

Jessee Family Newsletter

Vol. 2, No. 2 July 1993

Dear Cousin,

This letter represents the third effort to establish a *Jessee Family Newsletter* and information exchange. By George, or perhaps by Edward (see below), I think this newsletter is going to make it. We have over 40 on the mailing list, and it is beginning to grow more rapidly, although I have yet to break even. Your donations to help me cover costs are still needed. I have more information and news than ever before and several exciting events to share. As we do have several new families on the list, please forgive a bit of repetition.

In the first newsletter, I provided information about my long-time interest and work on the Jessee Family genealogy. I am volunteering to maintain a central mailing list, and to facilitate the exchange of information between us to the extent my time and means will allow. I am again providing the newsletter to all of you on the enclosed mailing list. Most of you responded sometime during the year to the first two newsletters, or were referred to me by someone who received the first newsletters. For that I thank you. I really look forward to your response; I enjoy your letters and appreciate the questions and information provided.

I have indeed incorporated any and all genealogy information provided to me into the Jessee Family Data Base and continue to add Jessees as I get more information. I have quite complete information on several of your families, and I am willing to key in more data or print charts for you as we continue to develop it.

Some of you I know, have met or have corresponded with previous to this effort. Some of you I have learned about from others. I am asking you, if you haven't done so already, to verify your interest by responding to this newsletter, and to help me identify additional Jessee Family Genealogists. If you are not interested, please give this newsletter to a

member of your family that may be. If I do not hear from you, I will remove you from the list.

Please feel free to correct any information I may have in error. Provide me additional names, addresses and telephone numbers of family members who may have interest in this effort. I am not looking for every family member, just those with interest in the family genealogy and willing to exchange Jessee family information and represent their own branch of the Jessees or their area of the country.

I would appreciate your help in defraying the cost of printing and postage. I am including copies of various source documents of mutual interest and importance, and pedigree and descendant charts of our members as those are further developed. I will of course look for means to condense this material to keep copying costs within bounds, but it still exceeds \$.06 per page, plus postage as you see. I will cover these costs up front, but eventually need your help. However, I do not want to exclude anyone with real interest who can't afford to contribute either. Please share what you can.

I am organizing our mailing list by the original 15 families descended from John Jessee. I would like to trace all the 15 family descendants of John Jessee and Frances Lea. While we now have 10 of John Jessee's 15 children represented, please note the Jessee families not represented and help us locate their descendants too.

I do my own work with an IBM compatible computer and *Personal Ancestry File*, PAF software. I am able to both provide and receive genealogy information using the GEDCOM data protocol on IBM or Mac diskettes and by modem too. It you have not yet bought a computer and software, the cheapest and probably best way to begin would be with the PAF and a cheap IBM clone computer. I would be willing to help you get established.

**Lineage Extended-
John Jessee to 1550
Frances Lea to 570**

Clearly the most exciting news is the prospect that we have extended the Jessee Family lineage to 1550 via a possible "Moravian" root, and the pedigree of Frances Lea to William the Conqueror (1027-1087), Robert the Strong Capet (d 866) and even the Islam Prophet Mohammed (570-632). Through the genealogical research of Dean Cornell Jessee, we have some definite focus to our future research, if not a major breakthrough in our family genealogy information.

Dean Cornell Jessee is a Professor of History at Brigham Young University, Utah. He lives in Salt Lake City and works very near the Genealogical Society of Utah's famous library. Through his own research, and additional professional research hired by him and his brother, he has extended the Jessee Family pedigree at least 6 more generations. See the attached pedigree charts for our John Jessee (1750-1815).

I have had the pleasure of several letters and phone conversations with him and learned that his daughter lived only 60 miles away from Chico. I invited him to visit me in Chico and he did this June, on a family vacation to visit his daughter in Chester, CA. We had a wonderful but all too short day with Dean, his wife June, daughter Teresa, son-in-law Rob Cruz, and three grandchildren. He left me a treasure of information, most of which I am sharing here with his permission and with the following mutual admonition. We are clearly very excited about this information, but caution that it all needs to be verified, confirmed, and proven by solid evidence, which involves more research and documentation.

We are sharing this information here, and invite your help in proving or disproving it, as the case may

be. Dean Jessee is a true scholar and professional historian (I have now read some of his work and it is excellent). He does express qualms about this material and its confirmation. I too share his desire that our genealogy be based on well documented and irrefutable evidence. Our appeal for help in proving this information is sincere, and we will share future developments, be they supportive or disappointing. With that said, now let me bubble with excitement and enthusiasm for his contribution to this newsletter and genealogy.

The Jessee Family Pedigree from John Jessee to a Peter Jessee born about 1550, was provided through professional research hired in England. This research suggests that the Jessee's, spelled clearly with a double EE for several generations preceding John Jessee, may have been adherents of the Moravian Church or Unity of Brethren, if not ethnic Moravians who fled to England. Moravia is an area adjacent to Bohemia where John Huss founded this Protestant Sect. John Huss has a history similar to Martin Luther and other Protestants, and was excommunicated, then executed for his religious beliefs. The Moravians were persecuted and pretty much run out of Europe. They came to America in 1735, settling first in Savannah, Georgia, then Salem, North Carolina, and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The English researcher postulates that our Jessees were part of this Moravian immigration. She also confirms that the Jessees may have lived or passed through Wales, but were not Welsh.

Dean Jessee provided me a copy of the Will of Henry Jessee (attached), John Jessee's father, which is witnessed by both John and Frankey Jessee. All names spelled with a double EE. Other records prove that Henry and John acquired land and were on tax rolls in Caswell County, North Carolina previous to the Revolutionary War. I am fairly convinced that Henry and his wife Elizabeth (last name unknown) were the parents of our John Jessee. However the gap between the birth of John Jessee (1750) and his alleged grandfather, John Jessee (1667) is 83 years, suggesting that this earlier John and his son Henry had children in their forties, which is possible, or that a generation is missing. We have much research ahead to close this gap, or find the missing link! It appears that we have from Delaware to Georgia in which to hunt for this evidence too. In the process we may discover additional Jessee families and find out how other Jessees evident in America (see Newsletter 2) before John fit into our family.

Dean Jessee's own research using the Royal Lineage or Medieval Ancestry Files developed by the Genealogy Library, provides very convincing evidence that Frances Lea, our 4ggrandmother Frankey Jessee, is a descendant of King Edward the III of England (1312-1377) and other clearly defined and well documented antecedents who date back to the 800s. The attached charts illustrate her pedigree which is traced very clearly to two of Edward the III's sons, John of Gaunt (House of York), and Edward of Langley (House of Lancaster), both characters who appear in Shakespeare's plays of the period, principles in the War of Roses, along with several of our infamous grandmothers. From Edward the III we are able to trace directly back to William the Conqueror, Eleanor of Aquitaine, King John (Robin Hood's great nemesis) and many other historical figures as well as the royal families of France, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Bohemia, and even The Holy Roman Empire.

I am providing a condensed version of this pedigree. A standard pedigree requires dozens of pages and would be best transmitted by a GEDCOM file to those who want it. Dean and I want to better complete and document this information before we publish it. It is likely to be a pamphlet which we may need to

sell to recover the cost of printing. In the meantime, I will provide GEDCOM files to any who provide me a diskette and return postage.

The key relationship to this pedigree is proving that Frances Lea is the daughter of John Lea (1735-1803) of Caswell County, North Carolina. His pedigree is well documented, but that our Frances is his daughter still needs better support. Dean and I invite your attention to proving or disproving this relationship.

Even if this relationship is incorrect, we are still most probably descendants of Edward the III, because it is believed that anyone with English ancestry is very likely descendants of Edward the III and that we are all, most probably, within 20 some generations of a common English ancestor anyway. I strongly recommend the book, *The Mountain of Names, A History of the Human Family* by Alex Shoumantoff, which contains these and many other fascinating tidbits including the fact that Edward the III was married to Philippa of Hainault, whose grandmother was a Moorish Princess who could directly trace her pedigree to the Islam Prophet Mohammed.

I have found all this to be fascinating and highly stimulating. I have been reading books on English history with renewed interest, and find that not only were the Edwards not very nice guys, but that most of their henchmen, conspirators, financiers and sword carriers, not to mention paramours, were in fact our grandparents!! I cannot thank Dean Jessee enough for this invaluable contribution to the Jessee Family.

The Ahnentafel Chart

Attached to this newsletter is the hopefully accurate pedigree of our ancestor Frances "Frankey" Lea in a condensed form known as an ahnentafel chart. Frankey Lea is the 1st generation and is appropriately noted as individual No. 1. Her father is 2x1 or individual No. 2 John Lea, and her mother is 2x1+1 or individual No. 3, Winnifred Kavanaugh. John Lea's father is 2x2 = No 4, James Lea and his mother is 2x2+1 = No. 5, Ann Herndon. An ahnentafel chart proceeds accordingly. To find the father of any individual multiply their No. times 2 and add 1 to find their mother. If the mother or father is unknown, this number is omitted. Thus John Lea's parents are No 4, and No. 5, but we do not know the parents of his wife Winnifred Kavanaugh, No. 3, so there is no No. 6 and 7 presented on the chart.

The source of all of the material beyond generation 14 in which appears Edward the III Plantagenet, King of England, is a book, *Heraldry and the Royal Families of Europe*, by Jiri Louda & Michael Maclagan, which I was able to get from our public library. It is a book of royal genealogies. Since we connect to several of them I was able to extend the pedigree of Frances Lea some 15 more generations. Of course there is still the challenge of connecting her to Mohammed! I spent many hours keying in this information, and there are no doubt some errors. I hope they can, one be forgiven, and two found in due time and reported to me for correction.

Nevertheless, with the addition of the many faceted genealogy of the Royal Families of Europe, based

on our alleged descendancy from Edward the III, we are able to extend Frances Lea's pedigree back some 29 generations, or some 34-36 generations from her descendants today, the Jessee Family. If you consider that with each generation as we go back in history the number of potential grandparents doubles (five generations is $2^5=32$, $2^{10}=1024$, $2^{25}=33,554,432$), the number of possible 34GGrandfathers is truly astronomical ($2^{34}=1.72E+10$). That we may have knowledge of one, Robert "the Strong" Capet, still dilutes his contribution to our gene pool to insignificance, but it sure makes reading medieval history a lot more fun!

One can quickly figure out that there weren't that many people on the earth in 850AD. This is one of the very significant points that Shoumantoff makes in his book, that there is considerable intermarriage of cousins, known and unknown, which quickly diminishes the potential number of grandparents. He proves mathematically that we are all cousins in this family of Man, probably not more than 50 generations distant from a common ancestor.

Amongst the Royal Families of Europe, intermarriage of cousins was the rule and our pedigree well illustrates this. It's a good thing some of those Royals eventually married a bunch of commoners, or we all would have Plantagenet long shanks, Hapsburg lips, Capet heads, Barbarossas (red beards), Bourbon breath, and have some pretty deadly health problems, if we existed at all. Let's here if for mongrels and hybrids, we Jessees are ones.

Electronic Mail Service Yields Information on Jessee Civil War Veterans

To get more down to Earth and a bit closer to home, I want to report several discoveries related to our Jessee Civil War veterans. These came to me as a result of my subscription to an electronic bulletin board, SOC-ROOTS over Internet, an Electronic Mail service available to education, government, and corporate institutions. It may also be available via some private EMail services like Compuserve. I am just beginning to explore these services and it is getting quite exciting. I may have more later. If you are able to get access to Internet, my electronic mail address is: jim@jessee.org.

Via my new EMail "pen pals" I was sent information regarding the Jessees and their service in the 29th Virginia Volunteer Infantry. Some 18 Jessees from Russell Co. served in the 29th. I have enclosed a copy of a page of a book that was sent to me listing these Jessees. I hope you find members of your family there. I have a great grandfather, John Tivis Jessee and two of his brothers listed. In addition, I was given a reference to the Simpson Confederate Research Center, which I followed up and received dozens of pages of material all relative to the Regiment and Company in which my grandfather served and his personal service records. I have attached appropriate information for you to use in pursuing research on your own Confederate Jessee ancestors, from Russell Co., VA or elsewhere.

A Jessee Family Cookbook

Amongst several individuals referred to me this year was Brenda Todd Larsen. Before receiving the *Jessee Family Newsletter*, this branch of the family believed they had descended from David Counts Jessee who had immigrated from Scotland or Ireland in the 1800s. She learned that David Counts Jessee was very much "accounted for" in our Jessee family as the grandson of John Jessee and Frankey Lea and son of child No. 13, George L. Jessee (Do you suppose that L. stands for Lea?). I was fascinated to learn that the name Tivis John Jessee is repeated often in her family. The name John Tivis has been repeated in my family for at least five generations. Now we both wonder where the name Tivis originated. I have been told that it is a Welsh version of the Scotch Tavish, and Irish Tavis.

Brenda is the second descendant of George L. Jessee with whom I have had correspondence, and thanks to the work of my first contact and ever faithful genealogy friend, Arlene Jessee, I was able to provide her quite a bit of information on this branch. She in turn sent me a wonderful gift and a real family treasure, a *Jessee Family Cookbook*, that she and her family had created based on the many family recipes and food traditions shared at their family reunions. It included information on their family history too. Brenda informed me of several other members of her family with interest (see the mailing list) and, thanks to several of them, we have added a lot more information to the Jessee Family Data Base.

To see me you would know that I love food, especially that good stick-to-your-ribs, arteries, heart and probably lungs too, food we Jessees so love to eat. This cookbook is wonderful, and full of those best remembered and oft requested foods from Grandma Dove, Uncle Bill, Aunts Eula and Grace, Cousin Shirley and many more. It is full of stories and Jessee family lore. It is a wonderful gift idea, a great centerpiece for a family reunion, and an heirloom for your children and grandchildren. Thank you Brenda for sharing it with me.

The Canadian Jessees

I cut my chain from work and took a two week vacation this June, the first in several years. The four of us, Jim, Nelda, Earl and Emma, traveled north to Portland, Oregon, Seattle, Washington, Vancouver, British Columbia, then ferried to Victoria, British Columbia, then down the Washington and Oregon coasts back to Chico. It was our first exploration into much of this country and it was beautiful. I highly recommend Vancouver as a real gem, and Victoria is only second by a hair.

The trip went very well, no illness or car problems, and only a few "tense" moments since both of my children have truly "matured" into their teenage years, going on 13 and 15. This teenager view of life and parents was suddenly very much evident this summer. Dad is getting dumber by the day, and there is little we now have in common by way of interests, be it music, radio stations or TV channels, not to mention Dad's love of genealogy, botanical gardens, parks and other corny things.

We spent several days in Vancouver, British Columbia where we met and learned about my wife's Canadian family of Norwegian extraction, the Petersons and Skogstads. I too did a little genealogy work

and called the only Jessee in the Vancouver telephone book. To my delight I spoke at length with Wilse Jessee and learned a great deal about most of the Canadian Jessees. I think they are all related to Wilse, and we were able to establish that they are all descended from our John Jessee and Frankey Lea by way of second son, Archer Jessee, and grandson James B. Jessee, although they have been in Canada for at least four generations, and came there by way of Indiana from Virginia.

Wilse and I have exchanged letters and much information since and you will find him on the mailing list. I am grateful for this call and the happy results. I hope we can meet someday, as Wilse tells me he travels to and through California on occasion. The Welcome Mat is always out in Chico for all American and Canadian Jessees, give me a visit someday.

I think I had best stop here, I may break the copy machine, not to mention the bank already. I have lots more goodies than I can send this time, so stay tuned for the next issue. Work is steaming up into a roar, so I may not be able to get to this again until late in the Fall, but never fear, with your continued support, I will keep on plugging.