

# • TREE TALK •

Volume 42 Issue 2

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## Editor's Letter

Thanks to Richard Sory Robertson for the story of his family's Christmas Tree Tradition. He also allowed us to print a photo of him standing next to a photo of his grandfather, W. H. Sory who was Mayor of Jacksonville in 1903.

Anel Grayson has let us publish another part of her family history. In this issue we publish the "Ancestors of Permella Peneopla Hairgrove."

We welcome new members Albert E. and Anna M. Nolley of Rusk. Our other new members are Tim D. and Barbara S. Taylor of Bullard.

Tim D. Taylor and cousins Beth Shirley of Coppell, Texas, Cookie Scotia and David Roach, both of Maydelle, and Jason Roach of Lindale, Texas are contributors to this issue. They have the letters and papers of their Great Grandfather Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach. Tim has transcribed the letters and other documents. He has scanned many of the documents and has begun scanning the larger sized documents at the office of the Cherokee County Historical Commission in Rusk. We are publishing two letters from Ellis (Allice) Farish Roach in this issue. Look for more from this family in future issues.

Our genealogical society and the Cherokee County Historical Commission are continuing our project to find, document and preserve the cemeteries in Cherokee County, Texas. A number of these cemeteries are referred to in various sources, but cannot be located on the ground. Please review the list beginning on page 51. If you know about any of these cemeteries, please contact me at: Cherokee County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 1332, Jacksonville, TX 75766-1332. Telephone 903-586-0135. Email: [ccgs@suddenlink.net](mailto:ccgs@suddenlink.net).

**Gordon Bennett**  
**Editor**

## A Christmas Tree Tradition By Richard Robertson

Our family has a number of traditions. Around our dinner table of seven, the conversation at times would turn to something we had done forever, and someone would strike up the tune: "Tradition" from Fiddler on the Roof.

One of our strong and irreversible traditions is the annual cutting of the Christmas tree.

Marian and I have celebrated 50 Christmases as husband and wife. Our best count is that we have cut down 48 Christmas trees in those 50 years. The tradition went back to Marian's family and I actually participated with them before we were married. Part of the tradition is that we cut down a tree native to this area, which in this case is a cedar tree or actually a juniper tree-held in low esteem by many Texans. In Temple, where we lived for ten years, there were many fields and wooded areas to choose from to cut our trees. After we moved to Austin, we had a wonderful area to explore each December to pick out the "right tree." Our relatives, the Collins, had 400 acres of land on the North San Gabriel river, north of Liberty Hill. They were delighted to have at least one cedar tree cut each Christmas. Cousin Walter and Margaret had restored an 1850 Log Cabin on the property and lived in it part time between Midland and the Austin area.

Our tradition in the sixties was to drive out on a weekend before Christmas, check in with the Collins, hunt for the tree, cut it, load it on the car, and then go to the Log Cabin for warm refreshments.

The slowest  
part of the  
equation was  
Jeannie, our  
fourth child,  
who, by age  
five had  
strong  
opinions



**December 1971 at Collins' Log Cabin  
L to R: Beth, Jeannie, John, Linda, Rick Robertson**

about Christmas trees. From the beginning, finding the "right tree" was the most important part for Jeannie. First of all, it had to be tall enough. Our living room has an eight-foot ceiling. It was hard for Jeannie to face that reality. She looked at twelve foot trees and insisted that they would fit in our living room. Next, the tree had to be symmetrical and full.

### A Christmas Tree Tradition

It was very difficult to get her to agree with the rest of the family on a “right tree.” Sometimes we would even have to out-vote her in order to get back to the cabin for our refreshments and the trip back into Austin.

The tradition at the Collins lasted until the late eighties. As the years went by and Jeannie grew older, her Christmas tree tantrums subsided, although she still was very particular and gave us all a lot of exercise in walking the property and tolerance in selecting the “right tree.” In a few of the later years, she missed a few Christmases while on the road as a folk singer. When she did miss getting home, she recruited some unsuspecting partner to go with her to select a tree. Little did they know what they were in store for, when they teamed up with her for the adventure! At Lake City, CO, one winter she recruited a friend with a pick-up truck, they obtained a permit to cut the top out of a tree in the forest and then began Jeannie’s long search. Her unsuspecting project partner quietly reported that he had now “been there and done that” and didn’t need to do it again. In Fairbanks, Alaska, one winter she was given directions to potential trees outside town, but not that the White Spruce she cut down was a valuable tree that should be allowed to grow.

In 1989 we moved our base of operations to John Knox Ranch, located near Wimberley on the Blanco River. Our fifth child, Beth, and her husband were in charge of the Ranch, which is a Summer Camp and Retreat site for the Presbyterian Church. The three hundred acres straddle Hays and Comal counties and have many cedar trees. The timing of going to John Knox Ranch was dependent upon whether Jeannie was going to be home for Christmas or not and if she was to be here, when. One year when Jeannie was home, we were unable to go to the Ranch until mid-afternoon. Characteristically, Jeannie could not find an acceptable tree before darkness descended upon us. Before going home empty, Beth informed us that she had spotted a good tree on the county road between Wimberley and the Ranch. In the dark she led us to the tree, Jeannie acquiesced, and we had our tree. At Christmas time 1991, Jeannie was scheduled to come home just a couple of days before Christmas Day. She and David were on their way in the van when Austin experienced its storm deluge and flood. The roads to John Knox and even back to the Collins property north of Liberty Hill were impassible. When Jeannie arrived, we suggested that this might be one of the rare times we would go and buy a tree. “Absolutely unacceptable” she said. She would go by herself in the rain and find a tree. To the rescue came Judy Butler, who knew of a place on Highway 620 that was accessible where they would let us look for a tree. We drove in the rain to the place, waded through the water, and found a tree acceptable to Jeannie in record time.

That record time held for many years. Each December we would walk and walk, discuss and even argue the merits of particular trees with Jeannie and finally get Jeannie’s “right one.” But this past Christmas we broke that 1991 record. Jeannie and David arrived in Austin on December 17. Our first opportunity to cut a Christmas tree was the afternoon of the 20th. Jeannie, Marian, and I headed for John Knox Ranch, a distance of 50 miles. We drove south on Mo-Pac to Ranch Road 45. About a half mile before we reached the Ben McCullough Road, Jeannie, who had been looking at the cedars in the median, said: “I think I see one. Let’s turn around and have a look.” We turned around at the Ben McCullough Road, drove back to the turn-around and went to Jeannie’s discovery. It was a lone cedar, about 8 ft high, and symmetrical

### A Christmas Tree Tradition

because it was all by itself. I stopped the car, Jeannie and Marian went down for a closer look, and signaled that they approved. I joined them and in five minutes had cut the tree and put it in the Suburban. We returned home within an hour and I don't believe we will every be able to beat that record!!!

Most folks don't have the same appreciation for cedar Christmas trees that we do, but unlike many unfortunates, we are not allergic to cedar. For those sufferers who are not captivated by the romance of this tradition, we try to pick a female pollen-free cedar and wash it thoroughly before setting it up ..... Because one thing we can count on is that Jeannie will be ready to help us cut our cedar Christmas trees for many years to come.

Richard Robertson  
February 2002



Richard and Marian by 2001 Christmas Tree



**Grandfather Sory  
Mayor of Jacksonville, TX 1903**



Richard Sory Robertson with photo of his grandfather, W. H. Sory who served as Mayor of Jacksonville in 1903.  
Photo used by permission of Richard Robertson, 5401 Shoalwood Ave., Austin, TX 78756-1619

**Members of Cherokee County Genealogical Society**

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME	CATEGORY	ADDRESS 1	CITY
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Wright Helen	Member	229 Mesa Dr Georgetown TX 78628-1506			
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**Ancestors of Permelia Peneopla Hairgrove**

*Generation No. 1*

**1. Permelia Peneopla Hairgrove**, born June 04, 1843 in Aberdeen, Mississippi; died March 19, 1924 in Palestine, Anderson County, Texas. She was the daughter of **2. Newell Adams Hairgrove** and **3. Mary Louise Land**. She married **(1) Walter Barnes** March 11, 1868 in Smith County, Texas. He was born Abt. 1831 in Mass. and died April 09, 1878 in Cherokee County, Texas.

More About Permelia Peneopla Hairgrove:

Burial: Palestine City Cemetery, Palestine, Texas

Children of Permelia Peneopla Hairgrove and Walter Barnes

Mary Emma, b. December 14, 1869

Lena Mahala, b. December 16, 1871

Caroline, b. March 01, 1874

*Generation No. 2*

**2. Newell Adams Hairgrove**, born April 20, 1810 in Bedford County, Tennessee; died June 07, 1894. He was the son of **4. Stephen Marion Hairgrove** and **5. Nancy Mary Brown**. He married **3. Mary Louise Land** August 24, 1837 in Aberdeen, Mississippi.

**3. Mary Louise Land**, born July 27, 1814 in Aberdeen, Monroe County, Mississippi; died July 08, 1866. She was the daughter of **6. Joseph Land** and **7. Elizabeth Sullivan**.

Notes for Newell Adams Hairgrove:

Newell Adams Hairgrove moved to Aberdeen, Mississippi in 1836 and to East Texas in 1855.

More About Newell Adams Hairgrove:

Burial: Thompson Cemetery, Bullard, Smith County, Texas

More About Mary Louise Land:

Burial: Thompson Cemetery, Bullard, Smith County, Texas

Children of Newell Hairgrove and Mary Land are:

i. Mary Elizabeth Hairgrove, born August 11, 1838 in Aberdeen, Mississippi; died February 11, 1905 in Nixon, Cherokee County, Texas; married James P. Thompson September 21, 1859 in Smith County, Texas; born June 09, 1824 in Aberdeen, Mississippi; died February 26, 1908 in Nixon, Cherokee County, Texas.

More About Mary Elizabeth Hairgrove:

Burial: Nixon Cemetery, Cherokee County, Texas

**Ancestors of Permelia Peneopla Hairgrove**

More About James P. Thompson:

Burial: Mixon Cemetery, Cherokee County, Texas

li. Ulysses Cincinnati Hairgrove, born November 27, 1839 in Aberdeen, Mississippi; died March 11, 1906 in Noonday, Smith County, Texas; married (1) Elizabeth A. "Lizzie" Pierce July 31, 1868; born September 27, 1850 in Noonday, Smith County, Texas; died February 27, 1902 in Noonday, Smith County, Texas; married (2) Florence Mattie Cone Aft. 1902; born Unknown; died Unknown.

More About Ulysses Cincinnati Hairgrove:

Burial: Noonday Cemetery, Smith County, Texas

More About Elizabeth A "Lizzie" Pierce:

Burial: Noonday Cemetery, Smith County, Texas

- iii. David Thompson Hairgrove, born November 07, 1841 in Aberdeen, Mississippi.
1. iv. Permelia Peneopla Hairgrove, born June 04, 1843 in Aberdeen, Mississippi; died March 19, 1924 in Palestine, Anderson County, Texas; married Walter Barnes March 11, 1868 in Smith County, Texas.
- v. Newell Hanibal Hairgrove, born January 05, 1845 in Aberdeen, Mississippi; died July 18, 1847.
- vi. Louisa Ann Hairgrove, born January 12, 1847 in Aberdeen, Mississippi
- vii. Martha Caroline Hairgrove, born April 19, 1849 in Aberdeen, Mississippi; died April 25, 1915 in Meadows Cemetery, Tyler, Smith County, Texas; married Robert F. McKnight January 17, 1877 in Troup, Smith County, Texas; born February 02, 1845 in Giles County, Tennessee; died June 25, 1925 in Meadows Cemetery, Tyler, Smith County, Texas.
- viii. Sallie Wadley Hairgrove, born May 14, 1851 in Aberdeen, Mississippi; died September 17, 1852.
- ix. Amanda Melvina Hairgrove, born June 15, 1853 in Aberdeen, Mississippi; married William Rawlings Abt. 1875; born Unknown.
- x. Stephen Douglas Hairgrove, born July 18, 1855 in Texas.
- xi. Leander Hairgrove, born August 16, 1857 in Texas.

*Generation No. 3*

**4. Stephen Marion Hairgrove**, born July 24, 1784 in Guilford County, North Carolina; died December 11, 1858 in Buena Vista, Shelby County, Texas. He was the son of **8. Stephen William Hairgrove** and **9. Mary**. He married **5. Nancy Mary Brown** August 29, 1805 in Guilford County, North Carolina.

**5. Nancy Mary Brown**, born August 08, 1787 in Guilford County, North Carolina; died October 08, 1880 in Buena Vista, Shelby County, Texas. She was the daughter of **10. William M. Brown** and **11. Elizabeth Hughey**.

### **Ancestors of Permelia Peneopla Hairgrove**

Notes for Stephen Marion Hairgrove:

Stephen William Hairgrove served as a Captain under General Jackson at Fort Jackson in the War of 1812. In the spring of 1806 he and Nancy moved by ox wagon to the Duck River Purchase in Bedford County, Tennessee where they reared a large family. In 1853 they moved with a part of the family by ox wagon to Shelby County, Texas. Some of their family located in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi. Nancy Mary Brown Hairgrove was living in the home of Joel Marion Hairgrove at the time of the 1860 Census of Shelby County, Texas, and in the Joseph Harris home at the time of the 1880 Census of Shelby County, Texas.

More About Stephen Marion Hairgrove:

Burial: Buena Vista Cemetery, Shelby County, Texas

More About Nancy Mary Brown:

Burial: Buena Vista Cemetery, Shelby County, Texas

Children of Stephen Hairgrove and Nancy Brown are:

- i. Asenath Tennessee Hairgrove, born June 14, 1807 in Bedford County, Tennessee; died 1884 in Jerico Cemetery, Shelby County, Texas; married James Harris July 29, 1830 in Bedford County, Tennessee; born 1790; died July 12, 1860 in Jerico Cemetery, Shelby County, Texas.
- ii. Newell Adams Hairgrove, born April 20, 1810 in Bedford County, Tennessee; died June 07, 1894; married Mary Louise Land August 24, 1837 in Aberdeen, Mississippi.
- iii. Elizabeth Hairgrove, born March 25, 1812 in Unionville, Tennessee; died November 04, 1889 in Marysville, Cook County, Texas; married (1) Dr. Jose Marion Davis November 11, 1829 in Bedford County, Tennessee; born Unknown; died Bef. 1849; married (2) Stratford Henry Sapp August 15, 1849 in Shelby County, Texas; born January 01, 1802 in Augusta, Georgia; died March 12, 1884 in Marysville, Cook County, Texas.

Notes for Elizabeth Hairgrove:

Elizabeth "Betsy" Hairgrove moved with her family to Shelby County, Texas in 1844.

- iv. Nancy Jane Hairgrove, born May 31, 1816 in Bedford County, Tennessee; died September 29, 1896 in Marysville, Cooke County, Texas; married (1) William M. Pounds Abt. 1834 in Tennessee; born September 04, 1810 in Maury, Tennessee; died July 03, 1851 in Buena Vista, Shelby County, Texas; married (2) John Wankan August 05, 1855 in Shelby County, Texas; born February 14, 1823 in Germany; died June 04, 1865 in on his farm 4 miles south of Center, Texas.

**Ancestors of Permelia Peneopla Hairgrove**

More About Nancy Jane Hairgrove:

Fact 1: 1848, moved to Shelby County, Texas

Fact 2: September 18, 1867, moved to Marysville, Cooke County, Texas

More About William M. Pounds:

Burial: Buena Vista Cemetery, Shelby County, Texas

- v.      Permelia M. Hairgrove, born April 17, 1818.
- vi      Vashti Hairgrove, born February 17, 1820.
- vii     David Brown Hairgrove, born May 04, 1822 in Bedford County, Tennessee; died Unknown in Nashville, Tennessee.
- viii    Stephen Porter Hairgrove, born April 12, 1824 in Bedford County, Tennessee; died Unknown; married Miss. Mary M. Abt. 1842; born Unknown; died Unknown.

More About Stephen Porter Hairgrove:

Military service: Co. D, 2nd Texas Cav., Mexican War

- ix      Ulysses Hairgrove, born April 26, 1826.
- x      Mary Jane Hairgrove, born June 22, 1827 in Rutherford County, Tennessee; died March 30, 1888; married Joseph M. Harris Abt. 1841; born March 30, 1819 in Pennsylvania; died May 30, 1896.

More About Mary Jane Hairgrove:

Burial: Weaver Cemetery, Timpson, Shelby County, Texas

More About Joseph M. Harris:

Burial: Weaver Cemetery, Timpson, Shelby County, Texas

- xi      Joel Marion Hairgrove, born June 05, 1830 in Bedford County, Tennessee; died December 05, 1910; married Jemima Arminda Billingsley January 26, 1860 in Shelby County, Texas; born January 01, 1842 in Blount County, Alabama; died September 20, 1900.

Notes for Joel Marion Hairgrove:

3rd Sergeant, Company A, Capt. Levi Truitt's 28th Regt. Texas Lancers, C.S.A. Served from the early part of the year 1862 until after the surrender of General Robert E. Lee at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9, 1865. Teacher and County Treasurer.

More About Joel Marion Hairgrove:

Burial: Woodlawn Cemetery, Timpson, Shelby County, Texas



**Ancestors of Permelia Peneopla Hairgrove**

Notes for Jemima Arminda Billingsley: Teacher

More About Jemima Arminda Billingsley:

Burial: Woodlawn Cemetery, Timpson, Shelby County, Texas

xii      Stephen William Hairgrove, born May 09, 1832.

xiii     Nellie Hairgrove, born June 07, 1834.

**6.      Joseph Land**, born Abt. 1786 in South Carolina? died 1840 in Monroe County, Mississippi. He was the son of **12. Isaac Land** and **13. Sabrina**. He married **7. Elizabeth Sullivan** Abt. 1805 in Mississippi.

**7.      Elizabeth Sullivan**, born Abt. 1788 in Tennessee; died 1841 in Mississippi.

More about Sabrina:

Sabrina was a full-blood Creek Indian

Children of Joseph Land and Elizabeth Sullivan are:

i        Joseph Land, born Abt. 1806.

ii       Rhoda Land, born Abt. 1808.

iii      Elizabeth Land, born Abt. 1810.

iv      Mary Louise Land, born July 27, 1814 in Aberdeen, Monroe County, Mississippi; died July 08, 1866; married Newell Adams Hairgrove August 24, 1837 in Aberdeen, Mississippi.

v        Minerva Land, born Abt. 1816

vi       Permelia Land, born Abt. 1818.

vii      Thompson W. Land, born Abt. 1818.

viii     Jane Land, born Abt. 1820.

ix       James M. Land, born Abt. 1822.      .

x        Amanda Land, born March 03, 1825; died July 20, 1896; married Jonathan John Shelton

xi       Henry Jerome Bonaparte Land, born April 24, 1831.

*Generation No. 4*

**8.    Stephen William Hairgrove**, born August 04, 1750 in England; died February 24, 1804. He married **Mary** Unknown in Unknown.

**9.    Mary**, born September 14, 1751; died August 18, 1802.

Notes for Stephen William Hairgrove:

Stephen William Hairgrove immigrated to the United States from England, settled in Newbern District, Johnston County, North Carolina and was in the 1790 Census of North Carolina.

**Ancestors of Permelia Peneopla Hairgrove**

Children of Stephen Hairgrove and Mary are:

- i Briton Hairgrove, born July 18, 1781.
- ii Burrell Hairgrove, born September 14, 1783.
- iii Stephen Marion Hairgrove, born July 24, 1784 in Guilford County, North Carolina; died December 1, 1858 in Buena Vista, Shelby County, Texas; married Nancy Mary Brown August 29, 1805 in Guilford County, North Carolina.
- iv William Hairgrove, born September 17, 1786.

**10. William M. Brown**, born April 17, 1752 in Brown Summit, North Carolina; died August 14, 1812 in Guilford Court House National Military Park, N.C. He married **11. Elizabeth Hughey** Abt. 1777 in Unknown.

**11. Elizabeth Hughey**, born May 20, 1753; died April 12, 1808.

Notes for William M. Brown:

William M. Brown served as Captain and Colonel in the Continental Army of the U.S.A. during the American Revolution.

Children of William Brown and Elizabeth Hughey are:

- i Abigail Brown, born September 14, 1779.
- ii Nancy Mary Brown, born August 08, 1787 in Guilford County, North Carolina; died October 08, 1880 in Buena Vista, Shelby County, Texas; married Stephen Marion Hairgrove August 29, 1805 in Guilford County, North Carolina.
- iii William Brown, born October 02, 1789.

**12. Isaac Land**, born Abt. 1748. He married **13. Sabrina** Abt. 1767.

**13. Sabrina**, born Abt. 1748

Notes about Sabrina:

Sabrina was a full-blood Creek-Cherokee Indian

Children of Isaac Land and Sabrina are:

- i Isaac Land, born Abt. 1768.
- ii Richard Land, born Abt. 1770.
- iii female Land, born Abt. 1772.
- iv Benjamin Land, born 1776.
- v Joseph Land, born Abt. 1786 in South Carolina? died 1840 in Monroe County, Mississippi; married Elizabeth Sullivan Abt. 1805 in Mississippi.

By Flo Anel Grayson, 608 E. Manning St., Oakwood, TX 75855-5313. Used by permission.

## Lost and Neglected Cemeteries in Cherokee County, Texas

The following is a list of the cemeteries documented in some form in Cherokee County, Texas that cannot be located on the ground. If you know the location and/or the history of any of the cemeteries, please contact Gordon Bennett, Cherokee County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 1332, Jacksonville, TX 75766-1332, 903-586-0135, ccgs@suddenlink.net.

CEMETERY NAME	LATITUDE-LONGITUDE	Description of Location
Alexander	?	In Jacksonville City Cemetery (?) on a hill by the fence near the back.
Augusta	?	Near Priscilla
Ball (Maydelle)	?	CR 2120, approximately 3 miles SE of Maydelle on private posted property on a dirt road in the back woods, near 31.758507,-95.316657?
Bradshaw	?	No site reference
Brooks Williams	?	Located on Brooks Williams hoime-place near Alto
Butcher Family	?	Near Rusk
Clapp	?	Rusk, no site reference
Conway	?	Alto
Dear Place	?	West of Alto (Archie Dear Place)
Egbert	?	No site reference
Green	?	6 mi. NE of Alto on private farm; only twp members of Green family
Herring Family	?	No site reference
Holsomback	?	Old Highway north of Wells about 1.5 mils on Melvin Burroughs farm
Morrill AKA Hoot	?	CR 2712, off FM 1911, 2 mi. W of Hwy 69 (Morrill Community) -GPS coordinates approximate 31.592405,-95.059661
Kennedy Plot	?	Hwy 110 (N of Ponta, on the Frances Miller Lester Place, W of Highway 110)
Lone Star	?	FM 235 & CR 2274 (NE of Rusk, near Ponta) Thompson plot??
Manning AKA Graveyard Hill	?	FM 851, 7 miles NE of Alto, north of Central High Community, on a hill known as Graveyard Hill, near 31.748358, -95.031482?
Neches River Bottom (Ezell)	?	Hwy 84, graves on Ezell Land, Neches River bottom W of Jacksonville

**Lost and Neglected Cemeteries in Cherokee County, Texas**

Odom Farm	?	CR 2138 (T.H. Odom farm, Maydelle), between Union Grove Cemetery and Mt. Comfort Cemetery
Old Cunningham	?	CR 3305, about 2 miles east of Corine cemetery (on Bearden Ranch) approximate 31.985102, -95.367525?
Pine Hill CME	?	No site reference
Sickenberger	?	HWY 69 S of Rusk, 1/4 mile N of the southbound roadside park on the W side of hwy.
Smith	?	Hwy 110 5 mi. N of New Summerfield (Blackhack) 0.25 mi. SE of school
Smryl plot	?	FM 747 SE of Pierces Chapel in the woods possibly near 31.868093, -95.359500?
Stephen Smith Family Plot	?	3 mi. N of Rusk
Terrell	?	Hwy 21, about 1 mi. E of Linwood (N of Hwy 21)
Thompson Plot	?	FM 235, Thompson Farm, between Stryler Lake and Walker's Chapel, on the south side of FM 235, at a sharp corner, 31.947835, -95.037110? Lone Star?
Todd Graves	?	Hwy 69 (Todd Farm near New Birmingham)
Warren	?	CR 3220 (S of Hwy 79) dirt road toward Neches River, 0.75 mi.
Watching Rock Cemetery	?	
Waters Graves	?	Jacksonville
White	?	Hwy 21, E of Linwood



**The Family of Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach**

**By Tim D. Taylor**

My great grandfather was Thomas Jefferson "TJ" Roach (1825-1891). TJ had a most interesting, sometimes tragic, life. He had five wives (one at a time) and outlived them all except the last one, Kate Bobbitt Roach, who was my great grandmother. Our family is in possession of a number of letters dated between 1853 and 1919 that chronicle a portion of our family history and which my cousins and I would like to share with the Cherokee County Genealogy Society (CCGS) and the Cherokee County Historical Commission. Besides myself, Those cousins are Beth Shirley of Coppell, Texas, Cookie Scotia and David Roach, both of Maydelle, and Jason Roach of Lindale, Texas.

Thomas Jefferson Roach was born on the family farm in Orange county, Virginia in 1825, the son of William Roach (1802-1875) and Jenney Tincey Rowe (1786-1843). TJ had four sisters. The farmhouse, built ca. 1735, is still occupied and the surrounding land along the Rapidan river is still being farmed, although the property is no longer in the family.

TJ Roach and his first wife, Ellis (Alicce) Farish (1823-1860), were married in 1845 and moved to Cherokee County, Texas from Orange County, Virginia in 1852. They already had two children. Three more would be born in Texas. They bought 640 acres of land near present day Maydelle in partnership with his brother-in-law, John D. Farish (1817-ca.1855), who had married TJ's sister, Mary Keeling Roach (1829-1858). It didn't take long for Ellis to learn to dislike life in Texas and longed to return to her beloved Virginia. On a much anticipated trip back to Virginia in 1860, Ellis died and was buried somewhere along the trail. TJ proceeded on to Virginia with their infant daughter, Mary Ellis "Mollie". While in Virginia, TJ married one of Ellis's younger sisters, Sallie M. Farish (1833-1861 or '62), and took her back to Texas. They left Mollie with Sallie's mother, Clementine Farish, never to see the child again.

Sallie died sometime after arriving in Cherokee county, probably between 1861 and 1863, without having any children. TJ joined the 35th Texas Calvary as a first sergeant in 1863 and it is believed he served until the end of the civil war. Upon returning to Cherokee county, he built the house in which he lived until his death in 1891. That house is still occupied today.

After Sallie's death, TJ married Josephine Broome (1840-?), daughter of Cicero and Mary Broome, in February 1865 and they had four children, two of which are believed to have died young. Josephine's date of death is unknown, but it was sometime after their last son, Gus Wallace Roach, was born in 1871. TJ married Elizabeth Bobbitt (1840-?) of Anderson county, Texas in 1876. Elizabeth died giving birth to twins, who also died. TJ then married Elizabeth's half sister, Kate Bobbitt, who was my great grandmother, and they had three children, including my grandfather, also named Thomas Jefferson Roach, but known as "Tom". After TJ's death in 1891, Kate Bobbitt Roach married John T. Jones of Rusk, Texas and they had children together. She lived until around 1919.

(continued on page 68)

## Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach Family Letters

Ellis (Alicia) Farish Roach letter to Sallie M. Farish

Dear Sister

I received your kind letter the 28<sup>th</sup> of May, and was glad to hear that you all were well. I also received one from Mary not long since. This leaves us very well. Skelling received a letter from Nan a few days since they were at home and in fine spirits. But is with Nan yet. she will be home in a short time. William has been charmed with Magnolia but I judge from the complexion of the people it is a very sickly village. every one except those that live there say it is very unhealthy. they will find out in a few months whether or not it is healthy. The water is very impure there.

Mel was well when I heard from her last. I believe she is much pleased with Texas. Mr Eohn is going to merchandising in fine bluff some distance from us. We have not heard from Mrs Conway since we parted in New Orleans. I must now tell you about the marriage the lady we bought of was married not long since to a widower with seven children they were married in church after preaching she a lady raised in high life he an old back woods fellow. The old man when he was courting would sit by her all day and hold her.

We want to go to Mr Rodricks this evening to get some plums ours are not ripe yet. we will have peaches in abundance this year. I wish you could see little Georgy he is the wildest child I ever saw to his age. he can walk very well and talk a little. he is as fat as a little pig.

Editor's note: This is a sample of the letter that Tim Taylor transcribed. Some of the fragments are out of order compared to the transcription.

**Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach Family Letters**

**Ellis (Alicia) Farish Roach letter to Sallie M. Farish**

Woodlawn      June 4,      1853

My Dear Sister,

I received your kind letter the 28 of May and was glad to hear that you all were well I also received one from Mary not long since. This leaves us very well. Keeling received a letter from Nan a few days since. They were all well and in fine spirits. Bet is with Nan yet. She will be home in a short time. William Hoe(?) is charmed with Magnolia but I judge from the complexion of the people it is a very sickly village; everyone except those that live there say it is very unhealthy. They will find out in a few months whether or not it is healthy. The water is very indifferent there.

Mel was well when I heard from her last. I believe she is much pleased with Texas. Mr. Cohn is going to merchandising in Pine Bluff some distance from us. We have not heard from Mr. Conway since we parted in New Orleans. I must now tell you about the marriage. The lady we bought of was married not long since to a widower with seven children. They were married in church after preaching. She a lady raised in high life, he an old back woods fellow. The old man when he was courting would sit by her all day and hold her hand occasionally. They were more sickening than any young couple you ever saw. Her son was violently opposed to the match. He was married on Wed. and she the Sunday following. She went to his wedding but did not tell him when hers would take place. He is a fine young man.

Brother John<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Roach are busily engaged laying by their corn. Corn is looking fine, cotton came up badly. They have ploughed up a third of it and planted it over. The weather is very warm at this time. Rain is badly needed. Jean<sup>2</sup> is standing by and says I must send her love to Aunt Clemie. She often speaks of you all and asks where grandma is. She calls the old lady that lived with us grandma. The old lady thinks a great deal of her.

Hetty writes that poor Bettie Gravis has lost her mind entirely. She has made several attempts to kill herself. I was very sorry to hear it, she was an amiable woman. I wrote to Mrs. Wallace not long since and to Aunt Polly. Jean<sup>2</sup> often asks when Aunt Polly is coming to see us. She says this is not her home, says she left her home. I expect that you are enjoying the May cherries and apples. Something that we are deprived of. We have a fine garden, the finest Irish potatoes I ever saw.

A line of telegraph will pass by here in a short time and it is thought the stages will run this road next winter. If so this will be a stage stand. We take in a good many travelers now. It helps us very much. But for the travelers we would have a lonesome time. The roses attracts the attention of most every traveler. They are so rare in this neighborhood.

We want to go to Mr. Hodricks this evening to get some plums. Ours are not ripe yet. We will have peaches in abundance this year. I wish you could see little Georgey<sup>3</sup>. He is the wildest child to his age I ever saw. He can walk very well and talk a little. He is as fat as a little pig

<sup>1</sup> John Farish. <sup>2</sup>Eugenia Roach, b. 1849., <sup>3</sup>George William Roach, b.1851



## Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach Family Letters

Ellis (Alicia) Farish Roach letter to Sallie M. Farish

and wanted to. *as was a woman*  
 you never see a woman pass the road but what she has a  
 baby in her arms. great many people moving west  
 carry gangs of children by here some look joyful I can assure  
 you. and go to church and you see all sizes, some heads as  
 large as my fist. give my love to Jimmie and Beck and  
 Cousin Beck when you see them. tell them they must  
 write to me any news will interest me from my old  
 neighbour here I tell Halse I saw one of his old acquaintances  
 from Mississippi not long since I forgot his name he said  
 he was well acquainted with Uncle Edmund's and family  
 he said he had gained that long low suit several gentlemen  
 have staid all night with us that was well acquainted  
 with him we also hear from Cousin Hazelwood Tarsh

affectionately to Miss Betty

not long since and to aunt Polly. Sean often asks when  
 aunt Polly is coming to see us. He says this is not her  
 home; says she left her home. I suspect you are enjoying  
 the many cherries and apples. something that we are deprived  
 of: we have a fine garden the finest Irish potatoes  
 I ever saw. A line of telegraph will pass by here  
 in a short time and it is thought the stages will  
 run this road next winter. if so this will be a  
 stage stand we take in a good many travelers now;  
 it helps us very much. but for the travelers we  
 would have a lonesome time the roses attract the  
 attention of most every traveler. they are so rare  
 in this neighbourhood

Dear Sallie this is my week to keep house and I have enough  
 to employ myself about Elisa Cooks and washes and Hogg makes and  
 works out both of them have grown very much we do not have  
 any one except Joe servants hire very high here a woman Cook  
 hires for 120 dollars a year servants do not sell much higher  
 here than they do in Richmond. Jimmie wrote to Brother John

**Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach Family Letters**

**Ellis (Alicia) Farish Roach letter to Sallie M. Farish**

Dear Sallie<sup>4</sup>, I am anxiously waiting for the expiration of five years that I may behold my loved home once more, for it is dearer to me than any spot on earth. Texas is a fine country to make money, but money never bothered me. I do not intend to advise anyone to come here for fear they may not be satisfied. They must come and see for themselves. The society here is very different to what I have been used to: great many people are coming here to look at the country, some like and some go back where they came from, satisfied to stay there. A great many from Georgia, Ala., and Miss.

The servants are tolerably well satisfied. John has left his wife. Says he does not intend to have anything more to do with these heathen negroes. Jim says he wants Mr. R. to make haste and get rich and go back home. While we were all sea sick Mrs. Conways servants and Aggy were talking about home and Ag said if she had wings she would fly back to old Miss. to get sect tatters. She and Elisen A. were the only females but what were sick. I should like to see Mrs. Conoway though we were all so sick I could not help being amused at her when she was at her sickest. Would be the time she would quarrel the most about Ellet Conways advise to go to sea knowing he had had the trial of seasickness.

Dear Sallie, this is my week to keep house and I have enough to employ myself about. Elisa cooks and washes and Aggy milks and works out. Both of them have grown very much. We do not have anyone except Joe. Servants hire very high here. A woman cook hires for 120\$ a year. Servants do not sell much higher here than they do in Richmond. Jimmie wrote to brother John and wanted to know if Texas was much of a country for children. You never see a woman pass the road but what she has a baby in her arms. Great many people moving west carry gangs of children by hire. Some look doleful, I can assure you. And go to church and you see all sizes, some heads as large as my fist.

Give my love to Jimme Beck and Cousin Beck when you see them. Tell them they must write me, any news will interest me from my old neighborhood. Tell Hosie I saw one of his old acquaintances from Miss. not long since. I forgot his name, he said he was well acquainted with Uncle Edmunds and family. He said he had gained that long law suit. Several gentlemen have staid all night with us that was well acquainted with him. We also hear from Cousin Hazelwood Farish. He stands very high. Dear Sister I must close this poor letter by saying that Brother John, Keeling and Mr. Roach join me in much love to Mama and all of my brothers and sisters, neighbors and friends. Farwell my dear sister, if we meet no more on earth may we be prepared to meet our dear Father and Sister where parting will be no ore. Your ever devote sister.

Ellis<sup>5</sup> D. Roach

PS give my best respects to all the servants

Remember me affectionately to Miss Betsy

<sup>4</sup>Sallie Farish, later T J Roach's second wife, <sup>5</sup> Ellis (Alicia) Farish Roach



Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach Family Letters  
Ellis (Alicia) Farish Roach letter to Sallie M. Farish

young man. Brother John & Mr Roach are busily engaged laying by their corn. corn is looking fine; cotton came up badly. They have ploughed up a third of it and planted it over. The weather is very warm at this time. rain is badly needed. Susan is standing by and says I must send her love to Aunt Elmerie she often speaks of you all and asks where grandma is she calls the old lady that lived with us grandma the old lady thing a great deal of her. Sallie writes that poor Bethe Graves has lost her mind entirely she has made several attempts to kill herself, I was very sorry to hear it she was an amiable woman. I wrote to <sup>Mr</sup> Wallace

wife. <sup>Mr</sup> says he does not intend to have any thing more to do with these heathen negroes. Jim says he wants <sup>Mr</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>make</sup> <sup>her</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>haste</sup> and get rich and go back home while we are all sea sick Mrs Conways servants and stoggy were talking about home <sup>and</sup> <sup>she</sup> said if she had wings she would fly back to old Miss to get sweet taters. she and Elisen & were the only females but what were sick I should like to see Mrs Conway though we were all so sick I could not help being amused at her when she was at her sickest. would be the time she would quarrel the most about Ellet Conways advice to go to sea knowing he had had the trial of seasickness



Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach Family Letters  
Ellis (Alicia) Farish Roach letter to Sallie M. Farish

Dear Sallie I am anxiously waiting for the expiration of five years that I may behold my loved home once more for it is Dearest to me than any spot on earth. Texas is a fine country to make money but money but money never bothered me. I do not intend to advise any one to come here for fear they may not be satisfied they must come and see for themselves. The society here is very different to what I have been use to: great many people are coming here to look at the country some like and some go back where they came from satisfied to stay, the great many from Georgia Alabama & Mississippi. The servants are tolerably well satisfied. John has left his

My dear Sister - I must close this poor letter by saying that Brother John Keeling and Mrs Roach join me in much love to Mama and all of my Brothers and Sisters neighbours and friends. Farewell my dear Sister if we meet no more on earth may we be prepared to meet our dear Father and Sister where parting will be no more yours ever Devoted Sister Ellis R.

Ps give my best respects to all the servants



## Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach Family Letters

Ellis (Alicia) Farish Roach letter to her brother believed to be William Penn Taylor Farish

Wm. Penn Taylor March 11 1855

My Dear Brother

As I have never written to you: I feel it my duty to devote a few of my leisure moments to scratching a few lines to you. I received Betty's letter last mail which was very consoling to me to hear from my distant home. I have received letters for the last three mails one from Fannie Bettie and George the mail

boy calls every Wednesday to leave our papers and letters we have no trouble to send for them. This leave all well with the exception of Keeling she has a very bad cold she and Mr Roach and Sean have just returned from Magnolia they spent upwards of a week with Sean and Bet. they left them all quite well. Billy is looking better than he was last fall; Magnolia is thought to be a very unhealthy situation, it is a very small village, and there has been forty or fifty deaths since Fall has been living there. They call it a town. it is just about such a town as Meadow Hill and as large

**Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach Family Letters**

**Ellis (Alicia) Farish Roach letter to her brother believed to be William Penn Taylor Farish**

Woodlawn                      March 7<sup>th</sup>                      1855

My Dear Brother

As I have never written to you I feel it my duty to devote a few of my leisure moments scratching a few lines to you. I received Bettys letter last mail which was very consoling to me to hear from my distant home. I have received letters for the last three mails, none from Sallie, Bettie, and George. The mail boy calls every Wednesday to leave our papers and letters. We have no trouble to send for them. This leaves all well with the exception of Keeling. She has a very bad cold. She and Mr. Roach and Jean have just returned from Magnolia. They spent upwards of a week, with Nan and Bet. They left them all quite well. Billy is looking better than he was last fall. Magnolia is thought to be a very unhealthy situation, it is a very small village, and there has been forty odd deaths since Billy has been living there. They call it a town. It is just about such a town as Meadow Hill and as large



## Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach Family Letters

Ellis (Alicce) Farish Roach letter to her brother believed to be William Penn Taylor Farish

~~There~~  
but one good house and that has been built since  
we came here, the ballance cabins most of  
them the doolest kind: so you may  
judge what sort of a looking town it  
is: Mr. Cone spent nearly four weeks with  
us since Christmas: and the day before he was  
to have left his horse disappeared and has not  
been seen or heard of since it was turned out  
with our horses several times. That day he  
turned it out himself: we think that  
some one stole him and rode him off. Mr. C  
has been very unfortunate as well as the  
rest of us: he says he does not like Texas

the honest man cannot do any thing in Texas  
he presented me a nice calico Dress when  
he came: he never comes to see us but to  
bring presents for some of us.

Tell Wiana she has another Texas grandson  
though it is no rarity to her. we have not  
named it yet. Betty wanted to know  
if Georgys hair reached like it did when  
he left home. It does not reach but he is  
a fine looking boy. John Thomas is equally as  
good looking. Jean is more like you than any  
one else: she reminds me very often of you  
when you were small though she is much  
wilder than you were; she is almost as wild  
as a deer

**Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach Family Letters**

**Ellis (Alicia) Farish Roach letter to her brother believed to be William Penn Taylor Farish**

but one good house and that has been built since we came here. The balance cabins most of them the droledest kind. So you may judge what sort of a looking town it is.

Mr. Cone spend nearly four weeks with us since Christmas and the day before he was to have left his horse disappeared and has not been seen or heard of since. It was turned out with our horses several times that day. He turned it out himself; we think that someone stole him and rode his off. Mr. C has been very unfortunate as well as the rest of us; he says he does not like Texas. An honest man cannot do anything in Texas. He presented me a nice calico dress when he came. He never comes to see us but he brings presents for some of us.

Tell Mama she has another Texas grandson, though it is no rarity to her. We have not named it yet. Betty wanted to know if Georgys hair reached like it did when he left home. It does not reach but he is a fine looking boy. John Tomas is equally as good looking. Jean is more like you than anyone else. She reminds me very often of you when you were small through she is much wilder



## Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach Family Letters

Ellis (Allice) Farish Roach letter to her brother believed to be William Penn Taylor Farish

My Dear Brother I would give a great Deal to see you all, it seems to have been a long time since I left my Dear home time is tedious with me I can assure you but I hope to see the time come when I shall see my home and friends once more for I would rather be poor in Virginia than rich in Texas. we have but a short time to live and we had as well spend that time <sup>with</sup> our friends for life is very uncertain Oh that I may be prepared to meet my god when he shall see fit to take me from this sinful world

Mr Roach and Brother John are busy making preparation for another crop; they have ~~been~~ planted some corn and potatoes they are making preparation for a large crop. we hire only two servants this year one girl and a boy. servants hire very high here it is nothing for women to hire for 150<sup>th</sup>. it is too much they cannot clear any thing we hired Joe two years gave seventy five dollars for him our garden is looking very well we have plenty celery yet I suppose you have heard that Simme Thontz was married a gentleman from his

**Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach Family Letters**

**Ellis (Alicia) Farish Roach letter to her brother believed to be William Penn Taylor Farish**

than you were; she is almost as wild as a deer.

My dear brother, I would give a great deal to see you all. It seems to have been a long time since I left my dear home. Time is tedious with me, I can assure you, but I hope to see the time come when I shall see my home and friends once more for I would rather be poor in Virginia than rich in Texas. We have but a short time to live and we had as well spend that time with our friends for life is very uncertain. Oh that I may be prepared to meet my god when he shall see fit to take me from the sinful world.

Mr. Roach and brother John are busy making preparations for another crop. They have planted some corn and potatoes. They are making preparations for a large crop. We hire only two servants this year. One girl and a boy. Servants hire very high here. It is nothing for women to hire for \$150. It is too much. They cannot clear anything. We hired Joe two years, gave \$70 for him.

Our garden is looking very well. We have plenty of celery yet. I suppose you have heard that Jimmie Thornton was married a gentleman from this



## Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach Family Letters

Ellis (Alicce) Farish Roach letter to her brother believed to be William Penn Taylor Farish

neighborhood I told Brother John that he  
married a poor widow I have nothing more  
worth writing at present Mr Roach  
Brother I & Keeling join me in love to  
Mama and all of my Brothers and Sisters  
farewell my Dear Brother may the choicest  
blessings rest on you is the sincere wishes  
of your ever devoted Sister Ellis J Roach

PS tell the children to write to Brother  
John he has not written but one letter  
since the gin house was burnt  
write soon please write to Brother I  
farewell E & R



**Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach Family Letters**

**Ellis (Alicia) Farish Roach letter to her brother believed to be William Penn Taylor Farish**

neighborhood. Told Brother John that he married a poor widow. I have nothing more worth writing at present. Mr. Roach, Brother J & Keeling join me in love to Mama and all of my brothers and sisters. Farewell my dear brother, may the choicest blessings rest on you is the sincere wishes of your ever devoted sister.

Ellis D Roach

Tell the children to write to brother John. He has not written but one letter since the gun house was burnt. Write to Brother J. Farewell,

EDR

Transcribed by Tim D. Taylor.

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**The Family of Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Roach**

(continued from page 53)

During his life, TJ was a farmer, slave owner, a sawmill owner, an esquire, a soldier, Postmaster of Pine Town (near present day Maydelle), Trustee of Pine Town school, a notary public, and husband to five pioneering women. He performed marriages and raised children from three of his five wives.

In transcribing the first two of our family letters presented here, I made no attempt to correct spelling but I did add some punctuation to make them more readable. Both letters were written by TJ's first wife, Ellis. The first was to her sister, Sallie, who would later become TJ's second wife, and the second letter was to one of her brothers. There is uncertainty as to how many brothers Ellis had, but I believe this letter was to her youngest sibling, William Penn Taylor Farish (1837-1892).

Unraveling this family history is a work in progress and I apologize in advance for any mistakes or misinterpretations.

Tim D. Taylor

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