The North Carolina Riddle Mystery Solved?

By Jim Hartung

Riddle descendants have been searching for years trying to discover the parents and origins of John W., Tyre, and Randolph Riddle, the three Riddle brothers who settled in Stokes Co. of western North Carolina.

In August Richard Riddle received an e-mail message from Stella Cotrill who is a descendant of John Riddle (1680-c.1745) of Prince George’s Co., Maryland. Stella has been amassing genealogical information about this line from various researchers for a number of years. Stella believes she may have a solution to our Riddle puzzle.

In March of 1794 a petition was filed in Maryland by John Riddle’s grandchildren concerning his estate. It can be found on tape CR34.684-1, page 143-146 at the Maryland Archives in Annapolis. The children and grandchildren are listed as follows:

1. Jacob of Prince George’s Co., Maryland.
2. James of Prince George’s Co., Maryland.

NC Mystery Solved?
Nathaniel’s Unknown Daughter
Little Will - Will Usda

Cherokee Resolution
Randolph Riddle Family Book
5. Sally Nicholson and husband Francis of Frederick Co., Maryland.
6. George the eldest son of John who is deceased and his six children: George, Samuel, Jeremiah, Mary Hutchison and husband Benjamin, Elizabeth Walker and husband Joseph and Ann all of Loudoun Co., Virginia.
7. John deceased, second oldest of John and his two sons Randall and John of Greenville, North Carolina.

You will notice that number 7, John Riddle’s two sons, Randall and John are listed as living in Greenville, North Carolina. Searching the 1790 Federal Census of North Carolina you will find a John and Randolph Riddle are listed in Stokes Co.

These two Riddles share not only the same names (almost) of John Riddle’s sons but also fit the time frame for John and Randall’s births. In the 1800 census John and Randall again appear in Stokes Co.

You will notice that Tyre Riddle is not mentioned in the petition but strong circumstantial evidence connects him to John and Randolph as a brother, cousin or uncle, most likely a brother.

John and Randolph were the sons of John Riddle (1734-c.1795) and his first wife Mary. John was the son of Elizabeth Linton and John Riddle (1708-1794) whose parents were John Riddle (1680-c.1745) and probably Elizabeth Bowman, all of Prince George’s Co., Maryland.

In addition to identifying the ancestral line of John and Randolph, Stella’s information ties together numerous Riddle lines mostly in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina.

For instance Stephen Riddle (1730-1807) born in Prince George’s Co., Maryland and owner of Riddle’s Ferry in Rowan Co., North Carolina is a first cousin, once removed to John and Randolph. Stephen is a grandson of John Riddle (1680-1745).

The well known Riddle researcher Doratha Riddle Marsh gives Stephen Riddle the credit for being the first Riddle in North Carolina which was prior to 1757. Riddle’s Ferry was located on the Yadkin River near what is now Clemmons, North Carolina.
The ferry remained in the family until sold by Stephen’s son Benjamin Riddle to Thomas Oakes in 1824. Benjamin and his family then moved to Hardeman Co., Tennessee. Stephen’s father was Benjamin Riddle (1703-1750) son of John Riddle (1680-1745) and Elizabeth Bowman. Stephen had three brothers, Zachariah, John, and Benjamin II. Zachariah moved to Virginia and later to Orange Co., North Carolina.

Stephen married Elizabeth Douthit and had the following children: Mary b. 1761, Elizabeth b. 1763, John b. 1764, Sarah Ann b. 1767, Benjamin b. 1769, Anna b. 1772, Stephen b. 1776, plus one unknown child b. 1776 all born in Rowan Co.

We find another of John and Randolph’s relatives living in North Carolina, their uncle Basil Riddle who was born in 1737 also in Prince George’s Co., Maryland, and the brother of their father John Riddle (1734-c.1795).

In the book Surry Co., NC Court Minutes Vol 1 & 2 1768-1789 by Mrs. W.O. Absher, John and Randolph Riddle are listed on page 134, 16 Feb 1788. "Randol Riddle and John, jury to mark road if necessary from Virginia line near William Webbs to Rockingham county line near Abraham Martins."

From 1781 to 1789 there are numerous references to Basil in this same book under various spellings such as Basdel, Baswell, Bazel, Baswell, Bazzell, Bazzle, Boswell, Brasseell and Brazzlo.

Basil was the twin brother of Zachariah Riddle who immigrated to Loudoun Co., Virginia. I'll hold the Virginia Riddle line for another article.

If you would like to see the complete list of Stella Cotrill's John Riddle (1680-1745) descendants and have access to the Internet her web site may be found at http://freepages.family.rootsweb.com/~stellacotrill/. We still have a lot of research and verification to do concerning the Riddles of Prince George’s Co., Maryland but it certainly appears that our Stokes Co., North Carolina Riddles were originally from Maryland.

Nathaniel’s Unknown Daughter

Jim Hartung

In October, 2001 I received an e-mail from Brent Bertram, whose wife is a Riddle descendant through the Allen family. Brent was kind enough to forward information from Marie Allen whose husband is the grandson of a previously unknown daughter of Nathaniel Riddle (1805-c.1870) of Yancey Co., North Carolina. Nathaniel is the son of John W. Riddle, Sr. who was one of the first Riddles to settle in Yancey Co. This was of great interest to me as this daughter; Emily Jane Riddle was the sister of my great-grandfather Smith Riddle.
Smith and Emily were the product of Nathaniel's second marriage to Elizabeth Edwards who he married in Sep. 1856 in Madison Co., North Carolina. Emily was born in 1861 in Madison Co. and was living in the household of Susanna Parris according to the 1870 Federal Census of Madison Co. As Emily was only nine at the time it is believed that Susanna was her guardian as her father Nathaniel was not mentally competent to raise her. Her brother Smith was then living with the John Holcomb family along with his father Nathaniel.

On Christmas Eve, 1879 when in her 18th year Emily Jane married Hiram N. Allen, age 24, the son of Adhiram D. Allen and Rachael Roland in Yancey Co.. Attending the wedding were M.P. Ray, T.C. McPeters, W.D. Dillingham and Emily's brother Smith.


I would like to thank Brent and Marie for sharing this information.

Little Will - Will-Uslid

Richard Riddle

Even though this newsletter is concerned mostly with various Riddle families I have made an exception because of the perseverance of my nephew James Stiles Riddle and his search for his Cherokee roots. Most of the material in this article is a result of his research.

I am also indebted to E. Stanly Godbold, Jr. and Mattie U. Russell authors of Confederate Colonel and Cherokee Chief - The Life of William Holland Thomas, 1990, The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, TN.

Although I have heard many of the stories related in this book I am particularly impressed with how the authors referenced the factual source of the information provided.
William Holland Thomas was my third great-grandfather and was named Wil-Usdi, Little Will by his adopted Cherokee father Yonaguska, Drowning Bear.

Little Will was the son of Richard Thomas and Temperance Calvert. Richard and Temperance were English by birth but raised in Virginia. Richard served in the 11th Virginia Regiment during the American Revolution and fought under Colonel William Campbell during the Battle of Kings Mountain.

Richard was a civil engineer and horse trader. Temperance and Richard were married in Richmond, Virginia on May 6, 1804. Shortly after their marriage Richard, Temperance, and Richard's cousins John and George Strother moved to the southwest and settled on Raccoon Creek about two miles east of Mount Prospect, now Waynesville, North Carolina. Temperance was approximately five months pregnant when they arrived at Raccoon Creek. Richard was never able to see his son as Richard drowned in 1804 and his body was never recovered.

Temperance remained in the sparsely populated wilderness and on February 5, 1805, she gave birth to a son and named him William in honor of her father William Calvert and Holland in honor of her mother Mercy Holland. William Holland Thomas spent his childhood in this mountainous frontier of virgin forests and clear streams which supplied abundant game and fish.

His neighbors, both white and Indian, were friendly and helpful. Temperance taught Little Will reading, writing, arithmetic, and Christianity.

From the Cherokees he learned survival skills mountain lore. George Strother, a cousin of his father and a civil engineer, was also a great influence as was Felix Walker. Felix was a large landowner who also practiced law. When Little Will was about 12 years old Felix Walker was elected to Congress as the representative Twelfth District which included Haywood and Buncombe Counties. Felix was nicknamed Old Oil Jug because of his skill as a persuasive speaker and as a slick politician.

At age 13 Little Will went to work for Felix Hampton Walker, son of Felix Walker. Will was employed as the manager of Walker's trading post located on the south side of Soco Creek near the Thomas farm.

The trading post was a branch of Walker's store in Waynesville and Will contracted with Walker to operate the post for three years in return for one hundred dollars, board, and clothing. Most of his customers were Indians who traded furs, hides, herbs and other items for general merchandise.
Will learned to speak the Cherokee language from an Indian boy who worked at the post. In addition Will learned to read and write the language and was equally proficient in English or Cherokee. During his employment at Walker's trading post Will met Yonaguska.

Unknown to most white people in that area Yonaguska was the Chief of the Lufty (Oconaluftee) or Qualla Clan of the Cherokee and the most prominent leader of the Eastern Band. He was 6'3” inches and handsome with two wives and seven children. Will and Yonaguska formed a close bond and the Chief adopted Will as a member of his clan.

In 1820, two years after Will began working for Felix Hampton Walker, Walker's store in Waynesville went bankrupt, and the Soco Creek trading post was closed. Unable to pay the one hundred dollars that Walker owed Will; Walker gave him a set of law books.

At that time anyone who read the law was able to practice it. Through diligent study of these law books Will became a frontier attorney.

His first big case which involved the contested ownership of a slave girl, was settled in 1828 by compromise. About 1830, Yonaguska requested that Will become the Cherokee's attorney and they became his principal client for the rest of his life.

Two years after the closure of Walker's Soco Creek Post Will opened his own store in Indiantown and was located about four miles from his mother's farm.

Will's mother provided the money to finance the business and the location was excellent. The roads and paths provided access for white settlers and Indians from all directions as well as a way to import needed goods.

In 1839, a post office was built in Indiantown and the village was renamed Quallatown. By 1839, Will and his mother had established their permanent home on the south side of the Tuckasegee River which they named Stekoa Fields as it included the site of Stekoa, an Indian village that had been destroyed during the American Revolution.

From 1822 to 1840, Little Will became a successful merchant, landowner, and attorney. In addition to the Quallatown store he established another six.

Will also led a second life as the adopted son of Chief Yonaguska and a member of the Qualla Clan. Although not proven, he is believed to have fathered at least five children in union with a Cherokee girl known as Nahunta or Kanaka. The Cherokee girl's English name was Catherine Hyde. One of these children may have been Demarius Angeline who was born on January 16, 1830.
When she was eight or nine years old she went to live with Will and his mother. This union between William Thomas and Kanaka was soon lost in the family. Angeline Thomas is my second great grandmother.

The discovery of gold in north Georgia in 1828 and the election of Andrew Jackson as President of the United States presented critical problems for the Cherokees. White settlers were pouring into the Cherokee land. President Jackson yielded to the pressure of having the Cherokees removed from their land. Federal troops were ordered into western North Carolina to remove the white intruders from the Cherokee Nation in 1832.

Chief Yonaguska and his Lufty Clan did not live within the Cherokee Nation and most of the North Carolina Cherokees did not want to move west to the land provided by the government. Both Chief Yonaguska and William Thomas realized that the security of the Lufty Clan was in jeopardy.

In 1831, Yonaguska, Willnotah, Long Blanket, and 57 other Cherokee families requested that Little Will act as their agent and represent them in Washington. Will agreed to act as a special agent for the Lufty Indians and wrote a simple form of government on their behalf.

Their government was simple, decentralized, informal, and bound by traditional Cherokee custom. In addition to Qualla town, he laid out five additional towns. After 1838 they became known as Bird Town, Wolf Town, Yellow Hill, Big Cove, and Pretty Woman Town. Each town had a Chief and a Tribal Council and this form of government remained in operation until after the Civil War.

By 1835, the federal governments had developed a plan for the general removal of all Cherokee Indians from the east and relocate them on western land known as the Indian Nation, now Oklahoma.

A minority group of Cherokees from Georgia known as the Treaty Party signed the infamous Treaty of New Echota on December 29, 1835 but the Cherokees of North Carolina were not represented at the signing. The U.S. Senate approved the treaty on May 23, 1836.

Little Will and the Lufty Indians wanted to insure that they would be allowed to remain in North Carolina. Under the provisions of earlier treaties, Indians who lived in North Carolina, individually owned their land and were not members of the Cherokee Nation, were not subject to removal. The strategy was straightforward. To remain in North Carolina the federal government as well as North Carolina must accept them as good citizens of that state.
Will lobbied both the state and federal governments to recognize the Lufty Indians as good citizens. In addition, the Treaty of New Echota made provisions for Indian families who did not want to move west, and who agreed to become citizens of the state in which they resided, and who could care for themselves were entitled to receive the same per capita payment as those who relocated.

On January 31, 1836, Will signed a contract with the Lufty Indians to travel to Washington and examine the Treaty of New Echota and if the treaty provided for them equal and unconditional rights he was empowered to sign it on their behalf. If Will signed the treaty and it was ratified he would collect any money due to the Lufty Indians. His contract further stipulated that he was to spend one half of the money for land and improvements for the Lufty Indians and the other half he was to keep for his services.

During the late winter of 1838-39, Chief Yonaguska summoned the men of his clan to form a circle around his bed in the Soco Council House. He recommended that Little Will would succeed him as Chief.

They agreed and the old Chief wrapped his blanket around himself, laid back on his bed and died at age 80. When Chief Yonaguska died Will was in Washington and did not learn of the Chief's death or his new position as Chief of the Lufty Indians until April 1839. For the next 28 years Little Will or Wil-Usdi would serve as the Chief of what would become the Eastern Band of the Cherokee.

Over the next 10 years Will would fight for the rights of the Cherokee Indians and to purchase land for himself and his Indian people. He received a partial settlement from the government in 1840 but it was not until 1846 that Will won a major victory.

The treaty of August 1846 gave the eastern Cherokees the right to remain in North Carolina and they would be paid $53.33 per capita fee with interest. The actual payment plan was authorized by congress as the Indian Appropriations Act.

It required that each individual file a claim or have a claim filed by their attorney with the commissioner of Indian affairs. The annual amount that Will was given to dispense to the Indians in 1851 was $26,160.18. Will Thomas would continue filing claims for his Indians, making distributions to them, and buying land for them until the beginning of the Civil War.

In addition to his role as the Chief of a small isolated group of Cherokees, Thomas was well known as a prominent citizen of western North Carolina. His political talents had been demonstrated in Washington as well as Raleigh. The Democratic Party wanted to nominate him for the state senate but a train accident prevented him from returning to North Carolina from Washington to accept the nomination. However he was elected to the North Carolina Senate in 1848. This began his fourteen-year career in state politics.
At age 51, after several unsuccessful attempts Will felt that he had found the woman with who he could share his life. She was the daughter of his former business associate James Robert Love.

Her name was Sarah “Sallie” Love, age 24. They were married on June 30, 1857 at the home of the bride in Haywood County. At that time Thomas was a state senator, a large landowner, white chief of a small band of about 2,500 Cherokees, and a prominent businessman. In spite of the cynics, the union lasted for 36 years until his death in 1893. Willie, as his wife Sallie called him, produced two sons and a daughter.

Their first son William Holland Thomas, Jr. was born on December 16, 1858. The second son James Robert Thomas was born on December 16, 1860. Their last child, a daughter Sallie Love Thomas was born on October 3, 1862.

As the Civil War approached the citizens of North Carolina were divided over the issue of remaining in or seceding from the Union. Many of the western North Carolina counties favored remaining with the Union but Thomas was in favor of secession and made his views public.

Governor John Ellis issued a call for the North Carolina legislators to return to Raleigh by May 1, 1861. A bill was quickly passed to elect 120 delegates who would meet on May 20, 1861 and hold a secession convention. Other action taken by the special session of the legislature was to authorize the governor to send military aid to Virginia, appoint a commissioner to Confederate government, raise 10,000 state troops, and to ask for 20,000 volunteers.

Other action taken by the legislature was the appropriation of $200,000 to manufacture arms in Fayetteville, issue bonds for the public defense in the amount of $5,000,000, and to accept at equal rank any military personnel who would resign from federal service and join the state service.

After the special session of the legislature adjourned, Thomas rushed back to Quallatown and called a council of his Lufty Indians. He explained that their treaties were with the United States government and that North Carolina and the Confederacy would soon be at war with that government.

The sub chiefs told Thomas that they did not understand but that they were loyal to him and the state of North Carolina. Chief Thomas then mustered two hundred Cherokee men into state service. He called
them in honor of their recently deceased hero Chief Junaluska. Thomas wanted his Zouaves to serve as a home guard force.

Will Thomas tried to convince the North Carolina and Confederate government to allow him to form a North Carolina Highland Brigade or Legion to protect western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee. Thomas finally convinced the Confederate authorities that it would be in the best interest of the Confederacy to enlist Cherokees into the army for local defense.

On April 9, 1862, Thomas and his company of 100 Cherokees and twelve white men became members of the Confederate Army. This was the beginning of the Thomas Legion. On September 27, 1862, Thomas was elected Colonel of a regiment known as 1st Regiment - Thomas Legion.

The regiment of about 1,100 men was divided into ten companies: eight white and two Cherokee. On October 1, 1862, the other unit of the Thomas Legion was formed with Lieutenant Colonel William C. Walker in charge. It was known as the Walker Battalion - Thomas Legion. The battalion of approximately 700 men consisted of seven white companies: three cavalry and four infantry. In 1863, another company of infantry, a company of miners and sappers, and an artillery unit were added to Walker's Battalion.

Colonel Thomas returned from the war broken a broken man, not only in body and mind but also financially. In his crusade to allow his Lufty Indians to remain in North Carolina and become full citizens of this state he had made many enemies both white and Cherokee.

He owed his creditors William Johnson and his son Robert more than $33,000. Thomas tried to resume his life and business operation but in March 1867, he was declared insane and was committed to the Dix Hill asylum in Raleigh. His first confinement lasted about a month. He was declared sane and was allowed to return home on April 8, 1867 where Little Will resigned as the Chief of the Lufty Band.

When Thomas was lucid he was slow to make decisions and could do nothing about his debts. His bad ankle was crippled and made him miserable. When he was not lucid he had to be physically restrained at times. His creditors demanded that his land be sold to pay his debts.

The Johnson's had the Sheriff of Cherokee County sell 115,407 acres of Thomas' land. The Johnson's bought the land for less than $9,000. Over 50,000 acres of this land belonged to the Lufty Cherokees.

On July 27, 1868, Congress recognized the North Carolina Cherokees as a distinct tribe and agreed to pay them the monies due under the laws of 1848 and 1855. After their attorneys were paid $16,000 they collected $32,000. The Johnson's offered to sell them the land that the Cherokees claimed and return the remaining acreage to Thomas.

They agreed and gave the Johnson's $6,500 as a down payment. Thomas' enemies convinced the secretary of the interior that Thomas and the Johnson's were collaborating to defraud the Indians. The secretary of interior and the commissioner of Indian affairs lobbied Congress to pass a bill that would
allow the Cherokees to sue their agents. The result was that the Eastern Band of the Cherokees brought two suits against Thomas, Johnson's and others.

When the two suits to court all parties agreed to combine the suits into one and submit it binding arbitration. In October 1874, the arbitrators reached their conclusion: the Indians got their land, Johnson's got their money, and Thomas lost every thing except the house and farm at Stekoa Fields.

To show their appreciation and recognize life long service that William H. Thomas had given to the now Eastern Band of the Cherokees met in General Council on November 16, 1874 and passed resolutions which gave him the highest praise and thanks.

They also made his daughter Mrs. Angeline Sherrill and her children, Thomas' two sons and daughter by Sallie Love members of the Eastern Band of the Cherokees and entitled to all the privileges as other members of the Band the same as if they had been born of Indian parents. (see attached copy of the resolution)

Thomas' beloved Sarah “Sallie” Love died on May 15, 1877.

Chief Thomas, Wil-Ustdi died May 10, 1893 at the Western Insane Asylum, now Broughton Hospital in Morganton, North Carolina.

My lineage is:
William Holland Thomas (1805-1893)
Demarius Angeline Thomas (1830-1901)
Laura Cheoah Sherrill (1850-1927)
Winnie Slaughter (1890-1973)
Lenna Adams (1912-1975)
Richard LaRue Riddle (1930-)

Cherokee Resolution

Now therefore: Be it resolved by the council of the Eastern Band of the Cherokees in General Council assembly and it is hereby authorized by the authority of the same that we heartily approve of award of General Rufus Barringer, Col. John H. Dillard and the Hon Thomas Ruffin composing the court of reference in the suits above cited and that the sum of $7,056 16/100 with the interest be paid to Wm H Thomas or his assigns in accordance with the said reward, and that the funds set apart by the act of July 29, 1848 and the unpaid interest thereon, be applied for said purpose and for the purpose of liquidating the unpaid balance on individual purchases in the Cheoch purchase of the said Cheoch boundary as originally designed and agreed upon between Wm H Thomas and the chiefs of the Buffalo Town.

Resolved that Mrs. Angeline Sherrill, daughter of Wm H Thomas, with her children, and Wm H Thomas jr and James R Thomas sons and Sarah Love Thomas daughter of the said Wm H Thomas be and the same are hereby adopted as members of the Eastern Band of Cherokees and entitled to all the
Randolph Riddle Family Book

Jim Hartung

It was noted in the June 2000 issue of the Riddle Newsletter that Ed Riddle had completed his family history book dealing with Randolph Riddle and his descendants. The title is A Bicentennial Overview of One Riddle Family and is a high quality hardback book of approximately 250 pages including 60 photographs. Not only does the book include the usual family group sheets, descendant lists and complete footnotes but also a substantial amount of the family history. It is exceedingly well written and skillfully laid out making it easy to locate an individual or family.

The following is an edited version of a speech Ed gave at the 1989 Andrew Jackson Family Reunion in Italy, Texas. It’s included because it as it an abbreviated history of the Randolph Riddle family and will give you a good idea what type of information Ed has incorporated in his book.

“In this overview today, I will briefly trace our Riddle family from 1789 forward to 1989 telling of Randolph I of Stokes County, NC; then of his son, William Stephen; of William Stevens's son Randolph; and of his son Andrew Jackson Riddle.

Randolph Riddle I, our first now known American ancestor, was born about 1762 in VA or NC. The name Randolph has been carried down through at least six generations of our Riddles. The year 1789 was a good one for the first Randolph Riddle family, there in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Stokes County, NC. The climate of the Carolina Piedmont was healthful and the land was still fertile and rich for farming. Two wagon roads were open nearby for commerce with Virginia, especially tobacco markets in Danville, VA.

Just as we are meeting together this July 4, imagine that the Randolph and Jemima Hawkins Riddle family met with his brothers John and Tyre Riddle and their families to celebrate Independence Day 1789. John was a close neighbor on Raccoon Creek, while Tyre and his wife Clara, had to travel east some twenty miles by wagon from their farm on Bigg Creek.
After a hearty lunch, Randolph and his brothers walked along Buffalo Creek looking for Indian relics, smoking or chewing tobacco from his drying shed and talking about the brand new nation. They wondered what it was like in the southwestern territory of Tennessee.

Families were large in those days; Randolph's consisted of at least 13 children, six boys and 7 girls including Wm Stephen, our ancestor. First child was a daughter, born about 1784, and the last was a boy named Tyre, born about 1803 in NC or TN. About this time Randolph sold his land in Stokes County and headed west to Tennessee.

Randolph's family was in Franklin County, TN by 1811. As it happened, their arrival coincided with the earth tremors radiating from the New Madrid, Missouri earthquake in Dec. 1811. WOW, what a welcome! Randolph found many similarities between Franklin Co., TN and his beloved Stokes County, NC. The valley elevation was 900 to 1,000 ft., Cumberland Mountains to the east and south peaked 1,000 ft. higher, timber was abundant on the mountain slopes, the climate was moderate, the population sparse and soil fertile.

During the War of 1812, Randolph was in the Home Guard. The family lived in the vicinity of Winchester, Franklin Co. TN, for more than 16 more years, acquired several hundred acres of land and prospered. Most of them lived along the valley of the Elk River near the mouth of Big Hurricane Creek. Indians had named the creek, not after the storm, but after the tall cane in dense cane-brakes that covered the valleys and having a hair-like growth on its stalk; thus, Hairy-cane Creek. In the fertile creek bottom land, this cane grew to a height of 16 to 20 ft. On the ridges and higher land with thin soil, the cane grew to a height of 5 to 8 ft.

Although Randolph and his sons prospered, wander-lust struck them in about 1828. That urge for the family to stick together was still strong, and most of the family moved to Jackson County, Alabama, into that fertile valley of the great bend of the Tennessee River. The Riddles bought their Franklin County, Tennessee land for 12 1/2 cents per acre and must have made a handsome profit when they sold it. Randolph received a Federal land grant of 80 acres in Jackson County, AL, but he immediately sold it. Randolph died in about 1835 and the family soon dispersed; he was the glue that had held the family together those many years. He was buried near Scottsboro, Jackson County, Alabama. Jemima died there in 1842.

Let's pick up on our story on 4 Jul. 1839, fifty years after it began. Wm Stephen did not stay long in AL. He was soon back in Franklin County, TN, and by Independence Day 1839 was in Bedford County, TN.
Earlier Wm Stephen, born 1794 in Stokes County, NC, married Sarah Weaver in about 1817. She was born in about 1801 in Pendleton Dist., and a daughter of Daniel Weaver.

In addition to rearing 14 children, one of which was our ancestor, Randolph (II), and providing five sons for the southern cause, Wm Stephen was active in church work until his death in April, 1870. A farmer, he also served as and Elder, Trustee and a charter member of the Little Hurricane Primitive Baptist Church, founded in 1858 in Franklin County, TN. After Sarah died in about 1875, she was buried beside Wm Stephen in the Church cemetery.

Randolph II was born 30 May 1833 in east Bedford County, TN, near Normandy. His family was in Franklin County, TN by 1850, but soon moved to that area of Lincoln County near Lynchburg that later became Moore County. On 12 Sep. 1858, Randolph married Miss Elizabeth Jane Hix. The couple bought land on East Mulberry Creek, just northwest of Lynchburg, and raised a family of nine children, including our ancestor, Andrew Jackson, born 7 Nov 1860.

Randolph was a farmer; his chief crop was corn which was sold to whiskey distilleries in the area. As an example of the market, the first distillery was established near Lynchburgh in 1825. The Jack Daniels Distillery was built in 1876 with a capacity of 50 bushels of corn and 300 gallons of whiskey per day. There were 15 distilleries in Moore County in 1885, with a capacity of 200,00 gallons of whiskey per year, selling for $2/gallon.

The Civil War had come to middle Tennessee, and Randolph II enlisted on 27 Nov 1862 at Normandy, TN. For 2 1/2 years Elizabeth Jane (Betsey), with three babies, struggled to run a farm and fight off malnutrition. At the beginning of the War Betsey was 23 years old, born 18 Sep 1837, and must have been a woman of great fortitude and strength. One of her problems was the foraging and confiscation of food stuff and stock by both armies. As you know, the Nashville to Chattanooga railroad via Tullahoma and Deshard was a major artery for troop movements.

Both armies had encampments close by to Betsey more than once during the see-saw campaigns to control middle Tennessee. She, as did other neighbors, helped to feed the armies of both North and South. In spite of hardships, Betsey and the children, Sarah, AJ, and little Billy made it through the War with the help of her father and kindly neighbors.

Of all the brothers, Randolph II served longest in the CSA Army, mainly because he was a prisoner of war. Randolph considered himself fortunate to have survived the Civil War as he boarded a train at Point Lookout, Maryland on 4 Jun 1865; a train headed south from the Union prison camp where he had been released. It had been 2 1/2 years since he left the beloved family and had enlisted. He reminisced that his unit, 2nd C Co., 34th TN Inf. had mobilized and trained at Chattanooga with General Bragg's 4th Confederate Reg. in 1862.

In Sep 1863, Gen. Bragg's retreat from Chattanooga started as the Federals captured that city on 9 Sep 1863 without firing a shot. Little did Randolph realize that the stage was being set for one of the greatest
campaigns of the War on Sep 19 & 20, the Battle of Chickamauga in north Georgia. Both sides fought desperately, resulting in over 37,000 total casualties out of a total force of 128,000 officers and men. On the second day of the battle, Randolph was taken prisoner; thankful he wasn't slain. The POWs were marched to Chattanooga.

The prisoners were marched 300 miles to Louisville, Kentucky, arriving there in October. Randolph and hundreds of his fellow Southerners, not wounded, were then transported by train to Camp Douglas Federal Prison in Chicago, IL. Many died from disease and malnutrition, but Randolph beat the odds both there and at Point Lookout, Maryland, where he was moved in Mar 1865 as the War was winding down. His release and freedom came on 4 Jun 1865. By 4 Jul 1865 Randolph was back home, surrounded by wife and children, truly celebrating Independence Day both of the country and his new freedom from prison. Imagine the happiness and joy; but reality was to make this short lived. The economy of the South was in terrible condition, as was the neglected, fallow farm land. Many families were looking west for better land and opportunities. It was a question of when, not if, Randolph would sell the farm and head west to Texas. Randolph had discussed this with his good friend, neighbor and fellow CSA vet James Martin Byrom, who would be a great grandfather to some of us.

The Byroms and Riddles decided to move west, sold their land and in 1869 had enough money for the trip. Two more children had been born to Randolph and Betsey since the War, so now there were five. Can you imagine what a grueling trip this must have been by covered wagon; caring for the needs of small children, finding and cooking food, finding feed for the mules and yes, washing diapers and clothes. Ten year old AJ's job was feeding the team. How many of you have ever heard grandpa AJ tell of this?

Traveling with the Byroms was daughter Elizabeth Ellen, born 5 Jul 1867, who would become grandmother to some of us. She would not have had a personal recollection of the trip, but likely heard the story recounted by her parents. How many of you have ever hear grandma Bettie tell of this? As fate would have it, she would not reach Texas for another 32 years. While in Arkansas, the Byroms were set upon by bushwhackers and robbed. They went no farther and returned to TN two years later.

Randolph reached Dallas County, Texas and in 1870 bought 100 acres of land in Precinct 5 for $800 to become a cotton farmer. He had no experience in raising cotton, but struggled with the boll weevils and
elements to make two crops. Disillusioned, Randolph sold the land in the fall of 1871 and the family back to Moore County, Tennessee on the train. This adventure left Randolph wiser, poorer and with a greater appreciation for the hollows and ridges of Moore County.

Now, let's move the story ahead to 4 Jul 1889, one hundred years after the story began. Imagine the Independence Day, being celebrated by the Randolph Riddle family at their home in East Mulberry Creek. AJ came with Elizabeth Ellen, his wife since their marriage on 6 Apr 1885, and their two sons Edd and Charlie. They lived nearby in Coon Hollow. The year 1889 was a good one for the Randolph Riddle family. Prices were up for corn, the area had recovered from the harsh Reconstruction Period and the first Democrat, Grover Cleveland, elected since the Civil War was serving as President. This pleased Randolph because he always voted for Democrats. Cleveland was elected because the people were ready for a change.

Randolph was ready for a change and was making plans to sell the farm and buy land in Owl Hollow in the neighboring Franklin County; the move was made a year later. AJ was ready for a change also, but he remained awhile in Moore County where on New Years Eve, 31 Dec 1889 an event very special to me happened; my father, Jas Lester was born.

It is a joy to believe that James Lester got to know his grandparents, Randolph and Betsey Riddle, and also the Byroms and the stories about the Civil War and the trip to Texas were related to him. Randolph died 4 Oct 1898. Betsey kept 60 acres of land and lived alone for some years. Grandkids loved to visit because she was noted for her tea-cake cookies. She smoked a corncob pipe in years later, when she could afford to buy tobacco. She drew a pension allowed for indigent widows of the Tennessee soldiers from 1905 until she died on 23 Aug 1922, a month before he 85th birthday. On the night that Betsey died, her daughter Sarah Riddle Byrom and Sarah's daughter-in-law Ruby Byrom worked through most of the night sewing a black dress for her burial. Betsey was laid to rest next to Randolph in the Little Hurricane Baptist churchyard cemetery.

The next 100 years of our Riddle family history story, 1890-1989, can be abbreviated I believe, because much of it is within the memory span of many of us, or because we have knowledge of events related to us by our parents. All of the remaining experiences of AJ and Bettie Riddle will happen in the next 50 years of story, some happy and some sad. Let it be said that both lived a long and useful Christian life, one for us to be proud of.”

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