

Jessee Family Newsletter

Issue #27

Summer 2005

Vol. XIV No. 2

Dear Cousin,

I am sorry to say I could not attend the 2005 Jessee Reunion. Four weddings, a wedding shower (in our own back yard), and two funerals, so far, this summer are using up all my time and energy. I also confess to being greatly saddened by recent interaction with some JHF board members, and am apprehensive about seeing them, even though I know I would be welcomed by so many others, and I love those family hugs.

I am rushing to finish this Newsletter and to get it into the mail before all these summer obligations begin. I will get this mailed just about the time of the Reunion, and I hope you will get it shortly thereafter. Therefore, I do not have photos or other reports of the 2005 Reunion, but hope that some of you who attend will share stories and photos with me for the January 2006 Newsletter.

Those who attended the Annual Meeting on Saturday elected a new JHF board and officers for 2005-2009. I had asked that a hand-in/mail-in ballot be provided to the JHF members at the reunion and to those JHF members who could not attend. Instead, a voice vote from those attending the meeting was planned. Please let me know who was elected. See more inside on the JHF Board.

The newsletter has scant news about some of the fifteen children, and that news depends on you. While I have received fewer news items on some lines, the family database continues to grow with over 43,000 records. There is always data entry to do; just the daily requests for help fill most evenings. Still, I am excited and gratified every time I extend the descendants for the Jessee family and am always astounded as I see increasing evidence of the interrelatedness of all these SW Virginia families. We are all cousins.

We have an interesting newsletter. Thanks to you who help support the effort through generous contributions of information, photographs, stories, documentation, and money. My spirits are uplifted by your friendly letters, email, and calls.

Jim Jessee

Featured This Edition

Joe Jessee provides the terrific news that the US Department of Interior, Park Service, has declared *Jessee's Mill in Russell County to be a National Historic Landmark.* This is an historic moment for the Jessee Family, the historic Mill Creek Community, and Russell County. It is a major step in efforts to preserve Jessee's Mill and the historic community around it for our descendants. Read all about it and follow-up efforts to create a *Mill Creek Historic Community Organization* to continue the effort.

The official *Jessee Historical Foundation Newsletter*, and other letters to me from the JHF Board and members have led me to significantly edit this Newsletter and Website. I have created a new column, *JHF News and Views*, to discuss the issues. I beg your pardon for the editorial comments you will find there.

SW Virginia Families, Other Jesse(e) Families, and Family Origins includes a tidbit of information on one the earliest **JESSE** families to arrive in America, **Richard and Frances Chowning Jesse of Middlesex Co., VA.**

Find news on John and Frankey Lea Jessee and their fifteen children. See new information and photos, read heart-warming stories, and meet new cousins inside. Several have sent articles and photographs which I am happy to feature. See photos from **Greg Lapore, Crystal Reed, Mitchell Jessie, and Peggy Mclain** and other historic family photos that have been shared.

Correspondence and Missing Links is rich this issue, with a photo of the *Sons of the Pioneers*, one of whom is a Jessee descendant, and a discussion of Virginia State Law regarding historic cemetery protection.

Jessee Resources on the World Wide Web has a few more clues for us computer geeks and the latest information regarding the development of the **Jessee Family Database.**

The 2006 National Jessee Family Reunion

Saturday, June 17, 2006

at the Harry L. Coomes Recreation Center,
300 Stanley Street, Abingdon, VA

The 2006 Jessee Family Research Day
Friday, June 16, 2006

at the Russell County Library
203 NW Main Street, Lebanon, VA

Please put the 2006 Family Reunion
and Research Day on your calendar.

The 2005 Jessee Family Research Day was held Friday, June 17, at the Russell County Public Library in Lebanon, VA. As planned the activities began at 9 a.m. and ended about 4 p.m.

The 2005 Jessee Family Reunion and Picnic was held on Saturday, June 18, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the Harry L. Coomes Recreation Center & Park, Abingdon, Virginia. The Jessee Historical Foundation held its annual membership meeting Saturday, during the reunion. The JHF elected a new board and officers at this meeting.

Notes for Next Year:

To get there: Take exit 19 from Interstate 81, go north on Route 11-Main Street toward Abingdon, approximately 0.7 mile. Bear right (north) at the second light onto Thompson Street, beside the shopping center. Go about 100 yards, then go right on Stanley Street. Coomes Recreation Center will be around the big curve, over the hill on the right.

Remember to bring a covered dish, enough to feed your family and at least four additional "cousins." You may bring a folding chair. Bring your musical instruments.

For information about this historic area, lodging, golf courses, etc., please call the Abingdon Convention & Visitors Bureau at 1-800-435-3440;

Phone: 276-676-2282 or Fax: 276-676-3076,

E-mail: acvb@abingdon.com or

Internet: www.abingdon.com/tourism.

THE SILENT AUCTION NEEDS YOU

Plan to participate in the annual silent auction, held during the family reunion on Saturday, to help raise funds for the Jessee Historical Foundation. To make the auction a success, your contributions are needed. Use your imagination to think of items to be contributed. The items for the auctions can be brought to the reunion picnic to be held at the Harry L. Coomes Recreation Center & Park Grounds, Abingdon, VA.

For more picnic and silent auction information, contact

Mary H. Akers

19246 Oakwood Drive

Abingdon, VA 24221

276-628-9239 Mydante@earthlink.net

Jessee Historical Foundation

Founded March 8, 2001

The JHF board, officers, and volunteers:

The following were presented by the nominating committee to the JHF membership for 2005-2009. The membership voted at the annual meeting, held in conjunction with the Reunion and Picnic, Saturday, June 18, 2005.

Hank Davis, President

Laura Jessee Thomas, Vice-President

Norma McHone, Treasurer

Karen Hall, Recording Secretary

Patricia Jessee Stone, Membership Secretary

Board of Directors: Mary H. Akers, Beverly Jo

Elswick, Nancy S. Elswick, Diane Fuller, Sandra

Hood, James C. "JC" Jessee, James W. "Jim"

Jessee, Robert Trigg Jessee, Joy Jessee Malone,

Irene Jessee Perry, Helen R. Reedy, Pauline P.

Salyers, Vernon L. Salyers, Janice S. Tiller.

Go to www.jessee.org for more information on JHF activities, news, and events. *Please Join Us.*

Membership Information

The Jessee Historical Foundation extends an invitation and warm welcome to new members and welcomes your annual membership renewal.

Annual membership will now run from reunion to reunion each year. Dues will be collected at the annual reunion in June for the following year. JHF Membership dues for 2005/2006 are due June 2005.

There are three categories of membership. Anyone age 81 or older may request free lifetime membership. The annual fee is \$10 per person. Ask about lifetime membership, too.

1. Regular Member: If you have a Jessee, Jesse, Jessey or Jessie surname, or are an adult Jessee descendant you are eligible to be a regular member with full voting privileges. Please provide information to verify your Jesse(e) lineage.

2. Associate Member: Spouses, related family, or friends of a regular member, who are non-voting.

3. Junior Member: Family members under age 18, who are non-voting.

Send an application. Get one at www.jessee.org, or provide the following information: name, street or PO box address, city, state, ZIP, phone, email address, and your Jessee pedigree. Please send your application and check, payable to Jessee Historical Foundation, Inc., for \$10 per person, to the membership secretary, at the following address.

Jessee Historical Foundation Inc.

C/O Patricia Stone Jessee

Membership Secretary

PO Box 1647

Lebanon, VA 24266

Jessee's Mill Declared National Historic Landmark

JOE JESSEE (joejessee@yahoo.com), our JHF founding president (2001-2005), provided this terrific news. **The US Department of Interior, Park Service, has declared Jessee's Mill in Russell County to be a National Historic Landmark.** This follows similar State of Virginia action to list Jessee's Mill on the Virginia Landmarks Register last December (see Winter 2005 Newsletter and the *Lebanon News* article, 12/15/2004). Joe sent the press release below to the *Lebanon News* on May 5, 2005, and the article appeared as written in the *Lebanon News*, 5/11/2005.

This is an historic moment for the Jessee Family, Mill Creek Community, and Russell County. This action opens the way for an appropriate non-profit corporation to seek grants and other funding for the acquisition and restoration of Jessee's Mill. It will open other avenues for recognition and support, too. This was the necessary first step. Please see articles to follow regarding the next steps for restoration of Jessee's Mill, perhaps as an anchor for a Mill Creek Historic Community someday.

Several Jessee Historical Foundation members, Russell County historians and friends did research and gathered the critical information necessary to document the history of Jessee's Mill used in the applications. Most of this body of knowledge and credit to those who contributed to it have been published in the Jessee Website at www.jessee.org and in the Jessee Newsletters over the last decade. I thank all those who helped along the way.

Joe Jessee, with support and help from Sherman Wallace, Mill owner, spearheaded this successful effort with the formal State and Federal applications. These State and Federal declarations are tremendous accomplishments to add to Joe's success at the renaming of the County Road to Jessee's Mill Road and establishment of the Jessee's Mill Historic Highway Marker. It was a very productive end to Joe's service as founding President of the JHF organization and Jessee family. Joe will not be returning to the JHF board, and will seek new endeavors. I offer Joe congratulations, best wishes, and heartfelt thanks.

Press Release: May 5, 2005
Jessee's Mill
A National Historic Landmark

The United States Department of the Interior, Park Service, has declared Jessee's Mill in Russell County, Virginia to be a national historic landmark. Prior to this designation the mill was declared a state historical landmark by the Commonwealth of



Joe Jessee & crew at Jessee's Mill Historical Highway Marker
Courtesy of the *Lebanon News*, 11/3/2004: Joseph Jessee, President, JHF; Chad Moore, Jimmy Winebarger and Pete Henry of Asplundh, who installed the marker; and Carl Moore, JHF Director and marker designer.

Virginia, Department of Historic Resources. Historical designation applications are first sent to the state office and then if declared eligible by the state, the application for a national designation may be forwarded for consideration to the federal government.

Jessee's Mill began operation over two hundred years ago, predating the census and tax records of 1790. The mill was the primary source for ground agricultural products and other trading in the Mill Creek Area. The mill is located on Jessee's Mill Road, State Route 645, north of Route 71, between Lebanon and Cleveland.

John Jessee, a first war of independence infantryman and musician, purchased the mill from William Gilmore in 1794. The mill continued mechanical improvement over the years and around 1890 was made into the three story structure which stands today. All of the milling machineries are still in the mill. The mill ceased operations in 1932 during the Great Depression.

The mill property is currently owned by Mr. Sherman Wallace of Cleveland. The application was submitted by Joseph Jessee of Lebanon, in cooperation with Mr. Wallace, and Jim Jessee of Chico, California.

An historical marker for Jessee's Mill and John Jessee is located on Route 71 about three miles from Lebanon.

The state designation was granted in December of 2004 and the federal designation was granted in January of 2005.

Joseph Jessee,
Lebanon, Virginia 24266-0001

JHF News & Views

The Jessee Historical Foundation publishes its own newsletter, *JHF News & Information--The Official Voice of the Jessee Historical Foundation.*

The May 2005 edition was sent to current JHF members, with news and information about the 2005 Research Day, Picnic, and the Four Year Annual Meeting where a new board and officers will be elected. The newsletter included a report from the nominating committee, comprised of J.C. Jessee, Vernon Salyers, Joy J. Malone, and Beverly J. Elswick. Please see the proposed board and officers on page 3. The new board and officers, and any additional nominees from the floor are expected to be elected by voice vote of those present at the annual meeting. If present, I would vote for this slate and hope for more new nominees, too.

Recent official communication to me from the JHF Board has indicated that I am only to publish in this Newsletter and on the Website information formally transmitted to me via their liaison, Vernon Salyers. In addition, I was not to suggest any further JHF involvement in restoration of Jessee's Mill, as well as the Jessee Cemetery, and to remove such references or inferences from the Website and Newsletter.

In other communication I was chastised for putting on the Jessee List the letter referred to above, my response, and other email I received about this alleged "private" JHF business. After extensive legal research, this individual informed me that all communications between us, and all previous contributions about the JHF, were private and confidential. It was suggested that I had breached the law, and certainly ethics, if not destroyed a friendship by my actions. This has made me so very anxious, depressed, and sad.

I have been threatened by implied legal action if I do not remove certain photos and reports from the Website within specified days. It saddens me so much to be forced to remove from the Website virtually the entire photo record and most of the written history of the first five years of the JHF, including our research days, picnics, and best events like the famous bus tour and silent auctions. These photos and reports did nothing but promote the organization and preserve its history for all. I am so very sorry for this loss.

Please visit the Website at www.jessee.org to see what I have done to comply with all of the above. I hope you and those concerned will find I have sufficiently changed my Website, and changed my reporting on JHF projects and interests in this Newsletter. If you find more photos or information I should remove, please kindly tell me.

I am simply this Jessee Family Newsletter's editor and publisher. I do not claim to be any "voice" for the JHF. So please consider all that appears here my editorial views and opinions only.

I will need you to be my reporters and to contribute stories and photos about JHF events and meetings. Please do so only with the understanding that I want to publish them on the Jessee List, in this Newsletter, and place them on the Jessee Website, and that I have your permission to do so, now and in the future. I make no profit doing this, so copyright is not an issue, but please know I will be placing your work in the public domain.

Since I could not be there this year, I really need photos and stories of the 2005 Research Day, Reunion Picnic, and JHF Annual Meeting for the January 2006 Edition. I hope someone will share with me the results of the annual meeting and election, too. I hope to hear from you and to share your photos and memories with the Jessee Family.

THE JHF NEWSLETTER EMPHASIZED SEVERAL POINTS THAT I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO EMPHASIZE

The editors of the JHF Newsletter made special effort to differentiate themselves from this Jessee Family Newsletter in their *About This Publication.*

"It was decided by the Board of Directors that it would be a nice idea to communicate with the members in conjunction with our annual Research Day & Picnic. This publication is totally separate from and not to be confused with the Jessee Family Newsletter published by Jim Jessee. Our publication will only be sent out once a year prior to the JHF Research Day & Reunion. Please send any suggestions or comments to either of the publication committee members."

Vernon Salyers, PR Chairman
Rt. 1 Box 97, Lebanon, VA 24266-9685
J.C. Jessee
PO Box 83, Lebanon, VA 24266-0083

The JHF Newsletter carried a reminder that JHF Membership Dues for 2005 are now due, and that "All Membership Dues will now run from picnic to picnic, each June." It did not indicate how much the dues are or where to send them, but it is \$10 per year per person. Please do renew or join anew, so you can have a voice in the organization. I believe you can still send your dues to Mary Akers, our retiring Membership Secretary (see pg. 2) or send dues to:

Jessee Historical Foundation
C/O Membership Secretary
PO Box 1617
Lebanon, VA 24266-1617

The JHF Newsletter provided an *FYI* box as a very important reminder to the membership.

"FYI According to the Internal Revenue Service our Foundation is classified as a 501(a)(c)7 organization. In that we are a social and recreational club whose general nature of activities are pleasure, recreation and social activities."
[italics are JHF editor's emphasis]

I have complained that as a JHF board member I have never received an agenda in advance, nor written minutes afterwards of any meetings. When I complained to a board member I thought to be most knowledgeable, I had it explained that *by virtue of being this kind of organization, there is no obligation to have written agendas, and no obligation to have written minutes or treasurer's reports provided to all the board members whether they can attend or not.* All business can be done with oral minutes and treasurer reports and voice votes by those attending, without a known quorum, or obligation to get input from or inform other board members of their actions with written minutes. I think this is wrong.

By rumor and the reporting of others (no minutes), I understand the JHF Board adopted Robert's Rules of Order last fall. Then by some interpretation of it, they rescinded all previous resolutions of the board that they having interpreted as not having followed those rules, including last summer's authorization of the Jessee's Mill Historical Sign. Fortunately, Joe had already done it.

By this FYI distinction, the JHF is not required to do any of these procedures, but it may elect to adopt such procedures in its own by-laws. I ask the new board to please adopt board procedures and bylaws that would include:

1. Providing all JHF Board members a written agenda at least 48 hours prior to the meeting
2. Keeping written minutes that include listing all those attending, relevant discussion of agenda items and exact wording of resolutions, recording who moved, seconded, and the vote.
3. Providing those minutes to all board members prior to further action of the board to approve the minutes. Subsequent board minutes may include corrections or amendments of prior meeting minutes as part of the approval process.
4. Providing a treasurer's report with the minutes to all board members.

I and most JHF Board members would be happy to receive these by email, to save the JHF the handling time, copying, and postage costs. The by-laws should so indicate that these may be provided by email.

This FYI classification is such a very important legalistic distinction for some members of the board that they have taken action against me. The board members present at the Winter 2005 JHF Board meeting directed that a letter be sent to me by "acting president," Hank Davis. It advised me that I must not misrepresent the JHF organization objectives in my Newsletter, on the Website, or Jessee List, and reminded me that by *this definition* of the organization, the JHF cannot be involved in projects like purchase or preservation of Jessee's Mill or protection of the John Jessee cemetery, and that I should stop implying they should or could. I was to print only what was provided in the official minutes. And I asked, what minutes?

Even though I have published that very "FYI" distinction for some time in this Newsletter and on the Website, I was accused of misrepresenting the JHF when I published articles and news about, or asked the JHF to be involved in some way with, efforts to preserve, buy, or restore Jessee's Mill, as well as efforts to protect and gain access to the John Jessee Cemetery.

These and other implied legal threats, demands to remove materials from the Website, and further bitter chastisements and aspersions on my character, have me in despair about ever having become involved. I am advised by my own media expert that since all materials were given freely to me via the Internet for use in the Newsletter and on the Web, that the providers helped me edit and proofread these articles and photos on both, and that they have appeared there for years without expressed concern, there are no copyright issues for which I can be sued. I am not making any money on these contributions, and all are photos of public events. Still I cannot get it out of my mind, and the lingering threat of legal action against me has me frightened. I cannot afford such legal costs or the emotional turmoil. I am sick about all this.

The JHF Newsletter announced that an "Official JHF Dedication Ceremony" for the Jessee's Mill Historical Marker was to be held Friday, June 17, 2005. They offered "Thanks to all of you who helped in any way..."

At the one recent JHF board meeting I was able to attend, last summer during the 2004 Reunion, these same JHF members strongly opposed authorizing Joe Jessee to proceed with the private highway sign for Jessee's Mill because, as explained, he had not followed procedures. The authorization was hotly debated with much personal attack upon Joe during and after. It passed by only one vote, including mine. There have been bitter feelings, actions, and now registered letters with accusations, demands, and legal threats directed at me and Joe ever since. Joe quit going to the JHF meetings; he could not take it anymore.

I pray that these bitter feelings and actions be left behind and that the new JHF Board and officers get a fresh start and all our support.

I offer the services of the www.jessee.org Website, the Jessee List, and this Newsletter as a vehicle for the JHF board to connect to the greater Jessee family, and to share information about issues and concerns of the board, membership, and others. If informed, I will gladly share here or on the Website JHF news and information of board agendas, minutes, and photos of activities and events, which I believe the JHF membership and many others sincerely want.

I get literally thousands of "hits" per month on my Website, and dozens of email messages from those who have first learned about the JHF and the Jessee Annual Reunions directly and only from this Website. You are free to use the Jessee List to communicate with fellow board members, too. I invite all board members to join the list and to subscribe to this newsletter as one of our means for better communication. I will gladly publish your comments, too.

If or when the JHF develops its own Mailing List or Website, I will gladly link to it as its own "JHF official voice" and welcome you to the Web.

Thank goodness, the JHF Newsletter had information regarding the creation of a Jessee Book, *Remember When*, with family stories, histories, and photos. God Bless Mary Akers for undertaking this one, too. She is asking that you send her family stories, tales, and lore, as well as photos. I know Mary has helpers, and I will gladly credit them as this develops. I am happiest promoting such JHF projects and activities, and hope to contribute as well. For more information on this project, contact:

Mary H. Akers
19246 Oakwood Drive
Abingdon, VA 24221
276-628-9239 Mydante@earthlink.net

The JHF Newsletter announced the following future meetings. I urge you to go and hope you can offer your thoughts, voice those Jessee opinions, and get the new board and officers off to a good start.

2005 JHF BOARD MEETINGS
Saturday, August 6, 2005
10 am at the Russell Co. Public Library,
Lebanon, VA
Saturday, October 15, 2005
10 am at Quality Inn,
Abingdon, VA.

Proposed JHF Projects

The following projects have been discussed in the Jessee Family Newsletter and on the Jessee List for many years, and were believed to be among the reasons for establishing the JHF in the first place. Most were adopted and acted upon by the first JHF board. Several have been achieved, and most may be continued by the new board. This remains a wish list for me and many others. I hope the new board will consider these as goals for the next four years, as well. Whether you are a JHF member or not, these projects need leadership and volunteers.

1. Planning for National Jessee Family Reunions, Research Days, and Annual Meetings. All agree this is the first and foremost goal of the JHF. A dedicated few are doing more than their fair share in organizing and managing these activities. They always need volunteers to help with the details of providing a Welcome Reception, Research Day, Annual Meeting and Reunion Picnic.

2. Creating a Jessee Family Cook Book. By the effort of Mary Akers and several other volunteers, who have been featured in previous newsletters, the first cookbook has been published and sold out. Let Mary know if interested in another printing or publication.

3. Creation of a Jessee Book, *Remember When*, with family stories, histories, and photos. See the May 2005 JHF Newsletter for more information on this new project, too. This is a terrific idea, and given enough time, there are many who would like to contribute, even me. Thank you, Mary.

4. The establishment of Virginia State highway, Russell County historical, or private markers for Jessee's Mill and other appropriate Family sites. The first of these, a private highway sign for Jessee's Mill has been accomplished. Please see articles in the Winter 2005 edition. This approach may set a precedent for developing further private directional and historical signs for additional family landmarks, cemeteries, and the like by the JHF. I hope so.

5. Clean-up and preservation of Jessee cemeteries and historical sites. There are so many that need our time and attention. I still hope that the JHF, working with local government, youth groups and organizations, can provide leadership for such efforts, raise and give money where and when appropriate.

Sadly missing from this wish list for the JHF is any official support, be it money, volunteers, or leadership, for efforts to restore Jessee's Mill, or to be involved with efforts to protect, preserve, and provide access to the John and Frankey Lea Jessee cemetery. These will need to be separate efforts distinct from the JHF organization. I will continue to report on those separate efforts through this Newsletter.

John and Frankey Lea Jessee Cemetery

Protection and restoration of the John and Frankey Lea Jessee Cemetery, if not family access, was believed by many to be one of the Jessee Historical Foundation objectives when founded, and remains an oft-expressed desire of many members. The 2001-2005 JHF board elected not to pursue this project. Some JHF board members have asked me not to write any further about the matter. You may wish to inform members of the new 2005-2009 JHF board if you feel differently.

This cemetery is owned by Mr. Jimmy Herndon, who lives on the property and has renovated the home. Mr. Herndon has indicated that he is not willing to cooperate with the JHF or Jessee family at this time. I believe we will need more investigation of our options and how to seek the cooperation of Mr. Herndon in at least providing or paying his costs for demarcation and protection of this cemetery from further deterioration or damage from activities. I believe we need to work with Mr. Herndon to find a way to hold him harmless for any liability for those who may visit this cemetery, and to protect his interests. In the meantime, I ask that we not bother Mr. Herndon with unauthorized visits to his farm and this cemetery.

See Correspondence at the end of this newsletter for A Dialogue Regarding Historic Cemetery Destruction and Virginia State Law. It has current and highly encouraging information regarding Virginia State Law, and several expressions of family feelings on the matter. No matter how much Jimmy Herndon and some JHF Board members would like me and others to go away, a recent exchange on the Russell County List regarding the attempt by a land owner to destroy the Whitt Family Cemetery brought all kinds of email to me about the John Jessee Family cemetery situation. It is clear that Virginia law makes it illegal for Mr. Herndon to do harm to the cemetery and he is obligated to provide family members access.

I wish that Mr. Herndon would allow the Jessee Family to contribute in a material way to the mapping, clean-up, and fencing of the cemetery. I hope that if Mr. Herndon were asked and agrees, the new JHF board would again undertake this project.

We still need to get John Jessee recognized as a Revolutionary War Soldier and the cemetery where he and Frankey are buried acknowledged as a Revolutionary War grave site. We know that it is also a Civil War soldier grave site, and may need this recognition as well. Should Mr. Herndon permit, we need the cemetery surveyed and well marked. **Volunteers are needed to pick up this baton.**

Mill Creek Historic Community Remains a Dream

Kathryn Greever, Joe Jessee, Sherman Wallace and I, among many others, believe that an appropriate organization or benefactor should acquire Jessee's Mill along with the dam above it and the Jessee School for a Jessee's Mill restoration project, as the anchor for a *Mill Creek Historic Community*. We have hopes to acquire enough land around the mill, dam, school, the Andrew Jackson Jessee home and the miller's home to preserve a sense of the historic Mill Creek Community. Sherman Wallace, the owner, indicates he is willing to work with a group or organization regarding these ideas. This is a wonderful opportunity to preserve these significant historical landmarks and perhaps create a small historical community around it for Russell Co. and all its sons and daughters across America.

In addition, Mill Creek Community members, landowners, and Russell County families with roots there, could seek land use zoning or historical designation to help preserve the character of the area. The Mill Creek Baptist Church and its members' support and participation would be highly valued.

I have asked various individuals, board members of the JHF and local history and genealogy groups in Russell County to consider how this project might happen. I asked whether the JHF, Russell County government, Chamber of Commerce, Genealogy or Historical Society, or other group would be willing to look into creating a Russell County or Mill Creek Historic Community with a renovated Jessee's Mill as its centerpiece. The response has been underwhelming and leads us to propose the following.

Mill Creek Historic Community Organization Proposed

The Virginia State and Federal declarations of Jessee's Mill as an historic landmark provide us the opportunity to form a separate public non-profit tax exempt organization for the purpose of acquiring, preserving, and some day restoring Jessee's Mill, Dam, and School as the centerpiece for a Mill Creek Historic Community.

A donor has offered to cover the costs of creating such a private non-profit charitable corporation, and is prepared to donate more to the effort. Sherman Wallace is willing to help, and others have expressed interest to me. At this time I would like to hear from any individuals who can offer time to help organize and participate in a small working committee there in Russell Co. This first group would discuss and set the

goals and objectives of forming such an organization, outline strategies and means to achieve our goals, and determine the legal procedures and costs to form a public non-profit corporation dedicated to this purpose. I would like to form a committee that could become the core of the new board of directors for such an organization.

The first chore is to determine whether there is enough interest, volunteers, and potential support to proceed further. If so, the group will need a lawyer to help us with the formalities, and I hope those family lawyers who have offered such help before will step up on this one.

I would like to see a complete proposal developed by this committee, with the purpose of the proposed organization well defined, and procedures for membership, election of a board and officers, done in accordance with Virginia law and those board procedural requirements, or by-laws, I outlined earlier.

I am too far away to be the leader, or even attend meetings, but I will gladly coordinate as best I can until the committee elects its own chair and handles its own affairs. I can collect your names and interests, and share them with the key individuals who may emerge to help us do this. I offer the services of this Newsletter, the Jessee List, and Website to this endeavor. Please write me at Jim@Jessee.org.

Jessee's Mill Restoration

The restoration of Jessee's Mill is a dream shared by many. I am willing to do what I can to encourage such an effort through this Newsletter and the Website. Here is a summary of what we have learned so far about the Mill from the many who have contributed in previous Newsletters.

The water powered Jessee's Mill is located 2.5 miles north of Route 71 on Route 645, Jessee's Mill Road. It is believed the dam and first mill were built before 1791 by Aaron Van Hook on Carr's Creek, now Mill Creek. It is mentioned in a survey of this land dated, 13 June 1791. It was sold in 1792 to William Gilmore.

The mortar-free stone dam, based on a Peruzzi design (Italy), strengthens with stronger water current. Handmade wooden gears for the mill wheel, believed to be an Oliver Evans design, were installed about 1814. In 1890, the mill was enlarged to a three story building with automated roller process machinery from Salem Machine Works (Virginia). Mill operations ended in 1932.

In 1794 William Gilmore sold the land and mill to John Jessee, a Revolutionary War musician and soldier. The mill was improved by John Jessee and later owned by his son Archer Jessee. John and his wife Frankey Lea Jessee raised a family of fifteen children and are buried on this land at West longitude 82 09'23", North latitude 36 55' 04". The current mill was constructed by Andrew Jackson Jessee, John's grandson, whose 1878 brick home is located just across Mill Creek.

Mill Creek once was a thriving community with a school, church, general store, and blacksmith, centered on the Jessee mill and businesses.

See the July 2005 and January 2005 Jessee Family Newsletters regarding our having secured State and Federal recognition of Jessee's Mill as an historic landmark. Here is the background and some of what needs to be done to preserve the Mill.

During spring 2003, Joe Jessee and Sherman Wallace submitted a preliminary application to the VA Dept. of Historical Resources for State historical status. On June 16, 2003, Joe and Sherman toured the Jessee Mill with Mike Pulice, the Architectural Historian, Roanoke Regional Preservation Office, Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Mike Pulice believed the Mill to be fully eligible for both State and National Historical Register status, and commented on its remarkable integrity. Clearly his comments were true, as we have now secured that recognition. He also advised Sherman Wallace on appropriate preservation measures, some of which are needed immediately.

SHERMAN WALLACE, wrote, 2/19/2003, with a special request for donations to help him preserve Jessee's Mill until some other arrangement for its long-term restoration is made. You may find his complete letter in the prior newsletters and on the Website. There has been as yet little direct response to Sherman, although I and a few others have made donations to help Sherman take some action on the Mill now to forestall further deterioration. He is proceeding with evaluation and some work, but it will take a good deal of money to do what is needed, even for just preserving the status quo.

I have requested that the JHF and members of the family and other lovers' of Mill Creek and Russell County history donate directly to Sherman Wallace for this specific purpose. Sherman owns Jessee's Mill, Dam, and land around it, and is a Jessee descendant, as well. I have toured the Mill and Jessee lands (including the cemetery when he leased it) with him, and know of his interest in preserving the Mill. My wife and I were guests in his mother's home, and enjoyed his generosity and hospitality. I find him to be an honorable man and trust him completely.

Those who do not wish to wait for all the legal and corporate falderal are encouraged to make a donation directly to Sherman Wallace now. I know Sherman will put your money directly into repairs and preservation of Jessee's Mill. God bless him.

TOM RUDDER provided this Web reference to a **topographic map locating Jesse's Mill**. It can be found at [TopoZone.com](http://www.topozone.com) which is a fantastic topographic map resource with many **Jessee landmarks identified, including the cemetery**. **Have fun playing on this site.**
[Http://www.topozone.com/map.asp?z=17&n=4085539&e=395992&s=25&size=m](http://www.topozone.com/map.asp?z=17&n=4085539&e=395992&s=25&size=m)



Andrew Jackson Jessee Historic Home, Spring 2005



Richard Jessee of Chico, CA at Jessee's Mill, June 17, 2004

SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA FAMILIES

Here I will feature articles, documents, and other information about other Southwest Virginia families who have intermarried with the Jesse(e) Family over many generations. Your contributions are welcome.

JESSE(E) FAMILY ORIGINS

There are many "Jessee," "Jesse," even "Jessie" families in the United States and Canada that we know are descended from families whose American origins are in Virginia. There are many Jesse, Jessee, Jessie, Jessey and, perhaps, Jeshy, Jaci, Jacy, and Jacie families in the world whose kinship is unknown. I believe we are all cousins. As "Jesse" and "Jessee" are the two most frequent spellings of this family name, I shall adopt the convention of using "Jesse(e)" in reference to the larger family.

Please see Newsletter #10 for an extensive discussion and summary of what we know so far about the origins of the Jesse(e) families in America. The many clues there lead us to several new avenues of research on the origins of the Jesse(e) families in, at least, Amelia Co., Cumberland Co., Essex Co., Isle of Wight Co., King and Queen Co., King William Co., Lancaster Co., Nansemond, Co., Middlesex Co., and Spotsylvania Co., VA, not to mention the Isle of White and Devonshire, England.

OTHER JESSE(E) FAMILIES

CARLYNE SQUIRES [jessee@oregonfcu.com] wrote, 2/18/2005, with this information from a Jessee Family Bible. I believe this to be from the **Richard and Frances Chowning Jesse of Middlesex Co., VA.**

Here's another item I found at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond: Items taken from the Jesse Family Bible.

MARRIAGES

Thomas Jesse and Rebecca Pullin were married 5th day of December, 1822.

Thomas Jesse and Elizabeth Shackelford who was Elizabeth Claybrook were married 24th of December 1828.

William Jesse son of John Jesse was married to Mary S, Barrett of King William 20th day of December 1832.

William T. Jesse and Mary D. Claybrook were married 28th December 1837.

Thos Jesse and Miss Fanny Major were married the 12th of April 1853.

BIRTHS

Thomas Jesse son of John Jesse and C/Katharine his wife was born Sept. 13, 1786.

Elizabeth Claybrook was born 30th day of September, 1791.

DEATHS

John Jesse my father died 19th day of March 1814.

Elizabeth Jesse wife of John Jesse died 29th of October, 1832.

William Jesse son of John Jesse died 19th March, 1840.

Betty Ball former B. Montague died August the 11th, 1848.

[Continued from page 9]

Jessee Family Photo Album

GREG LEPORE [greg@rhobard.com] sent these photos and commentary, 2/8/2005, regarding the **Jessee School House**.

I have recently come across a couple of photos of Jessee School House in Russell County. The photos appear to be from about 1903 and show two different classes. One class is identified on the back, mostly my Campbells, but there is also a Lola Jessee, which is not a name I am familiar with. After her name, actually slightly above, is the name Sutton in parentheses.

I don't have any information on the second photo, it's not actually labelled Jessee School House, it just appears to be very similar to the first photo, and I can't recognize any people in it. However, the photos don't appear to match the building identified as Jessee's School adjacent to Jessee's Mill. I'm not really sure if all three are of the same building or not.

By the way, I recently obtained another Confederate reunion photo, which is sure to have some Jessees in it at <http://russellvets.org/>.



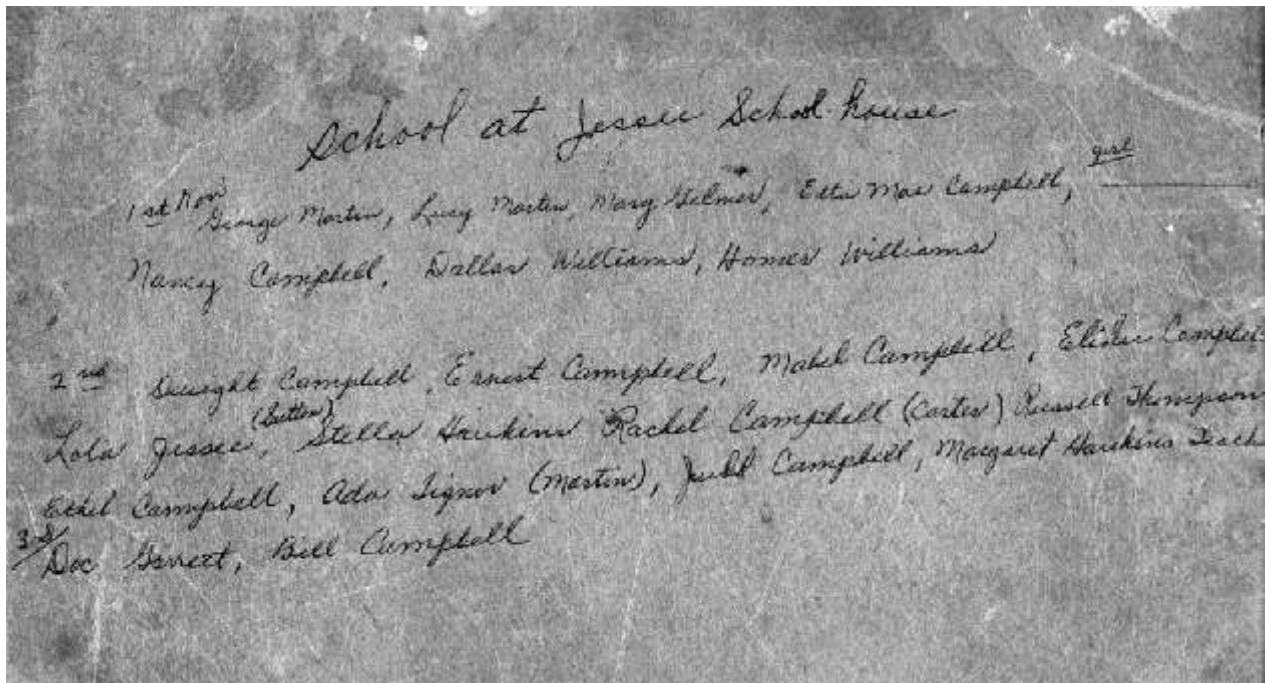
Jessee School at Jessee's Mill



Jessee School Photo 1



Jessee School Photo 2



Back of Jessee School Photo

Fanny Claybrook died August 17, 1848, in the 61st year of her age.

Elizabeth Jesse died July the 26th 10 min. before 3 o'clock in the 61st year of her age 1852.

NOTE: On the fly leaf of this old Bible is the following:

Thomas Jesse
May 30th, 1840.
Price \$5.00

FROM THE MARRIAGE REGISTER OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY, VA.

William T. Jesse, Esq., of Lancaster Co., and Mary D. Claybrook married December 27th, 1837. George Wright, guardian. Augustine Owen, Edw. L. Wright and R. A. Christian security and witnesses.

[the above data was typed; the following was handwritten]:

[in pencil]: Later: Mrs. Silbey said keep the Bible

[in ink]: The Jesse family Bible is at this date — Jan. 18, 1949

— in my possession but is the property of Mrs. D. D. Silbey of Hartfield, Va., to whom it must be returned.

C. C. Chowning

Call number for this data: Mssg:4J4953:1

Here's another tidbit from the Va Historial Society's

Richmond library: It's evidently a copy of pages from a **Shepherd family Bible** and not easy to read because it's reversed (white letter on black page) and most of the listings for births are Shepherd surnames, except:

"Lucy E. Jesse, the daughter Wm. Jesse and Lucy his wife was born June 13th 1816."

From the Marriages page:

"Wm. Jesse and Lucy Shepherd were married Feb. 15, 1815."

Under Deaths:

"Lucy Jesse departed this life on the 5th August 1816 in the 20 year of her age. She is gone never to return and left an helpless infant and a disconsolate mother behind."

PHILLIP AND RACHEL JESSEE

Phillip Jesse (1742-1858), wife **Rachel**, and his son **Gabriel Jesse (1804-1886)**, of still unknown relationship to John Jesse (1750-1816), are among the historic Russell County, VA pioneering families. Phillip, who is reported to have lived to be 116, is sometimes referred to reverently as "Old Phillip." Here I will feature articles, documents, and other information about Phillip and Rachel Jesse, their son Gabriel, and their descendants. Your contributions are welcome.

Gabriel Jesse descendants Irene Jesse Perry, Janice Jesse Tiller, and J.C. and wife Nellie Jesse have been generous supporters and stalwart workers who have helped establish the Jesse Family Foundation. For their past and continuing work, we thank them. I invite them and other family members to submit photos and other articles of interest for us all to enjoy.

Of note, Jimmy Herndon, owner of the John and Frankey Lea Jesse cemetery and original farm, is a Phillip and Rachel Jesse descendant.

JOHN AND FRANKEY JESSEE

Many, if not most, Jesses in America are descended from John (1750-1815) and Frankey Lea Jesse (1752-1836) of Cobb's Creek, Caswell County, North Carolina and Carr's Creek (today Mill Creek) in Reed's Valley, Russell County, Virginia. They had fifteen children. There are many "Jessee," "Jesse," even "Jessie" families in the United States and Canada who are known descendants of those fifteen children. All of us living descendants are about fifth or sixth cousins, or even closer kin. Here I will report new information for John and Frankey Jesse descendants and highlight news and significant contributions regarding each of their fifteen children.

I enjoy corresponding with many descendants of John and Frankey's fifteen children and constantly glean much new descendant and pedigree information. I cannot provide all of it in the Jesse Newsletter. Please visit the family database at www.jessee.org to see many new additions each month.

I. John Jesse, Jr.

John Jesse, Jr. (1775-1834) married **Mary "Polly" Armstrong (1780-1840)** and they had six children. This is the editor's line.

II. Archer Jesse

Archer Jesse (1776-1862) married three times: **Nancy Browning (1781-1826); Rachel Herndon (1790-1833);** and **Mary Jane "Polly" Owens (1803-1884)** and had fifteen children.

CRYSTAL REED (Crylynreed@aol.com) wrote, 1/3/2005, with these photos and newspaper article of **Nora Jesse Reed**, who married **Thomas Jefferson Reed**. Nora Jesse is the daughter of **Wilson and Mattie Childress Jesse**, who are cousins. Wilson is descended from **Archer Jesse and Nancy Browning**, and Mattie is descended from **Mary "Polly" Jesse Kiser and Archer Jesse and Mary Jane "Polly" Owens**.

Jim, I did find her info [Nora Jesse Reed] on your site. I have numerous pictures of her and some of the Jesse family. When Nora's daughter in-law passed away my husband and I were given all the family pictures and items of that nature. She and her family are from an area that I was born at and all of my family are from. When I went home for Xmas I went to the Clinch Valley Cemetery to look up their graves. My father-in-law was named after her son that died at Iwo Jima. I will send you what info and photos I have. Would you happen to have any pictures that maybe we could trade.

I hope you enjoy these pictures.

Crystal Reed, King George, Va



Wilson and Mattie Childress Jessee



Nora with brothers Richard and Watson Jessee



Nora Jessee Reed

Has Taught 1000 Children

Mrs. Nora Reed Quits Teaching

After 29 years of teaching in Tazewell county, Mrs. Nora Reed has retired.

Jolly and happy at 75, she is ready to go to Florida or California, though she will miss her associations with pupils and teachers that have made her teaching years happy ones. She says "I'm the kind who likes to mix and mingle!"

Mrs. Reed has taught the third grade in Richlands for the past seven years, and before that in Raven and at Red Root Ridge.

She has taught more than a thousand children, and raised a fine family to boot, and she's proud of it.

Mrs. Reed began teaching at \$25 a month, which she says was then more than enough to buy a swell Easter outfit, and has a multitude of friends throughout this section.

Superintendent of Schools J. L. Walthal wrote her a letter upon her retirement at the end of the school term, expressing "appreciation for long and faithful service as a teacher. You deserve the highest commendation for your work with children. Your happy and conscientious devotion to duty has been exemplary. Many children and



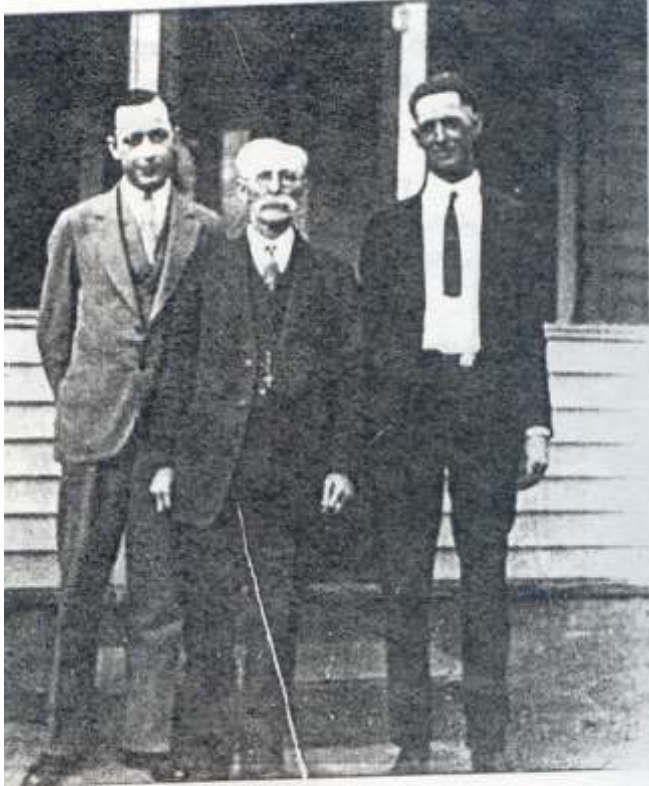
the community owe you much more than they can express."

Mrs. Reed, who lives here with her daughter, Vivian, has four other children, R. T. Reed of Fredericksburg, Mrs. C. H. Robins of Oak Hill, Bernard of Charlton Heights, W. Va., and Mrs. Lorraine Kontner of Columbus, Ohio.



Thomas Jefferson Reed

DON AND BJ CLOUSTON (dfbjclouston@earthlink.net) shared, 1/27/2005, these wonderful photos of the **John Wesley Jessee** family, son of **David Hanson Jessee**, son of **John Jessee**, son of **Archer Jessee and Nancy Browning**.



John Wesley w/grandson Ralph G. & ?

297

J.W. Jessee, his grandson Ralph Lapham and an unknown



Ola Belle Jessee (second from right) and her sisters

Four of the Jessee sisters. Ola Belle is Don's grandmother.



John Wesley Jessee & Jessee Clouston

J.W. Jessee and his grandson Jessee Clouston (Don's dad).



John Wesley Jessee Family - Circa 1893

John W., Cora Alice, Ola Belle, Frona Mae, Sarah Ann, Gerty, Bruce

John Wesley Jessee Family



Ralph C. Jessee - Ola's younger brother

Ralph Jessee

CLYDE M. SENGER [mailto:sengercm@juno.com] wrote, 2/25/2005 with this information about **William Jessee of Oregon**. William is the son of Vincent Jessee, son of Archer and Nancy Browning. Previously my undocumented note on William's record said "Went to California during the gold rush and never heard from again." I guess he did all right.

While working on a web page on James Pearl descendants, I was researching a **William Jessee of Linn Co Oregon 1860-1870**. He listed his personal wealth at \$1000 in 1860 which suggests he may have been in the California gold rush and thus might be the son of Vincent (1800 VA) that you mention on the Jessee Genealogy Service family tree at Ancestry. Also, he names his son Vincent. I am still working on the web page but am finished with the Jessee part as far as I know. Feel free to utilize this information if you wish.

You mention a marriage to Nancy SNAPP ca 1850 but gave no details and I could not identify William in the 1850 census. Have you? [I haven't] Clyde Senger
<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~sengercm/pmil.html>

III. William Jessee

William Jessee (1779-1841) married **Mary "Polly" Vermillion** (1785-1879), and they had fourteen children. This family moved to Lee Co., VA.

IV. Lea Jessee

Lea Jessee (1781-1852) married **Barbara Gose** (1788-1862), da. of **Stephen Gose and Barbara Catron (Ketron) Gose**, and they had ten children. This family moved to Missouri, and includes among descendants Archer Catron Jessee, the first Jessee to migrate to California before the Gold Rush.

V. David Jessee

Reverend David Jessee (1783-1856) married **Catherine "Katie" Banner** (1788-1860) and had thirteen children. See also the discussion under Rebecca Jessee Burk below.

TRACEY JESSEE DINGUS (gtdingus@bvunet.net) wrote, 1/7/2005, with the following inquiry that has led to the inclusion of many more Rev. David Jessee descendants into the Jessee Family Database. It is also an excellent example of the kind of dialogue I have with cousins that makes this work so rewarding.

I grew up in Russell Co., VA. My grandfather, Robert E. Lee Jessee, ran the Texaco station in Dante. He married Mary Lou Baker and they had 7 children, most of them still live in Russell Co. I don't know much about the history of our family. Are we related to your set of Jessees? Tracey Jessee Dingus.

I responded to Tracey stating I am quite sure she is related to all the Jessees in SW Virginia and most of



Tracey Jessee Dingus with Greg, Logan, and Peyton Dingus

America, as am I, especially if her Jessee family comes from Dante, and asked for more information. What she provided enabled me to connect her family as descendants of **John Skaggs Jessee and Jemima Dorton**, the grandparents of our faithful contributor **Tom Rudder**, who, with his wife Shirley, provided much if not most of the information in this corner of the database.

Here's what I've come up with from Dad... I'll start with Dad and work backwards...

Robert L. Jessee (b. 12/19/1936)
Robert E. Lee Jessee & Mary Lou Baker Jessee
Robert Bob "Cat Eye" Jessee & Lina Victoria Porter Jessee
Skaggs Jessee & Mimie Dorton Jessee
David Jessee & Hannah Ann Skaggs Jessee

Dad says that Papaw Jessee (Robert E. Lee Jessee) ran the Texaco/Esso station from 1955 on.

I was then able to direct her to the extensive pedigree information for John Skaggs Jessee and Jemima Dorton and tell her that she descends from Rev. David Jessee, and is my 5th cousin, once removed.

I went to the website again & looked at the information for John Skaggs Jessee & Jemima Dorton. WOW! I have attached what I found out from Dad. I will check with my cousins and fill in the blanks, if possible. :)

My Dad has ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) [that] and my son Peyton's project [on genealogy] in school are what got me to

thinking that I'd better find out who our "kin people" are while I still can. Thank you so much for all of your help.

My grandmother, Mary Lou Baker Jessee, would rattle off who everyone in Russell Co. and beyond we're related to. We all wish we had written down what she told us. She used to get us all tickled when she'd start. We used to tease her all the time. She would twitch her toe back and forth and spin her rings on her finger and she could tell who was related to who until our heads would spin. I guess she was "our" first family historian. Much of what I was able to find out was through my dad and my great uncle John C. Baker (Granny's brother).

Descendants of Robert "Cat Eye" Jessee & Lina Victoria Porter Jessee

I'll find out what I can about the other children of Robert "Cat Eye" & Lina Jessee and get that to you. I remember Grandma Lina and their daughter Mollie B. (That's what we called her). She was married to a Byington. I can remember visiting both of them when I was little. Daddy says that Lina's parents were John (or George) Porter and Sally Bonds Porter. Dad says that Sally only had one eye. One of Lina's brothers was "Money Bob" Porter who was murdered after flashing \$500 in front of some people at a store. Sally's parents were John & Hannah Bond.

Dad says that John Skaggs Jessee & Jemima Dorton Jessee are buried in a cemetery off of Rt. 71 on top of a hill in a sharp bend in the road after you pass John Skagg's store and Turner Jessee's farm.

My grandfather, Robert E. Lee Jessee, was born Dec. 4, 1910, d. May 1987. My grandmother, Mary Lou Baker Jessee was born April 4, 1914, d. Nov. 17, 1989. Both are buried in Temple Hill Cemetery in Castlewood, VA.

My dad, Robert Leland Jessee, was born Dec. 19, 1936 and is still living. He married my mother, Clara Lou Gilbert (b. Aug. 29, 1940), May 28, 1960, they divorced in 1991. He then married Mary Linkous (b. Dec. 21, 1936) on Nov. 15, 1992.

I have 2 sisters:

Tammy Lorraine Jessee Austin b. February 15, 1965, in Mt. Vernon, Ohio, married Mark Austin on July 15, 1995 on Big A Mountain, near Council, VA, no children.

Clara Lavada Jessee Gamble b. November 15, 1976, in Abingdon, VA, married Chris Vencill on Feb. 23, 1992 they have one son, Christopher Ethan Vencill (Johnston Memorial Hospital, Abingdon, VA) b. April 6, 1992. Chris and Lavada divorced in 1996. Lavada married Michael Adam Gamble on Nov. 14, 1998. They have one daughter, Tara Cheyenne Gamble (Bristol Regional Medical Center, Bristol, TN) b. Aug. 18, 1998.

My full name is Tracey Lynne Jessee Dings b. Dec. 18, 1966, in Mt. Vernon, Ohio, married Gregory Alan Dings on Aug. 5, 1989 in Russell Co. We have 2 sons: Gregory Logan Dings (Johnston Memorial Hospital, Abingdon, VA) b. April 18, 1994 and Peyton Alan Dings (Bristol Regional Medical Center, Bristol, TN) b. July 3, 1996. We live in Bristol, VA.

Dad has 4 brothers & 2 sisters:

Donald Jessee married Pat: they have 3 daughters, Sheree Jessee Campbell, Terry Jessee Dings, and Rosemary Jessee.

Peggy (I think Peggy is a nickname for Margaret) Jessee Campbell married Edd "Jack" Campbell. They have one daughter, Donna Campbell Ray.

Dad (see above)

Gene Jessee married Dorothy Fields: 2 children, Susan Jessee & Greg Jessee.

Glenn Jessee married Joyce Scarberry: (Uncle Glenn died Dec. 26, _____) 2 children, Angela Jessee Burke & Anthony Jessee

Joyce Jessee Johnston (married Robert Johnston: 1 son: Robert Johnston.

Roger Jessee married Linda 2 children: Kimberly Jessee & Lee Jessee.

VI. Elizabeth Jessee Gose

Elizabeth Jessee Gose (1785-1827) married **George Gose** (1786-1861), son of **Stephen Gose and Barbara Catron (Ketron) Gose**, and they had twelve children. See the Gose Family discussion under Lea Jessee above, as well as additional information under Rebecca Jessee Burk below.

VII. Mary "Polly" Jessee Kiser

Mary "Polly" Jessee (1787-1836) married **Abednego Kiser** (1784-1814), who died in the War of 1812. They had four children and are the ancestors of many a Kiser from Russell Co. She later married James Chafin, whose abuse may have caused her death.

I am sorry to report that VIVIAN BALES (Marion, IN), Mary "Polly" Jessee Kiser's gggg-granddaughter, passed away, Oct 30, 2004.

Vivian was a devoted genealogist and did years of work the hard pick and shovel way. She helped dozens, if not hundreds of cousins with genealogy research and freely provided information. She was a faithful contributor to this newsletter and contributed tremendously to the family database and newsletters. She constantly worked at ferreting out little bits and pieces of information she gathered over a lifetime, and sent them my way. She often provided good advice, poignant memories, stories, and insights into her own colorful life. She was a family treasure and will be well remembered and missed.

Vivian had a particular interest in learning about and getting to know the **Jesse/Jessee families of New Ross and New Castle, near Crawfordsville, Indiana**. We welcome help from anyone with information or connections there. She wanted us to bring them into the family fold, and for her, I thought I would try one more time.

MITCHELL JESSIE (www.mitchelljessie.com/family) wrote, 1/14/2005, in response to the January Newsletter regarding one of Vivian Bales' wishes...

Dear Jim,

I have received my highly anticipated copy of the Jessee Family Newsletter for winter of 2005 and, once again, I was not disappointed. This issue is packed with excellent information.

I would like to provide some information which was referenced in the Newsletter with regards to the passing of Vivian Bales... The article said that Vivian was interested in the Jessee Family from New Ross and New Castle, Indiana. Here is some information regarding that portion of our great family...

Mary "Polly" Jessee Kiser (who we know as one of the 15 children of John and Frankey Lea) had four children including a son named Elihu Kiser. Elihu had a daughter named Elizabeth "Eliza" Kiser. Eliza Kiser married George Lea Jr. Jessee – the son of Reverend David Jessee (one of the 15 original children of John and Frankey Lea).

At any rate, George Lea Jr. Jessee had a son named David Martin Jessee. To my knowledge, there is not one single Jessee living in that part of Indiana that is not one of the grand kids, etc. from David Martin Jessee. So, the fact is that the New Ross and



David Martin Jessee of Carter County, KY –
Great Grandson of Mary “Polly” Jessee
AND the Great Grandson of Reverend David Jessee.



Another Pic of David Martin Jessee
With my Uncle Harold Jessee from New Castle, IN

New Castle, Indiana clan of the Jessee Family are descended from the Reverend David line and the Mary “Polly” line. This includes me and all of my clan, as well. All of these Jessee’s in New Ross and New Castle (and Dayton, Ohio, for that matter) are there because they came from Carter County, KY because George Lea Jr. Jessee and Eliza Kiser moved there from Russell County, VA in the 1850’s. There is a Jessee reunion in New Castle, Indiana every August in which between 100 and 150 cousins gets together and celebrates the fact that we’re all Jessee’s... I have made contact with the organizer of that reunion with the hopes of getting out a mailing regarding the Jessee Foundation and the newsletter.

VIII. Frances Jessee Stone

Frances Jessee (1789-1860) married **William Stone** (1789-1860), son of **Jeremiah Stone**. They had ten children. This family is believed to have moved to Missouri, and we know so little about these descendants that any tidbit is big news.

IX. Sarah Jessee Vermillion

Sarah “Sallie” Jessee (1790-1851) married **Wilson Vermillion**, son of **Jessee Vermillion, Sr.** and **Mary “Polly” Scott**. They had three children.

X. Boedicia Jessee Gose

Boedicia “Dicey/Dicy” Jessee married **Stephen Gose Jr.** (1792-bef. 1842), son of **Stephen Gose** and **Barbara Catron (Ketron) Gose**. They had eight children. This family moved to Iowa.

See the Gose Family discussion under Lea Jessee, who married Barbara Gose, and Rebecca Jessee Gose above, as well as additional information under Rebecca Jessee Burk below.

XI. James Jessee

James Jessee (1794-aft 1846) married **Jane Burk** (1795-aft.1846), d. of **Fleming Burk, Sr.** and **Rebecca Miller**. They had four children. See also discussion under Rebecca Jessee Burk below.

IRIS LAMBERT HALL, a descendant of James Jessee, is a regular contributor who shares a lifetime of research, and more than a bit of wisdom. She is in increasingly difficult health, but keeps in touch.

XII. REBECCA JESSEE BURK

Rebecca Jessee (1796-1860) married **William Burk** (1797-1850), son of **Fleming Burk, Sr.** and **Rebecca Miller**. They had ten children.

KATHRYN BURKE GREEVER, JACK HOCKETT, IMOGENE BURKE VERBAL, and RUE BURKE STEVENSON published *Some Descendants of John Burk, 1656-1699, Middlesex Co., Virginia*, available from the Iberian Publishing Co. Order online at

www.iberian.com. All royalties go to the Russell Co. Historical Society and Russell Co. Library Family History Room.

This 502-page book details the descendants of **Fleming Burk, Sr.** Four of his children married Jesses, two children and two grandchildren of John and Frankey Lea Jesse. Jane Burk married James Jesse; William Burk married Rebecca Jesse, Fleming Burk, Jr. married Nancy Ann Jesse, daughter of David Jesse; and Robert Burk married Anna Gose, daughter of Elizabeth Jesse and George Gose. This book includes over 1000 descendants of Rebecca Jesse and William Burk. I would like to work with any volunteers who would be willing to help key this information into an appropriate genealogy database.

XIII. Jane Jesse Fuller

Jane Jesse (1797-1869) married **Henry Fuller** (1792-1872), son of **Abraham Fuller** and **Mary Sargent**. They had ten children. This family moved to Illinois. While I have a scant amount of descendants' information, I do not correspond with any descendant of Jane Jesse Fuller. This is a family that needs much research.

XIV. George Lea Jesse

George Lea Jesse (1798-1882) married **Elizabeth "Betsy" Counts** (1799-1880), da. of **John Counts, Jr. of Glade Hollow** and **Margaret "Peggy" Kelly**. George and Betsy had fourteen children.

Many George Lea Jesse descendants are subscribers and have contributed very much information to the database. It is one of our best researched and recorded branches of the family.

PEGGY MCLAIN (sampeggy@bellsouth.net) sent, 3/14/2005, this photo of **Mary Jane Jesse Musick**, who married **William Bailey Musick**. She also sent along two photos she took on a trip this spring of **Jessee's Mill during some high water, and the Andrew Jackson Jesse historic home (featured earlier in this Newsletter)** .

XV. Martin Jesse

Martin Jesse (1801-1879) married first **Virginia Jane Price** (1801-1853), da. of **David and Jane Price**, and they had eleven children. He married second **Mary Jane Darnell** (1834-1907), and they had seven children. Martin, with a total of 18 children, may have the most Jesse descendants in America.



Mary Jane Jesse Musick



Jessee's Mill Spring 2005

MISSING LINKS, PROBLEMS AND OTHER CONUNDRUMS

Please help us solve these riddles.

No new riddles were provided this issue, but we have lots of the old ones to resolve. Please help.

PEGGY LEE (AKERS) SIMMERS (99 Simmers Rd, Rising Sun, MD 21911) wrote, 1/20/2005, regarding several puzzles she would like to resolve. Peggy is a descendant of John Jr, Archer, and Martin Jessee.

Hi Cousin,

I am still researching **GOSE, MONK, JESSEE, and AKERS** side. Grandmother Gose is nowhere to be found. She died Oct. 4, 1929 at Marion State Hospital. No record of anything but that. Richmond doesn't have death certificate or burial.

I am looking for **Carrie Ann or Cora Ann Gose** married to John Edward Monk, 1889, seven children. **John Edward Gose** hasn't been found either. He was born April 1865. If anyone knows anything [please write to Peggy], I am looking for burial places.

DAN BROWN (dadbrown99@yahoo.com) wrote in May 2005 one of those excellent dialogues that keeps me stimulated and interested in the family genealogy, even when I am stumped.

Hello Jim

My name is Dan Brown. I have just chatted with "Carlyine" jessie@oregonfcu.com who lives in Oregon as I do. I was hoping she had some info on a Jesse, she referred me to you.

I am descended from Brown, Sullivan, Roop, Roten, Sapp, Blevins, Osborne, Baldwin, Stringer, and others. Some others from the Blue Ridge that married into my Brown ancestors or their descendants are: Wyatt, Barr, Brewer, Thompson, Shoemaker, Caudill, Lewis, Hash, Hart, and many many more, including a Jesse.

Many of my Browns and their relatives were in the Marion, Konnarock, Whitetop, Troutdale area of Grayson Co VA. My great grandparents Brown started in Wilkes and Ashe Co NC, went into VA and some went into W VA and KY before migrating to western WA prior to 1920. Some Browns and relatives remain in the Blue Ridge.

Do you know of any Jesse' that moved west prior to 1920 or that married a Brown ?

I have only recently discovered the names of my formerly anonymous paternal ancestors and am now busily searching for my roots and trying to find many missing pieces to my Brown tree.

Below is a portion of Carlyine's response to my inquiry to her which was basically the same as above:

"I have a bunch of cousins in Grays Harbor Co. — most of them dead now. Hoquiam and Aberdeen were wild and crazy with the logging and sawmills and shipping. Lots of people went there for work, from all over the world. Researching the census is a kick there, because you see so many different surnames. My father spent a lot of time there as a youth. He said it was common to shanghai sailors in the bars along the waterfront — they fell down trap doors when they got good and snookered. "

"If you are going to research Jesse family, you need to visit Jim Jessee's Website — www.jessee.org. Jim's a wonderful, helpful guy who has a huge database and has been researching Jessee family of Virginia forever, or just about. And he's got an excellent researchers feeding him results of their work. He also publishes an excellent multi-page newsletter about 4 times a year which you can

subscribe to. If you have Jesse(e)s in your tree which you don't find at his Website, I know he'd love to hear from you.

Regards, Carlyine

My father's oldest sister, Bonnie (b. 15 Aug 1899 in Ashe Co), also migrated west and apparently married a Jesse about 1920. I have just found out from the 1920 census of Montesano, Grays Harbor Co, WA that my father's sister, Bonnie Brown (19) was listed as being married to a Toni or Tom Jesse (21) who was from VA as was Bonnie.

My great grandparents were George Brown and Anna (Osborne) originally of Wilkes and Ashe Co NC. George and Anna had six sons who moved to WA, were all loggers and raised their families in Grays Harbor Co during the 1920s and '30s. Their names were: Joseph H. (my grandfather), Jonathon, Thomas "Smith", William Robie, James Wilda, and Lillard Wilson Brown. Three of these brothers married three Caudill sisters from Wilkes Co.

Bonnie Brown Jesse(e) parents were my grandparents, Joseph Brown and Mary (Sullivan). Bonnie had siblings named: Dessie (Brown) Shoemaker, Coy, Aaron, and my father, Joe (Jr.) who all lived in Montesano, WA Grays Harbor Co which includes Aberdeen and Hoquiam.

I have been unable to find any other census records for a Tom or Toni Jesse(e) or a date of death in WA. He and my aunt, Bonnie Brown Jesse are in the 1920 of Montesano WA.. Bonnie remarried in 1929. I have her obit and much other info on her and all of her siblings and Brown ancestors that I am willing to share if anyone has info on this Jesse or has a connection or info on any of my Browns in WA or in the Blue Ridge.

Can you put me in touch with any surviving Jesse' that still lives in Grays Harbor Co or to other Jesse' that had a relative named Tom or Toni Jesse(e)?

Sincerely grateful for your assistance, Dan

The fact is, I cannot find a connection to the greater JESSE or JESSEE family yet, but would bet there is one. Dan would appreciate any leads or connections you might offer.

DOLORES HARDING [humbird2800@sbcglobal.net] wrote, 3/26/2005, with an oft repeated lament, **an effort to discover the original John Jessee Bible**, believed to have been passed down in the family of Lena Ruth Jessee. This has been discussed in several previous newsletters, and I have previously published the extraction of information from copies provided by Dean Jessee.

Dear Jim,

I recently had a letter from Gloria, a daughter of Pearl Jessee Dickenson (daughter of Ephriam/Mollie Jessee). She said Ruth Jessee (Lena Ruth Jessee) had a son named Carl. My mother-in-law always called him Bobbie so I put him down as Robert in my response to where the Jessee bible may be.

He is deceased so perhaps a wife may have the bible. Perhaps someone knows that information. I will write to Gloria and see if Carl was married and to whom.

Jim, I just read in the RootsWeb.com, Jessee Genealogy Service, under John Jessee, that Dean C. Jessee of Salt Lake City had evidence for John Jessee's birth. He indicates that his parents obtained copies of pages of the bible from Ruth, many years ago. Is it possible to get copies of the pages he has?

CORRESPONDENCE

The following are only a few of the many communications I am fortunate to receive. These, in particular, give color to our work, address problems, provide new information, corrections, or updates, and both answer and ask new “missing links” questions.

BARBARA COGBURN [stardust725@cox.net] sent, 5/14/2005, this wonderful photo and the story about how one of the **Sons of the Pioneers** is a Jessee descendant. His great-grandfather was **James Mathias Jessee**, son of **Jefferson Jessee**, son of **John Jessee, Jr.**

I'm so glad I'm able to help. I've noticed a number of references in the newsletter to musical talent among the Jessee family and have been meaning to try to send you a picture you might be able to use for the newsletter. So here it is - I hope. It is an early picture of the Sons of the Pioneers. The handsome dog on the left is Ken Carson aka Hubert Flatt. Hubert Flatt was the name he was born with (parents were Bessie Marie Jessee and Herbert Flatt). Easy to see why he took a stage name. Ken is a great grandson of James M.C. Jessee and Catherine Fuller. He sang with the Sons of the Pioneers for many years and appeared in a number of the Roy Rogers westerns. He's also in a brief scene during the Flying Trapeze number on the bus in “It Happened One Night” which won the Academy Award in 1934. He later toured with The Ranch Boys and the American Barn Dance Show and remained active in radio in New York and Florida until not too long before his death in April of 1994. I think he must have gotten those wonderful Jessee musical genes.

A Dialogue Regarding Historic Cemetery Destruction and Virginia State Law

The following dialogue is specifically about threatened destruction of the Whitt Family Cemetery in Tazewell Co., but directly pertains to the John and Frankey Lea Jessee Cemetery situation in Russell County, although we do not believe it to be in immediate danger from destruction.

DEBRA ROOKARD [d_rookard@adelphia.net] posted to VARUSSEL-L@rootsweb.com, 2/7/2005, in response to an alert about the threatened destruction of the Whitt Family Cemetery:

What you can do right now - Whitt Cemetery Destruction

A land owner must possess a court order to lawfully proceed in any disturbance of a cemetery in the Commonwealth. If this unconscionable act is occurring as we speak, there is no time for writing.

I encourage every person on the Tazewell and Russell List to pick up your phones and start punching numbers. If you are local, please take a drive into town this afternoon and personally speak with those in county administration.

I phoned the Historical Society and emailed some officers. The HS is not open again until Wednesday. Their website is down. I just spoke with Bill Archer from The Bluefield Daily Telegraph and he is looking into the matter. Time is of the essence, Debra.



Sons of the Pioneers

TOM RUDDER [tomr@infostations.com] wrote, 2/7/2005, to alert me about the above posting and provides this very important advice.

Jim: If this is in fact the law in VA then those people in Lebanon can take the Jessee Cemetery matter up with the local authorities who can make the land owner aware of the law, in a nonbelligerent way, as a precautionary measure. In other words the land owner should be made aware of the law then the official notification will be on the record.

BILL & LINDA ATWELL[bill.lin.atwell@mindspring.com] Sent: Tuesday, February 08, 2005 11:09 AM
To: VARUSSEL-L@rootsweb.com
Subject: [VARUSSEL] Confederate Soldier's Grave in Danger of Destruction at Whitt Cemetery in Tazewell Cty., VA

Tracie Crawford furnished a listing of those buried in the Whitt Cemetery in Tazewell Cty., VA. Among those buried there are an American Revolution Soldier & a Confederate Soldier. It seems the owner, Mr. Finney, is in the process of tearing down the old Whitt (Witt) house & plans on removing the fence & grave markers from the cemetery — who knows what he plans on doing with the graves themselves. He is also NOT accepting visitors to the cemetery.

American Revolution Soldier: Whitt, Hezekiah, 1761-1849

Confederate Soldier: Lowe, James W., 1828-97

Being a member of the UDC in MD & born in Bluefield, I felt it wouldn't hurt to contact the closest UDC Chapters & SCV Camps around the Cemetery since there is a Confederate soldier's grave involved. They could be of great help.

We also need help from the DAR & SAR in that area to protect the grave of the Amer. Revol. soldier. Is there anyone on any of the mailing lists from a SAR Chapter that's close by?

All of these organizations have great wisdom, strength & knowledge when it comes to protecting the graves of their organization's soldiers. Everyone needs to contact the people listed below furnished by Debra Rookard to voice your concern over the possible destruction of the Whitt Cemetery. Make sure you also continue contacting the local media.

Linda (Kelly) Atwell, Monrovia, MD

TOM RUDDER [tomr@infostations.com]

Sent: Tuesday, February 08, 2005 5:38 PM

Jim: This and the following [Virginia Law] should take care of the problem with Herndon. Tom

The text of the **New Virginia State Law** was posted by **Debra Rookard**, and a copy was also sent to me and **Kathryn Greever** from **Thomas-Jack Hockett**, who followed the matter and clearly share the concern.

From the Code of Virginia:

§ 57-27.1. Access to cemeteries located on private property; cause of action for injunctive relief; applicability.

A. Owners of private property on which a cemetery or graves are located shall have a duty to allow ingress and egress to the cemetery or graves by

(i) family members and descendants of deceased persons buried there;

(ii) any cemetery plot owner; and

(iii) any person engaging in genealogy research, who has given reasonable notice to the owner of record or to the occupant of the property or both. The landowner may designate the frequency of access, hours and duration of the access and the access route if no traditional access route is obviously visible by a view of the property. The landowner, in the absence of gross negligence or willful misconduct, shall be immune from liability in any civil suit, claim, action, or cause of action arising out of the access granted pursuant to this section.

B. The right of ingress and egress granted to persons specified in subsection A shall be reasonable and limited to the purposes of visiting graves, maintaining the gravesite or cemetery, or conducting genealogy research. The right of ingress and egress shall not be construed to provide a right to operate motor vehicles on the property for the purpose of accessing a cemetery or gravesite unless there is a road or adequate right-of-way that permits access by a motor vehicle and the owner has given written permission to use the road or right-of-way of necessity.

C. Any person entering onto private property to access a gravesite or cemetery shall be responsible for conducting himself in a manner that does not damage the private lands, the cemetery or gravesites and shall be liable to the owner of the property for any damage caused as a result of his access.

D. Any person denied reasonable access under the provisions of this section may bring an action in the circuit court where the property is located to enjoin the owner of the property from denying the person reasonable ingress and egress to the cemetery or gravesite. In granting such relief, the court may set the frequency of access, hours and duration of the access.

E. The provisions of this section shall not apply to any deed or other written instrument that creates or reserves a cemetery or gravesite on private property.

(1993, c. 713; 2004, c. 831.)

From the Code of Virginia:

§ 18.2-127. Injuries to churches, church property, cemeteries, burial grounds, etc.; penalty.

A. Any person who willfully or maliciously commits any of the following acts is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor:

1. Destroys, removes, cuts, breaks, or injures any tree, shrub, or plant on any church property or within any cemetery or lot of any memorial or monumental association;

2. Destroys, mutilates, injures, or removes and carries away any flowers, wreaths, vases, or other ornaments placed within any church or on church property, or placed upon or around any grave, tomb, monument, or lot in any cemetery, graveyard, or other place of burial; or

3. Obstructs proper ingress to and egress from any church or any cemetery or lot belonging to any memorial or monumental association.

B. Any person who willfully or maliciously destroys, mutilates, defaces, injures, or removes any object or structure permanently attached or affixed within any church or on church property, any tomb, monument, gravestone, or other structure placed within any cemetery, graveyard, or place of burial, or within any lot belonging to any memorial or monumental association, or any fence, railing, or other work for the protection or ornament of any tomb, monument, gravestone, or other structure aforesaid, or of any cemetery lot within any cemetery is guilty of a Class 6 felony. A person convicted under this section who is required to pay restitution by the court shall be required to pay restitution to the church, if the property damaged is property of the church, or to the owner of a cemetery, if the property damaged is located within such cemetery regardless of whether the property damaged is owned by the cemetery or by another person.

C. This section shall not apply to any work which is done by the authorities of a church or congregation in the maintenance or improvement of any church property or any burial ground or cemetery belonging to it and under its management or control and which does not injure or result in the removal of a tomb, monument, gravestone, grave marker or vault. For purposes of this section, "church" shall mean any place of worship, and "church property" shall mean any educational building or community center owned or rented by a church.

(Code 1950, § 18.1-244; 1960, c. 358; 1975, cc. 14, 15; 1982, c. 561; 1983, c. 579; 1990, c. 510; 2004, c. 203.)

DEBRA ROOKARD [d_rookard@adelphia.net]

Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2005 5:49 PM

To: VARUSSEL-L@rootsweb.com

Subject: **Whitt-Lowe Cemetery Update 2/10/2005**

All of you are to be highly commended for your valiant efforts to step up and do what was within your power to further prevent the destruction/desecration of this cemetery.

It has taken center stage in our lives this week, and I am cognizant of the difficulty, sacrifice, and hardship many of you faced; being such a sudden call to arms.

I want to thank each and every person who has called, emailed, and took time out of their day/s to show up on the steps of the Tazewell County courthouse. Your efforts were not in vain.

The current landowners have willingly spoken with a few of you brave souls who called and visited. Only time and the materialization of peaceful ingress to our sacred family burial ground will prove their sincerity and acquiescence to the law of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

This painful exercise proves what a good legal document can provide for your family, (and descendants), many decades hence. I wish to encourage everyone to review the exact wording of your deeds and Wills. Hopefully, you have also made provision or attached codicils for the preservation and/or distribution of your genealogical efforts.

Now we wait,
Debra Rookard
Forsyth Co, GA

SANDY LUCCI (SAN516@aol.com) wrote, 4/12/2005, with this most interesting **Civil War Information**.

While doing some Civil War research on another branch of my family I ran across the following JESSEE information. I am hoping that someone will be able to expand on this information. The book I was referencing was "Court-Martials during the Civil War." Below is what I found listed for the JESSEE name.

Name- JESSEE, David A.
Rank- PVT
Unit- 48th Virginia Infantry
Company- K
Trial Date- 3/19/1863
Charge- Desertion
Sentence- Hard Labor

Name- JESSEE, David Lee
Rank- CPL
Unit- 29th Virginia Infantry
Company- A
Trial Date- 8/1/1864
Charge- (no charge listed)
Sentence- Acquitted

Name- JESSEE, George M.
Rank- CAPT
Unit- 6th Confederate BN. Calvary
Company- A
Trial Date- 3/23/1864
Charge- (no charge listed)
Sentence- Suspension from rank and command

I hesitated in sending this information as it may seem to be "negative" information. That is not my intention. Information to me, when it comes to genealogy is just that information, insight into the lives of our ancestors. Hope this will be of help to someone. Thanks, Sandy Lucci

DEBRA ROOKARD [d_rookard@adelphia.net] provided this interesting information regarding a **Farmland Protection Program**. While the current JHF Board is not interested in pursuing any such programs, others may find this of interest.

I ran across this and thought I'd send for you to comb thru and see if there was any way the JHF could utilize this to buy Jessee's Mill and/or Jimmy Herndon's farm. If it applies, you could have the Fed Gov pay 50% of the costs!

<http://www.achp.gov/funding-general.html#farmland>

Farmland Protection Program

Federal Agency: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Recipients: State, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations that have existing farmland protection programs

www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/fpp/

www.cfda.gov/public/viewprog.asp?progid=143

Through the Farmland Protection Program, the Federal Government assists States, tribes, local governments, and non-governmental organizations in purchasing conservation easements on farmland to limit its conversion to non-agricultural use.

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act, the so-called "Farm Bill," that was signed by President Bush May 13, 2002, extended this program to include farms or ranches containing historical and archeological resources.

RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

The Internet is a revolutionary and remarkable resource for genealogists. From time to time I will provide here pertinent information regarding Web resources and other links of interest to the Jesse(e) family. I invite you to provide me with addresses for Web pages developed by family members and other resources of interest, too.

MICHAEL A. DYE has created **The Russell County Page** of the VAGenWeb division of the USGenWeb Project. This is an award-winning site, and a terrific resource for all families whose sojourn in America included time in Russell Co., VA. Michael has been instrumental in assembling a vital online depository of Russell Co. records, indexes and abstracts, genealogical data, historical maps, local history, and lore. We thank you. You can join the Russell Co. List Server. This is a must-see site for Jesse researchers at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~varussel/>.

MICHAEL A. DYE [madye@fuse.net] wrote, 2/5/2005, to the Russell County List at VARUSSEL-L@rootsweb.com with a statement about **Russell County Missing Marriage & Will Books**.

I guess it's time for me to finally chime in on this matter. Seems like we have this topic come up every now and then. First someone brings it up, and then there is this big discussion about who did what and what to do about it, which in the end leads to nowhere.

First a little background. As Tom & Wayne said, there apparently was a courthouse fire in 1872. I haven't checked primary records to confirm this, but secondary sources seem to indicate that the courthouse was destroyed by fire. However, if in fact there was a fire that destroyed the courthouse, lets look at what records were destroyed and what were not. The only records that are missing are the first will book which covers the years 1786-1803 and the first marriage book which covers the years 1786-1853. All the other will books after 1803, the other marriage books, deed books, law order books etc., up though 1872 are all still present. My belief is that surely all the records would have been kept in the same place and that if the courthouse had been destroyed with records in it, that all the records would have been destroyed, not just the first marriage & will books. Therefore my assumption and belief is that either the courthouse wasn't completely destroyed or the records were not being kept and the courthouse at the time it was. In either case, I do not believe the first marriage & will books were destroyed by fire.

Assuming that the books were not destroyed only leaves one other option, that they were removed at some point. If this is so, the only relevant questions at this point are, do they still survive and if so, where are they and how can they be returned. It does not matter at this point who took them, for what reason, or what they have done with them if they do still survive. The reason I say this is because I have personally discussed this matter with several people in RCV, some of these persons much older than I. From my conversations I can say that I believe that the books have been missing at least 50 years, maybe as much as 100 years. No one that I have spoken with knows exactly when they turned up missing and none knows where they are for sure, though some have stated that they knew someone who claims to have seen them. Some have theories about about who and why, as do I. But I will not discuss

these theories on a public forum at this point. Anyway, as you can see, the records have apparently been missing for a very, very long time. Some of you have asked why haven't the state's attorney etc. gotten involved. Forget it, it isn't going to happen. Not for something like this that happened 50-100 years ago. Not only that, but if the books do still survive, and I do not know at this point if they even do, but I think that is a big if, but if they do, talk such as this will only lessen the chance that they will ever be recovered, especially if someone who may know about them sees it.

My feeling is that if these books do still survive, there is probably a good chance that whoever has them may not even know they do. I have seen to many times where someone has found something in an old house that they didn't know was there when they moved in. My opinion is that the best approach to their possible eventual recovery is the low key approach, quiet discussion between individuals about the fact that they are missing and how great it would be to be able to eventually recover them if they survive.

WWW.RSSGENEALOGY.COM is a site which lists Genealogy News and Articles from 58 feeds all over the world. For example, from the Site Updates & Issues 14-Jan-2005

101 new items in Genealogy News & Articles

6 new items in Genealogy Items For Sale

47 new items in Genealogy Blogs, Chats, and Message Boards

14 new items in Genealogy Software

If you know of a genealogy blog or a good site with genealogy related news, please let me know.

GREG LEPORE [greg@rhobard.com] sent this note and directed me to his most interesting Website on **Russell County Virginia from 1860 to 1865.**

I recently obtained another Confederate reunion photo, which is sure to have some Jessee's in it at <http://russellvets.org/>.

On his site you will find the following.

Census Home Page - beginning page with the latest information. I have added the Buchanan County, 1860 Census and the 1860 Wise County Census.

The Top Ten page has a list of the richest people in the county, as well as other top tens.

Anatomy of a Census is the top page of a section that includes scans of the census. Also included are scans of Isaac Vermillion's handwriting style.

The Graphs Galore page has summaries of population statistics, including total population from 1790-1900, and a census by census summary of the agricultural statistics for the county.

Search the Census

Slave Schedules to the 1860 Census, only the owners are named.

Civil War Home Page - main page with description of the site. This is the new entry point for the entire Civil War side of the site. The entire site has been redesigned to include original graphics and the best navigation possible. Stop by and let me know what you think.

THE FAMILY DATABASE

The Jessee Family Genealogy Database is on the Web at the RootsWeb World Connect Project. RootsWeb is the foremost volunteer-based non-profit genealogy resource on the Internet. Please go to: <http://worldconnect.genealogy.rootsweb.com>

This World Connect Website provides an index to multiple genealogy databases, provides excellent display and print options for pedigree and descendants charts, and allows people to download GEDCOM files. It is public and easy to use. Do a search for one of your favorite ancestors. Look for data records submitted by "jimjessee," and if you select one it will take you to our database. You can also navigate to the database directly from our Jessee Genealogy Service home page.

Please go to: www.jessee.org

Our database is now over 43,000 records. I do mean "our" database, as it is made up of the tens of thousands of hours of your research, the results of which you have generously and kindly shared with me over the years. I have concerns about the downside of this computer revolution, the Internet, and the ethics of genealogy research, but still conclude that greater good is done by making our work public. However, I am using the filters provided by the World Connect project to delete information on living persons.

I know that by the standards of some, I have violated best if not ethical practice, by making so much unverified information so public. It is already clear that errors in this database, even when later corrected, show up all over the Internet in other people's work. Others, many unknown to me, have used this database as an authoritative source. Beware, it is not!

I very much regret it when I see known errors, which appeared in this database in earlier years and have since been corrected, show up in other's genealogy, and quoting me as the source! I shudder at the fact that I know there are many unknown errors in the database, along with ignorant speculations, fantasy and plain lies.

Nevertheless, I have had so much expressed gratitude from dozens, if not hundreds, of people who have been helped in their research by our database, that I persevere. I certainly do welcome corrections, updates, additions, and documentation of information, and you who are receiving this newsletter have been very generous in that regard. You might be surprised how many take and give back nothing.

Some feel the need to wag their finger at me, too, just to make sure I know how important it is to get this right. I do get down when I have been given a good scold, but perk up when the next inquiry is made. I think there is no greater gift than to help people learn where they come from. I cannot "not help" someone on this quest. Please forgive me for the rest.

OUR PURPOSE

I believe that we are, indeed, all cousins, and that we can be colleagues and friends, too, sharing information and helping each other know what it means to be part of an extended family and to appreciate our common heritage. To these aims I dedicate this newsletter.

I research my own JESSEE ancestors, including the ARMSTRONG, SMYTH/SMITH, PORTER, DUNCAN, BICKLEY, RICHMOND/RICHMAN, BARTEE and BARRICK families; and many other SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA FAMILIES who have intermarried with the Jessees, including the BANNER, BROWNING, BURK(E), COUNTS, FULLER, GOSE, KISER, STONE, and VERMILLION families. I have an abiding interest in family history.

I would like to discover all of the descendants of the fifteen children of JOHN AND FRANKEY LEA JESSEE, and assist other Jesse(e) family members with their research. This is admittedly a monumental chore. I am giving myself the rest of my life to accomplish it, and may he live so long! The fun is in the learning and the friendships I develop along the way. I am rewarded all the time by the e-mail, calls, visits, conversations, and correspondence I have with you.

The purpose of this newsletter is to facilitate the exchange of information and documents relative to the genealogy of the Jessee and related families whose roots may be found in Southwest Virginia. I wish to enter all data provided me into the JESSEE FAMILY DATABASE discussed above. In return for information shared, I will share charts or GEDCOM data files with you on request.

I am afraid I am now accumulating more information than I can key into the database on my own. After 30 years of working intensively at a keyboard, I have developed a permanent disability which makes any prolonged time typing very painful. My computer time has been significantly limited and, in particular, my regular data entry routine has all but stopped. While I continue to plink at it, I am not denting the perhaps 3000-4000 records piled high and waiting to be keyed in. I will need help with data entry into the database in the future if it is to grow.

I am asking you to respond to this newsletter with answers to questions, documentation, your own materials, and, of course, current information about your branch of the family, preferably in the form of a GEDCOM file you will allow me to integrate into the database. I will filter out living individuals in the version of the database that is made public. Please feel free to correct any errors found. I wish to have a correct and trustworthy database as a resource for the family.

While limited in my ability to type, I will continue the newsletter, although I would welcome help. I am finding new ways to capture materials and avoid typing. I welcome the submission of pedigree and descendants charts, letters, manuscripts, electronic or scanned images of source documents and photos in JPG or TIF formats (600 dpi TIF files are best), as well as any word-processor or text files.

HOW TO HELP

I am operating on subscriptions and donations and don't even break even on out-of-pocket costs. The labor is all volunteer. I provide the newsletter free to anyone who has asked for it, provided me information, or has expressed interest and cannot afford to subscribe. I am providing the newsletter free to several historical and genealogical organizations and libraries. You are welcome to provide addresses of others that may be interested in our effort. I am looking for those willing to exchange information or represent their branch of the family or area of the country.

I am sometimes disappointed to find that less than 25% of readers actually subscribe or donate anything. *I do need help, even if it is simply informing me to stop sending you the newsletter if it has become junk mail.* I am steadily reducing my mailing to include those who have subscribed, provided donations, helped in some other way, are sponsored by someone else, or are a family treasure. If you are getting this newsletter, you are at least a family treasure. If I drop you in error, just let me know. Please inform me of address changes as returned and re-posted mail costs me, too.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

I am asking for a minimum subscription of \$10 a year for two issues of the newsletter. I need and appreciate your additional donations in defraying the considerable cost of research, printing, and postage of the newsletter and other materials I send without charge to inquirers. Additional donations also support those who can't afford to pay.

NEWSLETTER REPRINTS

At the request of many, I have now collected Jessee Family Newsletters into separate sets of reprints: #1-7, #8-9, #10-11, #12-13, #14-15, #16-17, #18-19, #20-21 (without some attachments that have become obsolete). You may request these for \$10 a set, or **\$75 for all back issues and a subscription to the current year.** Your additional donations to help me defray the costs of research, printing, copying, and postage are very much welcome.

The Jessee Family Newsletter

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A rendering of Jesse's Mill by Irene Jesse Perry.

The mailing label above indicates the expiration date of your subscription. It is based on your assumed interest, paid subscription, or previous donations. I am providing you the first issue of the new subscription year free as a reminder to renew.

If your label says "expired" or 1 July 2005, this is your last issue. Please renew. Those whose label indicate your are a NP JHF Board, please also consider subscribing. I hope this newsletter keeps you abreast of JHF as well as other family matters. Please inform me of any errors or corrections needed regarding your expiration date or degree of interest in receiving this newsletter.

I have continued to provide a copy to a few whose subscription has lapsed, because I believe you want it. Please inform me if you wish to receive it gratis or if you wish your subscription to stop.

The generous donations of some allow me to provide complimentary copies to history and genealogy societies, libraries, major contributors of research materials, and those who cannot afford to subscribe. Still I am not breaking even.

A special thank you to those who have provided those precious additional gifts and donations that keep me going.