a little forty-acre farm that Mrs. F. had bought while she was teaching. I raised a fine crop of corn, cotton and potatoes, doing nearly all the farm work myself. But feeling that, since I had prepared myself for professional work, rather than a farmer, we left the neighborhood and moved to Brinkley in Monroe Co., leaving the cotton to be gathered in the hands of Golder Hollums, an uncle of wife. We took the train at Poplar Grove and went to Brinkley by way of Blackton over the Helena and Brinkley railroad. This was in the fall of 1890. I secured a position in the Brinkley public school as first assistant with Prof. W. L. Skags as principal. We had only a four months term as the Board was scarce of funds. At the end of the third month the Board

dismissed Prof. Skags and left me to finish out the term with my assistant lady teachers. This was my last teaching in the Brinkley schools except in a private school of my own. During the remaining eleven years we continued to live in Brinkley I taught at various places, some three or four terms at Hunter, two or three across the Bayou in what was called Dark Corner, two at the Dixon school house, one in the Lawson, or Maye (*or Moye*) neighborhood, southeast from Brinkley and two or three terms at Blackton. We had sold the Phillips Co. farm and bought us a home in south Brinkley. Near there I bought a lot and built me a schoolhouse. Here I taught, I think, two terms. I finally sold this house to a scoundrel by the name of Goodrich, the price of which I put into a Building and Loan Association, managed and boosted by said Goodrich. I was to Secretary and general manager of the business, but as Goodrich had gobbled up all the association's funds and we could not get anything out of him the business came to naught.

We must now go back and retrace our steps a little. While we lived at Vineyard we had four precious boys born to us. The first was Edwin Grover, born Sept. 10, 1885. He grew to be a bright little fellow, quite a favorite with the people in the immediate community, but it seems he was just lent for only a short time. The little fellow sickened and died while I was on a trip up to Brinkley, lacking just a few days being five years old. The second son was John Joseph who was born July 8, 1887. He lived only about five weeks and was called away to a better life. The third son was Samuel Milton who is now my joy and pride and is a citizen of San Bernardino Calif. A more obedient son never blessed a home than he. He now has a loving wife and a sweet baby girl in her second year. And the fourth son, we called Huckaby for his grandfather, was born while we lived on the farm in 1890, March 26. He was only lent us for a few weeks when he died and went to a better world. Our fifth child was a sweet baby girl who came to bless our home Aug 3, 1897. We named her Lucille after Owen Merideth's heroine in the novel "Lucille." She soon became the pet and household treasure of the family. Having secured the school at Roe, across White River from Clarendon, we moved there in Sept. 1902.

Soon after the school opened, myself and wife both teaching, two little girls broke out with small pox, and we were renting rooms from their grandfather where they were staying. This closed our school for several weeks and we had to get out of the house and moved out into the country about two miles and stayed out there till all danger of smallpox was passed.

I then bought us a home in Roe, having sold our Brinkley property, We moved back to town and proceeded with our school till the close of the term. During this term we taught in the old school building but by the beginning of the next term we went into a brand new two room well arranged building. And so wife and I taught two terms in the new house.

In the early fall of 1906, wife, Sam, Lucille, and I went to Fayetteville, Ark. leaving Mrs. Huckaby at Roe to keep house for the young man and wife who were to teach the next term of the Roe school. While we stayed in Fayetteville, Sam and Lucille attended school and I secured a school at Brentwood some eighteen miles away on the Sante Fe railroad. After my school was out and the

Roe school out we returned to Roe to our home. That summer, 1907, I taught a short term at the Brown school house some six or seven miles east of Clarendon. In the latter part of Aug. I went to Bald Knob in White Co. and became the principal for the B. K. school. There I had two assistants Mrs. Moore and a young lady whose name I have forgotten. During my stay in B. K. I boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Seaton's family. Mrs. F. taught again in the Roe school with a Mr. Wilder as principal. This brings us to the summer of 1908. That fall I taught the school at Prairie Chapel, going from home in my buggy till the days got short, I then boarded with old Bro. Warren and his good wife. Mrs. F. taught again in the Roe school, with Mr. Burton, I think as principal.

My next school was down in the Trice neighborhood in Ark. Co. some nine or ten miles from Roe. There I boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Trice.

But there are some things we have omitted that will take us back a little. During Aug of 1904, Sammy and I went to St. Louis and spent a week attending the World's Fair. It was one of the greatest treats of my life. We crowded more into our mental tablets in one week than ever before or since in the same length of time.

In 1910 Sammy and I bought out Pete Fridell and ran a grocery business in Roe. We also handled and sold ice and cold drinks. In the spring of 1911 Sam went to Little Rock and took a course in Bookkeeping in Draughn's Commercial College. I sold my home to Mr. Miller and the grocery business to Mr. Churchill and we struck out for Fayetteville the second time. At Little Rock Sam joined us and we landed there in June. Sam returned to Roe and worked for Trotter and Minnis. I rented a big ten-room house, bought furniture for it and we began to take summer boarders. We had some nice ladies from Texas seeking cooler climate, and some teachers attending the summer Normal at the University. During the fall and winter we took students attending the University for boarders.

I secured Sam a position in a big grocery store at Fullbright and Conners and he came and worked for them.

I taught in one of the Ward schools for five weeks, then got a position with Uker Bros. big dry good store and worked for them till Xmas. Sam tired of his job as he was getting only \$30 a mo. left and went to Florida. I sought for work of any kind but could not get any, so in April 1912 we gave up the boarding business. I sold most of my furniture and we lit out for Roe. When we got back we found Sam at Trotter and Minnis at work. I bought a house in Roe and we moved into it! I sold nursery stock and Sam worked for T. & M all fall. He then struck out for Imperial, Calif. and secured a position with Varney Bros. in big furnishing store. I secured a school for the fall and winter at White Hall up in Woodruff Co. near Hilleman. In the summer of 1913, Mrs. F had a severe spell of sickness and Sam was sent for. He came home and when his mother got up he took her to Hot Springs and left her there. She stayed two or three weeks came home much improved and wanted to teach again. She secured the school at Prairie Chapel, but not being able to begin it, I went and taught it for her for several weeks. She then went and boarded with a Mr. and Mrs. Cob. Sam went

back to Calif. and I went to Hilleman to teach. When my school was out I secured the position for Mrs. F for the next term.

On the 8th of June she and I went to Brinkley to attend the Teachers Institute. While there we stopped with Mr. and Mrs. Dunlap. We left on Friday the 12, and came home, Mrs. F. nearly sick. She was in bed a part of Saturday and most of Sunday. Monday morning she was so anxious to do some work that she got up and tried to get our breakfast but found she was not able to stay up. Her mother and I doctored her several days, but she grew worse, so we called in Dr. Phipps and he came regular for several days, but she grew worse day after day, till Tuesday the 23rd about five o'clock in the afternoon her breath left her, the spirit took its flight and she was dead. This was June 23, 1914. That was the sad hour, the saddest of my life. I realized that she was gone, gone never to return and I was left without my dear companion. It being very warm weather we realized we could not keep her out of the grave long. So on the next morning's early train, Lucille and I went with the body to Clarendon, changed cars and went to Poplar Grove with her. There we were met by her sister and other relatives and carried her to Rehoboth church. Bro Sims the Baptist minister from Marvell preached her funeral to a congregation of friends and relatives, and we laid her body to rest near the graves of our three little boys, her father and other relatives to await the Judgment Day. With sad hearts dear daughter and I returned to Roe. Lucille and her grandmother kept house for me. In the summer I went to Hilleman and taught the school that dear wife expected to teach. I also taught the fall and winter term and closed in March. In Aug. 1915, Lucille went to her Brother's in Clifton, Arizona. Sam had married a Miss Eula Onler at Imperial, Calif. in March 1915 and had left there and secured a position with a big firm in Clifton. After Lucille left, Mrs. Huckaby went to live with her other daughter-wife of Esq. Warren Holtzclaw of near Poplar Grove, Phillips Co. I then had a sale and broke up housekeeping. However, I continued Roe till March 18, 1916, when I took the train for the great West. I stopped in Clifton with Sam and family and Lucille for about three weeks. I then went to Prescott, Ariz. Lucille and Alex Largent married in April in Clifton. Sam and his wife and little Maxine came to Prescott in July. I had rented and was living on a little place in what was called Idylwild about one mile from town, the place owned by Miss Marm. Sam and I spent a month digging up stumps for wood and romp around over the mountain and working my garden and little crop.

About the first of Sept. Sam got a position with the B. B. firm in town and I went to work for Mr. Phillips in Second hand furniture store. Lucille and Alex came in Sept. and stopped a day or two with me on the ranch. Alex then moved to town and soon got work with Power people. Sam went to work for Mr. O. W. Bruchman in Gents furnishing store. In Jan 1917 Sam came to Calif. and went on to a farm near East Highland and I took his place at Mr. Bruchman's. The 8th of March I left Prescott and came to Calif. the same day Lucille's little baby girl was born after spending several weeks in and about San Bernardino I came to Redlands in the later part of April to live.



L to R - Sam Ferguson, William L. Ferguson, Sarah Hollums Huckaby (the mother in law), Cornelia Huckaby Ferguson, Lucille Ferguson

About the Author

This story was written by William Lycurgus Ferguson, son of Joseph W. and Mary Ann Hatchell Ferguson somewhere in the time period between 1917 and 1918. William was born in Drew County, Arkansas in 1855 and died in San Bernardino, California July 30, 1935.

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