

THE ROPER BOOK

VOLUME ONE

THE "LOST" ROPERS
OF FORSYTH COUNTY,
GEORGIA

By

David L. Roper

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2003

Dedicated
to
my father
Dave H. Roper

INTRODUCTION

THE “LOST” ROPERS OF FORSYTH COUNTY

The book of the genealogy of Seth David Honaker:

To John Roper was born Peter B. Roper;

And to Peter B. Roper was born Hamilton Greenberry Roper;

And to Hamilton Greenberry Roper was born Lee Barney Roper;

And to Lee Barney Roper was born Lee David Hamilton Roper;

And to Lee David Hamilton Roper was born David Lee Roper;

And to David Lee Roper, Cynthia Ann Roper and her sisters, Deborah Lynn and Angela Kay;

And Cynthia Ann married Richard Honaker, and to them was born Seth David Honaker and his sister, Rachel Fern.

All my life I have been asked if I was kin to this Roper or that. I generally answered, “I don’t know. Since no Roper has any money,¹ it hasn’t been worthwhile to check if we are kin!” It was said in jest, but the fact remained that no work had been done on our Roper heritage—at least not on my Ropers. For years, I said, “*Someone* should work on our Roper line.” Finally it reluctantly became, “I guess *I* ought to work on our Roper line.” I got a genealogy computer program Christmas 1997. I installed it March 1998—not having the slightest idea what I was doing.

IGNORANCE PERSONIFIED

As an illustration of my ignorance, I said, “As long as I am working on the Ropers, I might as well also work on my mother’s family, the Dacuses.” And then, “As long as I am working on those, I might as well also work on my wife’s family, the Tibbles.” Of course, each of those “extra” projects actually involved four lines—my mother-in-law’s four grandparents and my mother’s four grandparents. I soon discovered I had a tiger by the tail. But I finally wrote *The Tibbles Book* for my mother-in-law (in 2000) and *The Dacus Book* for my mother (in 2001). As further illustration of my ignorance, instead of just researching my Roper line, when I discovered that my ggg-grandfather had 16 children, I decided that I should research all those lines since most of them had not been done, and the descendants had never all been connected. “Fools rush in”

I wanted to do *The Roper Book* for my Dad, who will be 90 this October (2003). I also wanted to do this for my children and grandchildren (see the note above). But hopefully this will also be of some benefit to others in “our” Roper clan.

THE CHALLENGE

I started with no genealogical skills other than being a fair researcher. I immediately discovered why no one had done our Ropers. L. David Roper, who probably knows as much about the Ropers than anyone, says the Ropers have a highly developed moving gene. I believe he said that he has never found a Roper who died in the same place he was born. There are probably exceptions to that, but not many. Ropers tend to move a lot!² Census

¹ Roper boots and Roper stoves indicate there must be Ropers somewhere with money, but I haven’t personally met any.

² When my father was in his 70s, he sat down and figured out how many moves he had made: more moves than the number of years he had lived!

records are ten years apart³ and a Roper can make *many* moves in ten years. (Not to mention the fact that some of them managed to get left out of the censuses.) Further, when Ropers moved, they left no tracks. For the most part, they left no Bible records, no letters, and no wills that conveniently name heirs. To illustrate the challenge, let me insert some notes made June 10, 1998:

A few months ago, I . . . started trying to find the Roper roots. Using the resources recommended in the books on genealogy, I've been able to fill in some of the blanks on known Roper history, but regarding moving the line back past my great-grandfather, Hamilton "Hampy" Roper, I have been like the rat in the maze: I've mainly spent my time bumping into dead ends.⁴

But a few days ago, I discovered a message on the internet about a "Hampie" Roper that sounded like mine—a message from Janice Roper of Comanche, Oklahoma. Janice turned out to be a distant cousin, a descendent of Hampy's brother, John Walter. Through her, I met (via the internet) another cousin from the same line: Charles Van Bebber, who has also done Roper research. They have convinced me that Hampy's father and mother were Peter B. Roper and Nancy Cape, not C. L. and Alma G. Roper as the LDS sources say.

I encountered another dead end when trying to locate Peter's father John farther back than 1850. Can you imagine how many "John Ropers" there are? I wasted a lot of time checking out Ropers in Marion County, South Carolina. By the process of elimination, I *finally* located mine in the 1830 census in Pickens County, South Carolina.

One of the biggest wastes of my time came from trying to locate John in the 1860 census. The only John the right age in Forsyth County was married to the wrong woman. So I looked *everywhere* in Georgia and surrounding states—until I finally realized that "old" John had gotten himself a new wife between 1850 and 1860.⁵

Thus the project has gone. I started to make a list of all the things I've done, all the hours I've spent, all the places I've been, all the money I've wasted. But I won't bore you with that. Suffice it to say I've spent an incredible amount of time, effort, and money on this little project (all the time, my wife's honey-do list continues to grow).

I wouldn't want to leave the impression I did this project on my own. Through this volume, I will indicate many who helped me; I thank each of them from the bottom of my heart. At the outset, however, I must mention two who deserve special credit: Annette Bramblett, who thought she was taking on a couple hours' work when she agreed to research our Ropers in Forsyth County; and L. David Roper, the guru of Roper researchers (see www.roperld.com). And I could mention Winnie Tallant, Mary Lamm, and others who have done everything they could to help me—but I must move on.

³ Since there is no 1890 census, in that case, it was twenty years between censuses.

⁴ On the death certificate of my g-grandfather "Hampy" Roper, the space for his parents has "unknown."

⁵ I had a hard time convincing myself that the John Roper married to Tabitha in Forsyth County in 1850 and the John Roper married to Amy in Forsyth County in 1860 were the same John Roper. At the time, I worked up an elaborate comparison chart and a full page of arguments. Here are some high points: (1) "Old" John and Amy did not marry until 1856 (Forsyth County Marriage Records). But in the 1860 census, two children are living with John and Amy too old to be Amy's. So that John had to be married before. (2) One of the older children in the 1860 census is Alfred, who also appears with John and Tabitha in the 1850 census. We know it is the same Alfred because when "old" John died, one of John and Tabitha's sons-in-law Samuel Asbury Holbrook was appointed Alfred's guardian. Alfred calls him his "brother-in-law." (3) When "old" John died, many of John and Tabitha's children and their mates are present for the proceedings regarding Amy and her younger children. When Amy died, "old" John and Tabitha's oldest son, Henry F. Roper, was appointed guardian over Amy's minor children.

THE ROPER DNA PROJECT

Speaking of L. David Roper, I must mention his latest project: The Roper DNA project. For years, LDR has been frustrated by his inability to take the John Roper Jr. line (his line and mine) back to its English roots. One reason is that many of the needed records were destroyed by fire. Now he is using DNA technology to establish the ties between the different Roper lines. About a year ago, he wrote,

In my wildest dreams, I never expected to get such wonderful results from this project. Every southern Roper tested but one has shown to be related, the southern Ropers with Virginia origin have shown to be related to the northern Ropers with Massachusetts and, before that, County Norfolk England origin, and the large Roper family in Nova Scotia has been shown to belong to the same family.⁶

I was an early participant in the program. (When I told my daughter Angi, her response was “You’re out of control!”). Participation answered a major question for me: Was my ggg-grandfather John Roper related to the other Ropers in Pickens County, South Carolina, many of whom moved to Forsyth County, Georgia, and surrounding counties? I felt sure he was, and had charts and pages of arguments to substantiate that conclusion. But all that was rendered unnecessary when my DNA was basically the same as other descendants of John Roper Jr.⁷ I sent the following note to my cousins in Forsyth County: “What this means: Whether they like it or not, whether they are willing to admit it or not, all the Ropers in that area whose roots go back several generations are kin to you.” Shirley Maynard replied, “Even the Yankees among us? Shoot.” Nothing but comedians in this branch of the family! Incidentally, if you are a male with the surname Roper and would like to participate in the DNA program, email L. David Roper at roperld@vt.edu.

GENERAL NOTES ON VOLUME ONE

Since this volume focuses on “old” John Roper and his two wives in Forsyth County, Georgia, my sub-title is “The ‘Lost’ Ropers of Forsyth County, Georgia.” My Forsyth County researcher Annette Bramblett was unimpressed with the title. “They weren’t lost,” she wrote, “just misplaced.” Around my house, “misplaced” is a synonym for “lost.” By “lost,” I meant what TV programmers mean when they speak of “the four ‘lost’ episodes” of this program or that: someone came across long-forgotten videos of those episodes tucked away in a musty corner of their archives. I call my Ropers “lost” because the history of other Pickens County Ropers in Forsyth County (such as William and Susan [Masters] Roper) had been well documented, but not my bunch. Hopefully this volume will help remedy that omission.

I must apologize for the fact that this book contains a maximum of dry facts and a minimum of interesting details, such as family stories. I hate this because, as far as I am concerned, there is no more excruciating way to die than to be bored to death. But, as far as I can tell, most Ropers did not spend a lot of time around the camp fire, passing on stories of their ancestors. We are the losers for it. I also apologize for not including as many pictures

⁶ Email dated June 18, 2002.

⁷ Regarding my DNA, one marker out of twelve was off by one. This is called “a random mutation, which occurs at about 0.2% probability per generation” (note from L. David Roper’s website). This variation has become the “marker” for our particular branch of the vast Roper tree. Note: When I shared this “random mutation” tidbit with my son-in-law Dan, he made some comment about me being a “mutant.”

as I would have liked—but this was cost prohibitive. I included a few key pictures and left some blank pages for you to add your own old family photos. If you sent me pictures, they are all treasured and will all be included in Dad's album which will be passed from generation to generation.

Originally this was going to be a one-volume project, but I made my scope so broad that it will take two volumes. This volume focuses on "old" John and his two wives and all their children. Volume Two will have less general appeal: It will center on my particular line—the descendants of Peter Byrum Roper. I hope to have Volume Two finished within a year or so (yes, Jo, I do plan to eventually get to the honey-do list).

DISCLAIMERS

I have tried to make this volume as accurate as possible, but I know it contains mistakes. Some are my fault and probably some are because I copied faulty information. You are encouraged to check and recheck all information.

I tried to make this volume as complete as possible, but, as genealogists know, once you start, there is no end. Thus I present this simply as a starting place for your own research. At present, I have no plans to reprint this volume or later revise it, but who knows what the future holds? In the meantime, send me additions or corrections. If I don't use them, they will be available for anyone else who wants to do an update. My present address will be found at the end of this introduction, but if some time has gone by, I will probably have moved (after all, I am a Roper). If that is the case, you can get hold of me c/o Truth for Today, 2209 Benton, Searcy, AR 72143.

Close observers will notice that there is inconsistency in the way information is listed in the descendancy charts (now a part of the "John Roper Jr." database). I tried to enter the material the way it was given to me. I should mention that I have no desire to cause anyone embarrassment. If information has been included that causes anyone pain, you have my abject apologies. Again I say that I merely tried to record the information as it came to me.

I should also mention that there is repetition in this volume between various chapters. This is on purpose since I know some will only read the chapters relating to their own lines instead of the entire volume. I encourage you to read the entire book, however, because I might mention something about your ancestor in another chapter that I do not mention in the chapter on his or her life.

This final disclaimer is probably not needed, but I will make it anyway: I have attempted to record details, not make judgment calls on them. Just because I refer to murders and other moral or religious lapses does not mean I approve of them—but you knew that, didn't you? Why include such details at all? Because the tapestry of life contains dark threads as well as bright.

A CHALLENGE

It is obvious we Roper descendants are the losers for our ancestors leaving so few records of their lives. Let me urge you to do two things: (1) Interview the older people in your particular Roper line. Use audio tape, video tape, and/or write it down. Preserve this along with old pictures for future generations. (2) Write an account of your own life. Make it short or make it long. (I will leave a few blank pages in the back of this volume if you want to do it there.) You may think now that nothing interesting has happened in your life, but you might be surprised what will interest future generations.

David L. Roper

Judsonia AR 72081
April 11, 2003

THE ROPER BOOK: VOLUME ONE

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SECOND TWO: “OUR” ROPERS IN FORSYTH COUNTY GEORGIA.

Note: The original Volume One included the descendants of most of the children. That information is now available in L. David Roper’s database on “John Roper, Jr.”

CHILDREN OF JOHN AND TABITHA:

4. Child Number One: Henry Franklin Roper
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18. Child Number Fourteen: Theresa Roper
19. Child Number Fifteen: Pinkney Roper
20. Child Number Sixteen: William Larkin Roper

SECTION THREE: A ROPER PHOTO ALBUM

Note: The original Volume One had a small photo album in the back – one page each for many of “old” John’s children. That section has been eliminated from this online version because of memory constrictions.

FROM ENGLAND TO VIRGINIA: JOHN ROPER JR. AND MEREDITH ROPER

I did little personal research on this chapter. I consider this L. David Roper's area of expertise and he is still hard at work on it. I include the chapter to make the transition to South Carolina where my own research begins. Stay in touch with L. David Roper regarding our early roots. He has something exciting to report almost daily.

It is generally agreed that the Ropers came from England. If my memory serves me, "Three's Company" was based on an English comedy and featured a landlord named Roper. When we lived in Australia, we found that many English Ropers had migrated to Australia. Roper River in that country was named after an early English explorer.

The premiere Roper researcher is L. David Roper, a retired professor from the University of Virginia. He has been working over thirty-five years on Roper family history in the U.S. and England. He has collected everything he can find on the Ropers. You will want to check his website at www.roperld.com. Regarding early Roper origins, he wrote of . . .

. . . "a Roper family in eastern England," whose progenitor is purported to have come from Brittany with William the Conqueror in 1066 to county Derby, then to Kent, then to Suffolk, then to Norfolk, then to Durham and elsewhere in the England and the U.S.⁸

THE ROPER NAME

Most books I checked on the origin of names say the name "Roper" had to do with rope making or rope selling. Other sources indicate the name had nothing to do with rope.⁹ Here are notes from *The Ropers of Sterling and Rutland* by Ella E. Roper:

The name of Roper has been evolved from a somewhat fantastic origin Our first known ancestor, one Musard (probably of Norman descent) becomes Hasculphus. His grandson, William of Miserden, Gloucester County, assumed the title De Rubra Spatha, or Red Sheath, in the time of Henry III This was shortened to Rospeare and passed through the various stages of Rousper, Rooper, Ropere, and Roper, to the last of which the family has held.¹⁰

Having a somewhat romantic nature, I much prefer being David "Red Spear" than David "Rope-maker."

As you do research on the Ropers, be warned that in early United States records, the first "s" in a written double "s" looks much like a written "r." Thus, "Rosser" looks much like "Roper."

ROPER'S IN AMERICA

⁸ From "A Roper Y-Chromosome Project" from the L. David Roper website.

⁹ One writer suggested that the name "Raper" is more connected with rope-making, stemming from rope being made from the rape plant. Many named "Raper" have changed their name to "Roper."

¹⁰ Quoted in "The Origin of and Facts about the Roper Surname" from the L. David Roper website.

If speculation makes you break out in hives, you may want to skip the rest of this chapter and the next. But . . . if you are still with me . . . here are some of Prof. Roper's notes about early Ropers in the U.S.:

The early Roper family in Massachusetts came from Norfolk County England c1637, who earlier came from Kent County England. The progenitor John Roper was b c1587. .

.. William Roper (b 1606 England d 1650 Northhampton Co. VA) and Katherine Graves . . . was a shipping merchant in Accomack and Northhampton counties and was in the House of Burgesses in Williamsburg¹¹ . . . His descendants apparently mostly moved into Maryland. One of his descendants may have been Thomas Roper (b c1750 d 1788 Loudoun Co. VA) who owned a tavern in Leesburg, Loudon Co. VA, where George Washington had lunch in 1784. Perhaps some of the early Virginia Ropers are his descendants

It is possible that John Roper (b c1645 England? D c1698 New Kent Co. VA) in Charles City and New Kent Counties, VA descends from William Roper given above

John Roper Jr. (b 1660 d c1759 Charles City Co, VA) lived in Charles City and New Kent Counties, VA. The dates are not right for him to be a son of the John Roper mentioned above. It is possible that he descends from the William Roper above [T]his area of Virginia abounded with people and place names from Kent County England, so I think this is where he was from.

John Roper Jr. is L. David Roper's line—and mine. Up until a year or so ago, this was an educated guess. It has now been confirmed by LDR's Roper DNA project.¹²

JOHN ROPER JR.

Most of what we know about John Roper Jr. comes from The Vestry Book and Registry of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in New Kent County, Virginia. In the early pages of the records of that church, there is a John Roper who appears on almost every page: He was a church warden and a vestryman. He is the John Roper mentioned on the previous page who died in 1698. But the John Roper in which we are interested appears in the latter part of the church records. He is called "John Roper Jr." in a few spots in the records.¹³ I should mention that the suffix "Jr." did not necessarily mean his father was named "John," as it does today. Rather "Jr." was often used to distinguish between two people in the area with the same name, one older and the other younger. So "John Roper Jr." just means that he was the younger John Roper living in the area. It has, however, become a convenient way to distinguish him from other John Ropers.

Finding information on John Jr. has been difficult. The courthouse records for Charles City County burned—twice. We know that John Jr. had land in Brunswick County, Virginia, in 1741. In the fall of 2002, L. David Roper hosted the first of the Roper "unions" in Virginia. Here is part of Mary Lamm's description of the event and the area:

¹¹ Much data about him can be found in *County Court Records of Accomack-Northampton, Virginia 1632-1640*, Francis S. Philbrick, American Legal Records, Vol. 7.

¹² See the introduction to this volume.

¹³ *The Vestry Book and Register of St. Peter's Parish* (Richmond, VA: Library of Virginia), pages 371, 388, and 653.

Going to Providence Forge was a wonderful experience. All the 7th cousins present at the conference were very congenial and we had a good time together We left the B&B on Saturday to view the former Roper farmland They took us to the properties formerly owned by John Roper Sr. and John Roper Jr. . . . It was such an experience to walk these roads knowing that this was land settled by our family generations and generations ago and they were able to endure all kinds of hardship and prevail The Roper Church Road is still in use and there is a road sign. We saw the site where the church probably existed though it is no longer there Our tour included stops at St. Peter's Church, New Kent Courthouse and Charles City courthouse. We walked through the graveyard at St. Peter's Church The church is old but well preserved and very impressive. The setting is beautiful. It's tucked away on a back road that one could almost title "The Land That Time Forgot," but it was wonderful to get away from suburbia and crowded roads and just travel back in time on these rural roads [T]hese lands . . . are relatively unchanged since they were first farmed by the early Ropers.¹⁴

Most of the references to John Jr. in the records of St. Peter's Episcopal Church records have to do with the baptism of his children. L. David Roper believes John Jr. had two wives, the first named Susannah and the second named Mary. Here are some references in the church records:

Mary daughter of Jn Roper Jun & Susan his wife bap 3 day of March 1685/6.¹⁵

Ann Daut of Jn Roper bap the 18th Fed 1699.¹⁶

Jane Daut of John Roper baptiz the 1st December 1700.¹⁷

Rebecca, daut of Jn Roper baptiz the 26 July 1702.¹⁸

William Son of Jn Roper Baptized April the 2nd 1708.¹⁹

Joseph Son of Jn "Rooper" born . . . Bapt. Jan 6 1711/12.²⁰

David—Son of Jn & Mary Roper born Jan 8 & bap. 24th March 1727/8.²¹

Here is LDR's tentative list regarding John Jr.'s children:²²

With Susannah:

Mary
Anne
Thomas
Rebecca
John
William
Joseph

With Mary:

¹⁴ Email dated November 17, 2002.

¹⁵ Page 371. Or on April 11, page 388.

¹⁶ Page 389.

¹⁷ Page 389.

¹⁸ Page 389.

¹⁹ Page 389.

²⁰ Page 390.

²¹ Page 489.

²² For a listing of their dates of birth and death and their descendants, download the "John Roper Jr." file from the L. David Roper website.

Meredith
Benjamin
David
Frances

“MYSTERIOUS” MEREDITH

Glance at the list of John Jr.’s children and you will notice a Meredith listed there. Though he is not mentioned in the church records, L. David Roper’s research has led him to believe he is a son of John Jr. He is of special interest to me because I believe this to be “my” line.

LDR has written an article on “The Mysterious Meredith/Meriday Roper in NC.”²³ In it, he attempts “to follow the trail of Meredith/Meriday Roper from northeastern North Carolina (Northampton Co.) starting in 1756 to northwestern South Carolina (Pendleton District) in 1810.” In these records, many spellings are found for “Meredith.” Dave noted that “Meredith set the pace for moving around that many of his Roper relatives emulated in the years of and following his life.”

The first mention of Meredith is in a document about a land deal in Northampton County, NC, dated May 25, 1756. Meredith was closely connected with David Roper, probably a son of John Jr. and is mentioned in several land deals with him. By 1759, he had moved west to Orange/Caswell County, NC. By 1768, Meredith had moved further south and west. He is listed in the Rowan County, NC, tax list.

September 1, 1778, 300 acres were purchased on Lyles Creek in Lincoln County, NC, which included “Ropers Cabbin.” This was probably Meredith’s cabin. August 4, 1784, Meredith was witness for two Lincoln County deeds for land on a branch of Lyles Creek. When the 1790 U.S. census was taken, Meredith was in Rutherford County, NC,²⁴ along with his brother David Roper. In the 1800 census, Meredith had moved south and west and was in the Pendleton District, South Carolina.

Meredith does not appear in the 1810 census, so it is assumed that he died between 1800 and 1810.

MEREDITH’S CHILDREN

Here is L. David Roper’s educated guess as to Meredith’s children:²⁵

Solomon Benjamin
Charles
Daniel
Joshua
David
Aaron

²³ Published in the Burke County Genealogical Society Journal and copied from L. David Roper’s website.

²⁴ See the next chapter.

²⁵ From an email dated July 6, 2000, and other sources. L. David Roper calls these “guesses from looking at lots of data.” For a complete listing on these children: their dates of birth and death and their descendants, download the “John Roper Jr.” file from the L. David Roper website.

Carrie

The one that most interests me is Charles. The next chapter will focus on Meredith and Charles.

A CLOSING NOTE

In this chapter, I mainly hit a few spots of what L. David Roper has uncovered in thirty-five years of research—and I have failed to do this research justice. Please go to his website for complete details.

FROM VIRGINIA TO SOUTH CAROLINA: MEREDITH ROPER AND CHARLES ROPER

ROPER TO SOUTH CAROLINA

Many Ropers moved from Virginia, eventually ending up in South Carolina. Some of these moved to south-eastern South Carolina. I did a lot of research on the Ropers in that area as I was trying to find my ggg-grandfather John. The book *Historic Houses of South Carolina*²⁶ mentions two historic Roper houses: one at Point Comfort and the other on John's Island near Charleston. It has a picture of the latter.

Our particular "branch of the [Roper] family appears to have moved from Virginia to Rowan, Stokes, and Rutherford Counties, N[orth] C[arolina], and it is believed from Stokes to Pendleton District[, South Carolina]" in the southwestern part of the state.²⁷

"The area which became Pendleton County (later district) was opened for settlement in 1784. Pendleton County began functioning c1790. Prior to that time, much of the area was considered to be Abbeville County or Greenville County depending on the area of Pendleton concerned. By the year 1800, three thousand families had settled there, coming from other parts of South Carolina and from the states of North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, as well as nearby Georgia. In 1800, like other counties in South Carolina, Pendleton County became known as Pendleton District. It was abolished in 1826 to form Anderson and Pickens District. The records remained in Anderson and are a part of Anderson County records today."²⁸

Most of "our" Ropers "lived in what is now Pickens County."²⁹ Pickens County was named for Andrew Pickens (1739–1817), a Revolutionary War hero. Most of the Ropers I am interested in lived in the Oolenoy region of the county. The Oolenoy Valley lies across the Northeast quadrant of Pickens County.³⁰ How this region got its name:³¹ A Cherokee village was located on the broad top of what is now called Uwharrie Mountain,³² high above the valley and facing Table Rock Mountain. The tribal chief was named Woolenoy. His name, revised by English spelling, was used in naming Oolenoy River, Oolenoy Church, Oolenoy School, and the like. As you go through the early records from this area, you will find "Oolenoy" spelled like the original "Woolenoy" and misspelled as "Aulenoy," "Oolenoi," etc.

General notes on the pioneers who came to this region:

The people were not thickly settled because of the Indians.

The early settlers in Oolenoy Valley brought a few tools with them. An axe was the most important tool they had. With it, they cut trees to build their log cabins and cut

²⁶ Harriette Kershaw Leiding, *Historic Houses of South Carolina* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1921), pages 52, 53.

²⁷ *Special Publications of the National Genealogical Society, Number 26: 1800 Census of Pendleton District, South Carolina* (Washington, D. C., 1963), page 39.

²⁸ Letter from genealogist Brent Howard Holcomb, dated January 25, 2000.

²⁹ *Special Publications of the National Genealogical Society, Number 26: 1800 Census of Pendleton District, South Carolina* (Washington, D. C., 1963), page 39.

³⁰ There is a website with a history of Oolenoy Valley and pictures of the area. In September 25, 1999, I found it under "Pickens County Tour, Oolenoy Valley."

³¹ *History of Pumpkintown—Oolenoy* by Bert Hendricks Rice.

³² Uwharrie was a contemporary of Chief Woolenoy; Uwharrie was the warrior chief of the tribe.

wood for fires and cooking. It was used to make traps for animals which they used for food. They usually carried an axe in their belts to protect themselves from marauding Indians and wild animals.

They built rail fences around their small fields. Otherwise wild animals ate their crops. In a week, two or three men could split enough rails for a mile of fence. A farmer could accurately tell the size of his field by counting the rails.

They made wooden tools. They used wooden pins for making buildings and furniture.

Most of the first settlers in Oolenoy did not own slaves. They were dirt farmers and had to learn to grow corn, beans, pumpkins, and squash as the Indians were doing.

Life was hard. The early people helped each other with their work; they clung together to each other for protection.³³

During this period of time (about 1800 to 1845), "Pickens County was very much a transient area. Families came from Virginia, North Carolina, or Pennsylvania, staying a few years, had children, etc. and then moved on to settle in Georgia, Alabama, Missouri, Texas, etc. Information on these folks is hard to come by. If they buried their dead, either there were no stones or they have vanished. They had little need for paperwork to survive and no buildings were named after them."³⁴

As you go through what few records are available, you will find many descendants of John Roper Jr. in this general area. For instance, in the 1830 Pickens County census, you will find my ggg-grandfather John Roper on page 313 of the census records. Tyre Roper was on one side of him (page 312) and Benjamin Roper, Jacob Roper, John H. Roper, and Meredith Roper on the other side (page 314). A little farther down the road were David Roper, Singleton Roper, and William Roper (page 317). Most of these lived along tributaries leading into the Saluda River—probably because it was rich bottom land, good for raising crops.

Tyre Roper was one of the better known of the Ropers. He preached for the Oolenoy Baptist Church 1840—1976. He is buried near the entrance to that church building.

A TRIP TO SOUTH CAROLINA

In May of 2000, my wife Jo and I made a trip to South Carolina to do research and get a feel for the country where my Ropers had roots. Here is the summary I sent to fellow Roper researchers shortly after we returned:

We stayed in Greenville, South Carolina, which is near Pickens County. We visited the county seat of Pickens County, which is Easley. There is a Roper Road in Easley, as there is in most towns in Pickens County. In the county library [in Easley], I discovered where the strange name "Pinckney" came from . . .³⁵

From Easley, we went west to Pickens (the town) where there is an interesting museum in an old jailhouse. There is a Roper Ridge near Pickens. There is also a Hagood mill nearby . . .³⁶

³³ Notes taken from *Echoes: Oolenoy—Pumkintown* by Alma Lynch and Elizabeth Ellison (Easley, South Carolina: Pace Publishing, Inc.).

³⁴ Email from Herman Geshwind, dated October 14, 1999.

³⁵ See the chapter on Pinkney Roper.

³⁶ See the chapter on Elizabeth Roper.

From Pickens, we headed northeast toward Pumpkinville. About halfway there, we turned east to drive through the Oolenoy Valley. I thought this was where our ancestors lived, but we saw little farm land in the valley itself. Rugged, rugged, rugged.

We reached the crossroads two miles west of Dacusville and turned northwest, looking for the Oolenoy Baptist Church. We found it at the outskirts of Pumpkinville. Tyre L. Roper was one of the early preachers for this church. The first known pioneer in this area is buried there: Cornelius Keith from Scotland. He traded a pony to the Indians for the Oolenoy region. The Keiths and the Ropers intermarried big time

With a clearer idea of where the Oolenoy region is, we went back to the crossroads and went through Dacusville. (That is where my mother's Dacus roots are.) A few miles east of Dacusville, we turned northeast a little way to get to the Peter's Creek Baptist Church. Reuben and Cynthia Roper were members of this church. We then returned to the main road. A little further east, we came to the Saluda River. All our known ancestors lived along this river. Here we saw small plots of farmable land.

Back in Greenville, we visited Roper Mountain which is at the edge of that city. It has been turned into an educational facility by the school system. I didn't find anyone who knew how the mountain had gotten its name.³⁷

From Greenville, we traveled to Forsyth County³⁸

"MY" BUNCH TO SOUTH CAROLINA

Returning to the history of my Ropers in Pickens County: My notes will center around a Charles Roper, whom I am guessing is my gggg-grandfather. The first mention I find of Charles is in 1783 when he was indicted in Rutherford County, North Carolina:

Rutherford County Minutes of Court for January 1793: Whereas, Summonses having issued to the Sheriff to notify the following persons to appear and answer an Inquisition of treason, felony, and forfeiture found against them by the Grand Jury. [This is followed by a list of names including Charles Roper.] And now being Solemnly called Show cause why their property should not be confiscated, failed to Show any cause. It is therefore considered by the Court that their property be ADJUDGED forfeited.³⁹

"The indictment was for being a Loyalist, i.e., for aiding and abetting British soldiers."⁴⁰

In the first federal census taken—in 1790—Charles had moved from Rutherford County to Burke County, North Carolina. Charles' family and one other capture my attention:⁴¹

"Merideth" Roper.

Free white males of 16 years and upwards, including heads of family: 3

³⁷ I also spent time in the genealogical section of the Greenville library—without success.

³⁸ See the chapter that focuses on John and his two wives.

³⁹ From a paper on "The Mysterious Meredith Roper" by L. David Roper, page 3. This was taken off the internet.

⁴⁰ Email from L. David Roper, dated July 19, 2000. I have to add this note: Whether you agree with Charles being a Loyalist or not, he was doing what he thought was right. He probably then felt he was treated shabbily by the government. My impression of my line of Ropers is that they did not trust the government and did little to cooperate with authorities. They often do not appear in censuses (I can see them ducking out the back door when they saw an official-looking person approaching).

⁴¹ There are also a couple of "David Ropers" in the county, but that's another line. You can check L. David Roper's website regarding them.

Free white males under 16 years: 1
Free white females, including heads of families: 4

Charles Roper

Free white males of 16 years and upwards, including heads of family: 1
Free white males under 16 years: 2
Free white females, including heads of families: 5

These two are listed one after the other. Meredith (with older males in his family) is apparently the older of the two. L. David Roper wrote, "Perhaps the Charles Roper mentioned here is Meredith's son . . . since he disappeared from Rutherford County about the same time Meredith did and appears with Meredith . . . in the 1800 US census of Pendleton District."⁴² Let me repeat here L. David Roper's educated guess as to Meredith's children:⁴³

Solomon Benjamin
Charles
Daniel
Joshua
David
Aaron
Carrie

L. David Roper thinks Charles' treatment by the government is a primary reason why he was ready to leave North Carolina. Sometime between 1790 and 1800, he and Meredith moved to Pendleton District, South Carolina.⁴⁴ Charles bought land in the Oolenoy region, on the south fork of the Saluda River. Here is the record of Meredith's and Charles' families in the 1800 census in that district:

"Merriday" Roper
Free white males 45 & over: 1
Free white females 16–25: 1
Free white females 45 & older: 1

Charles Roper
Free white males under 10: 2
Free white males 10–15: 1
Free white males 45 & older: 1
Free white females under 10: 4
Free white females 10–15: 2
Free white females 26–44: 1

Again, it seems obvious that Charles is the younger of the two.

Meredith is not in the 1810 Pendleton District census; presumably he died between 1800 and 1810. The 1810 census in that district lists Charles' family as follows:

⁴² From the paper "The Mysterious Meredith Roper," page 3.

⁴³ See the previous chapter.

⁴⁴ Meredith's many moves that finally brought him to the Pendleton District are outlined in the previous chapter.

Charles Roper
Free white males under 10: 1
Free white males 10–15: 1
Free white males 45 & older: 1
Free white females under 10: 2
Free white females 10–15: 2
Free white females 16–25: 1
Free white females 45 & up: 1

Charles is again listed in the 1820 Pendleton County census:

Charles Roper
Free white males 16–25: 2
Free white males 45 & older: 1
Free white females 26–44: 1
Free white females 45 & older: 1

Another of “my” bunch shows up in the 1820 Pendleton County census: Peter Byrum (Peter lived next door to my ggg-grandfather John Roper in the 1830 census and was probably the father of my ggg-grandmother Tabitha). Here is Peter’s listing:

Peter “Byrum”
Free white males 26–44: 1
Free white females under 10: 1
Free white females 10–15: 1 (I believe this to be Tabitha, born about 1807. She would have been about 13 when this census was taken.)
Free white females 26–44: 1

1820 is the last census in which Charles Roper appears. He sold his land on the Saluda River July 29, 1822. I think he and his wife moved in with their son Reuben, who lived nearby. I believe that in the 1830 census, he and his wife are living with Reuben, and that they died around 1833 or 1834.

A final general note on “my” bunch in Pickens County, South Carolina: February 28, 1836, Peter Byrum sold his 50 acres “on waters of Woolenoy adj. John Roper’s line” to Joel Keith,⁴⁵ who I believe to be a brother to the wife of one of Charles’ sons, Reuben.

“OLD” JOHN’S FATHER:
CHARLES ROPER?

As I worked on my Roper heritage, I used the process of elimination to pinpoint who might be the father of my ggg-grandfather John Roper. I examined what is known regarding the other Roper families in Pickens County, South Carolina. Many of the heads of these families could be eliminated because their descendants have been well documented (through wills and the like). Others were eliminated because, according to census records, they had no son born at the right time to be “my” John. I kept coming back to one viable prospect: Charles Roper. June Roper Walton wrote in *Some Southern Roper “Trees”* regarding “my”

⁴⁵ Pickens County Deed Book C-1, pages 427, 428.

John: "He is the right age to have been a son of Charles Roper in the 1810 Pickens [County, South Carolina] census."⁴⁶ Let me list reasons I believe Charles to be my gggg-grandfather:

- (1) He is an acceptable age to be John's father. Putting all the census records together, Charles must have been born between 1750 and 1755.⁴⁷ This would put him in his 50s when John and his brother Reuben were born. John himself fathered children into his 60s.
- (2) Charles is in the right place at the right time. His farm was on the Saluda River where John and Reuben bought their farms.
- (3) Charles has sons the right age to be John and Reuben. From the census records, I estimate John was the older, born around 1798 or 1799, while Reuben was the younger, born about 1801 and 1802. Neither of these would have been born when the 1790 census was taken, but notice how they fit perfectly into the other census records of Charles:
 - In the 1800 census, Charles had two sons born between 1791 and 1799. The younger of these could be John, born about 1798 or 1799.
 - In the 1810 census, Charles had one boy born between 1801 and 1809. This could be Reuben, born about 1801 or 1802. Charles had another boy born between 1785 and 1800. This could be John, born about 1798 or 1799.
 - In the 1820 census, Charles had two sons born between 1795 and 1804. This could be John (born about 1798 or 1799) and Reuben (born around 1801 or 1802).
- (4) "Charles" is a family name in my lineage. John named one of his sons "Charles," and so did Reuben. Look through the genealogies in this volume and you will find one or more males named Charles in every generation. (I might also mention that none of the other names of Meredith's children were used by John or Reuben in naming their children.)
- (5) Charles and his wife are the right age to be the older couple living with Reuben in the 1830 census (the couple are listed as being between 70 and 80 in that census).

I hired Brent Holcomb to try to authenticate my conclusion. After checking available South Carolina records, he replied, "I believe you are exactly right about Charles Roper being the father of John and Reuben, but we have no recording stating this to be the case."⁴⁸ Perhaps in the future, when additional records are transcribed and indexed, my conclusion can be proved or disproved. But, for the moment, I let it stand.

Final notes relating to Charles: (1) Assuming that Charles is my gggg-grandfather and that his father was Meredith and that Meredith was a son of John Jr., this establishes our line back to Virginia. Lots of assumptions, but for the moment, that is the best I can do. (2) You will note in the census records that Charles had many children other than the two I believe to be John and Reuben. I assume that one of these was named Charles (there are a number of younger Charles Ropers in Pickens County). Other than that, I could not hazard a guess. Here is another ripe field for an avid researcher.

COMING UP

⁴⁶ Page 18.

⁴⁷ Including the 1830 census records of the older couple living with Reuben.

⁴⁸ Letter dated January 25, 2000.

Acknowledgements on this chapter must include material by L. David Roper and the effort made by Brent Holcomb. The next chapter is a supplementary chapter on Reuben. The following chapter will return to “my” line as it focuses on John Roper and his two wives.

2a

SUPPLEMENTARY: REUBEN ROPER

As I did research on my ggg-grandfather John, I became interested in his brother Reuben. I did considerable research on Reuben but not all that can be done. Those who are interested in this line can build on my discoveries.

REUBEN IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Reuben was born about 1801 or 1802.⁴⁹ His wife was named Cynthia. She was probably born about 1807⁵⁰ in South Carolina.⁵¹

I think Cynthia's maiden name was Keith. My reasons for thus thinking:⁵²

- There were many, many marriages between the Keiths and the Ropers (see L. David Roper's file on the descendants of John Roper Jr.).
- Joel M. Keith (born March 16, 1799; married Mary Roper, daughter of Benjamin Roper) lived just five houses down from Cynthia and Reuben in the 1830 Pickens County, South Carolina, census. Joel named one of his boys REUBEN ROPER Keith. Joel moved to Forsyth County a few years after Cynthia and Reuben (Joel is in the 1850 Forsyth County census). Joel then moved to Murray County, Georgia, shortly after Cynthia did. He died in Murray County in 1853.
- In the 1860 Murray County, Georgia, census, living near Cynthia (page 100) on one side is one son of Joel—John B. Keith (page 99)—and on the other side is another son of Joel—Martin L. Keith (page 101).

To stick out my neck even further, I would guess that Cynthia was the older sister of Joel and both were the children of John and Jane (MacKay) Keith. But I'll let you check into this further. If you think you are descended from Reuben and Cynthia, you will want to investigate this because the Keiths were probably *the* most prominent family in the early history of Pickens County.

Reuben and Cynthia lived in the Oolenoy region of Pickens County: Reuben bought 160 acres from Ezekiel Howard December 23, 1828.⁵³ This was "on the branches of Woolenoy Waters of Saluda River adj[acent] Barkers line." Its position was later defined by a number of trees on the property: a post oak tree, a red oak tree, a pine tree, etc!⁵⁴ This was probably setting-up-house time for Reuben and Cynthia. The land cost \$150.00. James Hagood was

⁴⁹ According to one census, Reuben was born 1790 - 1800; another has 1800 - 1810. For both to be even half-way true, he must have been born around 1800. Other considerations would place the time of his birth around 1801 or 1802.

⁵⁰ According to the 1830 and 1840 censuses, she was born between 1800 and 1810. The first year she was on her own as a widow, in the 1850 census, she gave her age as 38, which would make her born in 1812. The next census (1860), she admitted to being 53. This would make her born in 1807—which fits three of the four records available to me.

⁵¹ According to the 1850 census, she was born in South Carolina; according to the 1860 census, she was born in North Carolina. The North/South confusion is common. South Carolina seems more likely since men generally married women who lived nearby.

⁵² L. David Roper said, "Your reasoning on Cynthia looks good to me" (email dated April 1, 2003).

⁵³ Book C-1, p. 479, 1828 - 1837

⁵⁴ Book C-1, page 141.

the principal witness to the deal. James was probably the grandfather of James Lowe Haygood who married a daughter of “my” John named Elizabeth.⁵⁵ “Old” James later moved to Forsyth County, Georgia.

Reuben is listed in the 1830 Pickens County, SC, census with his wife, a young son and a young daughter, and an old couple. Living next door is Peter Byrum. Living two doors down is Reuben’s brother John Roper. Here is Reuben’s census listing along with guesses regarding who each person might be:

One boy under 5 (born 1826 - 1830)

This is probably Reuben, Jr. (see later).

One man 20 - 30 (born 1800 - 1810)

This would be Reuben, Sr. He would have been on the high end of this number - and maybe a little beyond.

One man 70 - 80

This is probably Reuben’s father—probably Charles Roper.

One girl under 5 (born 1826 - 1830)

This was possibly Catherine (see later).

One woman 20 - 30 (born 1800 - 1810)

This would be Cynthia.

One woman 70 - 80

This is probably Reuben’s mother—name unknown.

There is a reference to Reuben in connection with the estate of Thomas Master, Jr. In a sale held January 26, 1831, Reuben was one of the buyers (along with other Pickens County Ropers).⁵⁶

Reuben and Cynthia were members of the Church of Christ/Baptist Church at Peter’s Creek. In the minutes of the Peter’s Creek Baptist Church, the first entry is as follows: “The church of Christ at Peters creek was constituted December the 19th 1825.”⁵⁷ In the September 1839 record, it was designated as the “Church of Christ at Peters.” The next month (October 1838), it was designated “the Baptist Church at Peters Creek.” Four months later (May 13 1854), it was called “the Baptist church of Christ at Peters creek.” Today the Peter’s Creek Baptist Church building is located at 972 Shoals Creek Church Road in Easley, Pickens County, South Carolina.

August 13, 1831, when the Peter’s Creek Church “met in conference,” “Cintha Roper” was “received by experience” along with Moses “Fendley” and James Hagood. In a listing of male members, “Reubin” Roper is listed right after Moses F. and James H., so he apparently became a member the next time the “church met in conference”—which would probably have been in September, 1831.⁵⁸ August 11, 1832, Reuben is appointed a delegate of the Peter’s Creek Church to the annual area conference.

According to *Some Southern Roper “Trees,”* Reuben and Cynthia were also members of the Reedy River Baptist Church, but I was unable to get confirmation of that.

October 11, 1934, “Brother Reubin Roper and Sister Cinthy Roper his wife applied for letters of dismissal [from the Peter’s Creek Church]—they were granted them.”

⁵⁵ See the chapter on Elizabeth Roper.

⁵⁶ This is recorded in two different books of SC county records.

⁵⁷ Information off the internet—from minutes of Peter’s Creek Baptist Church, filmed by the Baptist Historical Collection, Furman University Library, Greenville, South Carolina. The minutes are interesting regarding such matters as foot-washing and dismissal for swearing, drinking, and the like. But space does not permit giving this information.

⁵⁸ According to the few minutes I have, they met every month.

REUBEN IN GEORGIA

Reuben and Cynthia moved to Georgia around the end of 1834. We arrive at that time because, although they did not receive their letters of dismissal until October 1834, one of their children was born in Georgia in 1834. So they must have left immediately after receiving the letters. At the moment, I am working on the theory that Reuben's parents (the older couple living with him in the 1830 census) died shortly before the move. According to South Carolina genealogist, Brent Holcomb, "children often removed upon the death of a father or other patriarch in the family."⁵⁹

Reuben and Cynthia moved to Forsyth County, Georgia. As far as I have been able to find, Reuben was the first Roper to live in Forsyth County,⁶⁰ although there were Ropers earlier in nearby counties.

In 1835, Reuben returned to Pickens County, South Carolina, to sell his land. December 28, 1835, he sold his 160 acres to Lewis Findley (or Fendley) for \$100.00.⁶¹ (Buying the land for \$150.00 and selling it for \$100.00 proves he was one of "my" bunch. Our motto is "Buy high; sell low.") John Roper was a witness to the sale. In the record of the transaction, Reuben is listed as "Reuben Roper of the State of Georgia Forsyth County." After disposing of his property, Reuben then returned to Forsyth County.

August 22, 1836, Reuben was commissioned Ensign for Militia District 575 in Forsyth County. Officers were elected by the voters and commissioned by the governor. The Forsyth County units were attached to the 79th and 80th Regiment of Georgia Militia.⁶²

Reuben was on the Grand Jury list for February 1837. A prerequisite for serving on the Grand Jury was the ownership of land.⁶³

In 1840, Reuben and Cynthia were charter members of the Friendship Baptist Church in Forsyth County. In *The History of the Friendship Baptist Church, Forsyth County, Georgia* by Preston Tribble and Fleeta Bramblett, we read:

The names of the eleven who constituted this historic old church are: Toliver Reid, Reuben Roper, L. B. Edwards, Delilah Haygood, Susannah Compton, Cinthea Roper, Nelly Edwards, Martha Sharpton, Mary Reid, and Mahala Scruggs

The name of the church 'Friendship' was suggested by Zachariah Haygood⁶⁴

Reuben is listed in the 1840 census in Forsyth County, Georgia (one index lists him as "Koper" because the top part of the "R" faded in the original record). Here is info from that census plus some guesses:

One boy under 5 (born 1836 - 1840)

My guess is that this child died before the 1850 census was taken because he should have appeared in the 1850 census with his mother and he does not. I have no idea what his name was. "John" would be as good a guess as any.

One boy 5-10 (born 1830 - 1835)

⁵⁹ Letter dated January 25, 2000.

⁶⁰ This may not be the case, since there's a Meredith Roper in Forsyth County in 1828 and 1838 buying and selling land. But this Meredith Roper never shows up in a census. So maybe he didn't actually live in Forsyth County.

⁶¹ Book C-1, p. 141, 1835 – 1836.

⁶² Don L. Shadburn, *Pioneer History of Forsyth County*, page 70.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, page 530.

⁶⁴ This is from the internet.

This is Charles who was born about 1830/32 in SC.
One boy 10-15 (born 1825 - 1830)
This is the boy listed in the 1830 census, who I indicated was probably Reuben Jr..
He was born about 1830 in SC.
One man 30-40 (born 1800 - 1810)
Not sure who is this. He is too old to be a son of Reuben. He is probably a
relative.
One man 40-50 (born 1790 - 1800)
This is probably Reuben.
One girl 5-10 (born 1830 - 1835)
This was probably Malissa, who was born about 1834.
One girl 10-15 (born 1825 - 1830)
This is the girl listed on the 1830 census, who I indicated is possibly Catherine.
One woman 20-30 (born 1810 - 1820)
Again, not sure who this is. She is too old to be a daughter of Reuben. She may be the
wife of the unknown young man listed above.
One woman 30-40 (born 1800 - 1810)
This would be Cynthia who was born about 1807.

If Reuben had lived and had been listed in the 1850 and 1860 censuses which give the names of the children, we could be more precise regarding his offspring. But, according to the minutes of the Friendship Baptist Church, Reuben died September 19, 1841.

CYNTHIA AND HER CHILDREN

Shortly after Reuben's death, Cynthia and the children moved to nearby Georgia counties. According to the minutes of the Friendship Baptist Church, Cynthia was DBL (dismissed by letter) January 5, 1843. That was apparently when she left the county. She moved to Murray County, Georgia—a couple of counties WNW of Forsyth County. I think she moved there because she had family living there: the Keiths.⁶⁵

December 24, 1845, Cynthia's (possible) oldest daughter, Catherine, married Jacob Mathis December 24, 1845 in Murray County.⁶⁶

December 27, 1849, her (probable) oldest son Reuben Jr. married Malinda A. Stephens in Habersham County, Georgia, a little NE of Forsyth County. Malinda was born about 1822/23 in Georgia. Reuben and Malinda moved to Hall County. Hall County joins Forsyth County on the NE. Many Pickens County descendants moved from South Carolina to Hall County, Georgia.

When the 1850 census was taken, widowed "Sythia" Roper is found in Murray County. She gave her age as 38. (Do women ever report their ages a little low?) Living with Cynthia is Charles, age, 18, born about 1832 in South Carolina, and Melissa, age 16, born about 1834 in Georgia.

In the 1850 census, Reuben Jr. (spelled "Reubin"; born about 1830 in SC) and his wife Malinda (just listed as "M"; born about 1822 in GA) are living in Hall County. After the 1850

⁶⁵ Many Keiths who had intermarried with Ropers lived in Murray County. See L. David Roper's John Roper Jr. database.

⁶⁶ I have not traced this family in the census records. Someone, who has access to Georgia census records, needs to go through Murray County family by family looking for all the Reuben and Cynthia Roper ties.

census, Reuben Jr. and Malinda moved to Banks County, GA. Banks County joins Hall County on the east.

January 25, 1855, Cynthia's daughter Malissa married Berry Carden in Murray County.⁶⁷

December 27, 1855, Cynthia's son Charles married Malinda Whitmore in Murray County. Malinda was born in Georgia about 1838.

When the 1860 census was taken, Cynthia was still in Murray County. She gives her age as 53. Living with Cynthia is a 34-year-old James G. Roper. He is a carpenter, born in South Carolina. He is not listed in L. David Roper's list of "John Jr." descendants. He is probably a descendant of Reuben and John's parents, perhaps a nephew of Cynthia who is helping her with chores.

Also in Murray County at the time of the 1860 census is Cynthia's son Charles Roper (born about 1830 in South Carolina) and his wife Malinda (born about 1838 in Georgia) and their 4-year-old James (born about 1856 in Georgia).

When the 1860 census was taken, Reuben Jr. was in Banks County, Georgia: Reuben Roper (born about 1830 in SC) and his wife Malinda (born about 1823 in GA) have one daughter Olly, born about 1850. My gg-grandfather Peter B. had a daughter Lillie who named a daughter "Ollie"—so here is another indication this Reuben was one of "our" bunch. (If you are expecting a girl and are stuck for names, keep in mind that "Ollie" is a time-honored Roper name.)

I might mention in passing that, in the 1860 Banks County census, there are two clusters of Ropers: (1) Isaac Roper (born about 1835 in SC), Elizabeth (born about 1836 in GA), Henry C. (born about 1859 in GA), Robert L. (born about February 1860 in GA). (2) Warren D. Roper (born about 1838 in SC) and Nancy A. (born about 1844 in SC) None of these are in the John Jr. file and probably fit some way into the descendants of Reuben and John's parents.

I might also mention that living almost next door to Reuben is Singleton Roper, who is a son of Joshua Roper, another of the Pickens County bunch.

CLOSING NOTES

The info in this chapter came from South Carolina records, some Forsyth County sources, census records, and the internet. I hope others will carry Reuben's line on down to the present—and maybe discover a living relative that can tell us more.

⁶⁷ I have not checked out this family in the census records.

FROM SOUTH CAROLINA TO FORSYTH COUNTY, GEORGIA: JOHN ROPER AND HIS TWO WIVES

In the previous chapters, we discussed the Roper family in Pickens County, South Carolina. In this chapter, I want to focus on one of those Ropers: my ggg-grandfather, John Roper.

John Roper was born around 1798 or 1799⁶⁸ in South Carolina.⁶⁹ According to one history of the Friendship Baptist Church, his middle initial was “C.”⁷⁰ If his father was named Charles (see previous chapter), John’s full name may have been John Charles Roper. There are so many John Ropers that I often refer to him as “old” John.

John married in South Carolina, probably around 1826 or 1827,⁷¹ to a woman named Tabitha.⁷² According to one family member, her name was pronounced “Ta-BI-tha” instead of the more common “TAB-I-tha.”⁷³ Tabitha was born in South Carolina about 1810.⁷⁴ According to South Carolina researchers, the estimated mean age of marriage in 1800 was 21.5 for men and 19.4 for women. John was older than the average and Tabitha was younger.

I believe Tabitha’s maiden name was Byrum:

- John and Tabitha named one of their oldest boys “Peter Byrum Roper.” The name is so unusual that the natural assumption is that he was named after kin.
- In the 1830 census in Pickens County, South Carolina, John was living next door to Peter Byrum. This Peter Byrum was the right age to be John’s father-in-law.

According to one family member, Tabitha’s mother’s maiden name was Tudor.⁷⁵

THE BYRUMS: ROYAL LINE?

Roper cousin and fellow-researcher Charles Van Bebber thinks it “very possible” that our Byrum line looks something like this:

- Tabitha T. Byrum, daughter of Peter Byrum.
- Peter Byrum⁷⁶ (born about 1760), son of Clayton Byrum and Nancy (Unknown).

⁶⁸ According to the censuses, John was born between 1790 and 1800. I believe around 1798 or 1799 is correct.

⁶⁹ One census says North Carolina, but at least two others have South Carolina.

⁷⁰ Retha Sosebee McConnell, *Friendship is Reaching Out* (privately printed, 1990), page 233.

⁷¹ This guess is based on the date of the birth of their first child. Early marriage records in SC are scarce and incomplete.

⁷² Some have referred to Tabitha as John’s second wife, but I have found no evidence for this. According to one history of the Friendship Baptist Church, her middle initial was “T” (Retha Sosebee McConnell, *Friendship is Reaching Out* [privately printed, 1990], page 233).

⁷³ Phone conversation with Lanier Garrett, June 24, 2001. Lanier is a descendant of Lowe and Elizabeth (Roper) Haygood.

⁷⁴ This is according to the 1850 census, which basically agrees with the 1830 and 1840 censuses.

⁷⁵ Phone conversation with Lanier Garrett, September 21, 2002. Lanier says his grandfather told him this.

⁷⁶ Peter was a common name among the Byrums.

- Clayton Byrum (born about 1738, Essex County, Virginia; died about 1805, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina), son of Orzwill Byrum and Catherine (Unknown).
- Orzwill⁷⁷ Byrum (born about 1704, Southfarnham Parish, Essex County, Virginia; died April 18, 1749, Southfarnham Parish, Essex County, Virginia), son of James Byrom and Elizabeth (Unknown). Orzwill married Catherine about 1725, Essex County, Virginia.
- James Byrom (born about 1670, Lancashire, England; died May 22, 1717, Essex County, Virginia), son of Henry Byrom and Frances Mills. James married Elizabeth December 10, 1702, Essex County, Virginia.⁷⁸

The basic details of this family fit: Clayton's son, Peter, was born at the right time to be Tabitha's father. Peter had a brother, Samuel who moved to Georgia—as Tabitha did after her marriage. Further, Clayton had children named Peter, Nancy, and Henry—names used by Tabitha in naming her children. Charles Van Bebber thought this line should be researched further “to prove/disprove it.”⁷⁹

Another note on the Byrum line: One descendant of Tabitha said his grandfather told him the Byrum line had royal blood.⁸⁰ I found a website called “240,000 people connected to Royalty.” It is the family tree of a Tyler and Mary Ann Byrum—which lists a variety of royal ancestors. Whether this is a legitimate lineage or “a “vanity pedigree,” I cannot say. You may enjoy checking into this further. As you research, keep in mind that “Byrum” is spelled (or misspelled) many ways in official and unofficial records.

BACK TO JOHN AND TABITHA

John and Tabitha had a 100-acre farm on the Oolenoy and Carpenter Creeks near the Saluda River in the Oolenoy region of Pickens County, South Carolina.⁸¹ As already noted, they lived next door to Tabitha's parents. They also lived near John's brother, Reuben. John's parents were probably living with Reuben.⁸²

The first time John appears in public records is in the 1830 census in Pickens County, South Carolina.⁸³ Census records for that year name only the head of the family and give a range of dates. John's age is listed as 20–30; he would have been pushing the top end of this range—and could even have been 31 or 32 (census records lack precision). His wife's age is given as 20–30. Tabitha would have been around 20. One son is listed: a boy under 5. This would have been Henry Franklin, who was around 2 years of age.

⁷⁷ Other spellings: Orzwell, Oswald.

⁷⁸ According to the records Charles found, May was the daughter of Robert and Mary Mills and the granddaughter of John Mills.

⁷⁹ Email, dated April 16, 2000. In an earlier email, dated March 6, 2000, Charles said some of his information was from World Family Tree Volume #3, Tree #6391. Other internet sources have the same male line, but shift the wives around: Clayton is married to Nancy, Orzwill is married to Catherine, James is married to Elizabeth, etc. Also the dates vary in different sources.

⁸⁰ Phone conversation with Lanier Garrett, June 24, 2001. Lanier said that his grandfather said that the family inherited a royal blood disease. He said that one of Tabitha's brothers bled to death.

⁸¹ Regarding the Oolenoy region of Pickens County, see a previous chapter.

⁸² See earlier chapter for information on Reuben and John's parents.

⁸³ Pickens County, Pickens District, page 313.

While living in Pickens County, John and Tabitha had at least four children—and maybe five:⁸⁴

Henry Franklin Roper, born about 1828.
Mahulda Carolyn Roper, born about 1832.
Matilda Roper, born about 1834.
(Maybe a Lewis Roper,⁸⁵ born about 1835.)
James Hamilton Roper, born about 1837.

John's brother Reuben attended Baptist Churches in Pickens County, but John himself did not become a member of the Baptist Church until he moved to Georgia. In South Carolina, he and his family were probably members of the Episcopal Church (U. S. version of the Church of England).⁸⁶

John and Reuben's parents probably died around 1834. About that time, Reuben decided to go to Georgia to "spy out the land." He evidently liked what he saw. He returned in 1835 and sold his land in the Oolenoy region. John is listed as a witness to this transaction. Before Reuben returned to Georgia, he probably persuaded John that he too should make the move. It was not long until John sold his 100 acres to Joel Jones⁸⁷ and prepared to travel to Georgia.

GEORGIA—AND FORSYTH COUNTY

In 1828, gold had been discovered in Georgia and the Cherokee Indians started to mine the ore. In 1830, Georgia passed a law taking possession of the gold and silver found by the Cherokees. During 1831 and 1832, the Cherokee land was surveyed and on December 3, 1832, their land was divided into ten counties—one of which was Forsyth County.⁸⁸

Forsyth County was named in honor of John Forsyth (1789–1841), a Virginia-born attorney who served Georgia as Attorney General, Governor, Congressman, and Senator. He also served as Attorney General under Presidents Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren. In 1834, a settlement called Cumming was designated the county seat. It was on the Federal Road running through Forsyth County. The town was named after Colonel William Cumming, a distinguished Georgian.

In 1835, after bitter debate among Cherokee leaders, around one hundred Cherokees signed the Treaty of New Echota (the Cherokee capital). The Cherokees accepted five million dollars for their land. In the months that followed, most of the Cherokees moved voluntarily or were forced to move west. The "Trail of Tears" to Oklahoma took place in 1838. Of the 70,000 Indians on that infamous Trail, 17,000 were from Georgia.

⁸⁴ We know the number from the 1840 and 1850 censuses. The names of Matilda and James are from the 1850 census. We know Mahulda was a daughter because of a court document. We conclude that Henry Franklin was a son for many reasons (see the chapter on Henry Franklin).

⁸⁵ According to the 1850 Mortality schedule, a 14-year-old Lewis Roper born in SC died in Forsyth County in July—probably in 1849 since censuses were generally taken around April. This Lewis does not fit with any other Roper in Forsyth County, and may be a child of John and Tabitha. He is listed as a child of John in *Some Southern Roper "Trees,"* page 18.

⁸⁶ My South Carolina researcher could not find John or Tabitha's names in the available records of Pendleton District Episcopal Churches.

⁸⁷ Book D-1, p. 207, 1836-1840.

⁸⁸ Information in this paragraph and those that follow is from several sources, including *Stroll Around the Square* by Barnett, and *Portrait of America: Georgia* by Thompson (Austin, Texas: Raintree Streck-Vaughn Publishers, 1991).

In 1838, land formerly owned by the Cherokees was distributed by lottery (Georgia is the only state to distribute land by lottery). Over 18,500 “gold lots” were distributed in the northeastern part of the state.⁸⁹

Settlers from Virginia and South Carolina traveled west along the Federal Road into Georgia. When they reached Forsyth County, many decided to stay. It was not long until cotton farmers had taken over much of the Indian land.

OTHER ROPERS IN FORSYTH COUNTY

Many of John and Reuben’s cousins (most of them farmers) moved from Pickens County, South Carolina, to Georgia about this time—a number to Forsyth County and surrounding counties.

As I was struggling to identify “my” bunch in Forsyth County, I decided it would help if I eliminated those who came from other Pickens County, South Carolina, lines. So I searched the 30,000 folk in L. David Roper's John Jr. file. Below are the pertinent parts of John Jr.'s lineage. I put the Forsyth Ropers found in early census records (other than those in Reuben and “old” John’s line) IN ALL CAPS. Those in lower case are included so you can see how these relate.

- 1 John Roper Jr. (ABT - BEF 1759)
 - Susannah (-)
- 2 John Roper (ABT - 1784)
 - Mary (-)
 - 3 David Roper (BEF 1727 - AFT)
 - Sarah Yates (ABT - dec.)
 - 4 Benjamin Roper (1781 - 1831)
 - Susannah (1781 - BEF 1848)
 - 5. JOHN (HENRY) ROPER (1810 - dec.)
 - Sara Caroline Thacker
 - 5 Aaron Roper (ABT - 1881)
 - Sarah Ann Keith
 - 6 WILLIAM H. (HARVEY) ROPER (1826 - 1892)
 - Nancy Wallis (1830 - 1892)
- 2 Meredith Roper (ABT - AFT)
 - 3 Joshua Roper (ABT - 1856)
 - Mary (ABT - AFT)
 - 4 WILLIAM ROPER (ABT - 1892)
 - Susan Masters (ABT - 1879)
 - 5 Jason Roper (1829 - 1904)
 - 5 Rachel Ellen Roper (1829 - 1904)
 - 5 James Meredith Roper (1836 - dec.)
 - 5 William Alexander Roper (1839 - 1864)
 - 5 Robert P Roper (1842 - dec.)
 - 5 Joseph Roper (1844 - dec.)
 - 5 Claiborn Thompson Roper (1847 - 1928)
 - 6 Benjamin Perry Roper (1868 – 1943)
 - 7 William McKinley Roper (1905 – 1981)
 - 5 Jesse Larkin Roper (1850 - dec.)
- 3 Aaron Roper (1784 - 1855)
 - Rachel Meredith (1786 - ABT)
 - 4 Lemuel Roper (1807 - BEF)
 - Jane A Glenn (-)
 - 5 BEVERLY ROPER (1824 - 1904)
 - Susan Phillips (1825 - 1894)

⁸⁹ See James F. Smith, *The Cherokee Land Lottery* (New York, 1838).

- 4 JOHN C. (CALVIN) ROPER (1824 - 1857)
 - Susan Ann Compton (1819 - 1859)
 - 5 Tyre L Roper (ABT - dec.)
 - 5 Samuel Roper (dec.)
 - 5 Elizabeth Ann Roper (1842 - dec.)
 - 5 William N Roper (1844 - dec.)
 - 5 Marena Jane Roper (1848 - dec.)
 - 5 Lemuel Frederick Hawkins Roper (1850 - 1927)
 - 5 Reuben Aaron Roper (1854 - 1925)
 - 5 John Landrum Roper (1856 - 1933)

I carried this on another generation or two, but this is sufficient to show that many of “our” bunch ended up in Forsyth County. A majority of the above are descendants of Meredith Roper—this is “my” line from John Jr.. Notable among those listed is William Roper who married Susan Masters. This is the better-known Roper line in the county. One descendant of William and Susan, Benjamin Perry Roper, is featured in *Images of American: Forsyth County* by Annette Bramblett. A son of Benjamin, William McKinley Roper, operated one of the best-known stores in Cumming for years: the W. M. Roper Hardware Company on the town square. A statement often heard was “You can get it at Roper’s.”⁹⁰

DAVID AND JO TO FORSYTH COUNTY

In May 2002, Jo and I made our first trip east to search out my roots. The South Carolina part of that trip I described in a previous chapter. Below is I wrote about the Georgia segment [with notes inserted for clarity]:

[On Saturday, May 20], we traveled to Forsyth County, Georgia—only a couple of hours by the freeway, but it probably took our forefathers days if not weeks through the rugged terrain. (When I told one smart-alec, he said, “So why didn’t they take the freeway?”) We stayed in [the Lanier Lodge just south of] Cumming, the county seat of Forsyth County.

This was a NEAT visit. [On Sunday, May 21, we drove around in the afternoon, locating Roper Road, “the Roper house,” and the Friendship Church cemetery.] We [then] spent one day [Monday, May 22], with Michael Roper and his parents Charles and Doris. Charles and Doris live on Roper Road across from “the Roper house,” where his father George H. Roper lived and where he was born. The [Roper] house is now a rent house owned by Michael (a third cousin, once removed).

Our visits in this area are almost too many to enumerate: We visited the Friendship Baptist Church and cemetery. Reuben Roper and his wife were charter members of this church and John and Tabitha Roper were later members there (as was John’s second wife, Amy). Jo was flabbergasted by the number of Ropers buried in the cemetery. There are more Ropers buried there than live in most towns we have lived in—including the very large cities.

We also visited the Zion Hill Baptist Church and cemetery. Charles F. Roper, a son of John and Tabitha . . . , was a deacon there and is buried there. We also visited the Pleasant Hill Methodist Church which is tied in with a daughter of John and Tabitha: Mahulda and [her husband] Samuel Asbury Holbrook.

In addition to visiting the graves of a high percentage of John and Tabitha’s children, we also visited the house where Charles F. Roper lived We also had an enjoyable visit with 96-year-old Jewell, a living granddaughter of Charles F. Roper. One highlight

⁹⁰ From the “Forsyth Forum, June 20, 1986.”

was contact made with a branch of the family I thought was “lost”: the descendants of a half-brother of [my gg-grandfather] Peter B. [Roper] named John T. [Roper. Details on this will be found in the chapter on John T.]

I should also mention that Michael had a pile of pictures for me of his branch of the family. And Charles allowed me to borrow a history of the Friendship Church which had more pictures. The hospitality of this family could not be improved on.

[On Tuesday, May 23, I spent the morning in the Cumming library. That afternoon,] from Cumming, we went to Atlanta where I checked out the state archives[. I went there Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday, May 24,] but I really didn’t find anything of significance From there, [on Thursday May 25 and 26, we made our way] back to Arkansas.

In May and June of 2001, we made a second trip to Georgia—primarily to be in Forsyth County for the annual reunion of John T. Roper’s descendants. Here is a summary of that journey based on notes from my planner:

We arrived in Georgia Wednesday, May 30. We spent the night in Rome, Georgia, so I could do research on William Larkin Roper, the youngest son of John and Amy. On Thursday, May 31, I worked in the county library, made contact with the family of a grandson of Larkin—L. T. Tuck—and then traveled on to Cumming.

Friday, June 1, I worked in the courthouse in the morning (didn’t find what I was looking for). In the afternoon, we went to nearby Canton to make contact with Larry Ellis, who has researched the Haygoods, and to check out the county library there.

Saturday, June 2, we again spent an enjoyable day with Charles and Doris Roper. We went to the New Harmony Baptist Church cemetery where John T. is buried. Charles also directed us to the home of cousin Winnie Tallant who has done an amazing amount of research on the Holbrooks and Haygoods.

The Roper reunion was Sunday afternoon, June 3, on the grounds of the Mount Pisgah Baptist Church. I got to meet many distant relatives and also did a magic show for the children. After the reunion, Jo and I went by to see Annette Bramblett who went far “beyond the call of duty” in researching “our” Ropers in Forsyth County. Sunday evening, I preached at the Cumming church of Christ.

Monday and Tuesday, June 4 and 5, we made our way back to Arkansas. The air-conditioning on the car went out, but we had to drive through driving rain most of the time, so it wasn’t unbearably hot. Always something to be thankful for, isn’t there?

JOHN AND TABITHA TO FORSYTH COUNTY

John and Tabitha moved to Forsyth County the latter part of 1838.⁹¹ As mentioned earlier, the trip did not take long in a car, but it would have taken a l-o-n-g time by wagon. I can picture the family in their wagon piled high with household goods and four or five children—and a pregnant wife seated beside John.

John and Tabitha moved to a farm west and a little north of the town of Cumming. At the end of this chapter, you will note that when John’s property was sold, it was in the 3rd district, 1st section. A little later in this chapter, you will note that the Friendship Baptist Church building was built in the 3rd district, 1st section. The “Roper house,” which was owned by a grandson of John, is a short distance from the Friendship church building, but Michael Roper does not think that is where “old” John’s property was. He think John and Tabitha probably

⁹¹ We know this from the ages of the children and where they were born, plus census records.

lived closer to the Friendship Church “just on the other side (west)”: “part of what later became the Ben Roper property.”⁹²

A son, Peter Byrum, was born about 1838. John was on a list of Petit Jurors February 24, 1840.⁹³ A daughter, Nancy, was born about 1840.

John was in Forsyth County, Georgia, when the 1840 federal census was taken. This census again had only the name of the head of the household plus a range of ages. John was in the 40–50 age bracket while his wife was in the 30–40 age bracket. They had one boy and two girls in the 5-10 age group and two boys and one girl under 5. The 5-10 age children would have been: Henry Franklin (about 11 or 12; hey, I said censuses were not precise), Mahulda (about 8), and Matilda (about 6). The under-5 children would have been James (about 3), Peter (about 2), and Nancy (a baby).

November 15, 1841, John and Tabitha Roper joined the Friendship Baptist Church in Forsyth County: “Monday night – Bro. D. Hutchins and exhortation by Bro. Hawkins opened the door of the church when John Roper, Tabitha Roper and Melinda Ann Reid joined by experience.”⁹⁴ “By experience” means that the individual “became convicted of sin . . . , repented, asked for salvation, and believed that God granted forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation. The individual would have gone before the church, related the experience, and asked to be baptized (by immersion).”⁹⁵ Since this was on a Monday night, it was probably during a revival meeting. John’s in-laws Reuben and Cynthia Roper had been charter members of this congregation, having been “received by letter” February 28, 1840. John and Tabitha’s joining the Friendship Church is the beginning of “my” Roper’s strong ties with the Baptist Church. The majority of Ropers I have known have been associated with that denomination.

John was involved in the affairs of the Friendship congregation:

- John was on the building committee in connection with a new meeting place: “July 9, 1842 – After preaching by Bro. Hawkins, took up the case of building a meeting house. Agreed to build on Lot 881, 3rd District, 1st section. [This is where the present Friendship church building sits.] Agreed to build a Log House 30 ft. by 36 ft. square. Appointed a committee to go and see on what terms that placed can be obtained, or whether at all, and also the privilege of water and to make a return report at our next meeting. Committeemen were: Merady Scruggs, L. B. Edwards and John Roper, T[oliver] Reid.”⁹⁶
- John was sent as a delegate of the church in 1843, 1847, and 1851. Here is typical wording from the minutes: “July 8, 1843 - . . . Agreed to send our *beloved Brethren* F. M. Hawkins, Merady Scruggs, John T. Compton and John Roper to attend the Union Meeting of the Hightower Baptist Association of First District to be held at Shady Grove Church.”⁹⁷
- John was on a committee to investigate a charge: “April 5, 1845 - . . . Took up a charge against a male factor and female factor for disorderly conduct. Appointed John

⁹² Email dated April 8, 2003.

⁹³ Don L. Shadburn, *Pioneer History of Forsyth County*, page 534.

⁹⁴ Retha Sosebee McConnell, *Friendship is Reaching Out* (privately printed, 1990), page 42.

⁹⁵ Personal letter from Annette Bramblett dated September 15, 1999.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, page 43.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 44. Emphasis mine.

Roper, Benjamin Jones and D. Ephraim Pearson to investigate this matter and report to our next meeting.”⁹⁸

- In 1848, when the church created “a fund to have on hand to buy wine for communion and to meet other current expenses,” John contributed ten cents (as did his cousin William).⁹⁹

It should be mentioned that many whose names appear in this history were members of the Friendship Baptist Church (most of these are buried in the Friendship Church cemetery). Here are a few mentioned in the early minutes of the church: November 17, 1841, John’s later wife Amy E. Reid was received by experience. June 26, 1847, John’s cousin William Roper made application for membership and was received. June, 1848, John’s son “Henry Franklin Roper” and his wife “Eveline” were received into membership. November 1853, John’s later daughter-in-law “Nepsi Ann Cape” was received by experience. As you read this history, you will discover others who were members of the Friendship Church.

More children were born to John and Tabitha: Elizabeth about 1841 and Charles about 1842.

We next find John in the 1845 Georgia census—a state census taken for tax purposes. In this census, John’s household is said to contain ten “free white persons” and one slave. This is the only slave I have encountered in researching “my” Ropers. What became of this man or woman, I do not know. I think most of the Ropers were too poor to own slaves. Unable to buy laborers, they produced lots of children to work the land. But back to John’s ten “free white persons”: These included two “free white males age 6–16” and two “free white females age 6–16.” The ten individuals in John’s household would have been:

1 and 2: John and Tabitha.

3: Henry F. (about 17).

4 and 5: Two “free white males age 6—16”: James (about 8) and Peter (about 7).

6 and 7: Two “free white females age 6–16”: Mahulda (about 12) and Matilda (about 11).

8, 9, and 10: Nancy (about 5), Elizabeth (about 4), and Charles (about 3).

A state official thinks John and Tabitha may have been living in the militia district of “Ducktown” at the time of the 1845 census.¹⁰⁰ Ducktown was west and a little north of Cumming.

June 1, 1845, John and Tabitha’s oldest boy Henry married Evaline Holbrook in Forsyth County. December 28, 1846, Henry and John were on a note together for \$12.20. Did John underwrite a note for his son to help him in the early days of his marriage? The two were on another note August 21, 1850, for \$2.05.¹⁰¹

John and Tabitha had two more sons: Alfred (born about 1846) and William (born the first part of 1850). April 29, 1847, John and Tabitha’s oldest girl, Mahulda, married Samuel Asbury Holbrook in Forsyth County.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 45. Sounds like sexual impropriety (of course, it could have been as innocent as being with each other without a chaperone).

⁹⁹ *The History of the Friendship Baptist Church* by Tribble and Bramblett.

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Alice James of the Department of Archives and History, dated August 18, 1998.

¹⁰¹ The two notes are mentioned incidentally in connection with the settling of John’s estate. Apparently the notes had not been paid off at the time John died. The information is on page 101 of what was originally called “Book L.” It is now called “Inventories, Returns, and Misc. Estate Records 1866–1867.”

The most complete listing of John and Tabitha's family is in the 1850 Forsyth County, Georgia, census. Henry and Mahulda had already left home, but the rest were still there:

John Roper 59, farmer, born in South Carolina
Tabitha, 40, born in South Carolina
Matilda 16, South Carolina
James H, 13, South Carolina
Peter B., 12, Georgia
Nancy, 10, Georgia
Elizabeth, 8, Georgia
Charley, 6, Georgia
Alfred, 4, Georgia
William, 3/12, Georgia

About 1852, another of John and Tabitha's daughters married: Matilda Roper to John Red in Forsyth County. June 29, 1854, another of their sons married: James Hamilton Roper to "Nepsey Ann" Cape in Forsyth County. About 1854, John and Tabitha had their last child: Sarah. During this time, John did business with David Walker, a wealthy storekeeper of Cumming; John is listed in Walker's Ledger for the years 1855–1858, along with his son James H. and his grandson William.¹⁰²

September 12, 1855, John was "dismissed by letter" from the Friendship Baptist Church. Dismissal "by letter" indicates that the person moved from the community or left the congregation because of dissatisfaction.¹⁰³ In John's case, he did not move from the community, so there may have been some disagreement. The timing of the event makes me wonder whether it was in some way related to his second marriage a year later.

December 16, 1856, in Forsyth County, John (almost 60 years old) married Amy Elizabeth Reid (around 30 years old) in Forsyth County.

WHAT HAPPENED TO TABITHA?

One of unsolved mysteries in this history is what happened to John's first wife Tabitha. My original assumption was that she died in 1854 or 1855—until I discovered a notation in a history of the Friendship Church that Tabitha T. Roper was dismissed by letter November 1877.¹⁰⁴ I then shifted to the assumption that John divorced her—uncommon in those days, but not unheard of. But I checked county and state files for a record of this divorce and could not find it. Others also checked on this. I have shifted back to the position that Tabitha died before John remarried—and that she probably died in childbirth. My reasons for these conclusions are as follows:

- One family member said his grandfather told him that "Tabitha died young."¹⁰⁵ Dying in her 40s (in 1854) would be considered "dying young" while dying in her 60s or 70s (after 1877) would not.
- I tried, without success, to find any trace of Tabitha after 1854. If she was alive in 1877, as the church record indicates, she should be in the 1860 and 1870 censuses. Further, since according to the church record, she did not leave the Friendship Church

¹⁰² Don L. Shadburn, *Pioneer History of Forsyth County*, page 593.

¹⁰³ Email from Lee and Billy Jones, dated October 18, 1999.

¹⁰⁴ Retha Sosebee McConnell, *Friendship is Reaching Out* (privately printed, 1990), page 233.

¹⁰⁵ Phone conversation with Lanier Garrett, June 24, 2001.

until 1877, she would probably be in Forsyth County. The most likely place she would live would be with one of her children—but she was not with them. Nor was she living on her own. Nor, as far as I can, was she living with any of her siblings and their families. To be on the safe side, I not only checked in Georgia, but also in surrounding states. As I said, I could find no trace of her after 1854.

- Tabitha's last child, Sarah, is listed with John and his new wife in the 1860 census. If John divorced Tabitha, she would probably have taken Sarah with her *wherever* she went. I cannot imagine a mother leaving her infant daughter with her "replacement." To say the least, this would be highly unlikely.
- Regarding Tabitha dying in childbirth: Sarah was born when Tabitha was about 44, a somewhat advanced age for child-bearing. After all the children she had, I reckon she was worn out.

How then can I explain the reference in the church minutes? Maybe the one copying the minutes copied the information wrong or—who knows? I will leave it to more capable researchers to finish unraveling this mystery.

THE REID FAMILY

When Amy Reid married John, she was 29 or 30 years old, the daughter of Toliver (Tolliver?) and Mary Reid. (Many researchers feel the "Reids" are related to the "Reds/Redds" in Forsyth County. The Reds/Redds have been prominent in that county.) Toliver Reid had been a charter member of the Friendship Baptist Church. Here is the listing for Toliver's family in the 1850 Forsyth County census:

Toliver Reid, 52, farmer, 300 acres, born in South Carolina in 1798.

Mary Reid, 49, SC, 1801.

Ainia E. [i.e., Amy Elizabeth] Reid, 24, born in Georgia in 1826.

Eliza Reid, 22, GA, 1828.

Marion Reid (male), 18, GA, 1832.

Nancy Reid, 17, GA, 1833.

John T. Reid, 16, GA, 1834.

William Reid, 13, GA, 1837.

Mary J. Reid, 10, GA, 1840.

Aza S. Reid (female), 8, GA, 1842.

Others have done extensive research on the Reid ancestry. At one point, I downloaded Amy's pedigree from the internet and printed it out. The result ran to hundreds of pages and filled a good-sized cardboard box! I passed the box on to a descendant of John T. Roper (John T. was one of Amy's children). If you are a descendant of John and Amy, you can find this information if you have access to the internet.

JOHN AND AMY

John may have been almost 60 when he married Amy, but this did not keep him from siring more children. John and Amy's first child—a son—was born October 4, 1858. He was named John T. after his father, after Amy's brother, and—if the "T" stands for "Toliver"—after Amy's father. John and Amy's second child, Reuben, was born about 1859. He was named after John's brother.

And life was going on for the rest of John's brood: January 17, 1860, another of John and Tabitha's children, Elizabeth, married James Lowe Haygood in Forsyth County.

John and Amy are found together in only one census: the 1860 Forsyth County, Georgia, census.¹⁰⁶ Here is the listing:

John Roper, age 61, farmer, born in North Carolina,¹⁰⁷ married within the last year.¹⁰⁸
Ami, 33, born in Georgia.
Alfred, 12, Georgia.
Sarah A., 6, Georgia.
John, 2, Georgia.
Reuben, 1, Georgia.

The only child listed with John in both the 1850 and 1860 census is Alfred. Apparently William died between 1850 and 1860. Notice also that, although the census indicates that John and Amy had been married only a short while, Sarah is listed as 6 years old. It has already been suggested that she was the last child of Tabitha.

The Civil War was 1861–1865. Several of John's sons served in the war: Henry, James, Peter, and Charles. Also several of his sons-in-law served: Samuel A. Holbrook, James Lowe Haygood, and John Red. During the conflict, John and Amy had more children: Theresa (February 14, 1862), Pinkney (March 13, 1864), and William Larkin (May 1865). John's "first crop" continued to marry: February 16, 1862, Peter B. married Nancy Jane Cape in Forsyth County.

JOHN'S DEATH

A few months after the birth of his last child (Larkin), John died. We are not sure of the date, but the first court records relating to his death are dated March 26, 1866, and refer to his dying earlier that year.¹⁰⁹ He would have been about 66 or 67 at the time of his demise.

According to one family member, John was buried in the Friendship Baptist Church cemetery.¹¹⁰ She said her grandfather told her they went to the river to get "a special rock" to mark his grave, one "different from the others." Today, in that cemetery, there are two large areas of graves that are unmarked or have only stubs of weathered natural rock remaining as tombstones. Near one of these areas, on the west end of the cemetery, is the marked grave of John's daughter, Matilda (Roper) Red. As noted elsewhere, Matilda is not buried by her husband, John Red. He is buried one row over, by his parents. If I had to speculate, I would guess that Matilda's grave was also near her parents.

Researcher Annette Bramblett unearthed "a whole slew" (as we would say in Oklahoma) of court documents relating to John's death. The first one reads like this:

To the Ordinary of Forsyth County (can't read) as Clerk I. L. Hughes respectfully sheweth that John Roper a resident of said county until his death which happened on the (left blank) day of (left blank) 1866 has left an estate both real and personal and

¹⁰⁶ In the introduction to this volume, I discuss the challenge of locating John in the 1860 census.

¹⁰⁷ The NC/SC mix-up is common in censuses.

¹⁰⁸ Missed it by a couple of years.

¹⁰⁹ Forsyth Co., GA, Minutes of Ordinary 1863–1866, pages 194, 195.

¹¹⁰ Phone conversation with Inez Chadwick, descendant of John T. Roper. This conversation was in 2000, but I accidentally tore the month and day off the notes I took. Inez was taken to the grave site when she was a small girl.

without a will your petitioner sheweth further that in (can't read) of the length of time required by law to advertise for permanent letters of administration and circumstances of John Roper's estate great (two words, can't read) injury may happen unless temporary administration is granted immediately (three words, can't read) estate. Your petitioner sheweth further that he is one of the creditors of said deceased. Your petitioner sheweth further the estate of said dead is worth about six hundred dollars.

March 26, 1866

Signed I. L. Hughes

Do you get the impression that, as one of John's creditors, Mr. Hughes wanted to make sure he got his money before someone else got it? Isaac L. Hughes was appointed temporary administrator March 26, 1866. Appraisers were also appointed that day.

March 30, 1866, John's son Alfred requested that his brother-in-law Samuel A. Holbrook be appointed his guardian. His request was honored.¹¹¹ April 11, 1866, John's son Charles applied to the court to have "a certain cow of (red?) and white color and her calf" and "a certain feather bed & bedstead" exempted from John's estate because his father had given him "said property before he died while of sound mind." Charles' request was granted.¹¹²

The appraisers made an inventory of John's estate (they set a price for each item). As you read through the list below, you might ponder this: "What if someone were to list and appraise everything I own? What would the list look like?"

- 2 beds & furniture
- 1 side board
- 1 chest & trunk
- 1 clock
- Clothes (can't read) & book case
- 10 chairs
- Crockery ware
- Earthen ware
- Knives & forks
- Tin
- Pot ware
- Pot rack
- Coffee mill
- 1 bucket & slop bucket & half bushel (basket?)
- Meal tubs (something) & sieve
- 1 loom & furniture
- Spinning wheel reel & cards
- 1 dining table
- 1 churn
- (Can't read) tubs, boxes, and (can't read)
- Well bucket
- Wash tub
- 1 (something) hook
- 1 syrup barrel
- 17 gallons syrup
- 1 gallon lard
- 150 pounds bacon

¹¹¹ Forsyth Co., GA, Minutes of Ordinary 1863–1866, pages 200, 233. See the chapter on Alfred.

¹¹² Forsyth Co., GA, Minutes of Ordinary 1863–1866, page 234.

Trough & soap
Salt
1 grind stone
1 plow stock & plow
1 drawing knife & three chisels
1 mattock & hoes
1 set plow gear & harness & traces.
1 one-horse wagon
1 bushel corn seed
9 head sheep
7 head hogs
1 horse
12 1/2 bushels corn
300 bundles of fodder
1 cutting knife
1 red heifer

The appraisal of these items totaled something over \$380.00.

The appraisers of John's estate "allowed" Amy to continue to live on John's farm—which was probably mortgaged to the hilt. And they "gave" her some household and kitchen items, including the table, one oven and lid, one kettle, plates, cups and saucers, knives and forks, one bed, the spinning wheel and cards, and clothes. They then "generously" set aside "two hundred dollars for one year's support" for Amy and her minor children. Amy took most of this in goods from the estate (at prices set by the appraisers):

150 pounds of bacon - \$35.00
5 gallons of lard - \$7.50
12 1/2 bushels of corn - \$18.75
300 bundles fodder - \$6.00
Syrup bucket & 17 gallons syrup - \$10.00
7 hogs - \$32.00
1 heifer - \$10.00
5 sheep - \$7.50
Salt - \$.50
Soap & soap trough - \$2.00
10 chairs - \$2.50

This totaled \$131.75. \$68.25 went to Amy in cash. The remaining personal property of John was then sold. The sale brought in \$218.45. Most items were bought by sons and sons-in-law of Tabitha. Using the cash she had been allotted, Amy bought the cotton seed, one of the hoes, the wash pan, the wash tub, another oven & lid, one jug, three jars, and one more item (can't read the word). These cost \$5.05, leaving \$63.20. With this, she bought 14 1/2 bushels of wheat for \$29.00 and then paid a Mr. Brown \$34.20. I think the \$34.20 was for the two loans mentioned earlier and other debts incurred by John, including interest owed on the farm loan. Mr. Brown was administrator for these funds. That finished off the \$200.00 Amy and her family were to live on the next year.

I don't know how the details of the settling of John's estate will strike you. If you haven't made a will, maybe you're thinking, "I had better do that right away!" What I would like for you to do is put yourself in Amy's place. She was left alone in the world, without a bread-winner, much of what she owned taken from her, a mortgaged farm with interest payments, and six

children she was responsible for: two of Tabitha's and four of her own. I cannot imagine how hard Amy's remaining years were.

THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED

October 9, 1866, John and Tabitha's son, Charles F. Roper, married Mrs. Rebecca A. Henson, in Forsyth County. September 1868, one of Tabitha's children who had been left in Amy's household, Alfred, married Mary A. Hays.

When the 1870 census rolled around, Amy was living in the Cumming District of Forsyth County with her four children:

Amy Roper 44, keeping house, born in Georgia
John Roper 13, farm hand, born in Georgia
Theresa 9, born in Georgia
Pincney [i.e., Pinkney] 7, born in Georgia
Larkin 5, born in Georgia

Sarah, Tabitha's last child who would have been about sixteen, is not listed with Amy's family. We do not know what happened to Sarah. She may have gotten married; she may have been living with another family in the area as a domestic servant; she may have died.

Six years after the 1870 census, Amy died. She left no will so her estate went through the same grueling process as that of John. The first legal document relating to this process is dated June 12, 1876, so Amy must have died earlier in 1876. She would have been about fifty—which I now consider to be *young*. I reckon she too was worn out.

Appraisers were appointed. They were instructed as follows: "if upon a fair and impartial appraisement you find that the entire estate [of "Ami" Roper] does not amount to five hundred dollars exceed, that you set the same aside for the use and benefit of said two minors Pinkney & Doctor Roper."¹¹³ John's oldest son, Henry F. Roper, was designated as "keeper of the orphan children of said Dec'd," and was responsible for producing Amy's assets.¹¹⁴

Only Pinkney and Larkin ("Doctor") are listed in the document since they were "minors." John T. would have been 17 and Theresa 14, and thus not considered "minors" and therefore of no concern to the court. The 1880 census indicates that John T. and Theresa had to move in with other families as hired help.¹¹⁵

The appraisers listed "Ami's" personal property.¹¹⁶ The list is almost identical to the lists of what she was "given" and bought when John died. They set the value of her estate at \$98.00 and "set the same aside for the use and benefit of two said minors Pinkney & Doctor Roper."¹¹⁷ "The property set aside to Pinkney & Larkin Roper minor children under 14 years of age of Ami Roper Dec'd," was "sold by H. F. Roper Trustee on 16th June 1876."¹¹⁸ Most of the items were purchased by Henry himself. A side note: Larkin is designated as "Doctor" twice in these documents; evidently this was his nickname.

One final transaction remained: the sale of John's farm.¹¹⁹ Henry F. Roper bought it October 3, 1876 for \$40.00. The farm was in the 3rd district and 1st section of Forsyth County.

¹¹³ Book of Sales Bills Etc., page 406

¹¹⁴ Ibid., page 407.

¹¹⁵ See the chapters on John T. and Theresa.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., page 407.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., page 406.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., page 409.

¹¹⁹ Forsyth County, Georgia, Annual Returns 1877–1883.

Months later, April 1877 through April 1878, the account was settled. Five months interest — \$1.16—was added to the \$40.00 sale price. Most of the \$41.16 went for fees and costs. Apparently only one child of Amy benefited from the sale: Theresa received 40 cents. If I were inclined to be cynical, I might remark that government hasn't changed much.

FINAL NOTE

Regarding what happened to Pinkney and Larkin, you will have to turn to the chapters on their lives.

When you look at the descendants of individual children, keep in mind that all these are descendants of "old" John. We are all cousins.

SECTION TWO:
“OUR” ROPERS
IN
FORSYTH COUNTY,
GEORGIA

CHILD NUMBER ONE: HENRY FRANKLIN ROPER

Henry Franklin¹²⁰ Roper was born about 1828¹²¹ in South Carolina—probably in Pickens County, South Carolina—the oldest child of John and Tabitha Roper. In documents, he is generally called "Henry F." or "H. F."

OLDEST SON OF JOHN AND TABITHA?

Since no primary document says Henry F. was the oldest child of John and Tabitha, I need to begin with my reasons for this conclusion:

(1) Henry F. is the right age. In the 1830 Pickens County, SC, census, John Roper had a son under the age of five—which means that the son was born between 1826 and early 1830. In the 1840 Forsyth County, GA, census, John had a son in the 5-10 age group, which would make that boy born between 1830 and 1835. In the 1845 Georgia state census, John had a son in the 6-16 age group, which would make that son born between 1829 and 1839. Keeping in mind that census figures often vary several years from the facts, Henry's birth in about 1828 fits fine.

(2) There is no other viable candidate. By the time the first federal census was taken that lists descendants (1850), John's oldest children were gone from home—including the oldest boy. The only "unclaimed"¹²² Roper young man the right age to be John's oldest, living in the immediate area, is Henry F.

(3) There are many connections between John's family and Henry. Let me briefly list several:

- John and Henry were both members of the Friendship Baptist Church in Forsyth County.
- The same minister that officiated at Henry's wedding officiated at John's second marriage ceremony.
- John and Henry were on notes together in 1846 and 1850.
- Several of John's sons named their sons "Henry."
- Two of Henry's sons moved to Wise County, Texas. Later, one of John's sons (my gg-grandfather, Peter B.) moved to Wise County with his children and grandchildren. A common reason for such a move was to be where relatives were.

(4) Henry is listed with John's family in court records.

- Henry is mentioned in most of the court records in connection with the disposal of John's property after his death—in such a way to indicate that he was one of John's sons (see later).

¹²⁰ Some sources have "Henry Frank." The source of the middle name "Franklin" is the minutes of the Friendship Baptist Church, June 1848. If further proof is needed that his middle name was "Franklin," one of his grandsons was named "John Henry Franklin Roper."

¹²¹ The four census records that list Henry's family would put the year of Henry's birth at (or near) 1828, 1827, 1824, and 1827. "About 1828" seems close enough.

¹²² By "unclaimed," I mean that that he is not found in the descendant list of any other Ropers in the area.

- When John's second wife died, Henry was named trustee of the estate and given the responsibility for her two sons still at home. As a rule, a family member was given this kind of responsibility.

Unless or until I see solid evidence to the contrary,¹²³ I consider it settled that Henry Franklin Roper was the oldest son of John and Tabitha Roper.¹²⁴

(Later note: A descendant of Henry F.—Roderick John Roper—was DNA tested. His DNA was the same as mine, including the “relative mutation.” Thus the fact that Henry F. was a son of “old” John has been scientifically confirmed.)

A BRIEF SURVEY OF HENRY F.'S LIFE

As already mentioned, Henry Franklin Roper was born about 1828 in South Carolina. When he was about ten, his family moved to Georgia—to Forsyth County.

June 1, 1845, he married Evaline¹²⁵ Holbrook in Forsyth County.¹²⁶ (Many Ropers married into the Holbrook family.¹²⁷) Evaline, who was born about 1830,¹²⁸ had been born in Georgia.¹²⁹ The minister who officiated at Henry's wedding was F. M. Hawkins.

Like most of the men in his family, Henry did some farming, but he generally listed his occupation as blacksmith or wheelwright. According to census records, he did not learn to read or write.

December 28, 1846, Henry and his father John were on a note together for \$12.20.¹³⁰ (Did John guarantee Henry's note?)

July 26, 1847, Henry and Evaline had their first child: George W.

In June 1848, Henry and his wife became members of the Friendship Baptist Church.¹³¹ Did having their first child make them think more seriously about spiritual matters? Anyway, here are the church minutes:

June Meeting, 1848 - - Preaching by Bro. Tribble, received Henry Franklin Roper and his wife Eveline and Rachel Tallant (Talent) offered by experience

¹²³ The only negative fact against Henry F. being the son of John and Tabitha is that, in the 1880 census, it is stated that Henry's parents were born in North Carolina—while most other records indicated that John and Tabitha were born in South Carolina. But, this is no more a problem regarding John and Tabitha being Henry's parents than it is any other Ropers in that part of Georgia being Henry's parents—because they all came from the same Roper family in Pickens County, South Carolina. I personally think the North Carolina detail is a mistake; in my research, I have often found North and South Carolina used interchangeably in records.

¹²⁴ *Some Southern Roper "Trees"* has this note regarding Henry F. on page 11: "thought to be a son of John . . . one of the many settlers of Forsyth Co., who came from Pickens Co., SC." A similar note on page 18: "may have been a son of John Roper and first wife [*i.e.*, Tabitha]."

¹²⁵ On the tombstones of her children who died in Forsyth County, Evaline is designated as "M. E." so she probably had a first name that she never used. She used several "M" names in naming her girls: Mary, Martha, and Millie. Since she had a sister named Martha, we can eliminate that as a possibility for her first name. I would vote for "Mary," which is what she named her first daughter.

¹²⁶ This information is found in the Forsyth County, GA, Marriage Book A (1833 - 1848), page 215. I also have a photocopy of the marriage document, signed by the preacher.

¹²⁷ For more on the Holbrook family, see the next chapter on Mahulda.

¹²⁸ The four census records that list Henry's family would put the year of Evaline's birth at (or near) 1830, 1830, 1828, and 1827. "About 1830" seems close enough.

¹²⁹ At this time, we are not sure who Evaline's parents were.

¹³⁰ *Some Southern Roper "Trees,"* page 11.

¹³¹ Garland C. Bagley, *History of Forsyth County, Georgia*, Vol. II (Boyd Publishing Co., 1990), pages 723 and 724. John and Tabitha were already members

September 6, 1849, Henry and Evaline had their second son, William H.¹³²
John's and Henry's families are in the 1850 Forsyth County, Georgia, census. Here is the information on Henry's:

Henry F. Roper 22, farmer, born in South Carolina
Evaline 20, born in Georgia
George W. 3, born in Georgia
William H. 2, born in Georgia

August 21, 1850, Henry and John were on a note together for \$2.05.¹³³
April 2, 1851, Henry and Evaline had a daughter, Mary Josephine. June 11, 1854, they had a son, Thomas Floyd. About 1856, they had another son, named after Henry's father: John C.

December 16, 1856, in Forsyth County, Henry's father John married Amy Elizabeth Reid. Henry's mother Tabitha had probably died a year or so earlier.

July 1858, they had another son, whom they named after Henry himself: Henry Marcus.
John's and Henry's families are in the 1860 census in Forsyth County, Georgia. Here is the information on Henry's:

Henry T. [*i.e.*, F] Roper 33, blacksmith, born in South Carolina
Evaline 30, born in Georgia
George W. 12, born in Georgia
William H. 9, born in Georgia
Mary J. 7, born in Georgia
Thomas F.¹³⁴ 6, born in Georgia
John C. 4, born in Georgia
Henry M. 2, born in Georgia

Henry's daughter, Mary Josephine died October 15, 1860. Their son, Thomas Floyd, died November 8, 1860. Both were buried in the Friendship Baptist Church cemetery.¹³⁵ This had to be a sad time for the family.

The Civil War was 1861—65. Along with three of his brothers and many of his in-laws, Henry F. served in the war. He served with Co. E, Cherokee Legion, Georgia State Guards, Cavalry ("Forsyth County Cavalry"). August 2, 1862, he was listed as a 1st Lieutenant. August 18, he was listed as a 5th Sergeant.¹³⁶

About 1864, Henry and Evaline had a daughter: Sarah T. About 1865, they had another daughter (named after one of Evaline's sisters): Martha.

¹³² According to William's death certificate, he was born in 1851 - but there is some obvious confusion, because the "1851" has been written over another date. To compound the confusion, William's tombstone has 1850. According to his census records, 1849 seems closer to the mark if he was born in September.

¹³³ *Some Southern Roper "Trees,"* page 11.

¹³⁴ Some records show this as "Thomas H.," but one of my researchers, who looked at the original census, said it looked like an "F" to her. It is "Thomas F." on his tombstone.

¹³⁵ The information on this and the two other infant deaths is from Donna Parish, *Cemeteries of Forsyth County, Georgia* (published privately, 1981).

¹³⁶ Blanch Bagley McMullan and Marie Bagley Roper, *History of Forsyth County, Georgia, Vol. I* (Easley, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, Inc., 1985), 490. Also Don L. Shadburn, *Crimson and Sabers* (no publishing information), 382, 414, 474. Note: In one record, he is listed as a "5th Sergeant."

Henry's father, John, died early in 1866 in Forsyth County. John's personal property was sold later that year. Henry is listed as a buyer at the sale along with sons Peter B. Roper, Charles Roper, and Alfred W. Roper. Among other things, he bought a clock, two jugs, a bucket, a barrel, and a plane.¹³⁷

In 1867, Henry signed the "voter registration oath."¹³⁸

March 30, 1868, Henry and Evaline had their last child, a daughter, Millie Savannah. She died April 11, 1868, and was buried in the Friendship cemetery.

As noted earlier, Henry's father died before the 1870 census was taken. John's widow Amy is listed in the Cumming District of Forsyth County with four of her children still at home. Henry F. and his family are listed in the Vickerys Creek District of the same county:¹³⁹

Henry Roper 46, wheelwright, born in South Carolina
Evaline 42, keeping house, born in Georgia
John C. 10, farm hand, born in Georgia
Henry M. 8
Sarah T. 6
Martha 5

The value of Henry's real estate was listed as \$500, while his personal estate was estimated at \$200.

Early in 1876, Henry's step-mother Amy died. At the time of her death, Amy still had two children at home: Pinkney and Larkin. Henry was appointed trustee over the estate. The sale of the property set aside for the two minors took place June 16, 1876. The "Book of Sales" speaks of the "Sale Bill of the property set aside to Pinkney & Larkin Roper, minor children under 16 years of age of Ami Roper, dead, as sold by H. F. Roper, Trustee."¹⁴⁰ The remainder of Amy's property (called John's estate and the widow's dower) was sold Tuesday October 3, 1876. In the legal documents covering the sale of this property, Henry is designated as "H. F. Roper, keeper of the orphan children." Henry was the highest bidder (\$40.00).¹⁴¹

As a follow-up to the sale of Amy's property, on October 4, 1877, eighty cents was paid to complete "the distributives of H. F. [Henry F.] and P. B. [Peter B.] Roper in the estate of John Roper dec'ed." Again, Henry was connected with a son of "old" John.

Here is the listing for Henry and his family in the Cummings District in the 1880 Forsyth County, Georgia, census:¹⁴²

Henry F. Roper, 53, blacksmith, born in South Carolina
Ev[a]line, 53, keeping house, born in Georgia
Martha, 16, born in Georgia

¹³⁷ This "plane" was probably the carpenter's tool with an adjustable blade for smoothing and leveling wood.

¹³⁸ *Crimson and Sabres*, page 382. I think this oath basically said that the signer would be allowed to vote if he agreed not to again take up arms against the federal government. Regarding the wording of this oath, see the chapter on Peter B. Roper in Volume 2 of *The Roper Book*.

¹³⁹ Dwelling #6, family #6 (census taken June 6).

¹⁴⁰ Page 409. This property consisted of furniture and utensils and a few farm animals. Henry bought most of the items.

¹⁴¹ *Some Southern Roper "Trees,"* page 11.

¹⁴² #44.

Unfortunately there is no 1890 census. Only Evaline is listed in the 1900 census—living with her sister Martha Reid.¹⁴³ Presumably Henry died between 1880 and 1900. The 1900 census record said that, at the time, Evaline had five of eight children living.¹⁴⁴ Evaline died sometime between 1900 and 1910. I assume Henry and Evaline are buried in the Friendship Cemetery near their small children who were buried there.

It was not uncommon for children to be born and to die between the ten-year censuses—and thus not to be listed on those important records. Therefore, there is no way we can be sure we have a complete list of Henry's children, but here is a partial list (all born in Georgia):¹⁴⁵

- (1) George W. Roper - July 26, 1847, to December 15, 1883.
- (2) William H. Roper - September 6, 1849, to February 7, 1927.
- (3) Mary Josephine Roper - April 2, 1851, to October 15, 1860.
- (4) Thomas Floyd Roper - June 11, 1854, to November 8, 1860.¹⁴⁶
- (5) John C. Roper - about 1856 to ?
- (6) Henry Marcus Roper – July 1858 to 1922.
- (7) Sarah T. Roper - about 1864.
- (8) Martha Roper - about 1865.
- (9) Millie Savannah Roper - March 30, 1868, to April 11, 1868.

SOME OF HENRY F.'S ROVING CHILDREN

It has been mentioned that the Ropers have a highly developed moving gene. Several of Henry's children seem to have gotten a double portion of this gene. This segment will feature three of them:

George W. Roper

George W. moved from Forsyth County to Marshall County, Tennessee, where he met the Hooten family, who were dedicated members of the church of Christ. John Hooten was an elder in the church of Christ. Other members of the Hooten family were preachers and church leaders. April 29, 1869, George married one of John Hooten's daughter, a widow

¹⁴³ Some records have "Reed" instead of "Reid," a common mistake made by census takers. Martha Holbrook married Archibald Reid in 1844. At this time, I have no additional information.

¹⁴⁴ Adding cemetery records to census records, we have nine children for Henry and Evaline, not eight, but one of these died within a few days. Whoever gave the census taker the information apparently did not include that baby in the figure of how many children Evaline had had. The point is that Evaline had five living children in 1900. George W., Mary Josephine, Thomas Floyd, and Millie Savannah had died before the 1900 census but the other five were still alive.

¹⁴⁵ Some lists of Henry's children have circulated with two of his sisters (Mahulda Roper and Elizabeth Roper) listed as his children. I have no idea where such an idea originated.

¹⁴⁶ According to the printed cemetery records, Thomas Floyd lived June 11, 1857 to November 8, 1859—which does not conform to the census records. There are several possibilities: (1) The tombstones were put up later and the dates came from a faulty memory, (2) The tombstone inscriptions were hard to read and mistakes were made, (3) whoever typed up the material for the publication made mistakes. The dates assigned to Thomas Floyd are guesses based on the available information.

Susan A. Hooten Wilson, who had a small child.¹⁴⁷ The service was performed by C. R. Darnell, a minister of the church of Christ.¹⁴⁸

George and Susan moved to Piney Fork, Sharp County, Arkansas. In the 1870 census, his occupation was "blacksmith" (like his father). When the 1880 census was taken, he and his family were back in Lewisburg, Marshall County, Tennessee. His occupation was "liveryman." They buried two young children in Marshall County.

Sometime between the time the 1880 census was taken and November 1881, George and his family moved to Decatur, Wise County, Texas, to join his younger brother Henry (see Henry's entry). George buried two small children in Wise County in November 1881 and sometime in 1882. While living in Decatur, Wise County, George owned and operated a wagon yard and blacksmith shop. County records show George involved in several land transactions:

- November 7, 1882, George W. bought land from W. J. Bennett.
- September 7, 1883, George W. sold land to Alfred Davidson.
- September 12, 1884, George W. bought land from the State of Texas (since George died in 1883, this was apparently a deal started by George but completed by his estate).

George died December 15, 1883, in Decatur—at the early age of 36. He was buried in the Oak Lawn Cemetery in Decatur. After his death, Susan moved to Gainesville, Cook County, Texas, where she operated a boardinghouse until her death in June 1887; she was only about 39. She was buried in the Bolivar Cemetery, Denton County, Texas.¹⁴⁹ One child was still at home when she died: Edgar Edward. He was raised by his half-sister Emma Jane Wilson Koiner (Susan's daughter by her first marriage).

For details on known members of George's family, see the section that follows on descendants of Henry F. One descendant, Becky (Robertson) Hugg, gg-granddaughter of George W., has been a major help in providing information—as has the wife of a first cousin of Becky: Carin Green-Werner, avid genealogist.

William H. Roper¹⁵⁰

William did not travel as far as some of his brothers, but he did move about in Georgia. Like his father, he farmed, but was also a blacksmith.¹⁵¹

William H. Roper married Nancy Elmanda Aarons, February 11, 1869,¹⁵² in Forsyth County. Nancy had been born on September 14, 1849, in Georgia,¹⁵³ the daughter of R. D.

¹⁴⁷ Susan had been married briefly to John W. Wilson. He died while she was pregnant with their first child, Emma Jane. Note: Some think that George had been married briefly to a woman named Ellen before his marriage to Susan. If so, the marriage probably took place about 1866 and Ellen died about 1868.

¹⁴⁸ Marriage Book 4, page 88.

¹⁴⁹ Two of Susan's grandchildren (children of Susie Southern) are buried beside her—Mamie and Robbie—in unmarked graves.

¹⁵⁰ There has been some question regarding whose son William H. is. See the discussion in the chapter on William Roper, son of John and Tabitha.

¹⁵¹ 1910 census.

¹⁵² They were licensed on the 9th and married on the 11th.

¹⁵³ According to the 1900 census. Nancy's tombstone has 1851 as her date of birth, but according to the 1900 census, she was born in 1850. However, in the 1850 census, she is listed as 1 year old, which would be impossible if she were born in 1850. September 1849 is the most likely of all the possibilities.

and Minerva Aarons. The wedding was performed by F. M. Hawkins, the same preacher who did William's father's wedding.

William and Nancy had their first son, Henry F., named after his father, in late 1869 or early 1870. These three are listed in the 1870 Forsyth County census, in the Vickers Creek District. Listed with them is a thirteen-year-old John, "farm hand." Since all the "John Ropers" in that general age group that belong to "our bunch" are accounted for in the 1870 census, I am not sure who this was.

William and Nancy had three more children over the next few years: Lucy A., born about 1873; William B. born about 1874; and Susan A., born about 1877. In the 1880 census, the family is still in the Vickers Creek District.

In June 1881, William and Nancy had another child: Nancy Eva. Over the next few years, they had at least five more children, all born in Georgia: Thomas N., born June 1883; Phillip B., born April 1886; Mary L., born May 1889; Carter L., born September 1890; Grover C., son, born May 1893.

There is no 1890 census. When the 1900 census was taken, the family was living in Milton County, Georgia,¹⁵⁴ with the five youngest children listed. William listed his occupation as "blacksmith" (like his father). In the census, Nancy E. said that she had had ten children and that eight were still living. Since the five listed were still living and we know that Nancy Eva was still living, this means that two of the first four had died by that time: Henry F., Lucy A., William B., or Susan A.

When the 1910 census was taken, William and Nancy were living in Cobb County. Only their youngest son, Grover C. was living with them. Here are the facts listed after William's name: "born in Georgia, father born in South Carolina, mother born in Georgia, blacksmith, owns shop."¹⁵⁵

William and Nancy should be in the 1920 census, but I have not found them. They may have been living with some of their children.

William died February 7, 1927, in Cherokee County, Georgia. He was buried in the New Home Cemetery February 8, 1927. Nancy died August 11, 1939, in Cherokee County, Georgia, and was buried August 13 in the New Home Cemetery.

Much of the information about William H. comes from one of his gg-grandsons, Keith Chafin. We are still trying to gather information on William H.'s descendants. Check the next section to see how far we have gotten.

Henry Marcus Roper

Henry evidently followed his older brother, George W., to Marshall County, Tennessee. There he made contact with the Sheppards and Hootens, who were members of the church of Christ. In the fall of 1878,¹⁵⁶ several families in the area decided to leave Tennessee and move to Texas: the Lawrence B. Sheppards, the Henry Crawfords, the McKinseys, the John Hootens (parents of George W. Roper's wife), the John D. Richardsons, William D. Holt, , Henry, and possibly others.¹⁵⁷

Preparations were made hurriedly so the wagon train could be ferried over the Mississippi River before it froze over. They traveled over dusty and muddy trails and rocky

¹⁵⁴ If you check a Georgia map looking for Milton County, you won't find it. In 1932, it became part of Fulton County.

¹⁵⁵ This is a proof that William H. was Henry's son, not John's son. See the chapter on William Roper.

¹⁵⁶ One family memory says 1879, but 1878 fits all known facts better.

¹⁵⁷ The story of the wagon train to Texas is taken from *Wise County History, Vol. I*, page 444, and *Wise County History, Vol. II*, page 345.

roads, and crossed rivers. There were many babes in arms in the wagon train. It was a hard and trying trip.

After days of travel, they arrived at Denton Creek, two miles south of Denton, Texas. Here the caravan disbanded. Families whose men folk were business people moved into neighboring towns: Denton, Decatur, Bridgeport, Chico, Rhome. Farming families bought or leased acreage in rural areas: Alvord, Willow Point, Boonesville, Poolville, Park Springs, Wilson Prairie, and Draco. The Sheppards and Hootens were involved in establishing churches of Christ in Wise County—in Bridgeport (1890s) and at Willow Point (early 1900s)

A few months after the group arrived in Texas, on January 16, 1879, Henry married a daughter of Lawrence and Nancy Evelyn (Hooten) Sheppard: Susan Elvira ("Sis") Sheppard. Henry's mother-in-law was a daughter of John Hooten. He thus married a niece of George W. Roper's wife. That made their children some kind of double cousins (I'll let someone else work that out).

Here are some of Henry M.'s land transactions over the next few years:

- November 10, 1887, Henry M. bought land from John Brown (the estate of Katie Brown).
- March 31, 1894, Henry M. and wife sold land to W. N. Sullins.¹⁵⁸
- August 3, 1894, Henry M. and Susan E. sold land to W. N. Sullins.
- July 29, 1910, Henry M. sold land to H. E. Smith.

In the 1910 and 1920 censuses, Henry was living in or near Bridgeport, Wise County, Texas. In the 1920 census, his occupation was listed as "blacksmith." He died in 1922 at about 64 years of age. Susan E. died in 1944; she was in her 80s at the time of her death.

DESCENDANTS OF HENRY F.

I am indebted to those already mentioned who helped accumulate information on Henry F.'s descendants—plus Rod Roper and Robert L. Marks who recently sent additional data on his descendants.

¹⁵⁸ Note: Around the end of 1893 or early 1894, George W.'s and Henry M.'s families were joined in Wise County by an uncle (a brother of Henry F.)—Peter B. Roper—plus several of Peter's children: Hamilton Roper and his family, Andrew (unmarried), John W. Roper (unmarried), and Lillie (Roper) Combs and her husband. More on this in the chapter on Peter B. Roper in Volume Two of *The Roper Book*.

CHILD NUMBER TWO: MAHULDA CAROLYN ROPER

Mahulda Carolyn Roper was born about 1832¹⁵⁹ in South Carolina— probably in Pickens County, South Carolina—the second child of John and Tabitha Roper, and their first daughter. She is also known as "Hulda" or "Huldy."

THE OLDEST DAUGHTER OF JOHN AND TABITHA

For some reason, in many genealogical records, published and on the internet, Carolyn is identified as the daughter of Henry F. Roper—in spite of the fact that she was born just three or four years after him. There is no doubt, however, that she was the daughter of "old" John Roper.

Like her older brother, Henry Franklin, Mahulda left home before the 1850 census was taken—the first census in which the children in the family were named. Unlike Henry F., however, we have documentation to identify her as the daughter of John and Tabitha Roper. When "old" John Roper died in 1866, the court proceedings regarding his estate included a petition by one of his sons, Alfred:

The petition of Alfred W. Roper, a minor child of John Roper recently deceased, respectfully shows to the court that he is over fourteen years of age¹⁶⁰ [and] that he desires to have a guardian appointed for him to take charge of his property, that he has selected as such guardian his brother-in-law Samuel A. Holbrook & prays the court to appoint him such G'dn.

Signed Alfred W. Roper
(his mark)

In 1866, Mahulda was married to Samuel A. Holbrook. The only way Samuel A. Holbrook could be Alfred's brother-in-law would be if Mahulda was his sister. Case closed.¹⁶¹

A BRIEF SURVEY OF MAHULDA'S LIFE

As already noted, Mahulda Carolyn Roper was born about 1832 in South Carolina— probably in Pickens County, South Carolina. She first appears as a statistic in the 1840 census: John was in Forsyth County, Georgia, when that census was taken. At the time, he had one boy in the 5-10 age group (Henry Franklin) and two girls in the same age group (Mahulda and Matilda; we'll get to Matilda in the next chapter).

Mahulda got married before the 1850 census—to Samuel Asbury Holbrook April 29, 1847, in Forsyth County.¹⁶² She was probably 15 or 16. As noted in the notes on Henry F.,

¹⁵⁹ According to the 1850 census, Mahulda was born about 1830. According to the 1860 census, she was born about 1929. According to the 1870 and 1900 censuses, she was born about 1832.

¹⁶⁰ Alfred was about 18.

¹⁶¹ If further proof was needed, Mahulda named her first son "John" after her father and her first daughter "Tabitha" after her mother . . . but I have said enough.

¹⁶² Their marriage is recorded in The Marriage Book A, page 277.

many Ropers married into the Holbrook family.¹⁶³ Samuel had been born April 7, 1822, the son of Samuel and Hannah (Wilson) Holbrook.¹⁶⁴

July 2, 1848, Samuel and Mahulda had their first child: John Patton.

Here is the listing for Samuel and Mahulda in the 1850 Forsyth County, Georgia, census:

SA Holbrook 28, farmer, born in Georgia
Mahulda 20, born in South Carolina
John P 2, born in Georgia

July 15, 1851, Samuel and Mahulda had their second child: Hannah Tabitha. February 10, 1853, their third was born: Mary Jane. On October 9, 1855, a fourth child was born—Abigail—but she lived just a few days, dying October 23. January 16, 1857, another daughter was born: Pernecia Ann. On August 20, 1859, Alpharetta was born. She just lived a few months, passing away August 4, 1860.

Samuel and Mahulda are listed in the 1860 Forsyth County census (the microfilm is light and hard to read):

S. A. Holbrook 38, male, farmer
Mahulda C. 31, female
John P. 11, male
Hanna T. 9, female
Mary J. 7, female
Pernecia A. 4, female

June 16, 1861, Samuel and Mahulda had a second son: William Asbury.

The Civil War was 1861—65. Mahulda's husband, Samuel A. Holbrook, served in the war. In the "muster rolls" for Forsyth County, 880 District, he is listed as a 2nd Lieutenant November 6, 1861. Mahulda was on "the salt list" for "wives of soldiers now in service" July 24, 1863. Samuel served in Co. E., Cherokee Legion & Co. H. 2nd Georgia Cavalry.¹⁶⁵

In 1864, during the hostilities, the Forsyth County Relief Fund was established. The book on the Reds has a listing of those who received help from this fund.¹⁶⁶ S. A. Holbrook's family is listed in the Hightower District.¹⁶⁷ Samuel does not seem to be at home; he is not listed as a discharged soldier. Listed as receiving help in his family are "1 soldier's wife" and "4 children of a soldier." The four children would probably have been Hannah Tabitha, Mary Jane, Pernecia Ann, and William Asbury (16-year-old John Patton had probably left home).

Late 1865 or early 1866, Samuel and Mahulda had another son: Greenberry¹⁶⁸ Lumpkin. September 4, 1866, Hiram Pledger was born.¹⁶⁹ October 26, 1870, James Pendleton was born.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶³ According to one Holbrook "expert," Nancy Jane Cape (whose mother was a Holbrook and who married Peter B. Roper) was a first cousin to Samuel Asbury Holbrook. See more on this in the section on Peter B. Roper in Volume 2 of *The Roper Book*.

¹⁶⁴ If interested, you can trace Samuel's line back to the 1600s in England. Just look up his name on any genealogy search engine.

¹⁶⁵ Some of the information about Samuel's military service is from *Crimson and Sabres* by Don L. Shadburn. The rest is from *The History of Forsyth County, Georgia*, First Edition, page 490.

¹⁶⁶ Bryan LaFayette Redd, Jr. and Arla Bateman Redd, *Family of James and Martha Red* (Decatur, Georgia: Privately published, 1995), 471ff.

¹⁶⁷ Page 481.

¹⁶⁸ One of my ancestors (a son of Peter B. Roper) was named "Hamilton Greenberry." Greenberry came from Mahulda's family; it was a Holbrook family name.

Samuel and Mahulda are again listed in the 1870 census: in the Hightower District of Forsyth County:

Sam'l Holbrook 48, farmer, born in Georgia
Hulda 38, keeping house, born in South Carolina
Hannah 20,¹⁷¹ farm hand, born in Georgia
Necia [short for Pernecia] 13, born in Georgia
William 9, born in Georgia
Green [short for Greenberry] 7, born in Georgia
Hiram 4, born in Georgia
Pendleton 1, born in Georgia
Joshua [should be Josiah] Red 18, farm hand, born in Georgia
Mary 17, born in Georgia
Sarah C. 2/12, born in Georgia

You will note that their firstborn daughter, Hannah Tabitha, is still living with them. She did not get married until she was 25. You will also notice that their married daughter Mary Jane is living with them, along with her husband Josiah "Joe" Redd, and their daughter Sarah C.

On May 19, 1871, Samuel Bentley was born but he just lived two days. Marcus LaFayette was born May 29, 1872.¹⁷²

THE HOLBROOKS

It is time to say a few words about the Holbrooks and Mahulda's husband. The Holbrooks were prominent citizens in Forsyth County¹⁷³ and Samuel was an respected member of the community. He was a farmer, community leader, and Methodist church leader. He and three of his children were charter members of the Pleasant Grove Methodist Church in Forsyth County. He gave an acre of land where the church building now stands. He was appointed Justice of the Peace of Forsyth County. Marriage and court records of the period reveal him to be a busy man. He officiated at the weddings of several of Mahulda's siblings, including Peter Byrum.

BACK TO SAMUEL AND MAHULDA

Here is the listing for Samuel and Mahulda in the 1880 Forsyth County census (the microfilm is light and hard to read; the following is the best I could do):

Holbrook, Samuel W.
Mahulda, wife
Pernecia 22, daughter
William A. 19, son
Green L. 16, son

¹⁶⁹ In my database, I have December 10, 1863. Obviously I came across two conflicting records. I will let someone else untangle this discrepancy.

¹⁷⁰ For information on the name "Pendleton" see the section on the Ropers in South Carolina.

¹⁷¹ Hannah Tabitha did not get married until she was 25, an unusual situation in those days.

¹⁷² He lived longer than several of their children: thirteen years.

¹⁷³ They are featured in histories of Forsyth County.

Hiram 13, son
James P., 12, son
Marcus L. 8, son

There is no 1890 census, but Samuel and Mahulda are listed again in the 1900 Forsyth County census—with son James Pendleton living on one side of them and son Hiram Lumpkin on the other. Here is the listing:

Holbrook, Samuel A., head, white, male, April 1822, 78, married, married 53 years, born in Georgia
Hulda C., wife, white, female, 1832, 68, married, married 53 years, had 12 children, eight still living, born in South Carolina

Samuel died February 22, 1902. I have not found Mahulda in the 1910 census. She died November 3, 1911.

Both Samuel and Mahulda are buried in the Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church Cemetery. Their markers are identical except Samuel has a design of an open Bible on top.¹⁷⁴ A family story says that when grave markers were being ordered "Grandpa said, 'There is no need to put a Bible on Mahulda's marker. She can't read no way.'"

DESCENDANTS OF MAHULDA (ROPER) HOLBROOK

Most of the information regarding Mahulda's descendants is from Winnie Tallant's book *Migration of Holbrooks from England to America and Forsyth County Georgia* (Cumming, Georgia: Self-published, 1983) and is used by permission. Mahulda was Winnie's gg-grandmother on her father's Holbrook/Bramblett side. Until you try to get information from family members, you will never appreciate how much time and effort is represented in getting this info. Winnie's book is out-of-print, but try to find a copy of it. It gives valuable and interesting information on the hundreds whose names fill the next section. (In a letter, Winnie expressed the wish that someone would update the Holbrook family during her lifetime. She said "We could add another 100 or more cousins in the John Payton family.")

¹⁷⁴ Jo and I had the privilege of visiting that cemetery several years ago—and saw the markers. Many of Samuel and Mahulda's descendants are buried in that cemetery.

CHILD NUMBER THREE: MATILDA ROPER

Matilda Roper¹⁷⁵ was born about 1834¹⁷⁶ in South Carolina—probably in Pickens County, South Carolina. She was the third child of John and Tabitha Roper and the second daughter. She has the distinction of being the first child of John and Tabitha named in the first census that gave the names of the children in the home: the 1850 census

A SURVEY OF MATILDA'S LIFE

While she was still a young child (about three or four years old), her father John moved to Forsyth County, Georgia—in early 1838. She is listed as a statistic in the 1840 federal census and the 1845 state census. Her name first appears in the 1850 Forsyth County, Georgia, census:

John Roper 59, farmer, born in South Carolina
 Tabitha, 40, born in South Carolina
 Matilda 16, South Carolina
 James H, 13, South Carolina
 Peter B., 12, Georgia
 Nancy, 10, Georgia
 Elizabeth, 8, Georgia
 Charley, 6, Georgia
 Alfred, 4, Georgia
 William, 3/12, Georgia

Matilda Roper married John H. Red¹⁷⁷ about 1852 in Forsyth County. John had been born about 1831, the son of Job and Ester (Unknown) Red.¹⁷⁸ John was a member of the Friendship Baptist Church, but had gotten into trouble over drinking and horse racing. The church had, however, decided to forgive him.

About 1853, John and Matilda's first born, Sarah Adaline, was born. About 1855, their first son was born: George Washington.

In 1855, John Red purchased land lot no. 665 in Forsyth County, Georgia.

Between 1855 and 1857, John and Matilda moved to Winston County, Alabama. Two sons were born there: Joseph ("Jossie") O. May 1856, and Henry December 1859.

Here is the information on John and Matilda from the 1860 Winston County, Alabama, census:

John Red 27, farmer, born in Georgia
 Matilda 24, domestic, born in South Carolina

¹⁷⁵ Since most of John and Tabitha's children had two given names, we assume that Matilda did—but her other name is not used in any records that have thus far come to light.

¹⁷⁶ In the 1850 census, the indication is that she was born about 1834; in 1860, about 1836; in 1870, about 1832. 1834 is probably pretty close.

¹⁷⁷ This is sometimes spelled "Red" and sometimes "Redd." The children of John and Matilda used both spellings. Some, in the know, also say that "Reid" was a variation of this name.

¹⁷⁸ For the life story of John's parents and other relatives, see the book *Family of James and Martha Red*, by Byron and Arla Red.

Sarah 7, born in Georgia
Washington 5, born in Georgia
Joseph 3, born in Alabama
Henry 7/12, born in Alabama

Living next door to John and Matilda was "Byron" Roper, 22, farmer, born in Georgia. This was Peter Byrum Roper, my gg-grandfather and a brother to Matilda.

The Civil War was 1861—65. John and Matilda's last child, William Alfred, was born about 1862. Then, on September 6, 1862, "John Red enlisted as a private in the 13th Battalion, Partisan Rangers, Jasper, Walker County, Alabama, . . . and after that served in Company N, 56th Partisan Rangers, joining that unit while in Mississippi, when the two battalions were combined. No date of discharge is known."¹⁷⁹

After the war, John and Matilda moved back to Forsyth County, Georgia. Matilda's father, John, died in early 1866, and Matilda joined the Friendship Baptist Church by letter June 8, 1866.

When the 1870 U. S. Census of Forsyth County was taken, John was not enumerated with the rest of his family. Here is the listing in the Cumming District:

Red, Matilda 38 Keeping house Born GA
Sarah Adeline 16 Born GA
George 14 Born GA
Jossie 12 Born GA¹⁸⁰
Henry 10 Born GA
Alfred 8 Born GA

According to Red researcher, Bryan Red, times were very hectic after the Civil War. Homes and farms were gone. Men scattered here and there trying to find work. Bryan suggested that John may have been in Atlanta or elsewhere trying to make a living for the family when the census was taken.¹⁸¹

Matilda died October 21, 1875, and is buried in the Friendship Baptist Church Cemetery, Forsyth County.¹⁸² John died December 19, 1877. He is not buried next to Matilda, but is buried a row over and several graves down— between the graves of his parents Job and Ester Red.

DESCENDANTS OF JOHN AND MATILDA (ROPER) RED

Much of the information for John and Matilda's descendants came from "the Red book." In addition, Winnie Tallant again came to my rescue to add to the information and correct many errors.

¹⁷⁹ Red book, page 59.

¹⁸⁰ Notice that, according to this census, Joseph, Henry, and Alfred were all born in Georgia. This could not be right.

¹⁸¹ Phone call June 17, 2000.

¹⁸² Matilda is buried at the edge of the western-most of the two "unmarked" areas in the Friendship Cemetery. As noted, she is not buried by her husband John Red who is buried by his parents. That being the case, it would be natural for her to also be buried by her parents. This may give us a clue as to where John and Tabitha are buried.

7
CHILD?
LEWIS ROPER

As those who work in genealogy know, it is impossible to know for certain how many children a couple may have had. We will never know the names of many of the children who lived and died before the 1850 census—the first that named the members of a family. Also many children were born and died between censuses.

I mention that all that as background to this statement: It is possible that John and Tabitha had a child named Lewis, born about 1835 while the family lived in South Carolina. In the 1850 Mortality Schedule of Forsyth County, a 14-year-old Lewis Roper, born in South Carolina, is listed as having died in July—probably July of 1849 since censuses were normally taken earlier than July. I have spent a lot of time researching all the Ropers in Forsyth County and this Lewis does not fit in the families of any of the other Ropers from Pickens County, South Carolina. He is therefore the son of either Reuben Roper or "our" John Roper. Since Reuben Roper took up residence in Forsyth County before 1835, Lewis is probably John and Tabitha's son.

However, since we cannot know for certain that Lewis is a son of John and Tabitha, I will not call him "Child Number Four." But as numbers are assigned through the remainder of this book, keep in mind that "old" John probably had *more* than sixteen children. We just happen to know about the sixteen.

CHILD NUMBER FOUR: JAMES HAMILTON ROPER

James Hamilton Roper was born about 1837¹⁸³ in South Carolina—probably in Pickens County, South Carolina—the son of John and Tabitha Roper. In documents, he is called "James H.," "Hamilton," or just "J. H."

A FEW FACTS ABOUT JAMES HAMILTON

I wish I knew more about James Hamilton. Among other reasons, his middle name appears at key spots in my line: My g-grandfather was named *Hamilton* Greenberry Roper, while my father was named Lee David *Hamilton* Roper. But, though other researchers and I used the same tools and techniques on James as we did on his siblings, we have come up with little. But let me share what I do have:

While James Hamilton was still a baby, his family moved to Forsyth County, Georgia (the latter part of 1838). James appears as a statistic in the 1840 and 1845 censuses, and then appears by name in the 1850 census:

John Roper 59, farmer, born in South Carolina
 Tabitha, 40, born in South Carolina
 Matilda 16, South Carolina
 James H, 13, South Carolina
 Peter B., 12, Georgia
 Nancy, 10, Georgia
 Elizabeth, 8, Georgia
 Charley, 6, Georgia
 Alfred, 4, Georgia
 William, 3/12, Georgia

Four years after that census, on June 29, 1854, "Hamilton Roper" married "Nepsey Ann Cape" in Forsyth County.¹⁸⁴ According to some researchers, "Nepsy" was a nickname for Penelope or Priscilla—which may be true, but "Nepsy" is never called anything else in any of the documents we have found. She is probably the "Nepsi Ann Cape" who was "received by experience" in the Friendship Baptist Church in Forsyth County in November 1853, along with Kimsey Reid and Eveline Cape.¹⁸⁵ She was probably a daughter of Merriman and Charlotte (Holbrooks) Cape.¹⁸⁶

James was listed in David Walker's ledger for the years 1855-1858— along with his father John and his nephew William. David Walker was a wealthy storekeeper of Cumming.

¹⁸³ I have found only two records that might indicate the date of James' birth: The 1850 census would indicate that he was born about 1837 while the 1860 census would indicate the figure should be about 1835. The earlier census seems an attempt for exactness while the latter seems to be a rounded-off figure. "About 1837" is probably close enough.

¹⁸⁴ *Forsyth County Marriage Book C*, page 25. One researcher recorded her name as "Miskey Ann."

¹⁸⁵ Minutes of the Friendship Baptist Church.

¹⁸⁶ Merriman Cape had another daughter named Nancy who married my gg-grandfather Peter B. Roper (one source on this: email from Charles van Bebber, June 10, 1999). See more on Merriman in the chapter on Peter B. Roper.

About 1856, John and Nepsy had their first child: John C. April 14, 1859, their second was born: Martha J.

Many of "old" John's family had scattered by the time of the 1860 census, but James and his family were still in Forsyth County:

James H. Roper, age 25, farmer, born in South Carolina
Nepsy A., 24
John, 4
Martha J., 2

The Civil War was 1861—65. James served alongside his younger brother, Peter B:¹⁸⁷ in Co. A, 36th Regiment., Georgia Volunteer Infantry, Army of Tenn., CSA, Cherokee County, GA. He was listed as private on January 15, 1862, and last appeared on the roll June 1, 1862.¹⁸⁸ However, "Mrs. J. H. Roper" appears on the "salt list" July 24, 1863, as the wife of a "soldier now in service."¹⁸⁹

Apparently James made at least one trip home during his time in the service because, sometime in 1862, James and Nepsy had another child: Vinete, the last of their children that we have a record of. A "Sarah V. Roper" married a William Cantrell January 11, 1883, in Forsyth County. "Sarah V." *may* be the full name of Vinete.

After the war, with their homes and farms destroyed, many of the men had to go elsewhere to try to find jobs to support their families. At any rate, James does not seem to be in Forsyth County in 1866 when his father died, nor in 1870 when the census was taken. Nepsy and her children were in the Coal Mountain District in 1870, sans James:

Epsy A. (*i.e.* Nepsy) Roper 38, born in Georgia
John C. 13, born in Georgia
Martha 11, born in Georgia
Vinete 8, born in Georgia

Their son John C. married "Eller" (Ella?) Allen October 5, 1876, in Forsyth County.¹⁹⁰

There is one more possible record of James and his family. in the 1880 Forsyth County census, a James H. Roper is listed in the Hightower District. I really don't think this is "our" James H.,¹⁹¹ but I include this information for future genealogists to work on. The microfilm is so light that it is almost impossible to read. Here is one possible interpretation of what it says:

James H. Roper, while, male, 43,¹⁹² married, farmer, cannot read or write, born in South Carolina, both parents born in South Carolina.

¹⁸⁷ See the information elsewhere on Peter B.'s involvement in the war.

¹⁸⁸ This information comes from *The History of Cherokee County and Crimson and Sabres*. Note: If you are doing research, be warned that another "J. H. Roper" served from Bartow County, Georgia. That "J. H." is not "ours."

¹⁸⁹ *Crimson and Sabres*.

¹⁹⁰ There were two "John C. Ropers" in Forsyth County the right age to be the son of James H. The other one was probably the son of Henry Franklin (see the chapter on Henry Franklin). If this is the case, this John C. was James H.'s son.

¹⁹¹ A Martha J. Stewart married Andrew H. Stewart February 15, 1880, in Forsyth County. If that Martha is James H.'s daughter, then the Martha in the 1880 census cannot be James' daughter, and this census record is not of "our" bunch.

¹⁹² Or it could be 63, in which case, this is *not* our "James H."

(Can't read) Roper, white, female, 40,¹⁹³ wife, married, keeping house, born in Georgia, both parents born in South Carolina.

Martha (can't read middle initial) Holbrook, female, 22, daughter, widowed or divorced, born in Georgia, both parents born in South Carolina.¹⁹⁴

Lee Holbrook, white, male, (can't read age), grandson, born in Georgia, both parents born in Georgia.

A(can't read)line Rice, black, female, 29 (?), single, domestic servant, can't write, born in Georgia, both parents born in Georgia.

THE REST OF THE STORY?

When did James H. and Nepsy die? Where are they buried? Maybe answers to these questions will come to light in the future.

¹⁹³ Or 60. See previous footnote.

¹⁹⁴ If this Martha is the daughter of the couple just named, one of whom was born in South Carolina and one of whom was born in Georgia, it makes no sense that both of them could have been born in South Carolina. Oh well.

CHILD NUMBER FIVE: PETER BYRUM ROPER

Peter Byrum Roper was the first child of John and Tabitha Roper born in Georgia—about 1838¹⁹⁵—shortly after their move from Pickens County, South Carolina to Forsyth County, Georgia. (I can see Tabitha sitting in the wagon during that long trip, holding her swollen belly and saying to John, "Watch those bumps!"). Peter B. was evidently named after his maternal grandfather.¹⁹⁶ As you might imagine, his middle name was generally misspelled as "Byron" or worse.

NOTES ON PETER B.'S LIFE

Peter B. was my gg-grandfather. Volume Two of *The Roper Book* will be the story of Peter and his descendants, but for completeness' sake, I need to give a brief sketch of his life in this volume.

Peter was listed as a statistic in the 1840 Federal census, as a statistic in the 1845 state census, and finally as a name in the 1850 Forsyth County census: "Peter B., 12, born in Georgia."

Peter's father, John, remarried the last of 1856. Peter, then age 18, probably left home about that time. When the 1860 census was taken, Peter (age 22) was in Winston County, Alabama, living next door to his married sister Matilda (Roper) Red.¹⁹⁷ Peter's younger sister, Nancy (age 18),¹⁹⁸ was living with him.

The Civil War was 1861—65. On January 15, 1862, Peter Byrum Roper enlisted in Captain Joseph Glenn's company of Georgia Militia, in Dalton, Georgia. He enlisted with his older brother James Hamilton Roper.

On February 16, 1862, in Forsyth County, Peter married Nancy Jane Cape.¹⁹⁹ Peter's brother-in-law Samuel Asbury Holbrook, Justice of the Peace, performed the ceremony. Nancy had been born December 1938 in Georgia. Earlier, Peter's brother, James Hamilton had married Nepsy Ann Cape. Both Nancy and Nepsy were daughters of Merriman and Charlotte (Holbrook) Cape.²⁰⁰

Peter's unit stayed in the general area until May. During that time, his first child was conceived. Nancy gave birth to their first son December 1, 1862, named after Peter's older brother: Hamilton Greenberry²⁰¹ Roper. For most of his life, Hamilton G. was called "Hampy."

¹⁹⁵ As is usually the case, Peter's age varies from record to record, but a birth sometime in 1838 fits more of the records than any other date.

¹⁹⁶ See the segment on Tabitha (Byrum) Roper earlier in the book.

¹⁹⁷ See the previous section on Matilda Roper. Peter was listed as "Byron Roper."

¹⁹⁸ See the later section on Nancy Roper.

¹⁹⁹ According to Forsyth County records, the date of their marriage seems clear. But one online source has them married April 28, 1867. Some researcher even sent me the date of January 16, 1850. I have no idea the source of this confusion.

²⁰⁰ See the information in Volume 2 on Merriman Cape, Charlotte Holbrook, and the Cape family in general. Note: If the Holbrook expert was right, and William Holbrook was Charlotte's father, then Nancy Jane Cape who married Peter B. Roper was a first cousin to Samuel Asbury Holbrook who married Mahulda Carolyn Roper. And Nancy Jane was a first cousin, once removed, to James Lowe Haygood who married Elizabeth Roper (see the later section on Elizabeth).

²⁰¹ As noted in the section on Mahulda Roper, "Greenberry" was a Holbrook family name. Nancy's mother was a Holbrook.

Our military cousin, Charles Van Bebber, has written a complete history of Peter B.'s military career which will appear in Volume Two. For the moment, I simply notice that on July 4, 1863, Lieutenant General Pemberton's surrendered Vicksburg to Union Major General Ulysses S. Grant. Peter and James Hamilton. were taken prisoner.

After being paroled, Peter probably returned to Forsyth County, Georgia. But his unit was again deployed—and participated in the Battle of Chattanooga in the Fall of 1863 and later the Atlanta Campaign. In 1864, the Union Army marched through the area where Peter's family lived.

In 1864, during the hostilities, the Forsyth County Relief Fund was established. The book on the Reds has a listing of those who received help from this fund.²⁰² (Peter) Byrum Roper's family is listed on page 479 in the Hightower District. Peter does not seem to be at home; he is not listed as a discharged soldier. Listed as receiving help in his family are "1 soldier's wife" and "1 child of a soldier." The child would have been Hamilton Greenberry.

After the war, Peter returned to his family in Forsyth County. Peter's father, John, died early in 1866. Peter was one of the buyers listed at the sale.

July 8, 1867, Peter signed the "voter registration oath." At the time, his age was listed as 27.

Peter and Nancy's second child, Andrew, was born in Georgia, September 18, 1868. Peter and his family moved to Arkansas shortly after Andrew's birth.

According to family memory, Peter and his family spent some time in Alabama on the way to Arkansas. Remember that Peter and others in his family had lived in Alabama for a while. He probably had friends there and maybe even family members.

They did not spend much time in Alabama but moved on to Arkansas. They must have reached there by the latter part of 1868, because Nancy was a charter member of the Gassville Baptist Church which was organized in 1868.

Peter and his family are listed in the 1870 Arkansas census, in Whiteville Township, Marion County (later part of Baxter County).

In Arkansas, Peter and Nancy had three children: Henry J., born about 1870; John Walter, born November 5, 1874; and Lillie Day, born November 5, 1877. Here is the listing from the 1880 Whiteville Township, Baxter County, Arkansas, census:

Peter B. Roper, 46,²⁰³ farmer, born in Georgia (father born in South Carolina, mother born in South Carolina)

Nancy J. Roper, 41, born in Georgia (mother born in Georgia)

Hamilton, 17, born in Georgia

Andrew W., 13, born in Georgia

Henry J.,²⁰⁴ 10, born in Arkansas

John W., 6, born in Arkansas

Lillie D., 3, born in Arkansas

March 21, 1883, Hamilton Roper (my g-grandfather) married Martha Ada, daughter of Clayton B. Mooney, in Gassville in Baxter County. According to the history of Baxter County (written by a cousin and a descendant of Clayton Mooney), Ada's father opposed the union.

²⁰² See p. 471.

²⁰³ According to all the other census records except this one, Peter B. was born in 1838, which would have made him 42 at the time, not 46.

²⁰⁴ You may or may not notice that Henry J. does not appear again in these notes. No one knows what happened to him. The mystery of Henry J. will be treated briefly in Volume 2.

The 1890 census records were lost, but the 1891 personal property tax list is available for Baxter County, Arkansas. It lists P. B. (Peter Byrum) Roper and H. G. (Hamilton Greenberry) Roper.

1892 was a turning point regarding the Ropers in Baxter County. On June 15, 1892, a cousin of Hampy, named Jesse B. Roper, killed the first sheriff of Baxter County.²⁰⁵ Jesse escaped but tensions ran high in the area. Hampy's father-in-law, Clayton Mooney, was the leader of those intent on revenging Jesse's deed.

Peter's daughter Lilly D. Roper married Joseph T. Combs in Baxter County, January 1, 1893. But not long after that, the family got ready to move. October 14, 1893, Peter and Nancy sold their land. Around the end of 1893 or early 1894, Peter, Hamilton, and others in the family moved to Wise County, Texas.²⁰⁶

In 1896, after a few years in Wise County, Peter and Nancy and son Andrew moved north into Indian Territory, to what is now McClain County. Hamilton, Ada, and their family followed Peter and Nancy to Indian Territory around 1897–1899, to the Stratford area. Lillie Day (Roper) Combs and her family moved to the Territory about the same time to the same general area. John Walter Roper and his family stayed in Wise County a few more years before moving to Oklahoma in 1915.

Peter evidently died in Indian Territory in late 1899 or early 1900. When the 1900 Indian Territory census was taken, Nancy J. Roper, a widow, was living in the Chickasaw Nation on a farm in McClain County (not far from Stratford, now Oklahoma) with her son Andrew. Nancy died between 1900 and 1907.²⁰⁷

I have not been able to find the graves of Peter B. and Nancy, but there are a number of unmarked graves in the Roper plot in the old McGee Cemetery just north of Stratford, Oklahoma.

²⁰⁵ See the special section on Jesse B. Roper in connection with his father Alfred W. Roper.

²⁰⁶ See the section on the children of Henry Franklin Roper.

²⁰⁷ She is not listed in the 1910 Oklahoma census, indicating that she died before that date. Further, official records in Oklahoma began in 1907 and no death certificate exists for Nancy, indicating that she also died before 1907.

10
CHILD NUMBER SIX:
NANCY ROPER

Nancy Roper was John and Tabitha Roper's sixth child—born about 1840²⁰⁸ in Forsyth County, Georgia. Nancy is found with her family in the 1850 Forsyth County, Georgia, census:

John Roper 59, farmer, born in South Carolina
Tabitha, 40, born in South Carolina
Matilda 16, South Carolina
James H, 13, South Carolina
Peter B., 12, Georgia
Nancy, 10, Georgia
Elizabeth, 8, Georgia
Charley, 6, Georgia
Alfred, 4, Georgia
William, 3/12, Georgia

We do not know what happened to Nancy. It was assumed that the Nancy A. Roper who married Basil Benjamin Gunn, November 13, 1856, in Alabama was our Nancy. As I was wrapping up this volume, I put this to the test. Below is the report sent to L. David Roper:

I found Benjamin B[asil] and Nancy together in the 1860 census in Choctaw County, Alabama. Nancy A. was listed as 26 and born in Alabama. Wrong age and wrong birthplace to be "my" Nancy (who was the 6th child of John and Tabitha Roper). In the same census, "my" Nancy is in Winston County, Alabama, living with her brother, Peter Byrum Roper (my gg-grandfather), next door to their sister Matilda Red. Right age for "my" Nancy (18) and right birthplace (Georgia). Incidentally, Choctaw County and Winston County are far removed from each other. My conclusion is that Basil's descendants are NOT descendants of "my" John Roper My next step was to try to nail down which Roper bunch Gunn's Nancy A. Roper belongs in. In the 1860 Alabama census, in Choctaw County, "down the road a piece" from Basil and Nancy, are these Ropers: Elijah Roper, Frances Roper, Green Roper, Richard T. Roper, and Washington Roper. Odds are that Basil's Nancy is kin to this bunch. I found most of them in your Richard and Judith Roper file—in Choctaw County, Alabama. I didn't find Nancy or Basil/Benjamin Gunn in that file, but I still figure Nancy fits into that bunch, not "my" bunch. I did notice that "Nancy Ann" is a common family name among that group of Ropers. I also noticed that the name "Richard" is in red on your website, indicating kinship. "My" Nancy remains a mystery, but I think I established that Basil's Nancy is NOT her I'm disappointed, but disappointments are part of trying to do family research.

If and when any of my readers come across any real proof regarding what happened to our Nancy, please let me know.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ According to the few records we have, Nancy could have been born anywhere between 1840 and 1842.

CHILD NUMBER SEVEN: ELIZABETH ROPER

Elizabeth²¹⁰ was born in 1841 in Forsyth County, Georgia, a daughter of John and Tabitha Roper.²¹¹ She is listed as a statistic in the 1845 Georgia tax list, but her name is found in the 1850 Forsyth County, Georgia, census:

John Roper 59, farmer, born in South Carolina
 Tabitha, 40, born in South Carolina
 Matilda 16, South Carolina
 James H, 13, South Carolina
 Peter B., 12, Georgia
 Nancy, 10, Georgia
 Elizabeth, 8, Georgia
 Charley, 6, Georgia
 Alfred, 4, Georgia
 William, 3/12, Georgia

Elizabeth's mother Tabitha died while she was still in her teens. In 1856, when she was about 15, her father John remarried. A few years later, on January 17, 1860, in Forsyth County, Elizabeth married James Lowe Haygood (sometimes spelled Hagood). James, the son of L. David²¹² and Mary (Holbrook²¹³) Haygood, had been born September 9, 1843. Elizabeth was probably 18 when they married; James was probably 16. According to several descendants, James went by his middle name "Lowe"—so that is what I will call him in the pages that follow.

THE HA(Y)GOODS

I haven't devoted a lot of space in this volume on Roper "side-lines," but if you are a descendant of Lowe and Elizabeth, you will want to do some serious research into the Ha(y)good family. You can find much information concerning them on the internet. Also there is a chapter on the James Ha(y)good Family in the *Pioneer History of Forsyth County*²¹⁴ And there is a section in the Red book on "Haygood Family Connections."²¹⁵ Further, the

²⁰⁹ One family member suggested that Nancy married Dave Tinsley, but when I checked, I found that Dave Tinsley (born about 1858) married Nancy *White* September 30, 1880—a relation on John T.'s side, but not "old" John's daughter.

²¹⁰ A gg-grandson of Elizabeth says that his grandfather (a son of Elizabeth) said that her full name was "Phoebe Elizabeth." One Mormon record has her full name as "Elizabeth Tabitha." I am disposed to believe the gg-grandson.

²¹¹ Like her older sister, Mahulda, Elizabeth is sometimes listed as the daughter of Henry F. Roper, but there is no doubt that she was the daughter of John and Tabitha. See the 1850 census listing.

²¹² Or Davis.

²¹³ Notice another Holbrook connection. If the Holbrook expert (referred to in any earlier chapter) is correct, then Nancy Jane Cape who married Peter Byrum Roper was a first cousin, once removed, to James Lowe Haygood. And there is a connection to Mahulda (Roper) Holbrook's husband, to Henry F. Roper's wife, etc., etc.

²¹⁴ By Don L. Shadburn, pages 415–417.

²¹⁵ Pages 431, 432.

Haygoods are featured in the *Family History of John Henry Ellis and Mary Catherine Haygood Ellis*.²¹⁶ Here is a note from that volume:

Throughout the records we find Haygoods and their descendants who are ministers, musicians, civil servants, and soldiers. The preachers were fiery and dedicated. The musicians performed with talent from their soul. Many of the soldiers gave their lives in the cause for which they fought. The politicians supported their causes with conviction even though they might not be popular causes. Even the occasional rascal was a notable rascal. Of all our ancestors, I have found the Haygood to be the most passionate, colorful, courageous and interesting. It is easy to see why so much research has been done on this family. They have played a major role in our country's history.²¹⁷

If you check out your Roper roots in Pickens County, South Carolina, you will keep bumping into the Ha(y)good name. For instance, you can't miss the name of Benjamin Hagood, prominent citizen and affluent merchant and planter. One tangible evidence of old Benjamin is the historic Hagood Mill, a tourist attraction in Pickens County. Here's a note from a folder on the area:

Hagood Mill, on the National Register of Historic Places, is a functioning 19th century water-powered gristmill. Benjamin Hagood, an early settler of the Carolina Upcountry, built the original mill c. 1825. His son, James Hagood, built the mill at its present location in 1845 and it continued operations until the 1960s The mill is open for tours and corn-grinding demonstrations on the third Saturday of every month

The James Hagood mentioned in that piece may be the same James Ha(y)good who was a pioneer in Forsyth County. At least he was almost certainly kin to the James Haygood who was one of the charter members of the Friendship Baptist Church (along with Reuben and Cynthia Roper and others²¹⁸). One of James Haygood's sons was named L. David, and he had a son named James Lowe—who married Elizabeth Roper.

BACK TO LOWE AND ELIZABETH

At this point, I have been unable to find Lowe and Elizabeth together in any census. But here's the info I have been able to gather:

Lowe and Elizabeth's first child, Mary Angeline, was born July 20, 1861.

The Civil War was 1861—65. Lowe served in Co. A, 36th GA ("Cummings Brigade"). According to a g-grandson of Lowe, Lowe was ambidextrous. The g-grandson, Lanier Garrett, said that Lowe could play the fife and dance at the same time, and that—when morale was low among the troops—Lowe would entertain them.²¹⁹

Lowe was injured July, 1863 at Vicksburg, Mississippi. I have a copy of his application for a pension. Here is his description of how he was wounded (written in his own handwriting): "by a bombshell striking a log and knocking it on my breast and disabling me from work."²²⁰

²¹⁶ By Larry Waylon Ellis (Ball Ground, Georgia: Self-published, 1997).

²¹⁷ Page 59.

²¹⁸ See the chapter on Reuben and Cynthia Roper.

²¹⁹ Telephone conversation, June 24, 2001. Lanier lives in Cumming, Georgia.

²²⁰ In spite of this written description of his wound, one gg-grandson of Lowe said that his grandfather (a son of Lowe) told him that Lowe was injured by the recoil of a cannon.

In July 24, 1863, Elizabeth was still on the "salt list" of "wives of soldiers now in service."²²¹ On September 1, 1864, Lowe and Elizabeth's second child was born: Greenberry. That same year, the Forsyth County Relief Fund was established. The book on the Reds has a listing of those who received help from this fund.²²² Among those in "our" family who received help was Elizabeth Haygood.²²³ According to the listing, Lowe was still at war and she had two children. I suppose that the two children would have Mary Angeline and Greenberry.

Greenberry only lived a year, dying September 8, 1865.

Elizabeth's father John died early in 1866 in Forsyth County. At the sale of his property, Lowe bought the following:

1 reel for \$1.00
3 jugs and jars for .65
1 smoothing iron for .50
1 china tea pot for .45

On September 16, 1866, Lowe's and Elizabeth's second son was born: Samuel David. On January 12, 1870, Alfred Taylor was born. On December 18, 1871, Martha Denisa was born. Lillie Cappytoley was born August 11, 1874, and Joseph Capres was born December 18, 1877.

James applied for a service pension, January 3, 1907. At the time, he was living in Dawson County, Georgia. After telling about his service, he noted that he was wounded "in the State of Mississippi" in "1863," and gave the details noted earlier in this chapter. He was allowed an invalid pension of fifty dollars.

Elizabeth (Roper) Haygood died June 15, 1919, and is buried in the Friendship Baptist Church cemetery. According to one family member, at the time, she lived a short distance from the Friendship Baptist Church, and the pallbearers carried her coffin from her home to the church building. Here is part of her obituary:

Mrs. Elizabeth Haygood, the wife of Mr. J. L. Haygood, died at her home on route 2 Monday morning, and her remains laid to rest at Friendship Tuesday She was 78 years of age, a good christian woman and leaves a husband and several children to mourn her departure²²⁴

"James L. Haygood" is listed in the 1920 Forsyth County census as a widower. Living with him is his youngest daughter "Cappi," a widow.

In August of 1823, Lowe made further application to the government for help, listing "total blindness."

Lowe Haygood died September 8, 1929,²²⁵ and is buried in the Friendship Baptist Church Cemetery.

DESCENDANTS OF ELIZABETH (ROPER) HAYGOOD

²²¹ Some of the information in this paragraph came from *Crimson and Sabres* by Don L. Sahdburn.

²²² See page 471.

²²³ Page 478.

²²⁴ *Forsyth County News*, June 20, 1919

²²⁵ Regarding the death date, I got this one from a book. I got a different one from a tombstone record.

Most of the information on the descendants of Elizabeth comes from cousin Winnie Tallant. Elizabeth (Roper) Haygood was her g-grandmother on her mother's Haygood side. Larry Ellis, who featured the Haygoods in his book, had this to say about Winnie: "Winnie (Bramblett) Tallant is a gifted genealogist in Forsyth County who has generously provided . . . most of what I have on Lowe Haygood" It should be noted that since the Holbrooks and Haygoods intermarried, there will be some overlapping between the descendants of Mahulda (Roper) Holbrook and the descendants of Elizabeth (Roper) Haygood.

CHILD NUMBER EIGHT: CHARLES F. ROPER

Charles F.²²⁶ Roper was born August 8, 1842,²²⁷ in Forsyth County, Georgia—the son of John and Tabitha Roper. Like most men of that day, he often went by his initials: "C. F." Earlier, I speculated that John's father was named "Charles." If that is the case, Charles F. carried on this family name.

A SURVEY OF CHARLES F.'S LIFE

Charles first appears in the 1850 Forsyth County census:

John Roper 59, farmer, born in South Carolina
 Tabitha, 40, born in South Carolina
 Matilda 16, South Carolina
 James H, 13, South Carolina
 Peter B., 12, Georgia
 Nancy, 10, Georgia
 Elizabeth, 8, Georgia
 Charley, 6, Georgia
 Alfred, 4, Georgia
 William, 3/12, Georgia

I have not located Charles F. in the 1860 census. He was about 16. He is not living at home.

The Civil War was 1861—65. Charles F. served in the war.²²⁸ He enlisted March 4, 1862 in Company I, 43rd Georgia Volunteers, Stovall's Brigade. He served under Captains Bell and Lester. A later application for a pension states that "He was in the siege of Vicksburg, Mississippi & while there contracted rheumatism which rendered him unable for military duty for some time but [he] remained in the service until the surrender." The date given for the onslaught of the problem is given as "on or about June 1863." An attached physician's affidavit adds to the rheumatism "other diseases"; and, elsewhere in the application, liver and kidney problems are specified. It has often been stated that disease killed more soldiers in the Civil War than bullets did.

According to the book *Crimson and Sabres*, Charles was at the Battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, which was fought July 1–3, 1863. According to *The History of Forsyth County, Georgia, Vol. 1, First Edition*,²²⁹ he was captured at Vicksburg, Mississippi, July 4, 1863, and was paroled there July 6, 1863. He apparently went home for a while, and then rejoined the

²²⁶ According to some family members, the "F" stood for "Frank."

²²⁷ This date is from his tombstone. Another record has August 9. His pension application has October 1842.

²²⁸ Some of the details concerning Charles F.'s military career came from *Crimson and Sabres* by Don L. Shadburn (Saline, MI: McNaughton & Gun, Inc., 1997), pages 130, 135, 227, 262, 317, 389. Other information came from *History of Forsyth County, Georgia 1832–1932, Vol. 1, First Edition* by Garland C. Bagley (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, Inc., 1985), 467, 552. Another source was the file regarding Charles' applications for pension help—from the historical archives at Atlanta.

²²⁹ By Garland C. Bagley (Easley, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, Inc., 1985), page 467.

fight. Pension records show that he surrendered at Greensboro, North Carolina, April 26, 1865.²³⁰ He was discharged in May of 1865.

Shortly after the war, on October 9, 1866, Charles married a widow, Mrs. Rebecca A. Henson, in Forsyth County. Rebecca had married John H. Henson August 22, 1858, but after a brief military service,²³¹ John had died at home in 1862.²³² Rebecca had been born February 14, 1840²³³ in South Carolina.

Charles' father, John, died early in 1866 in Forsyth County. On April 11, 1866, Charles made this claim regarding property he said his father had given him:

State of Georgia, Forsyth County. In person appeared before on of the justices of the peace in and for said county, C. F. Roper, who on oath says that a certain cow of red and white color & her calf now in the possession of the family of John Roper late of said county deceased, is his own right & property. Also a certain feather bed bedstead is his own right and property & that his father the said John Roper give to him said property before he died while of sound mind & and that the same is not the property of the estate of said John Roper deceased estate.

C. F. Roper (his mark)
Sworn to and subscribed before me
April 11, 1866, S. A. Holbrook,²³⁴ J. P.

Charles was then present at the sale of John's property on April 13, 1866. He bought a trunk for \$1.00 and a horse for \$128.00 (must have been a pretty good horse!).

Charles and Rebecca's first child, Albert F. Roper, was born January 12, 1868. Their second, Mary Rosalee Roper, was born November 2, 1869. The first census in which Charles and his family appear is the 1870 census in Forsyth County:

Coal Mountain District

Charles F. Roper 25, farm hand, born in Georgia

Rebecca 27, housewife, born in South Carolina

Alfred F. 2, born in Georgia

Mary R., 1/12, born in Georgia

Charles and Rebecca's third child, George Herman was born February 9, 1872. Lucy Eldora was born December 5, 1874, and Marion Raymond was born December 29, 1876. Their last child, Sallie, was born about 1879. Charles' family looked like this in the 1880 Forsyth County census:

Hightower District

Charles F. Roper, age 36, born in Georgia

Rebecca, 36, born in South Carolina

Albert F., 12 (all the children are listed as born in Georgia)

²³⁰ According to *Crimson and Sabres*, he surrendered in April of 1865 at Appomattox, Virginia.

²³¹ John had served in Co. D, 2nd Battn., NC Inf, later New Co. E, 21st GA Inf (page 105 of *Crimson and Sabres*).

²³² The fact that John died "at home" after only a brief military service suggests that he was either wounded or contacted a disease while serving. Rebecca was listed in the military "Salt List for Widows and Families" July 24, 1863 (page 105 of *Crimson and Sabres*).

²³³ This date is from tombstone. One census record has February 1841. The 1900 census says October 1842.

²³⁴ This was Samuel Asbury Holbrook, Mahulda's husband (see the chapter on Mahulda).

May [Mary] R., 10, born in Georgia
George H., 8, born in Georgia
Lucy El Tora [in other words, Eldora], 3,²³⁵ born in Georgia
Marion R., 2, born in Georgia
Sallie, 1, born in Georgia

Living next door to Charles in the 1880 census is a John C. Roper, who is probably Henry F. Roper's son.²³⁶

The 1890 census was lost, so twenty years passed between the 1880 census and the 1900 census. In that period of time, all of Charles' children married:²³⁷ Albert married Jenny McClure in 1889. Mary married Clay Milford in 1890.²³⁸ Lucy married Alfred Milford in 1892. George married Arta Collett²³⁹ in 1905. Sallie married Hillard Rollins in 1899. Raymond married Fannie Wallis in 1904. There was also death in the family: In 1890, while Charles' son, Albert, was helping build the Macedonia church building, he fell off the roof and was killed.²⁴⁰

While we were visiting in Cumming, Georgia, I did my best to see what I could find in the courthouse records. I THINK I found Charles involved in several land transactions: February 8, 1887, he sold property to J. W. Lummus. January 1, 1889, he bought land from Phillips Edward & Co. October 8, 1890, he took possession of land from Davidson & Dunlap. December 1, 1890 he turned over a deed to the A. Mortgage Company. (None of this means anything to me, but at least it shows some of Charles' land deals—I think.)

In February of 1900, Charles filed for an "Invalid Soldier's Pension." In a later application, he wrote, "I contracted rheumatism and kidney trouble, and said disease disables me from performing manual labor, and [I also have a] tumor on [my] left side." In those days, there were few desk jobs; if you could not do hard physical labor, you were an invalid. Several documents accompany Charles' petition, including a doctor's affidavit. The physician B. W. Pirkle added a personal note: "This is a worthy case." Charles was given an allotment, but I cannot read the amount.

While my wife and I were visiting in Forsyth County a few summers ago, we had the pleasure of visiting with Jewell (Milford) Pruitt, a granddaughter of Charles and Rebecca Roper. She was 96 at the time, but still had clear memories of her grandparents. Unfortunately, I did not take a tape-recorder and all I have are scribbled notes, but here are a few of her memories as I remember them (keep in mind that they are the memories of a small child visiting an old sick woman):

²³⁵ This appears to be another census detail that is off by several years.

²³⁶ See the chapter on Henry F.

²³⁷ For additional details, see the next section on the descendants of Charles F.

²³⁸ If you visit Forsyth County, be sure to go by and see the old Clay Milford home—and ask Charles E. or Michael Roper to tell you the stories connected to that house.

²³⁹ Arta was a daughter of Ephram Clyde Collett and Nancie E. RED. She was a first cousin to Raymond's wife Fannie Wallis, who was the daughter of M. T. Wallis and Marsha RED. If you are a descendant of either Arta or Fannie, you will want to do special research on the Red/Redd family. Your starting place is the Red book. Then ask family members to tell you about Mahulda Red, who lived to be 102 years old and who still had vivid memories of the Civil War. Mahulda's old house is still standing on Roper Road. It was built in 1847 as a wedding present from Mahulda's father. Family members can tell you fascinating stories about that house (my constant helper, Michael Roper, was born in that house).

²⁴⁰ He is buried in an unmarked grave to the east of his parents in the Zion Hill Baptist Church Cemetery.

"I loved Grandfather [Charles F.], but I remember Grandmother [Rebecca] as being old and sick and cranky. I remember her saying, 'My feet have been cold for twenty years!' When you put a hot iron in the bed to warm her feet, she would just kick it out!

"Mother [Mary Rosalee (Roper) Milford] would go and stay to look after Grandma. One of my older sisters would go over to cook for her. Grandma was close with money. She liked egg custard—with nutmeg—but she always said, 'Don't use the eggs. I want to sell them.' So Sister would sneak out on the back porch to break the eggs and beat them."

In the 1900 U.S. Census, Charles and Rebecca are in the Settendown District of Forsyth County.²⁴¹

Roper, Charles F., head of household, born October, 1842, married 34 years, born in Georgia, father and mother born in South Carolina, cannot read or write, speaks English.

Rebecca A., wife, born February 1841, mother of 6, 5 living, born in South Carolina, father and mother born in South Carolina, can read and write and speak English.

George H., son, widower,²⁴² born February 1872, born in Georgia; father born in Georgia; mother born in South Carolina, can read and write and speak English.

Charles applied again for a Disabled Soldier's Pension in February of 1901, and was awarded \$50.00 for the year. He also applied 1902 through 1907. As best I can tell, each year he was awarded the same amount.

Family members usually think of Charles F. and Rebecca as associated with the Zion Baptist Church in Forsyth County (they are buried in the cemetery of that church), with Charles serving as a deacon of that congregation. It is interesting, however, to note that in the minutes of the Friendship Baptist Church in Forsyth County, Charles F. is listed as a deacon in the minutes of an ordination service at Friendship, dated April 8, 1910. Perhaps Charles F. served at different times as a deacon of both churches.

Charles died July 5,²⁴³ 1918. He is buried in the Zion Hill Baptist Church Cemetery.

October 29, 1918, Rebecca applied for a pension as the widow of one who served in the Civil War.²⁴⁴

In the 1920 census, Rebecca was living with her son-in-law Hillard D. Rollins. She died January 9, 1920.²⁴⁵ She is buried beside Charles in the Zion Hill Baptist Church Cemetery.

NOTES ON SOME OF CHARLES' CHILDREN

George H. Roper: Michael Roper, a grandson of George H. Roper and a son of Charles Edwin Roper, now owns the house known as the George Roper Place—on Land Lot 847—located on Roper Road near Cumming, Forsyth County, Georgia. The house was built in 1898 and was fully restored in the late 1970s.

²⁴¹ This part of the census was enumerated by James L. Heard on June 27, 1900.

²⁴² George H.'s first wife and young daughter died and are buried together in the Friendship Baptist Church Cemetery. At this time, I do not have the details regarding this first marriage.

²⁴³ This is from his tombstone; some records say July 6.

²⁴⁴ Page 262 of *Crimson and Sabres*.

²⁴⁵ If the death date of January 1920 is correct and Rebecca is listed in the 1920 census, the census must have been taken very early. I'll let someone worry about that.

Space will not allow me to tell of Charles Edwin Roper. He worked for Lockheed. He also farmed: chickens (35,000–60,000 at a time!) and cattle.

Marion Raymond Roper: Annette Bramblett wrote, "Raymond lived here and there around the northwestern part of Forsyth County, and worked in the field for others enough to eke out an existence. My husband remembers him working in his father's fields."

SOURCES—AND A FINAL NOTE

Some of the material in this chapter and the section that follows is from the Red book and the Worley book. But most of it is from individuals. Those who have helped me most regarding Charles F. are Michael Roper and his father Charles. But as I went through my file on Charles F., several more names surfaced, including Dian T. Goldwire (Michael's sister), Jessie L. Milford, Frances M. Davis, Martha R. Satterfield, Jewell (Milford) Pruitt, and Buena (Pruitt) Moore. If you look carefully, you will find these names in the list of descendants. My apologies to others I have failed to mention.

Note: Close observers will note some overlapping between Charles' descendants and the descendants of John T. Roper, one of Charles F.'s half-brothers.

13
CHILD NUMBER NINE:
ALFRED W. ROPER

Alfred W. Roper²⁴⁶ was born about 1847²⁴⁷ in Forsyth County, Georgia—the son of John and Tabitha Roper. In documents, he is often referred to as "A. W."

A BRIEF SURVEY OF A BRIEF LIFE

Alfred's name first appears in the 1850 Forsyth County, Georgia, census:

John Roper 59, farmer, born in South Carolina
Tabitha, 40, born in South Carolina
Matilda 16, South Carolina
James H, 13, South Carolina
Peter B., 12, Georgia
Nancy, 10, Georgia
Elizabeth, 8, Georgia
Charley, 6, Georgia
Alfred, 4, Georgia
William, 3/12, Georgia

As noted elsewhere, Alfred's mother, Tabitha, apparently died while he was still a child; and, on December 16, 1856, his father, John married Amy Elizabeth Reid/Reed. The next time Alfred's name appears is in the 1860 Forsyth County census:

John Roper, age 61, farmer, born in North Carolina,²⁴⁸ married within the last year.²⁴⁹
Ami, 33, born in Georgia
Alfred, 12, Georgia
Sarah A., 6, Georgia
John, 2, Georgia
Reuben, 1, Georgia

Alfred is the only child on the list that had been mentioned in the 1850 census. All the rest had either died, left home, or gotten married.

Alfred's father John died early in 1866 in Forsyth County. As noted in the chapter on Henry F., the court proceedings regarding John's estate included a petition by Alfred. That petition is repeated here:

The petition of Alfred W. Roper, a minor child of John Roper recently deceased, respectfully shows to the court that he is over fourteen years of age²⁵⁰ [and] that he

²⁴⁶ Not to be confused with Alfred W. Roper who was born 1875 in Forsyth County, son of Robert P. Roper, who was the son of William and Susan (Masters) Roper (William was a cousin to "our" Alfred's father John). The Ropers tended to recycle names.

²⁴⁷ According to the 1850 census, Alfred was born about 1846. According to the 1860 census, he was born about 1848. According to the 1870 census, he was born about 1849. 1847 is probably pretty close.

²⁴⁸ The NC/SC mix-up is common in censuses.

²⁴⁹ Missed it by a couple of years.

desires to have a guardian appointed for him to take charge of his property, that he has selected as such guardian his brother-in-law Samuel A. Holbrook & prays the court to appoint him such G'dn.

Signed Alfred W. Roper
(his mark)

Did Samuel Holbrook accept that guardianship, and, if so, of what did it consist? What did he do for Alfred? I do not know. It is interesting to note, however, that Alfred bought one block of items at the sale of his father's property: a bed and furniture for \$22.45. It sounds like Alfred was already planning for the next stage of his life.

Alfred Roper married Mary A. Hays,²⁵¹ September 1868, in Forsyth County (the license was issued September 29; they may have been married a day or two later). Mary had been born September 1846.²⁵² Mary's parents were William and Cassandra Hays (Hayes?).

In late 1869, Alfred and Mary had named Jesse B.

Alfred and Mary are listed in the 1870 Forsyth County census, in the Hightower District:

Alfred W. Roper 21,²⁵³ farm hand, born in Georgia, cannot read or write
Mary A., 22, born in Georgia
Jesse B., 9 months, born in Georgia

Alfred died in 1873.²⁵⁴ He was probably about 26 or 27 when he died. He left no will, but there are court records regarding the disposal of his property²⁵⁵— which include an inventory of all he owned (made on October 25, 1873). All his possessions could be listed on one page.²⁵⁶ The appraisers estimated the value at \$259.00. An "account" of \$8.25 was mentioned (probably money he owed) and 65 cents in cash which the widow had on hand. The final document (filed October 29, 1874) closed with these words:

Therefore we the . . . commissioners and appraisers do hereby assign and set apart the entire estate of said A. W. Roper dece'd to M. A. Roper widow and her child [that is, Jesse B.] for them and for their own proper free use and benefit.

In the 1880 census, Alfred's widow, Mary, was living in the Coal Mountain District of Forsyth County, with her widowed mother Cassandra Hays/Hayes. Mary's son, Jesse, is also listed, although he is listed as "Jesse Lee" instead of "Jesse B."²⁵⁷

We do not know much about Jesse B's early life, but he is listed as a member of the Friendship Baptist Church in Forsyth County.

²⁵⁰ Alfred was about 17 or 18.

²⁵¹ Because of the incident of Alfred's son Jesse B. in Baxter County, Arkansas (see "The Legend of Jesse B. Roper"), there has been some question regarding the maiden name of Alfred's wife. If the history of Baxter County, Arkansas, is taken literally, Alfred's wife's maiden name should be Mary Twiggs. And there was a Mary Twiggs in Georgia the right age to be Alfred's wife. But I have a copy of Alfred and Mary's marriage certificate and her last name is definitely Hays. There are probably ways that Mary Twiggs could end up being called Mary Hays at the time of her marriage—but none are convincing. Regarding the Twiggs' connection, the most probable solution is that Mary's *mother's* maiden name was Twiggs.

²⁵² This is according to the 1900 census.

²⁵³ He was probably closer to 23 or 24; the microfilm may have had "4" and I misread it as a "1."

²⁵⁴ Why did he die so young? Disease? Accident?

²⁵⁵ Forsyth County, Georgia, *Inventory & Appraisements 1869 - 1871*, pages 245–249.

²⁵⁶ It is similar to the inventory given earlier in the chapter on "old" John.

²⁵⁷ The census taker failed to remove the wax from his ears that morning.

Jesse B., married Etta Marcella Sewell July 4, 1886, in Forsyth County, Georgia. Etta was born December 14, 1870, the daughter of Greenberry Sewell and Sarah M. Cheek.²⁵⁸ For a long time, I knew only of one son of Jesse and Etta: King Samuel Roper, but recently learned about the rest of his offspring. See the section that follows regarding Jesse's descendants. The best known event in Jesse B.'s life was a trip to Baxter County, Arkansas, in early 1892, which resulted in the fatal shooting of the first sheriff of Baxter County. See "The Legend of Jesse B. Roper." For more on Jesse's wife Etta, see "Survivor Circa 1890."

Alfred's widow and Jesse's mother, Mary, remained unmarried until 1894. On July 29, 1894, she married a widower Francis M. Tribble,²⁵⁹ in Forsyth County.²⁶⁰ She would have been about 48. He was about 49, with several children still at home²⁶¹ who needed a mother. With that, I close the brief account of Alfred's brief life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For a long, long time I could not find out anything about Alfred's descendants. But once I made a break-through, I have had *so much* help. My constant encourager has been one of Alfred's great-granddaughters, Mary Alice (O'Brien) Lamm, but the list of those who have supplied information grows almost daily. Here is a partial list: Kristy Smith, Lucille (Grant) Mason, Gwyn (Sears) Delay, Dorothy (Roper) Hendrix, Donna Poole, Robert E. Grant, Hazel (Grant) Black, Edward Patterson, Tom M. Tribble. You will find most of these names in the list of Alfred's descendants, but some not related have been generous in sharing data. I should also give credit to the Ginn Funeral Home in Franklin County, Georgia; the Banks County Public Library; and the Maysville Public Library. I need also to give a special word of thanks to Roger Wyatt Roper who had his DNA tested and thus established beyond any doubt that descendants of Jesse B. Roper are part of "my" Roper bunch. Thanks to all!

²⁵⁸ Etta's Sewell heritage has been traced back many generations. Those descended from Alfred and Jesse B. will want to do research on the Sewells. Use any internet genealogy search engine and look for Green or Greenberry Sewell.

²⁵⁹ Francis M. was the son of the Thomas C. Tribble who was one of the appraisers when Amy (Reid) Roper died (see the section on Amy earlier in the book). Francis had been married to Harriet E. White. Harriet died in late 1879 or early 1880—probably shortly after giving birth to her last child.

²⁶⁰ Until a short time ago, I assumed that the "Mary A." who married Francis Tribble was a young woman, the daughter of John C. Roper who was the son of Henry F. Roper. Then I got to wondering what happened to Alfred's widow

²⁶¹ Here are some of Francis' children: Hester, Martha, Harrison, William, Charlie, Thomas, Monty, Lela, Wanda, John, Cora, and Ida. At the time Mary and Francis married, probably at least four or five of the younger children were still at home. In the 1900 census, Francis and Mary were living in the Alpine District of Chattooga County, Georgia. Francis still had two daughters living at home: Cora L., age 18; and Ida L., age 15. Cora, who was born June 15, 1880, later married George L. Webb in 1900, and died October 25, 1922, in Gwinnett County, Georgia. George lived until 1943.

THE LEGEND OF JESSE B. ROPER

Another Southern tradition is: We don't have skeletons in the closet. We display them in the parlor.
Mary Ann Messick, August 13, 2002.

Jesse's father, Alfred Roper, married Mary A. Hays September 1868 in Forsyth County, Georgia. Mary was the child of William and Casandra Hays. It is thought that Casandra's maiden name was Twiggs.²⁶²

In late 1869,²⁶³ Alfred and Mary had a son they named Jesse B. Jesse was their only child.

Jesse's father, Alfred, died in 1873, at age 27. Jesse would have been about 3 when his father died.

Sometime between 1873 and 1880, Jesse's mother Mary moved in with her widowed mother Casandra (Twigg?) Hays. In the 1880 Forsyth County census, Casandra, Mary, and Jesse were living together in the Coal Mountain District of Forsyth County.

We do not know much about Jesse B's early life, but at one point he was listed as a member of the Friendship Baptist Church in Forsyth County. (He may have been absent from church the day they taught on drinking, dancing, and shooting people.) One thing we know about his early years: He liked guns and learned to handle them—both pistols and rifles. I also think there's a good chance he was spoiled by his mother and grandmother.

Jesse B. married Etta Marcella Sewell July 4, 1886, in Forsyth County, Georgia. Etta had been born December 14, 1870, the daughter of Greenberry "Bud" Sewell and Sarah M. Cheek. Jesse was about 16 when they married and Etta was 15.

Over the next few years, Jesse and Etta had three children, probably all in Forsyth County: Cora Roper, born May 1887, and King Samuel ("Sam") Roper and a twin brother, born October 9, 1888. The twin brother died at birth.

A few years after Sam's birth, perhaps in late 1891 or early 1892, Jesse B. left Georgia and headed for Arkansas where some of his mother's folks lived. A family tradition says that he left because of some kind of trouble. One story is that a moonshine still and revenuers were involved. Another possibility is that he went to Arkansas thinking he could help his mother's family in a feud.

Jesse B.'s destination was Baxter County, Arkansas. One of Jesse's uncles on his father's side, Peter Byrum Roper, lived in Baxter County, along with a number of Jesse's cousins. But having been raised in the household of his grandmother Casandra (Twiggs?) Hays, Jesse may have felt closer to her family. He stayed at the cattle ranch owned and operated by William Twiggs, who was probably his great-uncle.²⁶⁴

²⁶² Most in Baxter County, Arkansas, believed that Jesse B. was kin to the Twiggs. Some mistakenly thought that Jesse B.'s mother's maiden name was Twiggs, but we know that her maiden name was Hays. We do not, however, know the maiden name of Jesse's maternal grandmother, Casandra. Research into the Twiggs family has shown that "Casandra" was a family name. I therefore consider it a strong possibility that Jesse's maternal grandmother's maiden name was Twiggs.

²⁶³ In the 1870 Forsyth County census, Jesse B. was listed as nine months old. Since censuses were normally taken around the middle of the year, I have placed Jesse's birth in late 1869.

²⁶⁴ The exact relationship between Jesse and the Twiggs is uncertain. In various publications and personal letters, Baxter County historian, Mary Ann Messick, suggests that he was Mr. Twigg's grandson . . . or John and Joe Twigg's cousin . . . or John and Joe Twigg's nephew . . . or maybe no kin at all. Putting together what little information is available, my educated guess is that William Twiggs was a brother to Casandra and Jesse's great-uncle.

At the time Jesse rode up to the Twiggs ranch in early June 1892, the Twiggs and Dentons were involved in a bloody feud. The exact reason for the feud is obscure, but it is said that it was over a woman. Whatever the origin, one of William Twigg's sons, John, had been killed by Ing and Lee Denton, but the Denton brothers had been released by the law. Those who later remembered the feud agreed that Jesse felt the Twiggs were getting a dirty deal from the law.

Jesse, not yet 23, was described by one observer as "medium size, sandy haired and very good looking." He was also characterized as "spirited and cocky." It was said that "he wore nice clothes, the most outstanding part of his costume being his small-brimmed black felt hat which he wore with the high crown squashed down in front." Others who remembered him said "he was a right nice guy—friendly with good manners, and popular with the young folks but distrusted by their parents because of his association with the Twiggs."²⁶⁵

Jesse may have been popular with most of the young folks, but not all. According to Baxter County historian, Mary Ann Messick, "shortly after his arrival, Jesse Roper backed Leon Mooney against the wall at a dance and promised to blow off Leon's head the next time they met."²⁶⁶

On June 15, 1892, disaster struck. Mary Ann Messick reconstructed the events of that day from newspaper reports and first-hand accounts from several who were present.²⁶⁷ The version that follows is a blending of information from her article "The Denton-Twiggs Feud" in the *Wild West* magazine and a chapter on "Bad Day in Gassville" in her *History of Baxter County*.

On June 15, 1892, Jesse Roper and several other young men were shooting their pistols in the woods just south of Gassville. Although it was against the law to carry a pistol, several boys did and no officer had ever challenged their right to do so. The style was not to wear a holster but to carry the gun either in the hip pocket or pants cuff. Following the fad, Roper carried his pistol in his wide pants cuff, fastened with a snap.

Roper challenged the boys to a shooting match and they accepted in hopes one of them could put him to shame. No such luck, for Roper was not only a quick draw artist, but a sure shot. He easily won the competition.

The match ended in friendly laughter, and one of the boys invited Roper home with him for dinner. It is generally believed, however, that some of the other boys must have been jealous of Roper's shooting abilities. At any rate, someone went before the Justice of the Peace, Squire L. E. Tucker, and swore out a warrant for Roper's arrest on the charge of carrying a pistol.

While Roper was eating lunch at his host's house, Deputy Sheriff Tom Combs stepped up on the porch, opened the door, and told the young man to consider himself under arrest. Roper drew his pistol from his pants cuff and had it on the deputy before Combs could make a move. "You don't say," Roper laughed. Combs slammed the door and beat a hasty retreat.

Roper finished the meal, thanked his host, and rode out of town. On the way to the Twiggs ranch, he stopped by George Anglin's. Mr. Anglin was out in the yard and for,

²⁶⁵ The quotations in this paragraph from the article "The Denton-Twiggs Feud" by Mary Ann Messick" in the *Old West* magazine (no date) and *The History of Baxter County* by the same author. Mary Ann is a cousin of mine on the Mooney side (my great-grandfather "Hampy" Roper married Ada Mooney, daughter of Clayton Mooney, who will come into the story shortly).

²⁶⁶ *History of Baxter County*, page 231.

²⁶⁷ As noted in the previous footnote, Mary Ann's family was involved in the shoot-out with Jesse Roper and she heard the tales all her life. She also managed to interview several that were present before they died. She incorporated the information she had gathered in her 1973 *History of Baxter County*.

some unknown reason, was butchering a hog in hot weather. Jesse stopped and visited with him, never mentioning the trouble at Gassville.

About ten minutes after Roper left, a dozen boys from Gassville, including some who had been in the shooting match with him, rode up in a hard gallop. They asked if Anglin had seen Roper. Mr. Anglin told them they could catch him if they kept riding in the same direction. Instead, the boys turned and went to Mountain Home for Sheriff Byler.

Abraham G. Byler had been the first man elected sheriff when Baxter had become a county in 1873. He served until 1884 when he was elected county representative for three terms. In 1890, he was again elected sheriff. He was a little man in stature but not in caliber. Well liked by all, his bravery and fairness was never questioned.

About four in the afternoon, Sheriff Byler and a posse of twenty men thundered into the yard at the Twiggs' ranch.

I need to interrupt the story to emphasize several details. While I cannot condone Jesse's subsequent actions, several factors must be taken into account: (1) Jesse was outnumbered twenty to one. Twenty armed men showed up to arrest one man for what was common practice in that area. (2) Some in the posse had a reputation for not hesitating to kill when they thought it justified—including Mary Ann's and my gg-grandfather Clayton Mooney.²⁶⁸ (3) Jesse may have already been in trouble back in Georgia. If so, it was not to his advantage to be arrested and put in jail. Keep all this in the back of your mind as we pick up the story.

Sheriff Byler instructed his posse to halt while he dismounted and approached the ranch house alone. He approached the house, hollering "Hallo, Hallo, anybody home?"

Roper had apparently heard the posse coming and had hidden in an old log smokehouse in the back yard. He stuck his lever action Winchester rifle through a crack in the wall and shot the sheriff twice—clear through. He then flung open the door and came out shooting. He went down on his knee, laid the rifle over his arm and fired at the posse.

Loge Hopper saw Roper aim for him and stood up in the saddle. The bullet struck his leg, knocking him off his horse. Roper then lit out across the open field and the posse followed, firing at him as he ran. Again Roper went down on his knee and aimed first to one side, and then the other—shooting with both his left and right hands. When a cartridge lodged in the rifle, Roper calmly worked the lever back and forth until he cleared the barrel. He fired again, this time killing Dr. Will Lindsey's horse.

The posse had begun to feel a healthy respect for Roper's Winchester, and fell back. Roper crossed the open field, climbed a split rail fence and disappeared into the thick woodlands. As he jumped up on the fence, Jesse Roper took off his black hat and waved a final farewell to the posse.

Since Roper escaped by foot, it was felt that friends hid him out for a while. From the things my Dad said, I could tell he thought the Mooney girls (my grandmother and her sister) harbored him and helped him escape.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ The story of Clayton Mooney's taking revenge on the gang that killed his parents will be told in Volume Two of *The Roper Book* (his gg-granddaughter Mary Ann Messick wrote an article on him called "The Avenging Angel of Lapland"). An example of the kind of bloody action Clayton was capable of will be found later in this chapter.

²⁶⁹ This particular sentence is from a letter from Mary Ann Messick dated June 25, 1998.

Jesse never returned to the Twiggs Ranch for his pistol, horse, or clothes. One of Dr. Martin's sons reported seeing Roper in the woods around Gassville the next day after he killed the sheriff, but Martin didn't try to approach him.

Roper was never caught. Rumors abounded as to what happened to him. Some said he was wounded by Clayton Mooney's vigilante posse, and that he died and was secretly buried on the bayou. It was rumored that Billie Twiggs and his mother hid Roper and that he died of natural causes. Some supposed he left the country on foot, crossing over Bald Dave Mountain into Missouri.

Most thought he went into Indian Territory. Walter Anglin said that Jesse's uncle Bill²⁷⁰ told him that Jesse had visited him many times in Western Oklahoma and that Roper was a law-abiding, useful citizen of a nearby town, living under another name. One version of this legend said he confessed on his deathbed to the shooting of Sheriff Byler.

In another version of this story, a Baptist preacher in Viola, Fulton County, Arkansas, named Carl Roper claims to be a nephew of Jesse.²⁷¹ He thought "Jesse" was just a nickname and believed that Jesse Roper was really John Ansel Roper, a great- (or great-great-) uncle of his. He told of an incident when he was a little boy of going with his father to receive the casket of John Ansel off a train. His father told him that the man was really the infamous Jesse Roper.²⁷²

Roper could not be found by those out to avenge the sheriff's death, but his Twiggs relatives could. They moved away, but not far enough. Clayton Mooney led a group of vigilantes who killed and arrested several in the Twiggs family who, it was thought, had harbored Jesse B.

For years after Jesse's escape, every robbery and murder was blamed on him. Fred Allsopp wrote:

On the night of November 3, 1893, the most daring train robbery that ever occurred in Arkansas took place at Olyphant,²⁷³ in Jackson County. The northbound Missouri Pacific was held up, the passengers were robbed, and Conductor McNally was killed. It was supposed that the bandits were led by Jesse Roper, a young desperado, who had a reputation for being a killer. The leader was not apprehended, but five others of the gang were, and three of them were convicted and hanged at Newport.²⁷⁴

An old newspaper clipping about this robbery hangs on the wall of a café in Pangburn, Arkansas, just north of Searcy. The clipping says that the robbers were eight men on horseback. One of those caught turned state's evidence and went free. Searcy residents added a few details. The three men who were hung had been in the railway car where the conductor was killed. None would confess to the shooting, so they hung all three. A new gallows was built for the hanging. They were hung in March.

Rewards totaling over \$4,000.00 were offered for Jesse, dead or alive. With this kind of money at stake, lawmen far and wide took a closer look at who they had in custody. Nondescript crooks started claiming to be the infamous Jesse and their captors were quick to

²⁷⁰ Who this "Bill" is, I have no idea.

²⁷¹ In June 1998, I talked to Carl on the phone.

²⁷² I was unable to establish any family kinship with Carl. Since the Jesse of Baxter County seems definitely to be the son of Alfred and cousin of "Hampy," I have discounted Carl's story.

²⁷³ Olyphant is a little north of where I live. I've preached at the church of Christ there many times.

²⁷⁴ Fred W. Allsopp, *Folklore of Romantic Arkansas*, Volume I (The Grolier Society, 1931), pages 318 and 319

believe them. One not only claimed to be Jesse, but also claimed to be part of the Dalton gang. At the time, all the Daltons were dead or in prison except Bill, and the Doolin Gang had ejected Bill.

Even before Doolin ousted him, Bill Dalton had been busy with plans of his own. Already he had selected a new area of operation—Texas. He was . . . determined to be a successful outlaw

The new "Dalton gang" consisted of Bill and a trio of inept scrubs: George Bennett, a cowboy with the habit of deserting his women; Jim Wallace, a country loafer from around Ardmore, near the Texas-Oklahoma border; and third fellow, identity not established, who called himself "Bill Jones."

They were sorry material. Bob Dalton would have given such help a meal and sent them along to steal chickens. The final Dalton ensemble lasted for just one job in the rough environs of the Lone Star State.

On May 23, 1894, the shabby bunch rode into Longview, a short way from the Louisiana line. There they held up the First National Bank, for a take of \$2000, in ten- and twenty-dollar bills. In a battle that was almost a replica of the Coffeyville slaughter, Bennett was shot and killed by Will Stevens, a deputy city marshal. Chief Marshall Muckelroy took a fatal slug through the bowels. Another man, named George Buckingham, was slain by Bill Jones, doing lookout duty in an alley. Saloonkeeper J. W. McQueen and citizen Charles Leonard were hit by stray shots, Leonard dying two days later.

As at Coffeyville, bandits used bankers temporarily as shields while emerging with the loot. Bill Dalton and his two surviving henchmen rode west towards Paris, near the Oklahoma border, hid in a cane break after outracing the posse, then crossed over into the Territory.^{275]}

Apparently, "Bill" was supposedly Jesse's pseudonym.

The *Indian Journal*, published in Eufaula, Indian Territory, Friday, September 28, 1894, told of another prisoner claiming to be Jesse B.:

Deputy United States Marshals William T. Nix and George Stormer arrested Charlie Watkins, alias Jesse B. Roper, Saturday and the marshals think they have a many times murderer in custody. The arrest was made near Perry. It is said that Watkins confesses that he killed Sheriff A. G. Byler of Baxter County, Arkansas, on June 15, 1892, and that he was then known as Jesse B. Roper. The Governor of Arkansas offered a reward of \$1,000 for the arrest of Roper and the citizens of Baxter county, Arkansas, offer \$500. Watkins is also charged with killing a cattle inspector in Nebraska and a man in New Mexico. In all, the officers say, there is a reward of \$4,400 for the arrest of Watkins. Officials of Oklahoma charge Watkins with impersonating United States officers.

Jesse was also accused of robbing a store of a man named Rogers at Claremore²⁷⁶ January 14, 1896, in the Cherokee Nation in Indian Territory. A man in jail wrote Mr. Rogers about the robbery and, in the trial, accused Jesse of being one of the thieves. Here are bits

²⁷⁵ Harold Preece, *The Dalton Gang: End of an Outlaw Era* (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1963).

²⁷⁶ Could there be a connection with Will Rogers from Claremore?

from the trial examination of the accuser (Jesse was not present—nor anybody claiming to be Jesse):²⁷⁷

I knowed they was going to rob the store.

Who?

This man [Hanson] and three other fellows.

Who are they?

One of them Stilts, and the other one is Roper, and the other one is Rowden my brother .

. . .

Who all did you find there?

Andy Hanson, my brother, Jesse Roper, and Jim Stilts

What kind of a man is Roper?

Kind of a middle-height man.

As tall as yourself?

Taller.

Heavy set or slim?

Just medium-sized

Whether anyone was ever convicted of this crime, I do not know, but the “Roper” mentioned was nowhere to be found.

For years, the succeeding sheriffs of Baxter County, Arkansas—most of them Mooneys—wasted weeks running down false tips.

Where was Jesse during much of this furor? He had returned to Forsyth County, Georgia, where he picked up his life with Etta and his children. His fourth child Olivia (“Livia”) Roper was born January 1, 1895.

While Etta was pregnant with their fifth child, someone in Arkansas finally decided to look east instead of west—and found out that Jesse was in Georgia. Extradition papers were sent to Georgia to have Jesse brought to Arkansas to face the music.²⁷⁸ An armed posse came to arrest Jesse. What ensued next is unclear. Some think there was a gun battle during which Jesse killed a lawman. Others think he heard they were coming and slipped out the back door where he had a horse waiting. At any rate, he fled for his life.

Before he left, he told Etta that he was heading for Texas and, after he was settled, he would send for her and the children. That was the last they heard from him. Their fifth child, Elijah (“Lige”) Roper was born June 25, 1897.

So what happened to Jesse B.? Family members in Georgia say the subject was not brought up when they were children, or—if it was—it was discussed in whispers.²⁷⁹ So if anyone had any idea what happened to Jesse, it was not passed on. Some believe he went to Texas and started a new family.²⁸⁰ Journalists, however, persisted in sensationalizing his case. Here is an article from the *Baxter Bulletin*, published in Mountain Home, Baxter County, Arkansas, August 24, 1906:

Jesse Roper Notorious Outlaw Dead

²⁷⁷ I sent off for a copy of a Fort Smith criminal jacket: “Jesse Roper. Jacket No. 361.” I was sent many pages of material, but none of it conclusive.

²⁷⁸ I have been promised a copy of an article about this, but have not yet received it.

²⁷⁹ I recently made contact with a member of the Twiggs family. He also said that the matter was always discussed in whispers in his family, so he too is not sure what happened.

²⁸⁰ We thought we had found a Texas descendant of Jesse’s new family, but this came to nothing.

Jesse B. Roper, who killed two fellow prisoners in the jail in Lufkin, Texas, August 15, beating them to death with a heavy bucket as they slept, ended his life at that place Monday, by hanging himself in his cell, using a strip from a blanket.

Roper acknowledged a few days ago that he was a member of the Dalton gang of bank robbers at Longview, Texas, in 1892. Sheriff Watts also claims positive evidence that Roper is the man wanted in Arkansas for the murder of Sheriff Byler in Baxter county in 1892; and for whom a reward of \$1000 was offered. Roper acknowledged various other crimes in Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas.

Francis Shiras, in her *History of Baxter County* (an earlier history than Messick did) reported that Roper committed suicide in 1918 in an Oklahoma jail while awaiting trial on another charge.

What really happened to Jesse B. Roper? You can believe the worst—or you can believe the best—but we will probably never know for sure. Back in Baxter County, Arkansas, his name became the stuff of which legends are made. In her *History of Baxter County*, Mary Ann Messick wrote:

Slowly the lives of those involved began to return to normal But the whole affair was not forgotten for many years. My grandmother kept a queer-looking black hat she said belonged to Jesse Roper. Schoolboys played at being Byler and Roper. Which was the villain and which one was the hero depended on whether his family was for the Dentons or for the Twiggs. Both the sheriff and Roper were honored by local ballad writers and their songs were popularly requested at every play party, square dance and school program for two decades.

13b
SURVIVOR CIRCA 1890
ETTA MARCELLA SEWELL

As I was doing research on Jesse B. Roper, I became more and more impressed with how his life must have affected his young wife—and how she “rolled with the punches.” I thought it would not be out of place to include a brief segment on her life.

Etta Marcella Sewell was born December 14, 1870, in South Carolina the daughter of Greenberry "Bud" Sewell and Sarah M. Cheek (both of whom had been born in South Carolina). Etta married Jesse B. Roper July 4, 1886, in Forsyth County, Georgia. She was about 15 when they married; Jesse was about 16.

Jesse and Etta had five children. The first was Cora Roper, born May 28, 1887, in Forsyth County. The second two were King Samuel ("Sam") Roper and a twin brother, born October 9, 1888, probably in Forsyth County. The twin brother was dead at birth.

While Sam was still a young child, Jesse went to Baxter County, Arkansas, where he got involved in the Twiggs-Denton feud and killed Sheriff Byers—on June 15, 1892.²⁸¹

The next couple of years are hazy regarding Jesse's activities, but he was back in Georgia at least by early 1894—because child number four Olivia ("Livia") Roper was born January 1, 1895. Livia was probably born in Forsyth County.

While Etta was carrying their fifth child, Arkansas sent extradition papers to force Georgia to send Jesse back to Arkansas.²⁸² Evidently policemen showed up at Jesse's home to arrest him. Here family memory goes fuzzy once more. One family memory thinks Jesse shot a policeman and escaped. But perhaps the "shot policeman" had reference to the previously-shot Arkansas sheriff. Maybe Jesse just got wind of the coming of the law and slipped off into the night. Anyway, he fled for his life. According to family memory, he told his family he was going to Texas and would later send for them. That is the last anyone in the family heard from him. Jesse was about 26 when he left his pregnant wife and children, and Etta about 25

The fifth and last child Elijah ("Lige") Roper was born June 25, 1897, in Forsyth County.

After Jesse left, Etta ran a boarding house for a period of time—perhaps in Maysville, Banks County, Georgia, which is two counties east of Forsyth County. The family remembers Etta as a GREAT cook—a gene she passed on to her son Sam and others.

While she was running the boarding house, one day Thomas E. Clark came to the door and asked for a drink of water. "The county or state was fixing the roads. They would pay you 75¢ a day to work on the road, \$1.00 a day for a mule and wagon. They were fixing the road in front of Etta's boarding house, and Mr. Clark was working on the road."²⁸³

According to family memory, after seven years Jesse was finally declared legally dead. Etta then married Thomas Clark—around 1903.²⁸⁴

Thomas Elias Clark had been born July 17, 1870, in Oconee County, South Carolina, which borders Georgia. His parents were Thomas Eli Clark (born 1832 in South Carolina) and Elizabeth Grant (born 1837 in Anderson District, South Carolina). Elizabeth Grant was

²⁸¹ See "The Legend of Jesse B. Roper."

²⁸² I was promised the article on this, but have not yet seen it. The date is a guess based on when Etta remarried and the fact that seven years are required before one can be declared legally dead.

²⁸³ Phone conversation with Robert E. Lee Grant, no date.

²⁸⁴ The 1910 census says they had been married 7 years in 1910, which—if accurate—would make them have gotten married the last part of 1902 or the first part of 1903.

kin to Thad Grant who later married Etta's daughter Livia. According to family memory, Thomas E. was a veteran; he probably served in the Spanish American War (1898).²⁸⁵

At the time Etta remarried, Sam would have been about 14, Cora about 13, Livia about 8, and Lige about 6. I assume they lived in Oconee County, South Carolina.²⁸⁶ I should mention that the grandchildren only knew Etta as "Grandma Clark." They called Thomas "Mr. Clark."

According to family memory, Thomas drank heavily and was sometimes hard on Etta and his stepchildren. He raised cotton and assigned them a certain amount of work to do each day.

Sam left home when he was about 16. He headed west, but did not go far. Some wonder if he had previously met his future wife somewhere and headed to where she lived. Others wonder if his future employer came to where he lived to get supplies or raw materials for his brick yard, met Sam, liked what he saw and took Sam home with him. For whatever reason, Sam ended up in Canon, Franklin County, Georgia, which is on the border of South Carolina. Mr. Fleming²⁸⁷ owned the brick yard in Canon and took him under his wing. According to family memory, Sam lived in the Fleming home, Mr. Fleming taught him to read and write, etc. Sometime in here, Sam met Carrie Blackwell and married her about 1908.²⁸⁸

When the 1910 census was taken, Thomas and Etta were living in Center township, Oconee County, South Carolina. At that time, Cora would have been about 23. She had married Dave Sears about 1904,²⁸⁹ and was living in Jackson County, Georgia. Sam would have been about 22, was married, and was living in Franklin County, Georgia. Livia was only 15 but was also already married; she had married Thad Grant about 1909.²⁹⁰ At any rate, when the 1910 census was taken, only Thomas, Etta, and Lige were living in Center, South Carolina:

1910 Oconee County, South Carolina census, Center township, page 24A

Thomas E. Clark, age 39, head of house

Etta, age 37, wife, married 7 years [she says four children born and living; she does not count the twin who was dead at birth]

Lige [no last name], age 13, stepson [Cora was listed as a stepdaughter, but then crossed out and Lige written in; this suggests to me that Cora was not married at the time but not living at home. I can imagine the census-taker's questions, "Any unmarried children?" "Yes, Cora." "OK" (writing down "Cora"). "But she don't live at home no more." "OK (scratching out "Cora"), any more unmarried kids—*living at home?*" "Lige." "And (writing down "Lige") how old is he?" Etc.]

Around 1919,²⁹¹ Lige married Dessie Grant. When 1920 rolled around, only Thomas and Etta were living in their household in South Carolina:

1920 Oconee County, South Carolina census, Center township

²⁸⁵ This seems to fit since I cannot find any other U. S. war he would be the right age for. I have been unable to find a website that lists combatants in that war; surely there is a book somewhere that gives that info.

²⁸⁶ Thus far I have found no record of Thomas ever living anywhere else.

²⁸⁷ John Fleming? There's a John Fleming in Canon in the 1920 census, 84 years old.

²⁸⁸ Mary A. Lamm, a descendant of Sam and Carrie, has neat stories about Sam and Carrie.

²⁸⁹ This estimate is based on the birth date of her first child.

²⁹⁰ This estimate is based on the birth date of her first child.

²⁹¹ This estimate is based on the birth date of his first child.

Thomas Clark, renting, age 49, can read and write, born in South Carolina, both parents born in South Carolina, a farmer.²⁹²

Etta Clark, age 48, can read and write, born in South Carolina, both parents born in South Carolina, farmer's wife.

Thad and Livia Grant were probably living not far away in Oconee County.

Thomas did not live long after the 1920 census: He died December 5, 1921. According to family memory, one evening he lay down drunk in front of the fireplace and the next morning Etta found him dead. He was buried in the cemetery of the Beaverdam Baptist Church in Oconee County.²⁹³

After Thomas' death, Etta lived with various members of her family. For a while, she lived with Livia and her family. One of Livia's sons, Robert, tells this story about her:

She had diabetes and high blood pressure and was under the care of Dr. Mays at Fair Play. I think Dr. Mays' wife was kin to Mr. Clark. Anyway, Dr. Mays wouldn't take any pay from her. Dr. Mays was very strict about what she could and couldn't eat. For instance, she was not supposed to eat pork. At the time, I was working for a grocery store and brought home some veal chops. At dinnertime, Grandma Clark ate her veal chop and said, "That was good. Please pass me another pork chop." She was told that it was not a pork chop but a veal chop, but she never did believe us. Once she had someone take her to a doctor in the mountains. This doctor said it would be all right for her to eat a little pork. When she got home, she measured off about a six-inch slab of country-cured ham, and said, "He said I could eat that much." She liked that doctor! But she never told Dr. Mays that she went to see him."²⁹⁴

Dr. Mays' son, Harry, took over the practice from him in Fair Play. Harry sent his boyhood memories of Etta:

I remember she used to visit in our home and she was a good cook, in fact, I remember especially her egg custard, She helped the family at the time of younger siblings' birth she was a likeable out-going person. She seemed to enjoy her visits with us.²⁹⁵

In the late 1940s or early 1950s, Etta lived with her grandson Jack (one of Sam's boys) and his wife. According to family memory, Etta applied for a pension since her husband was a veteran and was awarded that pension.

In her last days, according to family memory, Etta was in a nursing home named Lipscomb in Toccoa, Stephens County, Georgia. Stephens County is just north of Franklin County, on the South Carolina border. There is no longer a nursing home by that name in Toccoa.

Etta died June 12, 1954—presumably in the nursing home. She is buried in Earle's Grove Baptist Church Cemetery, Oconee County, South Carolina—probably in the Grant plot (Livia and Thad and many other Grants are buried in the same cemetery). The inscription on Etta's tombstone reads like this:

²⁹² According to a family memory, he raised cotton.

²⁹³ Etta was not buried beside him when she died 33 years later, in 1954. She was buried in the Grant plot in Earle's Grove Baptist Church Cemetery in Oconee County.

²⁹⁴ Phone conversation with Robert E. Lee Grant, no date.

²⁹⁵ Letter dated July 23, 2002.

Etta Marcella Sewell Clark [she dropped the Roper]
Born December 14, 1870
Died June 12, 1954

Someone needs to do a proper write-up of Etta's life. Abandoned by her husband at age 25. Trying to raise a large family while running a boarding house. Perhaps a hard life with a second husband. Left a widow at age 50. Forced to live with first one family member and then another. It is not my purpose to editorialize on Etta's life, but this much seems obvious: She was A SURVIVOR!

14
CHILD NUMBER TEN:
WILLIAM ROPER

William Roper was born the first part of 1850 in Forsyth County, Georgia, the son of John and Tabitha Roper. He was probably named after his father's cousin, William, who had also moved from Pickens County, South Carolina, to Forsyth County.²⁹⁶

William is found in only one census record: In the 1850 Forsyth County census, he is listed with John and Tabitha's family. Age: three months. He is not listed in the 1860 census with John's family even though his older brother (Alfred) and his younger sister (Sarah) are. William evidently died between 1850 and 1860. He probably died soon after the 1850 census. Infant deaths were common in those days. Later, as was not uncommon in the case in infant deaths, his father gave William's name to another son: William Larkin.²⁹⁷

Early in our research on "old" John's family, it was assumed that the William H. Roper who appears in the 1870 and 1880 Forsyth County censuses was John's son. At the time, we were only vaguely aware of Henry F. Roper, who had a son named William H., born about the same time as "old" John's William. By the time we determined that Henry F. was John's son, we had been supplied information that indicated that Henry's William moved to Tennessee with his brothers.²⁹⁸ Thus we continued to assume that William H. was John's son²⁹⁹ until the spring of 2002 when I started rechecking everything as part of the production of Volume One of *The Roper Book*. Every fact that I uncovered shouted that the William H. Roper who grew to maturity was Henry F.'s son, not John's son:

(1) The most reasonable explanation for the absence of William (who would have been ten or eleven) in John's family in the 1860 census is that he died. On the other hand, Henry F.'s son did not die while a child. He is listed with Henry's family in both the 1850 and 1860 censuses.

(2) In the 1850 census, John's son is simply called "William" (without a middle initial). On the other hand, starting with the 1850 listing, Henry F.'s son is called "William H." (with the middle initial). The William who lived to maturity was called "William H." Even his death certificate has "William H."

(3) In the 1910 census, William H. said that his father was born in South Carolina but that his mother was born in *Georgia*. This fits if he was Henry's and Evaline's son; it does *not* fit if he was John's and Tabitha's son: Evaline was born in Georgia, but Tabitha was born in South Carolina.

(4) The details of William H.'s life are consistent with his being the son of Henry F.:

- He named his first son after his father: Henry F. He later named a daughter after both his wife (Nancy) and his mother (Evaline): Nancy Eva.
- He was a blacksmith, as was his father Henry and his brothers George and Henry Marcus.

(5) As noted above, "old" John later named a son William. It is unlikely he would do this if the first William were still alive.

²⁹⁶ See the earlier chapter on the move from Pickens County, South Carolina, to Forsyth County, Georgia.

²⁹⁷ See the chapter on William Larkin.

²⁹⁸ To this point, I have been supplied with no evidence that this was the case.

²⁹⁹ One of the problems was/is that on William H.'s death certificate, his parents are listed as "unknown"—which is typical of many of the Ropers I have researched.

Additional evidence could be presented: Many of John's sons are mentioned in the court records connected with John's death; William is not among them. If "old" John's William had been alive when John died, he would have been about 16. Alfred (about 18) had a guardian appointed for him. If John's William had been alive, would not a guardian have been appointed for him? But I have said enough. Again I say that all the evidence points to the fact that John and Tabitha's tenth child William—their last son and next-to-last child together—died while an infant.

CHILD NUMBER ELEVEN: SARAH ROPER

Sarah was born about 1854 in Forsyth County, Georgia—the last child of John and Tabitha Roper.³⁰⁰ Tabitha would have been about 44 when Sarah was born. Tabitha probably did not live long after Sarah's birth; in fact, she may have died in childbirth.³⁰¹

When Sarah was about 2, her father remarried—marrying Amy Elizabeth Reid on December 16, 1856. When the 1860 census was made, Sarah is listed with John and Amy and their family:

Forsyth County, Georgia, 1860

John Roper, age 61, farmer, born in North Carolina,³⁰² married within the last year.³⁰³

Ami, 33, born in Georgia

Alfred, 12, Georgia

Sarah A., 6, Georgia

John, 2, Georgia

Reuben, 1, Georgia

This is the one and only mention of Sarah of which we can be certain.

Sarah's father died in 1866. When the 1870 census was taken, if still living, Sarah would have been 16. She is not listed in the widow Amy's household:

Cumming District

Amy Roper 44, keeping house, born in Georgia

John Roper 13, farm hand, born in Georgia

Theresa 9, born in Georgia

Pincney (i.e., Pinkney) 7, born in Georgia

Larkin 5, born in Georgia

If still living, Sarah may have already married—or she may have been living with another family as a domestic.

Regarding what happened to Sarah, one of the problems is that Sarah was a common name, among the Ropers as among other families. One other definite Sarah Roper has been mentioned in this volume and another possible Sarah Roper has been suggested:

A Sarah T. Roper married Rupert (or Robert) P. White December 2, 1877, in Forsyth County. Henry F. Roper had a daughter named Sarah T. born about 1864. If this is the Sarah T. that married Rupert/Robert, she would only have been 13 or 14—unlikely but not impossible. On the other hand, if this was Tabitha's daughter, she would have been 23 or 24 when she married Rupert/Robert—which sounds more likely—but in the one reference we have, she is referred to as Sarah A., not Sarah T.

³⁰⁰ This conclusion is based on the fact that Sarah is 6 in the 1860 census, but her father and Amy had been married less than four years. Sarah therefore must have been Tabitha's child—her last child.

³⁰¹ See the earlier discussion on this regarding the death of Tabitha.

³⁰² The NC/SC mix-up is common in censuses.

³⁰³ Missed it by a couple of years.

In the chapter on James Hamilton, it was noted that James had a daughter named Vinete. It was then noted that a Sarah V. Roper married William Cantrell January 11, 1883, in Forsyth County—and the suggestion was made that the "V" in "Sarah V." might stand for "Vinete." If this is the case, Sarah Vinete Roper was about 21 when she married William C., which is a pretty good fit. On the other hand, if Sarah V. was Tabitha's daughter, she would have 29 when she married William C.—not impossible, but unlikely.

Neither Rupert/Roport White or William Cantrell are listed in the database that includes the "other" Ropers that came to Forsyth County, so there is a good chance that the Sarah Ropers they married are part of "our" bunch. The problem is that, at this time, I have not been able to find either of these men in later census records. If I could find them in later census records, the ages of the "Sarahs" they married should give insight into which Sarahs they married.

At the moment, Tabitha's last child remains one of the many Roper mysteries. If you can shed light on what happened to Sarah, please contact me!

CHILD NUMBER TWELVE: JOHN T. ROPER

John T.³⁰⁴ Roper was born October 4, 1858, in Forsyth County, Georgia, the son of John Roper and his second wife, Amy Elizabeth (Reid) Roper. He was "old" John's twelfth child, but Amy's first child.³⁰⁵ For reasons that will be noted, I think of him as "Uncle John."

Before briefly surveying John T.'s life, there are a couple of matters I need to address.

THE "DISCOVERY" OF "UNCLE JOHN" —AND HIS YOUNGER SIBLINGS

Once it was established that the "John Roper" married to Tabitha in the 1850 census was the "John Roper" married to Amy in the 1860 census,³⁰⁶ it became obvious that we had a second set of children for whom we had to account: John, Theresa, Pinkney, and Larkin.³⁰⁷ I found a "John F. Roper" in the 1880 Forsyth County census. By going through the entire county census, house by house, I even located Theresa, Pinkney, and Larkin living as hired help in other households. But what eventually happened to these children?

I had little success in answering that question until my wife Jo and I were visiting in the home of Charles and Doris Roper near Cumming, Georgia, in the spring of 2000. In the course of the conversation, Charles mentioned an "Uncle John" who used to come by his grandfather's house and visit.³⁰⁸ Questioning revealed that some of "Uncle John's" descendants lived nearby. Jo and I were taken to meet Egbert and Mary Lou Roper.³⁰⁹ Mary Lou shared information about "Uncle John's" family. She also gave me the name of someone who might give me additional information: Inez Chadwick. During a phone conversation, Inez mentioned two brothers and a sister of John T. who had "moved west." Hey, that would be Theresa, Pinkney, and Larkin! Inez suggested that we contact another of John T.'s descendants, Fairy (Roper) Higgins, who might have some correspondence between John T. and his sister.

Michael Roper helped secure a copy of the correspondence,³¹⁰ which mentioned all four of the children: John T., "Thursie" (Theresa), Pinkney, and "Doc" (Larkin). The letters also revealed that Theresa was living in Blue Mountain, Mississippi, and that Pinkney had been living in Arkansas. With these clues, the pieces to the mystery of John's "second crop" began to fall into place. During a second trip to Georgia in the spring of 2001, my wife and I visited the annual reunion of John T.'s family and made side trips to where Theresa and Larkin had lived to gather information.

³⁰⁴ Some family members believe that the "T" stands for "Tolbert," and this may be true. It is also possible that the "T" stands for "Tolliver," which was the first name of Amy's father. If this is the case, Amy made three men happy when she named her first son "John Tolliver": her husband (JOHN Roper), her father (TOLLIVER Reid), and one of her brothers (JOHN T. Reid).

³⁰⁵ See the information on John and Amy's marriage in a previous chapter.

³⁰⁶ See the introduction on the difficulties involved in this identification.

³⁰⁷ There was a fifth child named Reuben, but he apparently died in early childhood. See the next chapter on Reuben Roper.

³⁰⁸ A little earlier than this, I had indirectly received word from Lizzie (Roper) Satterfield that her father, Raymond (son of Charles F.) had a half-uncle named John.

³⁰⁹ We also visited with Egbert's daughter-in-law who lives next door.

³¹⁰ For the complete text of this correspondence, see the chapter on Theresa Roper.

THE ISOLATED SECOND GROUP OF CHILDREN

As my research progressed on "old" John's second bunch of kids, it became obvious that Amy's children became more or less isolated from Tabitha's children. For instance, in Theresa's letters to John, she only mentions her full brothers, with no reference to her many half-brothers and half-sisters.

Having watched similar situations today, my guess is that "old" John's marriage to Amy was not accepted well by Tabitha's children. I hope I am not being judgmental when I speculate that Amy's children were basically ignored by Tabitha's children. As partial proof, note that when Amy died early in 1876, Henry F., John's oldest and a son of Tabitha, was designated as "Trustee" of Amy's property and "keeper of the orphan children."³¹¹ One would suppose that in the next census, "the orphan children" would appear in the households of their half-brothers and sisters. Instead, in the 1880 census, they had been parceled out to area farmers to work as hired hands. Times were hard, but it would have been nice to see a demonstration of the pioneer attitude "There's always room for one more."

I've reached the conclusion that John T., Theresa, Pinkney, and Larkin felt rejected—and, as it were, huddled together for comfort, shutting out the rest of the family. Wouldn't it be nice if this book helped restore communication between Tabitha's descendants and Amy's descendants?

But now it's time for a brief overview of John T.'s life.

A SURVEY OF THE LIFE OF JOHN T.

John T. is first mentioned in the 1860 Forsyth County census (he is the 2-year-old):

John Roper, age 61, farmer, born in North Carolina,³¹² married within the last year.³¹³
Ami, 33, born in Georgia
Alfred, 12, Georgia
Sarah A., 6, Georgia
John, 2, Georgia
Reuben, 1, Georgia³¹⁴

John T.'s father died early in 1866 in Forsyth County; John would have been about eight years old.

John T. is next mentioned in the 1870 Forsyth County census, with his widowed mother and three younger siblings:

Cumming District
Amy Roper 44, keeping house, born in Georgia
John Roper 13, farm hand, born in Georgia
Theressa 9, born in Georgia³¹⁵
Pinkney (i.e., Pinkney) 7, born in Georgia

³¹¹ For the full text of the document, see the chapter on Henry F. Roper.

³¹² The NC/SC mix-up is common in censuses.

³¹³ Missed it by a couple of years.

³¹⁴ Reuben evidently died between 1860 and 1870. See the chapter on the brief life of Reuben.

³¹⁵ For some reason, Theresa, Pinkney, and Larkin are listed as the children of William Alexander and Sarah (Tallant) Roper by the LDS. Since so many people check the LDS records, this error has spread far and wide.

Larkin 5, born in Georgia

We know little about John T.'s early years, but I imagine they were hard as he had to be "the man of the house" while still a teenager. I should also mention that John T. is probably the "John Jr." who is listed as a member of the Friendship Baptist Church in Forsyth County. He probably attended Friendship while a child; it was the church where his father and mother were members.

John T.'s mother, Amy, died in 1876. In the courts records regarding the disposal of her property, only Pinkney and Larkin are mentioned since they were minors.

The year after his mother's death, John T. married Mary Elizabeth Tinsley—on December 14,³¹⁶ 1877, in Forsyth County. Mary Elizabeth had been born August 8, 1858, in South Carolina, the daughter of Miles³¹⁷ and Eleanor ("Nellie") (Hayes) Tinsley.³¹⁸ Mary was a member of the Zion Hill Baptist Church and John T. became affiliated with that congregation.³¹⁹

John T. and Mary had their first child, George Floyd, February 6, 1878, in Forsyth County. He was probably named George after one of Mary's brothers, but he was called Floyd. John T. and Mary and son George F. are found in the 1880 census in Forsyth County:

Coal Mountain District³²⁰

J. F. [this should be a T.] Roper 21, farming, born in Georgia, both parents born in South Carolina.

M. Pattie ("M" is for "Mary" and "Pattie" was apparently a nickname for "Elizabeth"), 20, keeping house, born in South Carolina.

George F., born in Georgia.

As mentioned elsewhere in this volume, in the 1880 Forsyth census, John T.'s three younger siblings were living with other families as hired hands—all within a short distance of each other in the Vickers Creek District:

Triza Roper, 18, orphan, housekeeper, born in Georgia—living with R. C. Tallant.

Pinkney Roper, 16, orphan, working on farm, born in Georgia—living with W. L. Chamblee.

Larkin Roper, 14, hired hand, laboring on farm—living with William Phillipps.

John T. and Mary's next eight children came in quick succession:

(2) Virgil R. Roper, born May 19, 1881.

(3) *Luther* James Roper, born March 4, 1883.

(4) Artie L. Roper, born November 19, 1884.

(5) John *Rufus* Roper, born October 17, 1887.

(6) Mamie Ethel Roper, born August 10, 1889.

(7) Marion Roper, born 1892.

³¹⁶ Or 16.

³¹⁷ Some records say his name was "John." Perhaps his full name was John Miles Tinsley.

³¹⁸ Mary's Tinsley heritage has been traced all the way back into England. Those who are descendants of John T. and Mary will want to research their Tinsley heritage. Look for Miles or John Tinsley on the internet, using any standard genealogy search engine.

³¹⁹ As noted in the chapter on Charles F. Roper, John T.'s half-brother Charles was a deacon at Zion Hill.

³²⁰ I might mention that living in the same district was a cousin Tillman Roper (son of Tillman, son of Aaron, son of Meredith, son of John Jr.).

(8) Robert Lee ³²¹ Roper, born March 17, 1893. His mother had a brother named Robert Lee.

(9) Buel Everett³²² Roper, born June 9, 1895.

Let me catch my breath from listing all these children, and mention that while going through the courthouse records in Cumming, Forsyth County, Georgia, I came across one land transaction for John T.: In November of 1895, he was the grantor and W. P. Garrett was the grantee on a mortgage. Now back to the children:

(10) Zona ("Zonie")³²³ B. Roper, born December, 1898.

(11) Demon³²⁴ Washington Roper, born February 29, 1900.

(12) Doyle Eddie Roper, born June 4, 1902.

John T.'s brother Pinkney died February 14, 1914, in the home of his sister Theresa ("Thursie") Reaves, who lived in Blue Mountain, Mississippi. This prompted some heated correspondence between Theresa and her older brother John T. regarding the disposal of Pinkney's property in Arkansas (Pinkney had never married and left no heirs). See the chapter on Theresa for the full text of this correspondence (that is, Theresa's end of it).

In November of 1918, John T.'s daughter Zona died.³²⁵ One of my favorite Roper pictures was taken the day of the funeral: It shows John T. with his many, many descendants—but what I most like about it is the row of children across the front.

John's wife Mary Elizabeth died May 26, 1924. Here is a brief obituary from *The Forsyth County News*, June 5, 1924:

Mrs. John Roper, who has been in the sanitarium at Milledgeville, died last week, and her remains were brought to New Harmony for funeral and interment. She is survived by her husband, several children, and a host of other relatives.

Mary was buried in the New Harmony Baptist Church cemetery.

John T. married a second time December 6, 1925—to Lou Whitt. Little is known about his second wife.

John died August 17, 1942, and was buried in the New Harmony Baptist Church Cemetery.³²⁶

CLOSING NOTES ON JOHN T.'S FAMILY

This is one of my favorite Roper lines: They are still proud of being Ropers and have an annual reunion the first Sunday in June. They have family stories, which are reflected throughout this book. They shared some neat pictures. And many of them have been especially cooperative in sharing family information. Long may they live!

³²¹ For some reason, he is called "Lot" in the 1910 census.

³²² Buel's tombstone has his middle initial as "C," but according to census records, his middle name was Everett, so perhaps the initial should be an "E."

³²³ For some reason, she is called "Jane" in the 1910 census.

³²⁴ Occasionally his name is spelled "Damon," but "Demon" predominates in the records.

³²⁵ Her tombstone has 1920, but the family picture taken the day of the funeral has "November 1918" on the back. A thought: Many, many died in the flu epidemic of 1918. I do not know if there is a connection here or not.

³²⁶ On the left side, on the corner.

My primary collaborator on John T. and his descendants has been Beverly (Roper) Hales. She has showered me with help and encouragement. But, going through my files, I find so many others that have taken the time to share information. In addition to those named earlier in this chapter must be included Hubert Dean and Grace W. Roper, and Preston Worley. I have also talked to so many of John T.'s descendants on the phone; my apologies for not remembering all of your names. In addition to the information supplied by these and others, some information has come through courthouse records, census records, and Social Security records.

The careful reader will note some duplications regarding the descendants of John T plus some overlapping with William Larkin Roper's descendants.

CHILD NUMBER THIRTEEN: REUBEN ROPER

Rueben Roper was born about 1859 in Forsyth County, the son of John and Amy Roper. The only mention of this child is in the 1860 census:

Forsyth County, Georgia, 1860

John Roper, age 61, farmer, born in North Carolina,³²⁷ married within the last year.³²⁸

Ami, 33, born in Georgia

Alfred, 12, Georgia

Sarah A., 6, Georgia

John, 2, Georgia

Reuben, 1, Georgia

He was evidently named after John's brother, Reuben.³²⁹ He apparently died before the next census was taken in 1870. He probably died soon after the 1860 census; infant deaths were common in those days.

³²⁷ The NC/SC mix-up is common in censuses.

³²⁸ Missed it by a couple of years.

³²⁹ See the chapter on Reuben Roper earlier in this book.

CHILD NUMBER FOURTEEN: THERESA ROPER

Theresa Roper was born February 14, 1862, in Forsyth County, Georgia—a daughter of John and Amy Elizabeth (Reid) Roper. She was usually called "Thursie" or some variation of that term. She referred to herself as "Thursie" in her letters. By the end of her life, no one knew her by any name other than Thursie or Thursey. "Thursey" is the name on her tombstone. Based on the 1880 census, I think her nickname may have been pronounced with a "z" sound: "Thurzy."

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THERESA'S LIFE

See the chapter on Theresa's older brother, John T., for proof that Theresa was a daughter of "old John," and for background on the marriage of "old" John to her mother—and the repercussions this probably had in "our" Roper family.

"Old" John died early in 1866. Since Theresa was born after the 1860 census and John died in 1866, she never appears in a census with her father. The first census in which her name is found in the 1870 census in Forsyth County, Georgia. Her mother, Amy, is a widow:

Cumming District

Amy Roper 44, keeping house, born in Georgia

John Roper 13, farm hand, born in Georgia

Theressa 9, born in Georgia³³⁰

Pincney [i.e., Pinkney] 7, born in Georgia

Larkin 5, born in Georgia

Her mother, Amy, died in 1876. In the courts records regarding the disposal of her property, only Pinkney and Larkin were mentioned as "minor" children. It is interesting to note, however, that Theresa is mentioned in the court proceedings after her mother died. She inherited forty cents!

Received of J[ohn] T. Brown, Administrator of John Roper Deceased forty cents in full of the distributive share due Thursa Roper from the estate of said John Roper Deceased this October 4, 1877. Signed H. L. Patterson Attorney for T. Roper.

In the 1880 Forsyth County census, Theresa, Pinkney, and Larkin are listed as living with other families as hired hands³³¹—within a short distance of each other in the Vickerys Creek District. Here is the listing that includes Theresa:

Dwelling no. 100

R. C. Talint (i.e., Tallant), age 52, farmer

Narcissa (sp?) Talint, age 50, wife

³³⁰ For some reason, Theresa, Pinkney, and Larkin are listed as the children of William Alexander and Sarah (Tallant) Roper by the LDS. Since so many people check the LDS records, this error has spread far and wide.

³³¹ This situation was discussed in the previous chapter on John T. For the listings of Pinkney and Larkin, see the chapters on their lives.

John Talint (I didn't write down info on him)
Triza Roper, female, age 18, orphan, single, housekeeper

I am not sure why Theresa was living with this particular Tallant family, but there are many connections between the Ropers and the Tallants.

Shortly after the 1880 census, Theresa married Marion Reaves³³² February 6, 1881 in Forsyth County, Georgia. She was either 18 or almost 19. Marion had been born September 26, 1860, in Pickens County, South Carolina.³³³

Theresa and Marion's first child was born in December of 1881. They had at least six more children in Georgia before moving to Mississippi in 1891 or 1892.³³⁴ They probably moved to Mississippi to be near some of Marion's family. There were many Reaves/Reeves in Tippah County, Mississippi, but apparently no Ropers.³³⁵

Theresa and her family lived near Blue Mountain, Mississippi, in Tippah County. Tippah County is located in the northeast corner of the state of Mississippi. There are no 1890 census records, but Theresa and her family are in the 1900 Mississippi census.³³⁶

M. Reaves. White. Born September 1860. Age 40. Born in South Carolina.
Thersey Reaves. Wife. February 1862. Age 38. Born in Georgia.
As[o/c]ja [in other words, Oscar] J. Reaves. Son. December 1881. Age 19. Born in Georgia.
Gus P. Reaves. Son. April 1886. Age 16. Born in Georgia.
Jas. P. Reaves. Son. August 1889. Age 12. Born in Georgia.
Annie Reaves. Daughter. February 1886. Age 16.³³⁷ Born in Georgia.
Wm. L. Reaves. Son. December 1890. Age 10. Born in Georgia.
Homer J. Reaves. Son. December 1892. Age 8. Born in Mississippi.
Sallie B. Reaves. Daughter. May 1895. Age 5. Born in Mississippi.
Jessie M. Reaves. Daughter. October 1898. Age 2. Born in Mississippi.

Again, the family is listed in the 1910 Mississippi census, still in Tippah County.³³⁸

Marian Reaves. White. Age 49. Born in South Carolina.

³³² In the record of their marriage, Marion's last name is spelled "Reeves," and some of the family tombstones use the spelling "Reeves." But Theresa used "Reaves" in the letters we have, plus the name is consistently spelled "Reaves" in census records and obituaries. My guess is that it was later changed to the more common "Reeves" by someone in the family.

³³³ You will recognize Pickens County as the source of "our" Ropers. At this time, I do not have the names of Marion's father and mother. His first name is occasionally spelled "Marian," but "Marion" (with an "o") predominates in the records.

³³⁴ I base this on the fact that the last child born in Georgia was born in October 1890, while the first child born in Mississippi was born in December 1892.

³³⁵ Note: I found a number of Reaves in Tippah County in the 1920 census, one of the right age to be Marion's brother. Also, in that census, Marion had an older sister, "Huldy" (age 63, born in SC) living with his family. I should also mention that in the 1910 census, Marion had a niece living with him and her son: Ella Green and son Elbert. Further, I should mention that in the midst of the graves of Marion and Theresa's children who died in childhood is the grave for F. F. V. Reaves, wife of L. G. P. Reaves (May 3, 1870 - July 21, 1916) - a sister-in-law? There is also a William Newton Reaves in the same cemetery. I figure he *has* to be a relative. William N. was the son of F. M. and Millie Reaves (June 16, 1885 - June 20, 1895).

³³⁶ Vol. 49, E.D. 108, Sheet 4, Line 12.

³³⁷ This can't be right. Two children born two months apart? That's the way I wrote it down, but obviously I got something wrong.

³³⁸ ED 99, sheet 8.

Thursey Reaves. Wife. Age 46.³³⁹ Born in Georgia.
Wm. L. Reaves. Son. Age 19. Born in Georgia.
Homer Reaves. Son. Age 16. No reference to where born.³⁴⁰
Earnest Reaves. Son. Age 7. No reference to where born.
Ella Green. Niece. Age 29. Born in Georgia.
Elbert Green. Great Nephew. Age 4. Born in Georgia.

The inclusion of niece Ella Green and great nephew Elbert Green should give an astute genealogist a clue to identifying Marion's family.

Sometime early in 1914, Theresa's unmarried brother, Pinkney ("Pink") came to their home from Arkansas to die.³⁴¹ He passed away February 14, 1914, and was buried in the Sand Springs Cemetery.

Theresa's correspondence with her brother John T. was mentioned in the previous chapter, but for completeness regarding Theresa's life, I want to include the letters here in their entirety. I hope I will not offend anyone if I attempt to duplicate the formatting, spelling, and punctuation in this letter and the two that followed:

Page 1
Blue Mtn Miss
March 9, 1914
Mr John Roper
 dear Bro
Will try and drop you
a few lines to let
you hear from ous
I am not very well
and Marion was
very sick last week
but is up again
John I have bad news
for you. Pink is dead.
he died the 28 of feb.
he died with Consumption
of the lungs. Marion
and my Self was at his
bed side when he died

Page 2

and he was concious to
the last he had been
suffering with Consumption
for a bout a year
But Began to get worse
about two months Before

³³⁹ Oops, she lost a couple of years!

³⁴⁰ Sallie and Jessie should be between Homer and Earnest. Where are they? Perhaps they were living with other family members, working as a housekeeper and a farm worker.

³⁴¹ See the next chapter on Pinkney.

he died We Brought him
Back here and had him
Buried at our home
Burring place at Sand
Springs grave yard
at his request he made
his will for me to have
all of his property and
everything he had Marion
has gone back to Ark.
to sell his things
now he started yesterday

Page 3

John write to me as
soon as you get my
letter and let me
hear from you all
[can't read a few words] have you heard
from dock We havent
heard from him in a
long time. So answer
Soon and all the news
to your sister.

Mrs. M. A. Reaves
Blue Mtn.
Miss

That message was followed up in 1915 by two letters concerning a legal dispute. The correspondence probably had to do with the disposal of Pinkney's property. According to family memory, John T. and his siblings "had to sign a release."

Page 1

Blue Mountain Miss
March 22, 1915

Mr. J. T. Roper

Dear brother:-

I received your
letter about a week ago you
said you had written us two
or three letters before this one & didn't
receive no ans. we did not get your
letter the one written the 5th is
the first we've got in a long time
Times are might hard out her
for me to accept your offer of \$600.³⁴²

³⁴² My copy of these letters is dark and it is hard to see periods. This could be \$6.00 instead of \$600.

but in order to get things strait
I will give you the \$600 if
you will sign the quit clame

Page 2

deed that R. R. Posy sent you.
you & Betty³⁴³ in the presence of some
officer or lawyer after you have done
this send the deed to R. R. Posy turning
every thing over to me if you don't
accept this offer you are liable to come
out loser. Answer this at once
as I've got to get things straitened
up. I close for this time
hoping to get an answer soon.

Your sister

Thursie Reaves

Note: The 1915 letters are in a completely different handwriting than the friendly, sisterly letter of 1914. Theresa apparently had someone more adept at writing do this for her. Maybe Marion wrote the last two; note the signature on the second letter.

Page 1

Blue Mountain Miss
April 23, 1915

Mr. John Roper
Cumming, Ga.

Dear brother:-

I received your letter
a week a so ago. this leaves all
getting along very well hope these
few lines will find you the
same. you said in your letter
that you wouldn't sign the
deed until you got the money.
Their cant be any settlement
between you or me either until
the deed is sign & sent in.
The County & Probate judge

Page 2

of Sheridan³⁴⁴ refuses to permit me
to send you the money not until
you sign the deed & send it in.

³⁴³ John T.'s wife's name was Mary Elizabeth. I guess her nickname was "Betty."

³⁴⁴ Sheridan was the county seat of Grant County, Arkansas.

If you do not want to sign it &
send it to R. R. Posey you can
sign it & send it to The Grant
Co.³⁴⁵ Bank & have them record
it. Then Posey nor I would have
any thing to do with it.
Hope this will be satisfactory
with you.

Your sister & brother
Marion & Thursie Reaves

I would like to know how this disagreement was resolved, wouldn't you? Some researcher more capable than myself can probably figure it out . . . but I must move on. The last available census (at the time I was compiling my information) was the 1920 census. Here is the information from that census:

Reaves,
Marion, head, white, male, 59, married, farmer, born in South Carolina
Roper [i.e., Thursey], wife, white, female, 58, married, house work, born in Georgia
Gus, son, white, male, 35, widowed, farm laborer, born in Georgia
Earnest, son, white, male, 18, single, farm laborer, born in Mississippi
Huldy, sister, female, white, 63, single, born in South Carolina
Paul, grandson, male, white, 11, born in Mississippi
Philip, grandson, male, white, 7, born in Mississippi

Paul and Philip were sons of the widower Gus. The inclusion of Marion's sister Huldy may give someone another clue to determining who Marion's parents were.

Marion died September 24, 1939 in the family residence in or near Blue Mountain. Here is his obituary:

Marion A. Reaves, 79, pioneer citizen of Blue Mountain, died at the family residence Sunday morning after a long illness.

His funeral was conducted from the Reaves home Monday morning, directed by Erastus Hall, Pastor of Palmer Baptist Church, assisted of Dr. J. S. Riser, Jr., Pastor of Livery Baptist Church. Burial was in Sandy Springs Cemetery.

Marion A. Reaves was born in Pickens County, S.C. September 26, 1860, migrating to Mississippi in early life and residing in this section for well over a half century. He was married on February 27, 1881 to Miss Thursey Roper, who survives him, tho herself practically an invalid for some years. They had 12 children, the following five surviving their father:

Homer Reaves, Tupelo; Ernest Reaves, Cotton Plant; Will Reaves, Cotton Plant; Oscar Reaves, Blue Mountain; Mrs. Annie Hutchinson, Blue Mountain; besides many grandchildren and other relatives.

Mr. Reaves was a Deacon of Palmer Baptist Church for about 20 years and was a good and substantial citizen. His son, J. Oscar Reaves has been Chief Electrician and Engineer of Blue Mountain College for many years.

³⁴⁵ In the 1910 Arkansas census, Pinkney was living in Grant County, which is just south of Little Rock, Arkansas. See the chapter on Pinkney.

In the passing of Mr. Reaves, this community has lost one of its oldest and most highly esteemed citizens. He was a devoted and loyal husband, a fond and prudent father and a neighbor who found joy in lending a helping hand to who stood in need of his time, his care, and attention.

During his long illness, which kept him in bed most of the time, he maintained a living faith in God, deeply sympathized with his (can't read) and afflicted wife with whom he had lived for more than 58 years.

While life could hold out no hope to him for return to health and strength, his death had left a deep wound in the hearts of his family.³⁴⁶

As noted in the obituary, Marion is buried in the Sand Springs cemetery, one mile east of Blue Mountain, about a half mile off Highway 368.

Theresa died October 13, 1940. Here is a copy of her obituary:

Mrs. M. A. Reaves

Blue Mountain, Mississippi, October 15

Mrs. Thursey Roper Reaves, 78, widow of the late Marion A. Reaves of Blue Mountain, died Sunday night at the Reaves home, following a long illness.

Mrs. Reaves was a native of North Carolina, moved to Mississippi in early life, married Marion A. Reaves more than a half century ago, lived in the Community most all of her long and useful life, was a member of the Baptist Church, and was the mother of a family of useful children all of whom reside in this section of Mississippi.

The funeral of Mrs. Reaves was held Monday afternoon, conducted by her pastor, Rev. Erastus Hall, Pastor of Palmer Baptist Church, assisted by Dr. J. S. Riser, Jr., of Livrey Memorial Baptist Church. Interment was in Sand Springs Cemetery where her aged husband was buried a little more than a year ago.

Surviving Mrs. Reaves are one daughter, Mrs. Annie Hutchinson, Blue Mountain; and four sons: J. Oscar Reaves, Blue Mountain; Homer Reaves, Tupelo; Ernest Reaves, Cotton Plant; and Willie Reaves, Cotton Plant, besides many grandchildren and other relatives of this section.

The Pallbearers include[d]: Otis Reed, A. J. Kent, G. O. Thomas, Cecil Adkins, R. M. Hutchins and Orville Bryant.

R. L. Nance & Co. had charge of funeral arrangements.³⁴⁷

As noted in the obituary, Theresa is also buried in the Sand Springs cemetery. My wife and I had the privilege of visiting that little cemetery a few years ago. It is tucked away in a grove of trees a half mile off the road and reached by walking a half mile or so along a wooded lane.³⁴⁸

SOURCES—AND "THANK YOU"

Jo and I made a trip to Tippah County, the town of Blue Mountain, and the Sand Spring cemetery a few years ago—to work on this branch of the family. The information in this chapter has been compiled from information gathered on that trip; from the personal letters from Theresa; from census records; from information from the Tippah County, Mississippi, website; from information from the Tippah County library; from obituaries; from Social Security

³⁴⁶ From the *Southern Sentinel*, September 28, 1939.

³⁴⁷ From the *Southern Sentinel*, October 17, 1940.

³⁴⁸ At the time we were there, the gate to the lane had been locked because of vandalism.

records; from phone calls to family members; and from the basic background information from the Forsyth County research. The information regarding the descendants of Theresa are from the same sources. My thanks to all—with a special thanks to Patsy Reaves!

CHILD NUMBER FIFTEEN: PINKNEY B. ROPER

Pinkney B.³⁴⁹ Roper³⁵⁰ was born March 13, 1864,³⁵¹ in Forsyth County, Georgia—the son of John and Amy Roper. Like most who were named "Pinkney," he was often called "Pink."

THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME?

If you are like me, the name "Pinkney" sounds a bit strange—but you will find that many Ropers (and their kin) who came from Pickens County, South Carolina, named sons "Pinkney" (with some variation in spelling). In the spring of 2000, when my wife and I were visiting Easley, the county seat of Pickens County, I spent some time in the county library. And I *think* I found the origin of the name. The Pinckneys were prominent in South Carolina in general and one of them, Charles Pinckney, was prominent in what became Pickens County. Here are bits and pieces from a variety of sources:

The Pinckney family played a leading role in the politics of South Carolina and the nation during and after the American Revolution.³⁵² One of them, Thomas Pinckney, was governor of South Carolina 1787-89.³⁵³ Another played a major role in developing the Constitution of the United States.³⁵⁴ The one that probably most influenced our ancestors was named Charles Pinckney, Revolutionary War soldier, statesman, and diplomat.³⁵⁵ He was known as a friend and aide-de-camp to General George Washington.

Charles Pinckney and his family were a major influence on the area from which our ancestors came. The first town built in what is now Pickens County, South Carolina, was first called Rockville and then Pickensville in honor of General Andrew Pickens. The town was about a mile southeast of the present county seat of Easley. Charles built one of the first houses in Pickensville in 1795. It was a summer home and was built of logs and dressed lumber with oak shingles. Charles, a wealthy man, later built a mansion in the Pendleton District; the mansion (which is being restored) is called "Woodburn."

According to local history, when George Washington toured the area in 1798, he looked up his old friend Charles Pinckney. According to those same local histories, Mrs. Charles Pinckney "brought refinement and culture to Pickensville, since she was a member of one of Virginia's finest families."

³⁴⁹ The middle initial "B" is from Pinkney's tombstone. I have no idea what it stood for.

³⁵⁰ Do not confuse Pinkney B. Roper with Pinkney M. Roper (1883-1966) who also lived in Forsyth County. Pinkney M., a descendant of "old" John's cousin, William Roper, married Jenettie Tallant (1883-1956).

³⁵¹ According to his tombstone, Pinkney was born March 13, 1865. But all the census records indicate that he was born in 1863 or 64. Since his tombstone is a year off regarding his death (footnote 23), it is probably also a year off regarding his birth. But if you want to put 1865 in your database, I won't argue with you.

³⁵² 1999 Grolier Interactive Encyclopedia (on CD).

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁴ World Book Encyclopedia.

³⁵⁵ This sentence and those that follow are based on histories of Pickens County, South Carolina.

With this background, it is not hard to understand why early citizens in the area named their sons Pinckney or Pinkney—which was then passed on as "a family name."

A BRIEF SURVEY OF PINKNEY'S LIFE

As already mentioned, our Pinkney Roper was born March 13, 1864, in Forsyth County, Georgia—the son of John Roper and his second wife, Amy. Less than two years after his birth, Pinkney's father died. The first census in which Pinkney appears, he is in the household of his widowed mother:

1870 Forsyth County census
Cumming District
Amy Roper 44, keeping house, born in Georgia
John Roper 13, farm hand, born in Georgia
Theressa 9, born in Georgia
Pincney³⁵⁶ 7, born in Georgia³⁵⁷
Larkin 5, born in Georgia

Pinkney's mother, Amy, died in 1876, when he was twelve. After his mother died, five appraisers were appointed to appraise her estate.³⁵⁸ One of the appraisers was W. L. Chamblee. In the court orders given to the men, this statement is found: "[I]f upon a fair and impartial appraisement you find the entire estate does not amount to five hundred dollars, that you set the same aside for the use and benefit of said two minors Pinkney & Doctor³⁵⁹ Roper."³⁶⁰

The appraisal is dated June 12, 1876. The commissioners said they found "upon a fair and impartial valuation that the [the entire estate of Ami Roper] am[oun]ts to ninety-eight dollars & we do hereby in pursuance of said order set the same aside for the use and benefit of said two Minors Pinkney & Doctor Roper."³⁶¹ One of the appraisers who signed the statement was W. L. Chamblee.

On the same day, the appraisers certified that their "inventory & appraisement contain[ed] all the property belonging to the estate of said Ami Roper dec'd so far as was produced to us by H. F. Roper keeper of the orphan children of said Dec'd."³⁶²

The sale of the property "set aside to Pinkney & Larkin Roper minor children under 16 years of age of Ami Roper Dec'd" was "sold by H[enry] F. Roper Trustee on 16 June 1876."³⁶³

³⁵⁶ Note that the spelling in 1870 has the "c" of the original "Pinckney." Later, Pinkney dropped the c, as did most who were named Pinckney.

³⁵⁷ For some strange reason, Theresa, Pinkney, and Larkin are listed as the children of William Alexander and Sarah (Tallant) Roper by the LDS. Since so many people check the LDS records, this error has spread far and wide.

³⁵⁸ A Forsyth county researcher commented: "Appraisers were usually men of good reputation who lived in the community. I feel sure that one of the requirements would be that they were not heirs or possible heirs to the estate" (email dated June 16, 2002).

³⁵⁹ This was William Larkin's nickname. See the next chapter on William Larkin.

³⁶⁰ Inventory & Appraisements Book N, page 534. The same wording is in the Book of Sale Bills, Etc., page 406. For the complete text, see the section on Amy (Reid) Roper earlier in this book.

³⁶¹ Book of Sale Bills, Etc., page 406.

³⁶² Book of Sale Bills Etc., page 407.

³⁶³ Book of Sale Bills, Etc., page 409.

W. L. Chamblee bought two hens for 25 cents, "1 lot sundries" for 20 cents, and 1 yoke and hooks for 10 cents.³⁶⁴

Since Henry F. Roper was the "keeper of the orphan children" and "Trustee" of the property, one would think that he would make arrangements for Pinkney and Larkin to live with himself or some other relative.³⁶⁵ Instead, four years later, in the 1880 Forsyth County census, we find Pinkney and Larkin living with other families as hired hands in the Vickerys Creek District. Pinkney was living with the appraiser of his mother's property who bought some of the property: W. L. Chamblee. Here is the listing:

Dwelling no. 105
W. L. Chamblee, age 67 (or 57; hard to read), farmer
Iris E. Chamblee, age 49, wife, keeping house
Georgia Bramblett, age 25, orphan, single, housekeeper
Pinkney Roper, age 16, orphan, single, working on farm

There is no 1890 census available and I have been unable to find Pinkney in the 1900 census. We do know a few things about Pink. He never married. At some point, he traveled to Texas. A recently discovered picture of him was taken at a studio in Whitesboro, Texas. This is not far from where his Roper relatives lived near Denton. Finally, he moved to Grant County, Arkansas.³⁶⁶ February 14, 1910, he bought a 172-acre farm on Kelt creek from M. H. Webb, wife of D. C. Webb.³⁶⁷

I found Pinkney in the 1910 census, living in Grant County, Arkansas, in the Franklin Township.³⁶⁸ He is called "Pink Roaper," and is listed with Lawrence McGill and his wife Lizzie as a boarder. Lawrence was 36, born in Georgia, and was a farmer. Lizzie was 39. They had six children and a very young sister-in-law also living with them. Here is the information on Pinkney from that census:

47 years old, born in Georgia.
His parents both born in Georgia.³⁶⁹
He was single (as opposed to married, divorced, or widowed).
He was farming. He owned his farm. It was not mortgaged. There was no house on the farm.³⁷⁰
He was able to speak English. He was able to read and write.

Early in 1913, Pinkney came down with "consumption" (tuberculosis).³⁷¹ When he neared death, his sister Theresa (Roper) Reaves brought him to her home in Tippah County,

³⁶⁴ Book of Sale Bills, Etc., page 409.

³⁶⁵ See the discussion on this in the chapter on John T. Roper.

³⁶⁶ If I weren't so lazy, I would drive down to Grant County and check out courthouse records to see if I could find Pinkney in them. But I'll leave that task to someone else.

³⁶⁷ Info from a photocopies of two warranty deeds recently sent to me.

³⁶⁸ Vol. No. 024. E.D. 0079. Family No. 0012.

³⁶⁹ His mother was born in Georgia but his father was born in South Carolina. But the McGills probably did not know that.

³⁷⁰ Several of these items were marked out on the form, but they sound right even if they were marked out for some reason: The fact he was boarding with the McGills would indicate that there was no house on his farm. The fact that there was a family dispute over his property when he died would indicate that it was free from debt.

³⁷¹ My grandfather Lee Roper had tuberculosis. I don't know if there is a family weakness here or not.

Mississippi. Pink passed away February 28, 1914,³⁷² and was buried in the Sand Springs Cemetery in Tippah County. Here is a portion of a letter Theresa wrote her brother John T. March 9, 1914:³⁷³

John, I have bad news for you. Pink is dead. He died the 28th of February, died with consumption of the lungs. Marion and myself was at his bedside when he died and he was conscious to the last. He had been suffering with consumption for about a year, but began to get worse about two months before he died. We brought him back here and had him buried at our home burying place at Sand Springs graveyard . . . Marion has gone back to Arkansas to sell his things now. He started yesterday.

After Pinkney's death, there was some correspondence between Theresa and John T. over the disposal of his Arkansas property—but you can read about that in the chapters on John T. and Theresa.³⁷⁴

³⁷² According to his tombstone, Pinkney died February 28, 1913, but look again at Theresa's 1914 letter which sounds like Pink died very recently, not over a year before. My guess is that the tombstone was erected later and 1913 was a guess-timate.

³⁷³ For the full text of the letter (in the original format), see the chapter on Theresa Roper.

³⁷⁴ I was recently sent court documents and letters regarding this dispute—and I'm still confused. It seems to me that Pinkney had given the deed to his brother John T., but then, in his will, Pink left the farm to his sister Theresa. So John T. had to send the deed to Thursey, but first some money had to change hands. If a lawyer had the documents in hand, he could probably untangle the matter.

CHILD NUMBER SIXTEEN: WILLIAM LARKIN ROPER

William Larkin Roper³⁷⁵ was born May 1865³⁷⁶ in Forsyth County, Georgia—the son of John and Amy Roper. As far as we know, he was John's last child. In his childhood, William Larkin was known as "Larkin"³⁷⁷ or was referred to by his nickname "Doc" (or "Doctor"). In later years, he indicated a preference for "William" or "William L." He was the second son of "old" John to be named "William"; apparently the first William Roper died in infancy.³⁷⁸

LARKIN = LARKIN

At one point in my research into Larkin's life, there was a question whether the "Larkin/Doctor Roper" in Forsyth County, Georgia, was the "William Larkin Roper" later found in Polk and Floyd Counties, Georgia. I wrote a rather lengthy document on this, using "If A = B and B = C, then A = C" logic. Finally, however, I managed to get a copy of William Larkin's death certificate. Here is the pertinent data from that document:

Birthplace: Forsyth County, Georgia
 Name of father: John Roper, born in South Carolina
 Name of mother: Amy Reed,³⁷⁹ born in South Carolina³⁸⁰

You are therefore spared the pain of wading through my exercise in "logic." Be thankful for small favors.

LARKIN'S LIFE

As already noted, William Larkin Roper was born in 1865 (or maybe 1866³⁸¹) in Forsyth County, Georgia—the son of John Roper and his second wife, Amy Elizabeth (Reid) Roper. Larkin's father was in his late sixties when he was born. Larkin was a babe in arms when his father died early in 1866.

The first time that Larkin appears in a census is in 1870:

Forsyth County, Cumming District
 Amy Roper 44, keeping house, born in Georgia
 John Roper 13, farm hand, born in Georgia

³⁷⁵ Do not confuse William Larkin Roper with another Larkin Roper in another Roper line: Jesse Larkin Roper who was born in 1850 and married Mary L. Cape in 1867 in Forsyth County. That Larkin was a son of William and Susan (Masters) Roper.

³⁷⁶ According to the 1900 census, Larkin was born in May 1866, but looking at all the census records plus his death certificate plus the fact the fact that Larkin's father died early in 1866, I think the date should be May 1865. If you prefer May 1866, that's fine.

³⁷⁷ Since I knew him as "Larkin" 95% of the time I was researching of his life, you will notice that *my* preference in this chapter is "Larkin."

³⁷⁸ See the chapter on "William Roper."

³⁷⁹ The one supplying the information used a different spelling for Amy's last name.

³⁸⁰ Amy was actually born in Georgia, but this is a common mistake when information was supplied by people relying on their memory.

³⁸¹ See footnote 2.

Theressa 9, born in Georgia
Pincney 7, born in Georgia
Larkin 5, born in Georgia³⁸²

Larkin's mother, Amy, died just six years after this census—in 1876. She would have been about fifty years of age. Larkin was probably about eleven.

In the previous chapter on Pinkney, I quoted some of the documents that resulted from Amy's death. Twice in those pages, Larkin is referred to as "Doctor" and only once as "Larkin." When I first read the documents, I thought the one who wrote them forgot to bring his ear trumpet and "Larkin" sounded like "Doctor" to him. It was not until I found Larkin listed in the 1900 census record as "Dock," that I realized that this was his nickname. My mother-in-law, Edith W. Tibbles, had the same nickname (her nieces and nephews called her "Aunt Doc"), but the reason is disputed ("she liked to take medicine" vs. "she like to nurse things"). I have no idea why Larkin was called "Doc," but the nickname stuck.

As noted in previous chapters, Larkin and two of his siblings—Theresa and Pinkney—are listed in the 1880 census (two of them as "orphans") and are living with various families in the Vickers Creek district of Forsyth County. Larkin is listed as a hired hand living with William Philipps. Here is the listing:

Dwelling 119
William Philipps (or Phillips), 50, farmer
Eliza Jones Philipps, 44, wife, keeping house
Mary J. Philipps, 22, daughter, single, at home
Larkin Roper, age 14, hired, single, laboring on farm

Check the chapter on Pinkney and you will see that William Philipps was one of the appraisers of Larkin's mother's property after her death.³⁸³

When Larkin was about 23, he married Sarah Suits. Based on the date of their firstborn, I am estimating the date of their marriage as about 1897. Sarah had been born December 2, 1871, in Cassville, Bartow County, Georgia, the daughter of A. T. and Etheline (Cornett) Suits.

Soon after their marriage, Larkin and Sarah moved several counties west. Most of the rest of their life was spent northern Polk County, Georgia, and in the region around Rome in Floyd County. A number of other Ropers from Pickens County, South Carolina (other lines, but kin), moved to Polk and Floyd Counties. Perhaps Larkin moved there to be near those kinfolk. Or maybe not. A Roper doesn't need much excuse to move.

Larkin and Sarah's first child, a daughter, was born January 1, 1899,³⁸⁴ in Floyd County. They named her Amy after Larkin's mother.

There is no 1890 census record. By the time the 1900 census was taken, Larkin was living in Polk County:

Polk County, Georgia

³⁸²For some reason, Theresa, Pinkney, and Larkin are listed as the children of William Alexander and Sarah (Tallant) Roper by the LDS. Since so many people check the LDS records, this error has spread far and wide.

³⁸³ I am in touch with a gg-granddaughter of William Phillips: Patsy Cox. Patsy gave me limited background on him, but had no idea why Larkin was living with her gg-grandfather in 1880.

³⁸⁴ According to the 1900 census, Amy was born January 1, 1898, but the census also lists her as 1 year old. Since the census was taken about the middle of 1900, if she was really 1 year old at the time, she was born in 1899, not 1898.

Roper, Dock L., born May 1866, age 34, born in Georgia.
Sarah A., wife, born December 1871, age 28, born in Georgia.
Annie [i.e., Amy], daughter, born June 1898, age 1, born in Georgia.

Larkin and Sarah's second child was a boy: Henry Bright Roper born March 19, 1901 at Cedartown, Polk County, Georgia.³⁸⁵ It is possible that Henry was named after Larkin's oldest half-brother, Henry F. Roper.

Their third child was also a boy and was apparently named after his father and after a half-cousin on his father's side. William ("Willie") Alfred Roper was born September 18, 1902 in Rockmart, Polk County, Georgia.³⁸⁶

Their third boy was Delos Claude Roper. Claude was born September 4, 1904, in Taylorsville, Bartow County, Georgia—just over the line from Polk County. Since Sarah was from Bartow County, she may have gone home to have child number four.

Their fifth child was Catherine Aline Roper, born November 4, 1907—probably in Polk County. Child number six was David Dewitt Roper, born in Polk County March 24, 1909.

The family was still in Polk County when the 1910 census was taken:

William L. Roper (born in 1860)
Sarah, age 38, born c1872
Anna [i.e., Amy; had a hard time getting it right, didn't they?], age 10
Henry
William
Claude
Aline
David Dewitt

Sometime between 1910 and 1920, the family moved to Floyd County—and that's where they were when the 1920 census was taken:

Floyd County, Georgia
William L. Roper, age 55, born in Georgia
Sarah E., wife, age 48, born in Georgia
Amy, daughter, age 20, born in Georgia
Henry, son, age 18, born in Georgia
Willie, son, age 17, born in Georgia
Claud, son, age 15, born in Georgia
Alline, daughter, age 12, born in Georgia
Dewitt, son, age 10, born in Georgia

The family apparently moved back and forth between southern Floyd County and northern Polk County. When Larkin died December 13, 1925, he was near Cedartown, Polk County, Georgia. But then his body was interred December 14, 1925, in Floyd County: in the Pleasant Hope Cemetery on State Hwy 101 near Lindale, Georgia. Here are most of the details from Larkin's death certificate:

Polk County

³⁸⁵ This information is from Henry's Social Security application. According to that application, his parents were William Larkin and Sarah Adaline Roper.

³⁸⁶ This information is from his obituary in the *Rome News Tribune*.

W. L. Roper
Cedartown, Georgia R.F.D. 7 miles northeast
Male, white
Date of death: December 13, 1925
Cause of death: Acute Indigestion
Name of wife: Sara
Age: 60
Occupation: Farmer
Birthplace: Forsyth County, Georgia
Name of father: John Roper, born in South Carolina
Name of mother: Amy Reed, born in South Carolina³⁸⁷
Place of burial: Pleasant Hope Cemetery
Funeral Director: D. L. Roberts, Cedartown, Georgia

After his death, Larkin's family moved to Rome about 1926 or 1927.³⁸⁸ Since the family had been living in Floyd County when the 1910 census was taken, they must have lived some place other than Rome in those earlier years.

Near the end of her life, Sarah stayed with her first-born, Amy, who had married Thomas Payne. Sarah died January 20, 1946. Here is her obituary from the newspaper:

Mrs. Sarah Suits Roper, 74, died at 6:45 o'clock Sunday morning at the residence of her daughter, Mrs. Tom Payne, on the Airport Road, after an illness of three days.

The daughter of the late A. T. and Etheline Cornet Suits, born December 3, 1871, in Cassville, she moved to Rome twenty years ago. She was a member of the Baptist Church.

She is survived by four sons, Willy and Henry Roper, of Rome; Claude Roper, of Roswell, and D. W. Roper, of Chattanooga; two daughters, Mrs. Payne and Mrs. Aline Tuck, both of Rome; two sisters, Mrs. Frank Payne, of Rome, and Mrs. J. S. Brown, of Odenville, Ala.; three brothers, O. M. Suits, of Seney; Lee Suits, of Aragon; D. R. Suits, of Summerville; 14 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Funeral services were to be held at 4 o'clock this afternoon in the Mark McDonald Baptist Church, with the Rev. Leroy Perry officiating. Burial was to be in the Pleasant Hope Cemetery. The remains were to lie in state at the residence of Mrs. Payne on Airport Road.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS—AND NOTES

My constant encourager regarding Larkin's life and descendants has been Betty Payne, who was married to one of the step-sons of Larkin's first born Amy. As already noted, Amy married Thomas ("Tom") Newton Payne. He was a divorcee³⁸⁹ with several children:

Mary Louise Payne (1920 - 1920)

John Claude Payne (1922 - 1998), who married Sara Kathleen Born.

³⁸⁷ As noted earlier, Amy's last name was actually "Reid," and she was born in Georgia.

³⁸⁸ This information comes from obituaries of other members of Larkin's family.

³⁸⁹ He had been married to Carra Elivira Garrison. Tom had been 26 when he married Carra, age 15. Carra, her second husband, and her children lived on a houseboat on the rivers near Rome for a period of time. According to a family member, "theirs was a dysfunctional family."

Mattie Lee ("Martha") Payne (1924 - 1989) who married (Unknown) Parks and then John Nickolas Mandragouras.

William Herman Payne (1928 - 1986) who married Betty Sue Ralston.

Among the funny-but-sad family stories shared by Betty Payne³⁹⁰ is one that shows that Amy apparently inherited "the Roper moving gene":

Tom and Amy Payne lived in about a dozen different places while I knew them. My late husband said his parents . . . moved frequently when he was a child. He said he thought they probably moved every time their rent came due Once (which I think is sooo extremely sad) the parents moved while my husband (who was just a little kid of about 6 or 7) was at school. He did not know they were planning to move. Can you imagine a little child coming home with a friend and finding all his stuff gone and not knowing where his family is? He went home with a friend and found out later that his parents had moved up the street.³⁹¹

Other valuable sources include the following: a visit with L. T. Tuck and his daughter, Susan Brock, in Rome, Georgia; information sent me by Jane Carr; phone conversations with several in this particular branch of the Roper tree; obituary information from Pat Youngblood who works in the Jennings Heritage Chapel in Rome; and data gleaned from the internet. I need to *especially* express my thanks to the Rome–Floyd County library; the library was a gold-mine of useful information and the personnel were unusually helpful.

A final note: The careful reader will note some overlapping between Larkin's descendants and the descendants of his older full brother John T. Roper.

³⁹⁰ Betty also shared information on her own family which does not appear in this history since her husband was related to the Ropers by marriage—but I thank her for sharing her life with me.

³⁹¹ Email from Betty Payne, November 5, 2001.