

## TUTT, KING, EVERETT WAR

This war, or feud, concerned at least three families in a major way, and covered a good portion of the early days of Van Buren, Searcy & Marion counties history. It has been called the KING-Everett War, Tutt-Everett war and the Marion County War. Accounts of the story have been recorded from several individuals. The side you favored determined the flavor of the tale. But all agree on the three families involved. Not all agree, however, that it was a political feud. In any case, the feud dated from 1844 to the climax in 1850.

Marion County was formed in 1836. Needless to say, it was a rough and rugged country. Where Indians and Outlaws were in abundance. People were just beginning to wander west from the eastern states. Arkansas was said to be a beautiful land where you could make a fortune raising cotton and there was lots of hunting game for food.

The Everett's were already in Marion County when it was formed. Nobody knows when they came exactly, but they were In-Control of law and order of that area. The Everett's were tall and powerful men from Kentucky. They had no trouble keeping the peace. Ewell was the eldest, then John, Cimmeron "Sim", Jesse, and Bart being the youngest. Little is known of the temperament of the other brothers, but Sim, when sober, was a quiet and peaceable man. But, when drinking, as was frequently the case when he was in town, he seemed inclined to court a fight than to avoid one. He was said to be the most powerful man in the county in a straight knockdown or fisticuff.

In Searcy county next door to Marion, and only a few miles as a crow flies, the Tutt's were In-Control of the law and order. The Tutt's were said to be from North Carolina. They settled in the St. Joe community. P.B. Tutt liked to gamble at the cards, was a horse racer, and was real fond on fighting and drinking. He had three sons, Ben, Hansford "Hamp", and David Casey. In 1845 "Hamp" and wife Nancy(2nd wife) bought 160 acres Matthew & Catherine Adams, which included the land now known as Tutt Hill, lying just north of Crooked Creek in Yellville. Hamp ran a grocery store and saloon, the only public house in the county. He bought a few dry-goods and few barrels

of "fightin' whiskey" and soon became very popular with many, especially the whiskey drinkers.

The Tutt's were small to medium men in build but wiry. The KING family, Old Billy, James, Hosea, and Soloman, moved to the area from North Carolina, where they'd known the Tutt's. Old Billy had three grown sons, Jack, Loomis, and Dick. Jack and Loomis were heavy drinkers while Dick was a steady man and didn't imbibe much to speak. Old Hosea had two sons, young Bill and little Tom, who was said to be one of them feisty dogs among men. They say there wasn't a fight in a mile of little Tom that he didn't grab rock and chunk it to get the fight going good.

Politically, the Tutt's and KING's were Whigs, while the Everett's were Democrat. All voters back the Tutts or the Everetts. When "your" man was in office, you could get away with just about anything, including bloody murder.

In 1838 things started getting sticky, what with the legislature getting involved in boundaries and legal procedures and such. The animosity between the families was worked to a fever-pitch at all times. Somebody from both sides was always fightin' about something. Soon, the whole male population, about 300 strong, was classed as being friends of the Everett's or the KING's & Tutt's.

During the Presidential election of 1844 June, a large crowd had assembled at the Tutt place for some political speechifying. After most of the crowd had left, a fight broke out between the KING & Tutt bunch and the Everett's. The speakers rushed in the house for their guns, which earlier they'd hid under the bed, but the guns were gone. They rushed back outside and joined in the general melee anyways. Fists and rocks were freely used by everybody. "Sim" Everett, like a caged lion, was laying flat everyone that came in reach. One of the Tutt followers, Alfred Burnes, caught up a hoe handle, ran up behind "Sim" and struck him on the head. Burnes, believing him dead, made a hasty retreat to the woods. "Sim" lay there sometime as if dead and all hands ceased fighting. It was a bloody scene, blood flowed freely from heads and noses where deep cuts had been made by fists, flying rocks, hoe handles, and sticks. Afterwards, both sides was always armed with pistols, knives and such. Lawsuits followed. But nobody got anything.

Finally, in 1847, the good folks elected Jesse Mooney as sheriff of Marion county. He was neither Tutt, KING nor Everett, Whig nor Democrat. He was a Southern Democrat, big and blonde with the kind of good looks men envy and women admire. Jesse lost his wife in child-birth. He had inherited a plantation, a ferry and a Trading Post on the White River from his father Jacob Mooney. Old Jake Mooney had come to Arkansaw in 1809 to carve out a future for his family, making him one of the first white men on the White River. Handsome and popular, Jesse promised to serve all warrants without fear or favor. He was elected by a landslide over the other two candidates. The other two running for sheriff was Bart Everett and Hamp Tutt. As the "Patriarch" of the Everett bunch, Bart considered himself to be a "Kentucky Colonel" , a lawyer, and just a bit more important than the average man. Hamp Tutt wouldn't have known what "patriarch" meant, but he knew he was He-Coon of the Tutt Clan, a mountaineer and proud of it, though shrewder and more ambitious than the average man.

Sheriff Mooney held to his campaign promises. Outlaws was either arrested, run out of town or killed by the sheriff. He ran for and won a second term. But, during the elections and speechifying there was many a fight or brawl. In one free-for-all, Mooney and Hamp Tutt met in a hand to hand conflict, Mooney was armed with a loaded walking stick and Hamp with a big flat rock. Mooney struck Tutt with the walking stick, but Hamp kept too close, striking with the rock, that Mooney couldn't use his cane effectively and finally fell to the ground senseless. A nephew of Tutt's, S.W.Ferrall, ran in to shoot Mooney in the head with a pistol. John "uncle Jacky" Hurst sprang to assist Mooney and took a shot in the thigh. The fight ended with the gun shot. Mooney was took to his house. Many rumors were spread by the KING & Tutt clans. One such rumor had it that Mooney owned all the river bottom land between the Missourie line and Batestown, Arkansaw. AND, that he had a "perry widder woman and a house full of younguns" in several locations. Since Hamp Tutt was so dead-set against Mooney, he became the champion of the Everett's. But they's still fightin'. After the final tally of the elections, Mooney was sheriff, Ewell Everett was Judge, and cousin to the KING's & Tutt's, George Adams was elected Constable. This only made the situation grow worsen, putting neighbor against neighbor.

On Monday, October 9, 1848 another town meeting was to take place at Tutt's Store/Saloon. The principal parties went forth armed to the teeth with pistols, rifles, knives, rocks and sticks. Hamp Tutt decided not to attend because he feared he'd be shot. He knew there'd be a row raised, so he kept out of the way. Jesse Turner, Esquire, spoke that day. After his talk, the Tutt's, KING's, and Everett's and followers started slanging words and drew up in battle array. Some of the Everett clan weren't there. Jesse Everett had moved to Denton, Texas 2 years afore with Jacob Stratton. Ewell Everett wasn't there but his boys was. But there was plenty of Everett followers to make up for the boys not being there. The Everett's made it plain they meant business if molested and that it wouldn't take much to bring on a fight. There was heckling on both sides of the road in front of the saloon. They spat epithets back and forth till it looked like any minute a fight would commence. Sheriff Mooney was out of town that day because his wife was pregnant. He left Constable Adams in-charge. When the brawling started, rocks, sticks, and bricks appeared like magic in upraised ands. Sim Everett was laid low by a weeding hoe one of the KING boys had "appropriated" from in front of the Blacksmith shop. The soft curls the young ladies delighted in running their fingers threw, were now tangled and matted with blood. Constable Adams was in a dither. He didn't know what to do. He wished sheriff Mooney was here instead of "babysittin' his woman " 'cuz he could use his help. Out of the clear blue sky, right smack in the middle of the fighting, a whirlwind sprang up between the two factions. It covered everybody with dust and blew all their hats off. It took everybody by surprise 'cuz it was a plum clear day. They all scattered, onlookers and antagonists alike. That Devil Wind scared everybody and put a fear in 'em. War-like demonstration ceased for a time after that. When Sheriff Mooney came back to town, he found Bart Everett pacing up and down in front of the jail, demanding Mooney arrest all of the KING's.

Mooney obtained the warrants for the arrest of the KING's and rode across the Buffalo River into Searcy County. Searcy county Deputy, Ben Code, who operated the ferry across the river, teamed-up with Mooney and they arrived at the KING place just as they was sitting down to eat supper. The KING's were peaceable folk so, even though they'd been warned of the warrants out for Cherokee Bob and the KING boys, they mounted and rode out with Mooney and Deputy Code and the posse, that had some Everett friend's in it. When they reached the county line, where Constable Adams

awaited them, Code offered to go with Mooney on to Yellville. But Mooney declared he'd go it alone. He knew Old Bill and Hosea as good and trustworthy men and expected no trouble. However, Mooney was still troubled over his pregnant wife. Old Bill & Hosea told Mooney to go on home and check on her and they'd see the boys on to Yellville with Constable Adams help.

Gratefully, Mooney rode off, promising to name the baby William King if it was a boy since old Bill was really William and Hosea was Hosea William.

Unbeknownst to the KING's ( who were unarmed) and the lawmen, the Everetts lay in-wait about a half mile inside the Marion county line. They began an indiscriminate attack, killing old Billy and his son Lumis. Hosea and son little Tom and old Billy's sons Jack and Dick made their escape. Cherokee Bob and young Bill (Hosea's son) were seriously wounded, but managed to crawl off into the dense undergrowth.

Late Saturday night, Young Bill crawled into the yard of a Tutt sympathizer. Their hound dogs alerted them, and they hid the boy until the next day when Constable Adams listened to the dying boy's story. Sheriff Mooney was accused by the Tutt's of knowing of the ambush and slayings. Mooney decided it was time to "lay down the law". On 4 July 1849, Mooney and Constable Adams gathered a group of men and deputized each one. While Mooney was explaining their duties to them, the Tutt's and the remaining KING's gathered in the saloon, the Everett's took cover across the street, and the fight was on. Guns fired all afternoon, and the smell of gun smoke and death lay over the town. When their ammunition was gone, the feuders spilled out into the street. Sticks, bricks, axes, knives, and anything else that would kill or maim, became weapons in the hands of these men who allowed the worst in themselves to rule them, rather than their hearts and minds.

Ewell Everett's son Frank shot Jack KING with an old squirrel rifle and he died the next morning. A man named Mears advanced on Frank as if to disarm him, but Frank struck him with the gun, breaking his arm. Sim Everett shot at Dave Sinclair but missed. Sinclair returned fire and wounded Sim. Sim picked up a rock and pursued Sinclair, but spotted the wounded Jack KING and went for him, smashing in his skull in the most shocking manner. Sim died while in the act. KING lived till morning. Dick KING shot a

man named Watkins in the forehead at the hairline, the bullet cut a trench through his skin on top of his head without fracturing his skull. He fell to the ground as if dead, but soon recovered. Bart Everett shot at Jack KING's brother, grazing his shoulder and he shot back. Bart was standing by a Black Locust Tree, when the bullet struck him, he clasped his arms around the trunk and sunk to the ground and died. He had tied a ribbon around his hat for a hatband, and when his body was removed from the tree, some men took the ribbon off and tied it around the tree, where it hung for several months before rotting away.

Ten men died on the streets of Yellville that fateful day, including Bart and Sim Everett, Davis, Ben and Lunsford Tutt, Hosea KING's boy & little Tom, and Old Billy's boys Jack & Dick (Richard). None of the Burnes' or Cowans' was there.

Dave Sinclair rode out of town to Searcy County right after the fight. A posse of Everett friends found him the next morning asleep near the top of a tree, attempting to escape; he was killed by rifle shot. When Jesse Everett got word of his brother's deaths, he left Texas to avenge them. Hearing of this, Hamp Tutt was on the look out. One day, on his way home from Lebanon, he was fired upon. Arriving in Yellville, he told his friends he was sure it was Jesse Everett. Once again the country was in uproar and several attempts were made, unsuccessfully, on Hamp's life by Jesse and his friend Jacob Stratton. Hamp remained on alert and Jesse and Jacob remained in hiding. Sheriff Mooney knew he needed help. He sent his eldest son, Tom, to Little Rock to beg the Governor for aid. The horror is, Tom made it safely to Little Rock, but never made it home. The carcass of his white horse washed-up at the mouth of Rush Creek several weeks later, but Tom's body was never found.

In Sept. 1849, Arkansas Governor John Sheldon Roane sent General Allen Wood to Marion County to investigate this upheaval. And, to order out the militia if he deemed it necessary. Obviously Wood felt the need, and was given command of the militia raised out of Carroll County. Sheriff Mooney and Constable Adams were relieved of their duties.

Upon the arrival of Wood and his Militia, the Everett's and their friends retreated to Searcy County. There they had many more friends and

relatives. On September 27, 1849, Gov. Roane ordered William Thornhill, Searcy County Sheriff, to arrest those Everett's and their friends who murdered the KING's. Thornhill had heard they were at large in his county, so in early October, General Wood moved his headquarters to Lebanon in Searcy County, in order to round-up the culprits and all the witnesses needed for the court proceedings. Wood learned the Everett's were at the Methodist Camp meeting in Wiley's Cove. He ordered Captain W.C. Mitchell to Wiley's Cove to demand the Everett's to surrender into his custody. He was expecting the move might force the Everett group to flee to Marion County. So, at the same time he ordered Captain Tilford Denton and his men to the place on the Yellville-Lebanon Road where it crosses Tomahawk. And to be ready to arrest the fugitives if they took flight. However, the Methodist campers immediately complied with Capt. Mitchell's request and arrests followed.

On 13 October 1849 General Wood reported to Governor Roane that in his opinion, there wasn't one single person in all of Marion County that wasn't partial. If he placed the prisoners in the hands of one party, they'd be set free. And if placed in the other ones hands, they'd be dead and an all out war would ensue. Mooney and a few others were allowed to make bail. Everett and Stratton were jailed in Smithville, in Lawrence County. Martial Law lasted for 6 whole weeks and all was quiet. But, winter was coming on fast and the citizen-soldiers needed to be home, so the troops were removed. Within site of a week of their departure, a mob of Everett followers rode to Smithville jail. They tied ropes on the bars and used crowbars to pry, busting out Everett and Stratton. The mob took to the woods around Yellville shouting their defiant slogan, "Kill Hamp Tutt!" Knowing they was gunning for him, Hamp made his will in August 1850. Some people say Stratton forced Tutt into a gun fight, but that he out drew Stratton and survived. Hamp Tutt spent considerable hiding from the Everetts, mostly fortified in his own home. Everett done just what Tutt figured, he spent his time trying to waylay Tutt and dispatch him. Everett even changed his tactics by letting it be known he was gone from the county. Tutt remained on the alert, seldom if ever leaving Yellville. About the same time all this was going on, a handsome young stranger came to town. Nobody know'd his name, he was known only as "The Dutchman", came from Indiana to visit his uncle Dave Wickersham, an Everett man, over at Cowan Barrens way. As the sole surviving Tutt, Hamp was a wealthy man and had big plans.

He planned to build a brick house befitting a man of his means. Next election he planned to run for County Representative. He had an eye on the governor's mansion too. His head got to be full of plans for the future and sidetracked from caution for the present. This was a tragic mistake. While ambling along Crooked Creek on his way back from the brick works to see how his order was coming along, Hamp Tutt was ambushed, shot and killed dead. And never again was that Dutchman seen in Yellville.

After the killing of Hamp Tutt, there was nothing left in Marion County for the Everett family much. Everett and Stratton, and a few of their friends left one night. They canoed down the White River, took a steamboat down the Mississippi River and then up the Red River to Shreveport, Louisiana. Cholera was raging about that time. Everett came down with it and died all of a sudden. I guess he was paid for his deeds.

The KING family, mostly moved into Van Buren County and Cleburne County. They had suffered great losses due to the feuding. Thus ending the Tutt, KING, and Everett War in Marion County. It was the only great family feud ever known in the State of Arkansas. It cast gloom over Marion county for many a year. It began with ambition and ended with crime, greed, bloodshed, murder and death.

#### NOTES of INTEREST

##### \*EVERETT Family

\*\*Simmons Everett was in Lawrence Co. as early as 1836.

\*\*Thos. E. & John S. Everett were in Searcy Co. as early as 1836.

\*\*I.B. (Bart) Everett was sheriff of Marion Co. 1838-1842

\*\*T.E. (Ewell) Everett served as judge of Marion Co. 1840-1842.

\*\*Jesse Everett built the first mill in Marion Co. 1839-1840, it was in Mill Creek just south of the Indian village.

\*\*Jesse fought the cantankerous John Houston (brother to Sam Houston) at the mouth of the Big North Fork River until onlookers pulled them apart.

##### \*TUTT Clan

\*\*Hansford Tutt advertised lots for sale in the new town of Yellville in The Batesville News May 6, 1841

\*\*Hansford Tutt was elected coroner for Marion County 1842.

\*\*David Tutt (son to Hansford (Hamp) was killed in a celebrated gunfight on the town square of Springfield, MO. July 20, 1865 by Wild Bill Hickock and is buried there.

\*\*Hamp Tutt was one of the richest men in Searcy and Marion counties.

\*KING Family

\*\*Soloman King pretty much stayed in the north part of Marion co. till he died.

\*\*Not much is known what happened to James King. He kind of vanished. Some say he went to Oklahoma.

\*\*Hosea came to Arkansas with enough money to buy up all the land he could. His family was well to do in the east it was told.

\*\*Hosea ended up settling in Van Buren, Cleburne counties and later it became Faulkner County.

\*\*By 1855 Hosea had massed over 1000 acres and 15 slaves.

#### SOURCES

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\*\*Marion County Arkansas Mountain Echo,by W.B.Flippin 1899 (witness to the feuding)

\*\*Washington County, AR Telegraph, 25 October 1848 Issue

\*\*The Bramble Bush newsletter, Mtn. Home, AR. Fall 1999

\*\*The Melbourne Clipper, Melbourne, AR. 1877 by A.C.Jeffries

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