Robert George Brogdon was born in Phoenix, AZ in 1924 one of 14 children. His parents were Thomas “Tom” Newton Brogdon and Hanna Mallie Sparks.

Hanna was from the Sparks family who were cited in the book Images of the Past – A Pictorial History of Mount Pleasant and Titus County, Texas first published by the Mount Pleasant Daily Tribune in 1992. In addition to the Sparks family, Robert’s Stephenson and Riddle ancestors are also included.

This is an excellent reference for researchers whose ancestors are from this area as it includes historical photos from this small town. The individuals who are of primary interest in this article are William Carroll Sparks, who was a member of Co. 1, Titus County Grays during the Civil War, and his wife Arelda Jane Stephenson.

Arelda was the daughter of America Jane Riddle who is a descendant of William, the Tory Riddle. For articles dealing with William Riddle see the Riddle Newsletter Vol. 2 Iss. 2, Vol. 3 Iss. 1 and Iss. 2, Vol. 4 Iss. 1 and Iss. 2, Vol. 6 Iss. 1 and Iss. 2.
For those with Internet access additional information can be found at [http://www.wilkesnc.org/history/toryoak.htm](http://www.wilkesnc.org/history/toryoak.htm).

William Riddle is Robert George Brogdon’s 4th maternal great-grandfather. Following this descendant line we go from William, to son Isaac, then son Elam and wife Matilda Simpson and their daughter America Jane.

America Jane Riddle married William M. Stephenson on Dec. 19, 1844 in Boone Co., KY where they sired numerous children. Two of their children were Susan Mann and Arelda Jane Stephenson born 14 May 1846 in TX. America Jane appears on pages 14, 15 and 59 in Images of the Past as grandma Stephenson.

About 1865 Susan Mann Stephenson married William C. Sparks who was from Mississippi but unfortunately she died one year later. William, known as Carroll, then married Susan’s sister Arelda on 1 July 1867. Arelda and Carroll Sparks had nine children, one of them named America Jane, named after her grandmother American Jane Riddle.

Arelda died January 15, 1929 in Titus Co., TX. America Jane Sparks was born to her pioneer parents on May 14, 1846, the first white child born in Mount Pleasant, TX. America Jane had a sister named Mallie Hanna Sparks who married Thomas “Tom” Newton Brogdon, in Altus, Oklahoma just after it became a state.

Tom was born about 1888 in Roswell, NM and died 1961 in Phoenix, AZ. Mallie was born 1887 in Mount Pleasant, TX and died 1967 in Phoenix, AZ. Tom and Mallie Brogdon had the following children: Robert George, Vida, Manuel, Iva, Edna, Jewel, Mack, Addie, Elmer, Velma, and Hub. Robert George was born 1924 in Glendale, Maricopa Co., AZ. My line descends through Robert George Brogdon’s daughter; Shirley Jean Brogdon who was born in 1943 to Robert and his wife Rudeen Rose Merryman in Phoenix, AZ.

Today Robert lives a very active life in Rio Linda, CA along with his present wife, Oval Bessie Autry who he has been with since 1987. Oval’s sister Jean married Robert G. Brogdon’s cousin Kent.

Shirley Jean was first married to Ronnie E. Parr and had one son, Russell D. Parr. She then married William M. Pollock. William and Shirley had one daughter, Debra Rudeen Pollock. Russell later changed his name to Merryman.
Robert George has had many occupations during his life as did many men of his generation. Although now retired he has been a sailor, skilled carpenter and also worked along with his brother-in-law Lonzo Merryman taking air-to-ground photos of navy warships in the mid 1940s.

Robert served in the navy as a Seaman 1st Class/Coxswain from June 1943 to November 1945. He attended boot camp training in Shoemaker, CA and onboard training in Oakland, CA. He was then assigned to the USS Arctic. Unfortunately he injured his shoulder when he fell from the ship’s crow’s nest and was honorably discharged.

He was authorized to wear the American Area and the Asiatic Pacific Area campaign medals and their appropriate bars. While serving in the navy he and Rudeen made their home in Phoenix with his parents. Rudeen helped her mother-in-law, Grandma Mallie make Cha Cha which consisted of cabbage, chopped onion, bell pepper, vinegar and water, a salsa type dish. The ingredients were then put in into a 5-gallon container and left to ferment for 10 days to 2 weeks.

When Robert was assigned to permanent shore duty he, Rudeen and Shirley first rented an apartment in San Francisco and later moved to Signal Hill. At that time there were not many homes on Signal Hill and it was here that he taught Rudeen to drive, going round and round the oil wells.

Their next moves were to Wilmington, Walteria and then San Diego, CA. Finally they located affordable land in Spring Valley, CA where they lived in a tent while Robert built their new home. Behind their new home there was an acre of land, which they planted with avocado trees. Robert and Rudeen obtained a young goat from a neighbor, as a pet for Shirley and it wasn’t long before the goat learned to jump up and stand on their mailbox.
Robert George Brogdon is a proud father and grandfather and his children are equally proud of him. He will be celebrating his 77th birthday on June 23, 2001. His children wish him many more wonderful years.

My Yancey County Roots
by Jim Hartung
Aberdeen, MD

The first of my Riddle ancestors, my third great-grandfather, to appear in NC was John W. Riddle, Sr. Tradition alleges that John Riddle, Sr. and his brothers Randolph and Tyre were the sons of Samuel Riddle and the grandsons of Basil Riddle, born about 1735 in Ireland. Basil left Ireland and settled in Accomack Co., VA near the Blue Ridge Mountains.

What we do know is that by 1790 John and his brothers Randolph and Tyre had land grants in Stokes Co., NC and appeared in the 1790 Stokes Co. census records.

Randolph was born about 1760 and married Jemima Hawkins probably in Stokes Co. about 1784. They produced six sons and seven daughters. Soon after 1800 Randolph sold his land and moved his family to Franklin Co., TN.

In 1827 Randolph decided to again relocate, this time to Jackson Co., AL. Randolph died about 1836 and Jemima passed away in 1842. A large group of Randolph’s descendants later settled in Texas.

Tyre was born about 1765 and lived in the northwestern corner of Stokes Co. near Brown Mountain. Tyre and his wife Clara had three daughters and one son. Tyre died about 1840 and is almost certainly buried along with Clara and their daughters in the Riddle-Palmer Cemetery near Francisco, NC. Their son Asa moved to Lee Co., VA after Tyre’s death and his descendants’ later spread to VA, KY and MO. One of Tyre’s descendants was John Paul Riddle founder of the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

John Riddle, Sr. was born about 1764 and had two wives. The first is unknown and the second, Nancy Jane Biddix he married 26 Feb. 1831 in Rutherford Co., NC.
While living in Stokes Co., John and his first wife bore the following children, Lucinda (ca. 1787-1847), William (ca. 1793-ca. 1858), Margaret (ca. 1795-ca. 1879), John (1800-), Benjamin Tyre (1800-1875), Robert (ca. 1801-?), and Mary (1804-?).

On 9 Oct. 1802, John sold his land in Stokes Co. and moved to Buncombe Co., which is now Yancey Co. On Jan. 7, 1805, he purchased land on the Cain River from George Wilson.

His children born in Yancey Co. were Nathaniel and Jane. John died in 1844 and believed to be buried in an old abandoned cemetery on the Mitchell Co. side of Ross Branch.

Most of the Riddle families presently living in the Yancey Co. area are descendants of this John Riddle.

About 1825, John’s son Nathaniel began farming in Yancey Co. and married Rebecca Tatum and together they produced the following children, Nancy born 1826, John W. born 1829, Hiram B. born 1831, Julia A. born 1834, James E. born 1836, Mary born 1838, Mollie born 1840, Matilda L. born 1845, and Emma born 1847.

Between 1850 and 1855, his wife Rebecca died and on 2 Sept. 1856 he married Elizabeth Edwards and sired two more children, Isabelle born 1859 and Smith born 1864.

Nathaniel’s last appearance in the census records was in 1870 when he was living with his daughter Nancy and her husband John Holcomb and their family near Bald Creek in Cain River TWP. He was apparently suffering from senility. Nathaniel’s youngest child, Smith was also a resident of the Holcomb household.

From what can be ascertained his half-sister Nancy and her husband John raised Smith. On 18 Aug. 1889, J.P. Penland married him to Julia Austin at the home of James Edney. Julia was the daughter of Ezekiel Austin and his wife Lydia.

Julia died within two years of their marriage and Smith then married Sara Wilson on 17 Dec. 1892. Sara was the daughter of Mitchell A. Wilson (1823-1909) and Lucinda Metcalf (1827-ca. 1870) and had previously been married to an Ingle by whom she had had two sons. Smith and Sara had one son, Walter Lee born 25 Sept. 1893 and one daughter Lille Belle born 28 March 1895. Unfortunately, Lille Bell died three years later.

Walter Lee Riddle 1893-1963
son of Smith Riddle
In 1900 Smith and his family were living on a rented farm near Middle Fork of Ivy TWP, between Mars Hill and Barnardsville in Madison Co.. How long they resided at Middle Fork is unknown but by 1910 Smith, Sara and Walter had returned to Yancey Co. and were living on Horton Creek Rd. in Price’s Creek TWP. Their next-door neighbors were the John Metcalf family who were probably related to Sara as her mother was Lucinda Metcalf.

By 1920 we find Smith, age 56 and a widower living with Clyde Metcalf, his wife Mary and their daughter Alice. Clyde was the son of John Metcalf, their neighbor on Horton Creek Rd. The date of Smith’s death is unknown.

Sometime between 1910 and 1914 Walter, along with his friend Grover Boone, departed their homes in Yancey Co. and took-up residence in Chester Co., PA. Here Walter was employed as an attendant at Embreeville State Hospital in Chester Co., PA and then as a police officer in Coatsville, PA.

While working at Embreeville State Hospital he met Helen Phoebe Walker, a daughter of John H. Walker (1856-1933) and Mary J. Taylor (1856-1936) both of York Co., PA.

Rev. C.R. Williamson married Walter and Helen on 8 Feb. 1916 in West Chester, PA. About 1921 Walter quit his job as a police officer in Coatsville and they moved to Aberdeen, Harford Co., MD where Walter obtained work as a gun assembler at the newly opened Aberdeen Proving Ground.


Grover Boone remained in Coatsville where he married and raised four daughters.

Kenneth Riddle married Mildred Lee Davenport of Washington Co., NC and had two children plus two grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Kenneth died in 1960.
My mother, Kathryn Riddle married Milton Hartung and has three children, James, Barbara, and Judith.

Merle Riddle married Isabelle Hendricks and has two children and five grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

The Riddles of Turkey Cove, Virginia
Richard Riddle

In the December 1999 issue of the Riddle Newsletter, we published an article about the death of Mack Riddle who was known as Mr. Fourth of July in Kingsport, TN. (See article James Mack Riddle 1913-1999.)

Mack had been the spark plug for the Riddle Reunion held on the third or fourth Sunday every August for many years. Mack was a descendant of Tyre Riddle via Tyre’s son Asa.

Tyre Riddle was a brother of our ancestor John W. Riddle, Sr. (1764-1844). For several years Mack’s lineage to Tyre was unknown to me. Recently I heard from Faye Riddle Bocock, Mack’s second cousin, once removed. She graciously contributed information that solved this mystery. Mack is the 3rd great grandson of Tyre. His Riddle lineage is as follows:

Tyre Riddle (ca. 1765-1840)
As Riddle (ca. 1790-1961)
John Riddle (1913-1884)
James William Belt Riddle (1855-1926)
James Sebastian "Bass" Riddle (1879-aft. 1959)
Maxwell "Mack" Riddle (1913-1999)

Faye Riddle is a 4th great-granddaughter of Tyre Riddle. Faye’s Riddle lineage follows:

Tyre Riddle (ca. 1765-1840)
Asa Riddle (ca. 1790-1861)
John Riddle (1813-1884)
Franklin Tyre Riddle (1842-1912)
Isaac Howard Riddle (1886-1945)
Samuel Hollis Riddle (1921-)
N. Faye Riddle (1942-)

Mack and Faye descend from two brothers, James William Belt and Franklin Tyre Riddle, sons of John Riddle (1813-1884).
Faye’s great-grandfather Frank and Mack’s grandfather Jim Riddle married twin sisters. These sisters were descendants of Myeerah (White Crane), the daughter of Tarhe, Chief of the Wyandots, and Isaac Zane.

The Wyandots are a Native American people formed of groups displaced by the destruction of the Huron confederacy in the mid-17th century, formerly located in Ohio and the upper Midwest and now living in northeast OK.

Frank Riddle married Zane Asbury and Jim married Sina Asbury. Zane and Sina’s father was Joseph Asbury whose mother was the grand daughter of Isaac Zane and Myeerah.

Hollis “Hol” Lee Riddle, born 13 Feb 1874, is the son of James “Jim” William Belt Riddle. When he was about 18 years old he left Turkey Cove and traveled to Cincinnati, Ohio then to Dayton, Ohio and on to Springfield, Massachusetts.

He married Edith May Cumming from Springfield in 1899 and they had four children. Hollis remained in New England except for a few family visits to Virginia.

The following story is about Isaac Zane and the Wyandots and is abstracted from a book compiled by Hollis Lee Riddle entitled The Family of James William Belt Riddle And Sina Asbury - Their Antecedents, Descendants And All Known Kin, published July 1959.

Isaac Zane and the Wyandots

Isaac Zane (1753-1816) was the son of William Zane. Isaac’s brother Col. Ebinezer (Ebenezer) Zane (1747-1811) was the commander of Ft. Henry in Wheeling, WV during the Revolutionary War. He was a pioneer who established a land claim at the junction of Wheeling Creek and the Ohio River in 1770 where he established the first permanent settlement.

He later acquired additional lands including the present Zanesville, OH, which was named after him. Ebenezer was a frontiersman who blazed the trail, Zane’s Trace from present-day WV to KY.
Isaac and his brother Jonathon were returning home from school near Moorsfield when the Wyandot Indians captured them. At the time Isaac was eight years old. Two years later, Jonathon was ransomed and was returned to his family but Tarhe, the Chief of the Wyandots, refused to ransom Isaac.

When Isaac was eighteen he escaped and made his way to Fort Henry and his family. Unfortunately the Wyandots soon recaptured him.

Tarhe’s daughter Myeerah had developed a fondness for Isaac and they were married about 1774 after his recapture. Isaac again escaped during the Revolution but this time he was captured by the Shawnees near Pittsburgh.

Isaac was about to burn at the stake when Myeerah and a large body of Wyandots arrived and claimed Isaac as their captive. He was turned over to Myeerah and they returned to the Miami-Mad River valley, now Zanesville.

Isaac and Myeerah later visited his Zane family at Wheeling and were formally married in a Quaker wedding. They had seven children who mostly married Wyandots and followed the tribe into Upper Sandusky, OH and in 1842 to a reservation near Lawrence, KS.

James, Isaac Zane’s grandson became the Head of the Wyandots. The present Chief, 1959 is Lawrence Zane, Isaac and Myeerah’s descendant. Myeerah died in February 1816 and Isaac died in October 1816 in Zanesfield, OH.

There is a monument and plaque erected in memory of Isaac Zane the White Eagle.

In memory of Isaac Zane
The White Eagle of the Wyandots
Born in Berkley Co., Va in 1753
Died in Zanesfield in 1816.
Age 63 years
Captured by the Wyandot Indians in 1702 and carried to the Valley of the Mad River.
He grew to manhood among the Indians, and married the daughter of chief Tarhe.
He was the first white settler in the mad river valley, by nearly half a century.
His fort and cabin were the center of a new civilization, and the town was named in his honor.
His labors and influence for peace in behalf of the whites and his service for his country were recognized and rewarded the government.
The captivity of the young Virginian, and his union with the daughter of the Wyandots proved a great blessing to the settlers of the valleys of the Mad River, the Miami, and the great northwest.

Zane Grey (1875-1939), the famous American novelist was born in Zanesville and is thought to have been a descendant of this Zane family. In 1904, he published his first novel, Betty Zane that is about Isaac’s sister Elizabeth (ca. 1766-ca. 1831).
When Indians attacked Fort Henry, she ran through the Indian fire to a nearby hut and returned with a keg of power that helped save the fort. Zane Grey is best known for his adventure stories of the American west, including Riders of the Purple Sage, The Lone Star Ranger and many others.

Some of his novels where made into movies such as his last book West of the Pecos written in 1937. He died two years after it's publication.

John Riddle (1813-1884), son of Asa is thought to be the first of this family to settle in Turkey Cove, now the Dryden area of VA. John was born in Stokes Co., NC and married Arena Jones (1816-1893).

She was the daughter of Stephen Jones and Mary “Polly” Ann Parsons. Stephen Jones, John’s father-in-law left NC and settled on a 200-acre farm in Turkey Cove several years before John and Arena and joined them.

John’s father and mother, Asa Riddle and Mary East, later moved to Turkey Cove where Asa was given a large land grant about six years before he died. Asa and Mary ended their lives in Turkey Cove where they are buried. John and Arena Jones Riddle had eight children and many of their descendants remained in the Lee Co., VA area.

Isaac Howard Riddle (1886-1945) was the son of Franklin Tyre Riddle (1842-1912) and Zane Asbury. He married Sara Minnie Napier on December 23, 1905. He was 18 and she was 14 and they lived in Olinger, VA and had twelve children. Howard was a part time timber-cutter in Olinger where he and his family lived and later moved to Calvin to work as a coal miner at Stonega, known as Arno Coal Company and later at a new coal camp in Calvin, Virginia.

All of their children were born in Olinger except the three youngest. Howard died in 1945 while his sons Emmett, Joe and Samuel “Sam” Hollis were serving in the military during WWII. Emmett arrived home just in time to see his father’s casket lowered into his grave while Sam was serving in the South Pacific and was unable to return for the funeral.

Sam is the father of Faye Riddle Bocock and he was born March 22, 1921. Sam married Vergia Lee Shepherd on December 24, 1941 and they still live in Calvin where Sam worked at the Glenbrook and Calvin Coal Mines.

Sam and Vergia had seven children. Their first child N. Faye was born December 17, 1942. Sam served in the U.S. Army Air Force from 1943 until 1945. Sam retired in 1987 with over 45 years in the coal-mines.

He is an avid fisherman and you may find him floating down the Powell River. He always used his homemade raft but on his 80th birthday, March 22, 2001, the family presented him with a new fiberglass boat and rocking chair to make his trips down the Powell a bit more enjoyable.
Sam and Vergia have fifteen grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and four great-great grandchildren on the way.

Faye is married to Frank D. Bocock and it is the second marriage for both. They have five children ranging in age from 37 to 5: Michael, Kimberly, Shaun, Michelle and Joshua.

Since Faye is retired she spends much of her time caring for her five-year-old son and doing genealogical research. Faye contributed much of the information for this article.

See the next issue of the Riddle Newsletter for more on the Turkey Cove Riddles.

World War II Memorial
Richard Riddle

Do your remember where you were and what you were doing on December 7, 1941? I do. I was 11 years old and we were living at my grandfather Lune Riddle’s farm which was adjacent to the Coleman Boundary of the Pisgah National Forest, NC.

The farm was located about a mile from the Dillingham community on the Buncombe Co., NC side of Mount Mitchell. At that time none of the three houses on the farm had in-door plumbing, electricity, or a radio. Mostly the only transportation was walking.

On that particular Sunday my father Luke was home for the weekend and he had taken us to the Dillingham Baptist Church in his car. He worked in Asheville, which was about 30 miles away. In 1941 the roads were so bad it took about a 1-1/2 hours to make the trip from our farm to Asheville so he remained in Asheville during the week.

As we exited the car and began to walk toward our house, my grandmother began staring at the sky. We asked her what she was looking at. She replied, “Do you see that cloud in front of the sun?” We stopped and looked toward the sun, which was hidden by an unusual appearing cloud.

It was a perfect outline of the United States map. You could see the east coast, including Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, Texas, and the west coast. This cloud was darker than the others, but the rays of the sun radiated from behind in long reddish yellow spikes. We marveled at the unusual cloud. My grandmother said it was a sign that something momentous was about to happen to the United States.

Everyone was hungry and wanted dinner (lunch for those not from the south) and the incident was soon forgotten. On Monday morning December 8th, I walked the mile and a half to school as usual and heard that the Japanese had attacked a place named Pearl Harbor.
Some of the more affluent families in Dillingham had heard the news on their radios. On that day, December 8, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave a speech before Congress asking for a declaration of war against Japan.

“Yesterday, December 7, 1941, a date which will live in infamy - the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.” ……… “I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December seventh, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.”

War had been raging in Europe since 1936. The Rome - Berlin - Tokyo Axis was formed in 1936-37 and Japan had occupied most of the Chinese ports by 1938. German aggression began with the annexation of Austria in March 1938 and by 1939, Hitler had seized all of Czechoslovakia.

The Soviets collaborated with Hitler and formed the Nazi - Soviet Pact on August 23, 1939. On September 1, 1939, the German army marched into Poland. On September 3, the British and French declared war on Germany. By September 20 almost all of Poland was in German and Soviet hands. The Soviets had entered the war on Poland on September 17. We learned a new term: blitzkrieg (lighting war).

Many people in the U.S. did not believe the war would reach North America but in 1940 Congress enacted the first peacetime conscription, the draft that passed the Senate by one vote. The lend-lease program was also enacted and the U.S. began supplying weapons and supplies to the British and their allies.

By June 25, 1940, France signed an armistice with Germany that gave Hitler control of northern France and the Atlantic coast of Europe. In the summer of 1940, Hitler had only one remaining enemy in Europe and that was Britain. He hoped to defeat England by destroying the British air force by bombing them into submission. When this failed, Hitler ordered his army to invade Russia.
Scores of people felt that the US would be drawn into the European war by 1941. Others such as Charles A. Lindbergh, the famous aviator, wanted America to remain neutral. Lindbergh stated in his America First speech on April 23, 1941, that we could not win the war for England and that we should think of the welfare of America first.

When people learned of the Pearl Harbor casualties after the Japanese attack thousands of young men eagerly volunteered for military service. Most Americans became committed to winning World War II at any cost.

My Uncle Jack, Arthur Edwin Riddle, enlisted in the Army on July 22, 1941 and was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant in 1942 and served in the Allied North African Campaign with “Old Blood and Guts” Brig. Gen. Patton. He continued under Patton’s Command when it fought its way through France and Germany.

My Uncle Bob, Robert Young Riddle was the next in our family to join the Army in 1942. He soon reunited with his brother Jack in France.

My father, Luke LaRue Riddle, was 37 years old when he joined the Army a few months prior to the end of the war in Europe. He was honorably discharged shortly after the Japanese surrender which ended the war.

My uncles and my father did not consider themselves war heroes. Like many servicemen of that era they did what was expected. Over 16 million men and women had been mobilized for service by the conclusion of the war. Almost every family in America had a relative serving on active duty.

On September 2, 1945, Japan formally signed the surrender agreement on board the USS Missouri anchored in Tokyo Bay.

World War II Memorial
Fifty-six years after the war the country still does not have a memorial to honor those who served. Over 1,000 WWII veterans die per day. Those still living are now in their late seventies, mid-eighties, nineties.

In 1993 Congress finally passed legislation authorizing the construction of a National World War II Memorial in Washington and President Clinton signed the legislation into law on May 25, 1993. Millions of Americans rejoiced and after almost fifty years the generation whose spirit, sacrifice and commitment to the common defense of freedom would finally be honored.

It would take another eight years before the National Park Service would issue a construction permit.

Construction was scheduled to being in March 2001, but a lawsuit filed by a group who oppose the size and location of the memorial has delayed construction. On May 28, 2001, Memorial Day, President Bush signed legislation that should allow construction to begin although opponents believe they may still have legal recourse to block it.

If construction commenced now it will take thirty months to complete and another one million WWII veterans will have passed away. The cost of the $160 million memorial is being funded primarily from public donations.

If you would like to support the effort to build the Memorial or would like to have a member of your family’s name who served in the war entered in the Registry of Remembrances call the following toll free number for the required information:

1-800-639-4WW2
National World War II Memorial
2300 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 501
Arlington, VA 22201
Or e-mail to: custsvc@wwiimemorial.com
WWW address: http://www.wwiimemorial.com