

Jessee Family Newsletter

Issue #28

Winter 2006

Vol. XV No. 1

Dear Cousin,

I am sorry to report the passing of Laura Jessee Thomas, our Jessee Historical Foundation Vice President. Joe Jessee informed the family in December, and his note is inside.

I am rushing to finish this Newsletter during winter break and into the mail before the next semester begins at the University. I have been promoted to an administrator, after more than 30 years on the staff. Thirty-four years ago, I helped found and continue today as President of the Community Housing Improvement Program, CHIP, a non-profit, low-income, "self-help" housing developer, with over 1300 homes built, and some 400 more in the pipeline for a region of Northern California about the size of SW VA. I am also secretary and publisher for the Association for Northern California Historical Research, ANCHR. That and my daughter's engagement and planned wedding next September have me busy.

I regret to say that I will ask a minimum donation of \$15 per year for two issues, beginning January 2006. For those of you who have paid already at the \$10 rate, you are good for 2006 and I thank you for renewing early. Those whose address labels read Expires 1/1/2006 or just "Expired," please renew. I need you. Printing costs are increasing for me considerably, and postage is, as you know, increasing steadily.

The newsletter has scant news about some of the fifteen children, and that news depends on you. While I have received fewer written news items, the family database continues to grow with about 44,000 records. There is always data entry to do; just the daily requests for help fill most evenings, and writing this newsletter takes most vacations. Still, I am excited and gratified every time I extend the descendants for the Jessee family and am always astounded as I see increasing evidence of the interrelatedness of all these SW Virginia families. We are all cousins.

We have an interesting newsletter. Thanks to you who help support the effort. My spirits are uplifted by your letters, email, calls, and renewals.

Jim Jessee

Featured This Edition

Joe Jessee and Carlyne Ritter provide photos of the 2005 Reunion and Sherry Finco provides a wonderful historical photo of her James and Tabitha Jessee Simerly family.

In the last issue, Joe Jessee provided the terrific news that the US Department of Interior, Park Service, has declared *Jessee's Mill in Russell County to be a National Historic Landmark.* In one of our photos we misidentified Carl Jessee, the designer of the Jessee's Mill Historic Marker, as Carl Moore. Read all about it and follow-up efforts to create a *Mill Creek Historic Community Organization.*

See *JHF News and Views* for the obituary of Laura Thomas Jessee, and a further discussion of some issues that continue to nag.

***SW Virginia Families* includes a book review of *Melungeons-The Last Lost Tribe in America* by Elizabeth Caldwell Hirschman. It asserts that many historic SW VA families are of **Melungeon Origin**, perhaps even our **Frankey Lea** and **John Counts**. I highlight two families that have intermarried with the Jessees or their descendants over 250 years, the **Yates and Skeen families**. This book and its assertions are controversial but a wonderful read for SW VA historians and genealogists. It should stimulate more research.**

Other Jessee/ee/ie/ey Families, and Family Origins* includes a tidbit of information on one the earliest JESSEE families to arrive in Kentucky, the **Thomas and Lazarus Jessee family of Adair Co., KY.*

Find news on John and Frankey Lea Jessee and their fifteen children. See new information and photos, read heart-warming stories, and meet new cousins inside. Several have sent articles and photographs which I am happy to feature.

Correspondence and Missing Links has a few items of interest and a request for help.

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

The 2006 National Jessee Family Reunion

Saturday, June 17, 2006
at the Harry L. Coomes Recreation Center,
300 Stanley Street, Abingdon, VA

The 2006 Jessee Family Research Day
Friday, June 16, 2006
at the Russell County Library
203 NW Main Street, Lebanon, VA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

E-mail: acvb@abingdon.com or

Internet: www.abingdon.com/tourism.

THE SILENT AUCTION NEEDS YOU

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

For more picnic and silent auction information, contact
Mary H. Akers
19246 Oakwood Drive
Abingdon, VA 24221
276-628-9239

Jessee Historical Foundation

Founded March 8, 2001

The JHF board, officers, and volunteers:

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

Hank Davis, President

Laura Jessee Thomas, Vice-President

Norma McHone, Treasurer

Karen Hall, Recording Secretary

Patricia Jessee Stone, Membership Secretary

Board of Directors: Mary H. Akers, Beverly Jo Elswick, Nancy S. Elswick, Diane Fuller, Sandra Hood, James C. "JC" Jessee, James W. "Jim" Jessee, Robert Trigg Jessee, Joy Jessee Malone, Irene Jessee Perry, Helen R. Reedy, Pauline P. Salyers, Vernon L. Salyers, Janice S. Tiller.

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

Membership Information

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

Annual membership will now run from reunion to reunion each year. Dues will be collected at the annual reunion in June for the following year. JHF Membership dues for 2006/2007 will be due at the Family Reunion or mailed in after June 17, 2006. If you did not do so, you may need to renew your membership for 2005/06 now to receive the next JHF Newsletter in May, 2006.

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

- 1. Regular Member:** If you have a Jessee, Jesse, Jessey or Jessie surname, or are an adult Jessee descendant you are eligible to be a regular member with full voting privileges. Please provide information to verify your Jesse(e) lineage.
- 2. Associate Member:** Spouses, related family, or friends of a regular member, who are non-voting.
- 3. Junior Member:** Family members under age 18, who are non-voting.

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

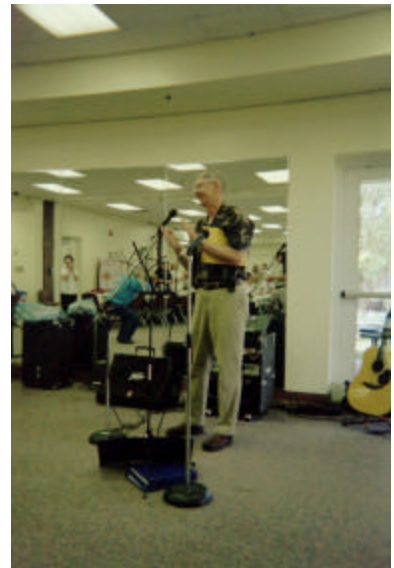
Jessee Historical Foundation Inc.
C/O Patricia Stone Jessee
Membership Secretary
PO Box 1617
Lebanon, VA 24266-1617

Highlights of the 2005 Jessee Annual Reunion

JOE JESSEE provided these photos from the Jessee Annual Reunion and Picnic, June 18, 2005.



Mary Akers and Toby Jessee lead the ceremonies.



Hank Davis, the new JHF President



Robert Trigg and Rev. Cecil Jessee lead the group in song.



"Tip" and "Doodle" Jessee check the food.

CARLYINE JESSEE (jessee@oregonfcu.com) sent, 7/15/2005, these photos of the 2005 Reunion.



Registration Table at the 2005 Reunion



Retiring President Joe Jessee addresses the crowd.



Karen Bachman and Carol Laferty



Lots of hugs for All



The Potluck Table being enjoyed by Helen Reedy & Joe Jessee



Ernestine "Ernie" Jessee helps with the desert table

Jessee Family Photo Album

SHERRY FINCO [sherrief70@bellsouth.net] sent, 7/23/2005, this photo of her Jessee ancestors, who are descendants of John Jessee, Jr. **Pearl Simerly**, identified below, is the daughter of **Timothy Simerly**, the son of **James Simerly and Tabitha Jessee**. Tabitha is the daughter of **Joseph Jessee, son of John Jessee, Jr.**

Hello Jim, My grandmother let me scan this picture it was taken in 1916, I know this because my great aunt Anthia Easter Kiser is the baby in front & was born in 1916. Starting top left is Pearl Simerly Burdett & Child, Valentine Simerly, Margaret Lillian Simerly Kiser, Tavis Kiser (I believe) even though I was told it was Robert Kiser, Tavis is Anthia's father & Robert married M. Lillian after he died. Next is Loomis Abradis Kiser, Margaret Hammons Simerly is holding Anthia, & Counts Sterling Kiser. I hope you enjoy it.

I called my grandmother & uncle Herbert, neither have the original of this picture, but both gave permission to use in the newsletter.

This photo was taken in late 1916. I determined the year of the photo by the age of my Great Aunt Anthia, the baby in the front, she was born April 1916. From front left to right; (man sitting) Timothy Simerly, Loomis Abradis Kiser (boy standing), (baby) Anthia Easter Kiser Godbey, (sitting holding Anthia) Margaret Hammons Simerly, (boy standing) Counts Sterling Kiser, Back row left to right; Woodrow Wilson Burdett (baby), (holding Woodrow) Pearl Simerly Burdett, Valentine Simerly & Margaret Lillie Simerly Kiser.



From front left to right; (man sitting) Timothy Simerly, Loomis Abradis Kiser (boy standing), (baby) Anthia Easter Kiser Godbey, (sitting holding Anthia) Margaret Hammons Simerly, (boy standing) Counts Sterling Kiser, Back row left to right; Woodrow Wilson Burdett (baby), (holding Woodrow) Pearl Simerly Burdett, Valentine Simerly & Margaret Lillie Simerly Kiser.

Jessee's Mill Declared National Historic Landmark

JOE JESSEE (joejessee@yahoo.com), our JHF founding president (2001-2005), provided this terrific news for the Summer 2005 Annual Reunion and Newsletter, which I am repeating here, because this is just about the best news we could have, and to correct an error in the last Newsletter where **Carl Jessee, 2001-2004 JHF Board Member and the designer of the Jessee's Mill Historical Highway marker**, was misidentified as Carl Moore.

The US Department of Interior, Park Service, has declared Jessee's Mill in Russell County to be a National Historic Landmark. This follows similar State of Virginia action to list Jessee's Mill on the Virginia Landmarks Register last December (see Winter 2005 Newsletter and the *Lebanon News* article, 12/15/2004). Joe sent the press release with this good news to the *Lebanon News* on May 5, 2005, and the article appeared in the *Lebanon News*, 5/11/2005.

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

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

Joe Jessee, with support and help from Sherman Wallace, Mill owner, spearheaded this successful effort with the formal State and Federal applications. These declarations are tremendous accomplishments to add to Joe's success at the renaming of the County Road to Jessee's Mill Road and establishment of the Jessee's Mill Historic Highway Marker.

It was a very productive end to Joe's service as founding President of the JHF organization. I understand he is finding success and much satisfaction, pursuing his music interests, and has been visiting Nashville with increasing frequency. I offer Joe congratulations, best wishes, and heartfelt thanks.



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

JHF News & Views

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

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

Vernon Salyers provided a note, 8/10/2005, to fellow JHF members to inform us of the June election results, and there was an encouraging note from our new **President, Henry A. "Hank" Davis.** Vernon Salyers later responded to my request for the 2006 Reunion dates, but said there was no other JHF news or information to report for this Newsletter.

Laura Jessee Thomas Passed Away

JOE JESSEE (joejessee@yahoo.com) our first JHF president, posted to the Jessee List, 12/20/2005, the note below, informing us of the passing of our former and current JHF vice-president, Laura Jessee Thomas. **I thank Joe for staying in touch and sharing this and other news.**

Laura J. Thomas of Bristol, Tennessee, has passed. She was a native of Russell County, Virginia. Funeral notice may be found in future editions of the Bristol Herald Courier or tricities.com. Laura was serving her second term as Vice-President of the Jessee Historical Foundation.

Laura was a fine woman and she will be missed. Our best for the family, especially her son Chip and daughter-in-law Debbie.

Obituary by Oakley-Cook Funeral Home:

Laura Jessee Thomas, of Bluff City, died Tuesday, December 20, 2005, at Wellmont Hospice House. She was born, January 19, 1924 in Artrip, Virginia, to the late Thomas J. and Dona Carroll Jessee and was the widow of Reed H. Thomas, Jr. She was a graduate of Bluefield College in Bluefield, West Virginia, and was retired after 25 years as a bookkeeper for L.C. King Company. She was a deacon of First Presbyterian Church of Bristol and past president of Holston Presbytery. She was a past president of the Bristol Republican Women's Club, which she served as First District vice-chair for two years. In 1994, she was appointed to the Tennessee Arts Committee by Governor Don Sunquist. In 1997, she was appointed by Senator Fred Thompson as the only delegate from Tennessee to the Silver Congress Session. She was a delegate to National Republican Convention. In 1999, she was honored by a proclamation from the State of Tennessee in recognition of service to the Republican Party. She was elected to the Republican State Executive Committee and served 14 years. She was preceded in death by her twin sister, Isabelle J. Earhart and sisters, Della S. Music, Ellen J. Ray and Nadine Jessee; and seven brothers, H.C. "Red" Jessee, Willard Jessee, John H. Jessee, Clyde Jessee, H.C. "Hop" Jessee, Ira D. Jessee and S. Clarence Jessee. Survivors include a son, Reed H. Thomas III and his wife Debbie of Bluff City; granddaughters, Ashley Thomas and Sydney Thomas; brother, Charles M. Jessee of Johnson City; Gail Thomas, who was like a sister; and several nieces and nephews. The family wishes to recognize, with grateful appreciation, her special care giver, Margaret Turner. The family will receive friends from 5 until 7:45 Wednesday evening, December 21, 2005, at Oakley-Cook Funeral Home. The funeral service will be follow at 8 o'clock Wednesday evening in the Paul Cook Memorial Chapel. Dr. Gordon Turnbull will officiate, assisted by Dr. Andrew E. Spence, Jr. and Senator Ron Ramsey. The committal service and interment will be held at 11 o'clock Thursday morning, December 22, 2005, in Glenwood Cemetery. Pallbearers will be Hartsel "Shorty" Thomas, Rob Thomas, Chip Thomas, David Phelps, Bill Ray, Reed Rutherford, Dr. Don Ellis and Dan Beverly. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be sent to Wellmont Hospice House, 280 Steele's Road, Bristol, Tennessee 37620. Condolences and memories may be shared with the family by visiting oakley-cook.com. Mrs. Thomas and her family are in the care of Oakley-Cook Funeral Home, 2223 Volunteer Parkway, Bristol, Tennessee; 423-764-7123.

I will need you to be my reporters and to contribute stories and photos about JHF events and meetings. Please do so only with the understanding that I want to publish them on the Jessee List, in this

Newsletter, and place them on the Jessee Website, and that I have your permission to do so, now and in the future. I make no profit doing this, so copyright is not an issue, but please know I will be placing your work in the public domain.

The editors of the JHF Newsletter ask for suggestions and comments for the JHF Newsletter in their *About This Publication*.

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

Vernon Salyers, PR Chairman

Rt. 1 Box 97, Lebanon, VA 24266-9685

J.C. Jessee

PO Box 83, Lebanon, VA 24266-0083

The JHF Newsletter carried a reminder that "All Membership Dues will now run from picnic to picnic, each June." Dues are \$10 per year per person.

Jessee Historical Foundation

C/O Membership Secretary

PO Box 1617

Lebanon, VA 24266-1617

The JHF Newsletter provided an *FYI* box:

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

I have complained that as a JHF board member I have never received an agenda, nor minutes, notes, or even the actions of meetings. It is explained that by virtue of being this kind of organization, there is no obligation to have agendas provided in advance, nor to have written minutes provided to all board members whether they can attend or not. JHF business can be done orally, without recorded votes by those attending, and without obligation to get input from or inform other board members of their actions.

The JHF board has never responded to the above complaint nor my specific request as a board member to consider more inclusive procedures, or bylaws, to inform and include all board members. I understand they have met at least twice since I made this request. I must take silence and lack of any minutes of their meetings as their affirmation that this is the way the current board will also conduct business.

I again ask the President, or any JHF Board Member receiving this Newsletter who is able to attend meetings and would represent us who cannot, to ask the JHF board to consider the operational procedures or by-laws outlined in the Summer 2005 Newsletter. These include keeping written minutes and treasurer's reports and sharing them with all board members, in attendance or not, in a timely way. I am sure that most if not all of us would be willing to receive these by email, to save the expense of copies and postage.

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

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

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

JHF and Other Family Projects

All of the following projects have been discussed in the Jessee Family Newsletter and on the Jessee List for many years, and were believed to be among the reasons for establishing the JHF in the first place. Several were adopted and acted upon by the first JHF board, and several milestones were achieved.

I hope the new board will consider the five goals listed here that I, as a Board Member, propose for the next four years, as well. I believe the current JHF Board is dedicated to managing the Annual Reunion and Research Day, and that is a great deal of work alone and deserves our thanks. Whether you are a JHF member or not, these projects need leadership and volunteers.

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

Welcome Reception, Research Day, Annual Meeting and Reunion Picnic.

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

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

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

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

Sadly missing from this wish list for the JHF is any official support, be it money, volunteers, or leadership, for efforts to restore Jessee's Mill, or to be involved with efforts to protect, preserve, and provide access to the John and Frankey Lea Jessee cemetery. These the current board have refused to consider further. There will need to be separate efforts distinct from the JHF organization under current JHF policy. If you feel different, please tell them. I will continue to report on those efforts in this Newsletter.

John and Frankey Lea Jessee Cemetery

Protection and restoration of the John and Frankey Lea Jessee Cemetery with family access, is a desire of many. This cemetery is owned by Mr. Jimmy Herndon, a Phillip and Gabriel Jessee descendant. Mr. Herndon, who lives on the property, has indicated that he is not willing to cooperate with the Jessee family at this time. I believe we will need to seek the cooperation of Mr. Herndon to provide or pay for his costs for cleaning up, mapping and fencing this cemetery. We need to work with Mr. Herndon to find a way to hold him harmless for any liability and to protect his privacy, property and farming activities from those who may wish to visit this cemetery. **I ask that we not bother Mr. Herndon with unauthorized visits to his farm and this cemetery.**

It is clear that Virginia law (see the Summer 2005 Newsletter) makes it illegal for Mr. Herndon to do harm to the cemetery and he is obligated to provide descendants access. I continue to hope that if Mr. Herndon were asked and agrees, the new JHF board would again undertake and fund this project.

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

Mill Creek Historic Community Remains a Dream

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

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

I have asked various individuals, board members of the JHF and local history and genealogy groups in Russell County to consider how this project might happen. I asked whether the JHF, Russell County government, Chamber of Commerce, Genealogy or Historical Society, or other group would be willing to look into creating a Russell County or Mill Creek Historic Community with a renovated Jessee's Mill as its centerpiece. The response has been and continues to be nothing and leads us to propose the following.

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

Donors have offered to cover the costs of creating such a private non-profit charitable corporation. One of our family lawyers has also volunteered to help with the legal paperwork, and others are prepared to donate more to the effort. Sherman Wallace is willing to help, and others have offered to give modest amounts of money. At this time I would like to hear from any individuals who can offer time to help organize and participate in a small working committee there in Russell Co. This first group would discuss and set the goals and objectives of forming such an organization, outline strategies and means to achieve our goals, and determine the legal procedures and costs to form a public non-profit corporation dedicated to this purpose. I would like to form a committee that could become the core of the new board of directors for such an organization.

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

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

As of December 2005, there have been positive responses from others outside of Russell Co. offering modest donations and moral support but no offers of joining us or offering leadership from anyone nearby. Sherman, Joe, Kathryn and I are disappointed to say the least, and may just have to shelve this dream until another time. May the Jessee Mill last so long.

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

Jessee's Mill Restoration

The restoration of Jessee's Mill is also a dream.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

TOM RUDDER provided reference to topographic maps locating Jessee's Mill. They can be found at TopoZone.com.

SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA FAMILIES

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

ELIZABETH CALDWELL HIRSCHMAN, has written a book, *Melungeons-The Last Lost Tribe in America* (Mercer University Press, Macon, Georgia, 2005) which is part of a series edited by **N. Brent Kennedy**. This is one of the best and most stimulating genealogy books that I have read in quite some time, and it is all about us, chock full with names and surnames familiar to all of us who study SW Virginia genealogy.

It is about the origins of many of the founding families of SW Virginia, Eastern Tennessee, and the southern Appalachian Mountains, who the author asserts were of Melungeon origin. Many of the Melungeon surnames are well represented in the Jesse family as we have intermarried with many of these families or their descendants over 250 years. Here is the description of this book from the back cover.

Most of us probably think of America as being settled by British, Protestant colonists who fought the Indians, tamed the wilderness, and brought "democracy" -- or at least a representative republic--to North America. To the contrary, Elizabeth Caldwell Hirschman's research indicates the earliest settlers were of Mediterranean extraction, and of a Jewish or Muslim religious persuasion. Sometimes called "Melungeons," these early settlers were among the earliest nonnative "Americans" to live in the Carolinas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia and West Virginia. For fear of discrimination--since Muslims, Jews, "Indians," and other "persons of color" were often disenfranchised and abused--the Melungeons were reticent regarding their heritage. In fact, over time, many of the Melungeons themselves "forgot" where they came from. Hence, today, the Melungeons remain the "last lost tribe in America," even to themselves. Yet, Hirschman, supported by DNA testing, genealogies, and a variety of historical documents, suggests that the Melungeons included such notable early Americans as Daniel Boone, John Sevier, Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, and Andrew Jackson. Once lost, but now forgotten no more.

Elizabeth Caldwell Hirschman was born in Kingsport, Tennessee and is of Melungeon descent. She is Professor of Marketing at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

N. Brent Kennedy is founder of the Melungeon Research Committee and author of the acclaimed *The Melungeons: The Resurrection of a Proud People*.

MELUNGEONS.COM is referenced heavily throughout this book with much material, surnames lists and summaries of interest to all of us reading this newsletter. Here is their own description.

melungeon.com is dedicated to bringing you information about the Melungeon Movement. Which began in 1997 at the First Union in Wise, Virginia when about one thousand people showed up at the College of Wise campus to reclaim their lost heritage. The "Melungeon Movement" is about racial and ethnic harmony. It took its name IN HONOR of the original Melungeons who were ethnically diverse but came together as ONE people to survive and live in peace and harmony. The Movement HONORS these early pioneers and they serve as a model for ethnic and racial relations.

Here are two excerpts by Elizabeth Caldwell Hirschman taken from the Melungeon DNA Surname Project found on this Website regarding just two of the families who have intermarried with Jesses and their descendants and are among the founding families of SW Virginia.

YATES: The sample for this common surname was taken from me, Donald Panther-Yates. Panther (which can also appear as Pardo, Brown and Painter) is a maternal surname and Yates my father's name, so my y-chromosome reflects a YATES line of descent. It matched Elizabeth Hirschman's CALDWELL and my wife's RAMEY line, among others, and proves to be one of the most populous of all male haplotypes studied so far. According to Joseph Jacobs in the authoritative 1901-1906 Jewish Encyclopedia (s.v. "Names, Personal"), Yates is a contraction similar to Katz (the most common Jewish surname). It is composed of the first letters of the Hebrew word Ger, meaning "convert," and zedeks, a modifier signifying "righteous, generous, pious, faithful." (It is evident, then, that the founder of this large family was non-Semitic.)

The usual form in German and Ashkenazic lands was Goetz, or Getz, which has approximately the same pronunciation as Yates/Gates. Old English pronunciation (and even today's Tidewater Virginia accent) often blends y and g sounds together, as in "The girl in the garden." Other forms are Oetz, Utz, Aytes and Jets, which probably reflect a filtering through French and Dutch. Abbreviations such as GZ and KZ are said to derive from Rhineland Jewry.

They are associated with fraternal orders and guilds at Speyer, Mainz and Augsburg, important centers of Jewish life in Frankish lands before the division into Ashkenaz and Sepharad. Not all instances of YATES or GATES are Jewish, however. The Anglo-Saxon word yate ("gap," "pass"), a variant of "gate," is probably the source of most of today's Yateses. The name can also appear as Yeats, Yeatts, Yeates, Gates and Yats. Its earliest mention is on a Rent Roll of the 11th century: Adam de Jette. The Ashkenazic family of Eliakim Goetz of Stelitz, whose son Samuel Yates became rabbi of Liverpool, is given by Malcolm H. Stern, *Americans of Jewish Descent* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1960), p.220.

My earliest known ancestor in America is John Yates, Esq. He was born about 1575 in England and was living at Elizabeth City according to a list made on February 16, 1623. He appears in early Virginia records as "Mr. Yates" and was evidently in the shipping business. His son John married Joan or Johanna JOBE. A grandson by the same name, born in 1640, had a collection of books and founded one of the first public schools in America. A great-grandson, also by the same name, was a saddler and innkeeper who built one of the first blockhouses on the Virginia frontier, the Yates Tavern, near Gretna, in what became

Pittsylvania County. This area around Danville, like the Yadkin River valley to the south, served as an important staging area for Jewish settlement in Kentucky and Tennessee beginning in the 1760s.

Other Virginia families who traveled with the YATESES along the same route were SIZEMORE, COOPER, SHELDON, GOOD, and BOLLING. For a YATES genealogy report, see "Yates and Cooper Cherokee-Choctaw-Sephardic Genealogies."

SKEEN: The first Skeen known to arrive in the American Colonies was born in Aberdeen, Scotland and came to New Jersey in 1690. The DNA sample obtained came from one of his descendants. The area around Aberdeen we believe was largely crypto-Jewish, meaning persons there practiced their religion in secret, while pretending to be Catholic and, later, Protestant.

A portion of the Skeen family migrated to Virginia and North Carolina, with several members settling in Wise County, Virginia. John Skeen is listed on the 1758 Frederick County, Virginia Rent Rolls. Jacob Skeen owned land in Randolph County, North Carolina. His name is listed on the 1779 tax list. Alexander Skeen is found on the 1769 Census living in Dobbs County, North Carolina. James Skeen owned land in Shenandoah County, Virginia, his name appears on the 1783 tax list. John Skeen owned land in Shenandoah County, Virginia, he can be found on the 1783 Tax List living in Shenandoah County, Virginia.

They intermarried with the Gold, Greene, Lea, Symeson and Sargent families, which we believe were Jewish in ancestry. Names such as Casto (surname), Mecca, Ann and Sephronia suggest that the family may have had Sephardic and perhaps Muslim connections, as well.

An excellent biography is available from the Wise County Historical Society by Jerry Evans and Jessica-Jean Skeen.

The Skeen DNA is very rare and only matches other Skeens.

I took particular delight in finding in the Hirschman book the following quotation and the following names specifically listed in Appendix 5: Germana Colonies: Surname Listings. The Germana Colony, with its "ostensibly" German immigrants, saw the arrival of many of SW Virginia's founding fathers in America between 1714 and 1725.

... the Germana Colony... does not appear to have been settled by ethnic Germans, but rather Sephardic Jews from Holland and Bohemia who were specifically recruited by [Governor] Spotswood for their mining and metallurgical expertise.

Among the many individuals listed as having arrived in the Germana Colony in 1714 are:

**John Coons/Cuntz/Cuntze/Koontz
John Kemper/Camper**

Both are my wife's 6G-Grandparents, and John Cuntze, whom you can look up on my Website, is the progenitor of John Counts of Glade Hollow, the ancestor of many SW VA families. I know this will be controversial, and may be subject to dispute, but you can imagine my delight to learn that I am not the only one in the family with Jewish roots.

JEAN SHAY, provided via email from Janet Paletaoga [gmagmpi@sbcglobal.net] wrote 5/5/2005 with more documentation on the life and times of **Samuel Porter and Elizabeth Dunkin**, as well as other **Litton and Berry** ancestors. Samuel Porter and Elizabeth are my gggg-grandparents, and those of many SW VA families.

My name is Jean Shay and I'm a direct descendant of Samuel and Elizabeth and live in Jackson Co., MO, where Elizabeth is buried. I'm attaching an outline so you'll see how I connect. If you'd like a gedcom with my notes, I'll be glad to do that, but must warn you that I've been doing this for about 10 years. I know that's not long in genealogy years, but I live in a county with one of the best genealogy libraries outside of Salt Lake or the DAR in DC.

I've come across (online) the Abstracts of George Rogers Clark Papers, who was the commander and chief of the Virginia Forces of the Western Department during the Rev War. I'm only enclosing the part about Samuel, as I've not researched the other families. It does mention some of the Duncan/Dunken(Dunkin), Berry, and Litton men as well as Samuel Porter. I thought you might be interested. <http://www.execpc.com/~sril/clark>

Index ABSTRACT OF GEORGE ROGERS CLARK PAPERS (Older brother of William Clark of the LEWIS and CLARK expedition) Compiled by: Richard Eugene Willson, Indexing Donald E. Gradeless, Ph.D., Microfilm #3 BOX 620-FOLDER 37 ACCOUNTS-SEPTEMBER 1779 Frames 125-166 40 documents filmed on 41 frames. 3055-3-126-131-September 30, 1779: Three copies of same document. Letter or orders written at Read Quarters at the Falls of Ohio by George Rogers Clark, Commander in chief of the Virginia Forces of the Western Department to Capt. Silas Harlan, who was informed that a fort was to be established near the mouth of the Ohio [River] and that a number of artificers as well as other inhabitants were needed to carry on the work at the new fort. Clark ordered Harlan to raise needed persons to become settlers at the fort, to pay them as militia for as long as necessary and to rendezvous at the new fort by December 1, [1779].

Microfilm #5 BOX 627-FOLDER 79 LETTERS, NOVEMBER 1780 FRAMES #1-88386-5-386-June 22, 1780: James Trabue certified several soldiers and had provided their own rations of corn, salt while on service at Martins Station. 8387-5-386-June 22, 1780-Continued: Names: Joel Hilsman, Ransom Finsley, David Tanner, Samuel Porter, Francis Berry, Thomas Berry, John Lovely, John Duncan, William McGuire, Thomas McGuire, Patrick Mahan, Thomas Mahan, William Mahan, Jol Morrison, and William Laforce. 8448-5-429-430-June 26, 1780: Bottom document. Journal entries of James Trabue at Martins Station for buffalo beef obtained for the militia from George Lovely, Thomas McGee, Patrick Mahan, Solomon Litton, Samuel Porter, and Joel Hill. 8462-5-437-438-June 9, 1780: Bottom document. James Trabue certified soldier Samuel Porter in Capt. David Gass company found his own rations for 20 days.

Microfilm #11 BOX 646-FOLDER 190 VOUCHERS JULY 1783 FRAMES #1-108 18085-11-321-322-November 12, 1783: Pay roll for 10 prisoners, who were taken at Martins Station in the June 26, 1780 and were exchanged November 6, 1782. Names: Lieut. John McLan, Thomas Machen, William McHon, William McQuire, Francis Berry, Thomas Berry, William Leforce, John Dunkin, John Dunkin Jr., Samuel Porter, Capt. Charles Galliff, John Bowman, Benjamin Harrison.

DEBBIE ALEXANDER [Energyproducers@aol.com] wrote, 8/25/2005, with information regarding the **McReynolds and Brawley Family Genealogy**.

I reviewed your research at Rootsweb. I would be interested in sharing information. Mary Moore McReynolds was my husband's gr great grandmother. As you already know Mary was born on March 12, 1809 in VA and died March 4, 1880 in Illinois. She is buried beside her husband William Alexander at Mt. Horeb Cemetery in Golden, Illinois. William Alexander was born in VA on June 20, 1802 and died Oct 19, 1886. The couple had 13 children. I have attached a photo of both of them for you and have a copy of William's last will and testament should you be interested.

William Alexander is the son of John Alexander and Martha Brawley. I have photos of just about everyone (William and Mary's children) down this particular line, and of the tombstones in Mt. Horeb cemetery where this line ended up in Illinois. (No photos of John Sr or Martha Brawley). I am glad to email you the photos along with the line's dates, sources and information I have gathered if you want. You may give my email address at pipingrocksdla@yahoo.com to anyone looking for this line and I will be glad to email them directly. The William b) 6/20/1802 you have listed (not your line) the son of John Alexander Sr. and Martha Brawley married about 1830 to Mary Moore McReynolds who was born on 3/12/1809 in VA. William died Oct. 19, 1886 and Mary (his wife) died March 4, 1880 and are both buried in Mt. Horeb church cemetery in Golden, Illinois.

YVONNE FRYERMANDY [Fryermandy@aol.com] wrote, 5/10/2005, with this interesting information about the **Bickley Family**, and the ancestors of **Charles William Bickley, of Castlewood, VA.**

I have been very interested in your work done on the Bickley family. I have found your research very helpful and I would like to thank you for that. My Bickley family came from Whitchurch, Shropshire, England to Kings Norton, Worcestershire. They also had and farmed land in Warwickshire especially around Tanworth in Arden close to where I live. I got stuck trying to find a John Bickley's birth around 1730 and also his brother Joseph. John and Joseph suddenly appear in Whitchurch and the families are Presbyterians. The other families there are Anglican. I have found a Joseph Bickley of Dirtwich, Whitchurch about 1729 on the LDS site also 1733 Dirtwich, father Joseph Bickley, mother Mrs Joseph Bickley. They possibly would be registered somewhere along the line in England. They have styled themselves exactly like the Bickleys from Louisa VA. Also Joseph has a son Joseph Bickley Jr. 1755 father, Joseph Bickley mother, Mrs Joseph Bickley.

I know that we are from that branch of the Bickley family from stories. Firstly, the Bickleys always support Cambridge in the Oxford and Cambridge boat race. Secondly, one of the Bickleys married somebody Reade and gained more land through this woman. John Bickley 1652/3 father, Sir Francis mother, Mary Parsons married Anne Reade of Barton Court Berkshire. Her brother Compton Reade's daughter Anne married Cornelius Vermuyden (jr). You can trace through the Reade family and the Hoo Family and arrive at Anne Boleyn. The Reades were friends of Charles 1st and Henrietta Maria. You can find this info on the Berkshire history site and click on gentry. I am a bit confused also about the lineage of John who married Mary Hurt. The first Bickley to arrive in America seems to me to be William b. 1633 from Penryn Cornwall. They are as you say the Philadelphia Bickleys. I cannot find any William Knight of the Garter from Northamptonshire. Are they confusing all this with Sir William the last Baronet and Sir Francis Bickley Baronet who John and Joseph Bickley have descended from?

By the way, my 4xGt., Grandfather Isaac Bickley born about 1760 Whitchurch married Jane Ray. I found that a Ray family were attacked by Cherokee Indians in Virginia and Charles Bickley was in the militia.

I hope this will be of some help. I am sure that John and Joseph Bickley came back home but of course I am unable to prove this.

P.S. The batch number for the Presbyterian Bickleys on the LDS is P016451

JESSE(E) FAMILY ORIGINS

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

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

OTHER JESSE(E) FAMILIES

MARGIE HARPER [MargieLHarper@earthlink.net] wrote, 11/11/2005, with an inquiry about the **Thomas Jessee family of Adair Co., Kentucky.**

I ran across your site in researching my mother's family. Her mother was **Della Jessee, born in 1897 in Adair County KY.** Her father being John Wesley, his Mordacai and his Thomas. I am trying to get my facts straight as to a clear view of how they are related and if Mordacai is actually descended from Thomas. I did see where you stated that Thomas did not appear in the 1820 census. Well I found him, categorized under the name Jesser. It is on page 10 of 32. A Lazareth also appears there, however he appears with the first name of Jesse and last of Lazareth.

Since I read how they didn't appear in the 1820 census, I wanted to let you know what I found. You have a great site and I am excited that I found it and hope to discover more.

Sent: Tuesday, October 11, 2005 9:43 PM

As for Thomas and Mordecai, I want to see if I can verify the connection, because all I have seen doesn't satisfy it for me yet. Mordecai is my GG grandfather, but I am not sure that Thomas is his father. I live in KY and I plan on going back to Adair county soon to see if I can find more info. For a small library they do have a very good genealogy section. I will let you know what I do find out.

PHILLIP AND RACHEL JESSEE

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

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

JOHN AND FRANKEY JESSEE

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

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

CARLYNE RITTER [jessee@oregonfcu.com] wrote, 7/1/2005, in response to Barbara Hall about our Revolutionary War Musician John Jessee and the musical talent evident in the family at the 2005 Reunion.

Cousin Barbara, I've been kidding you about [John playing] the harp, of course. Although I'm sure there are others who have a better understanding of what I'm saying, I will give it a stab and hopefully someone will correct anything I say that's incorrect.

The DAR directory of Rev. War patriots lists John Jessee as a patriot and musician. When I read this, I found it very interesting, because a history professor told me being a musician in the Revolutionary War meant he'd be in the front line in encounters with the enemy.

While in Lebanon for the reunion, however, someone pointed out that evidently someone had mistakenly assumed that the word "coronet" after his name in military records meant he played that instrument, but, in fact, it was the title of a noncommissioned officer. Everyone knows, though, that musical talent runs rampant throughout the Jessee family, as was evidenced by the wonderful musical entertainment provided at the research day in Lebanon and the reunion in Abingdon. It really was excellent and I was in awe of the many talents of this group of people. Which reminds me -- the Jessee couple who entertained us at research day had a CD or tape for sale that I'd love to own, because I've never heard anyone sing "Amazing Grace" more to my liking than that sweet woman. Does anyone know how I might go about doing this? I think I must have been out of the room when this announcement was made.

So.... of course it makes sense that John Jessee would have played a stringed musical instrument, because so many of his descendants play banjo, guitar or fiddle, etc. It's possible I was the only one singled out by Heavenly Father to have NO talent. I like to think I appreciate those with talent enough to make up for this lack in myself, and when my own family had an evening of music, I was good at remembering the tune and the words, and eventually taught myself to play chords, but I'm so tone deaf I couldn't even tune my own guitar even with one of those gizmos you can buy which seem to work for everyone but me (sigh/grin).

I. John Jessee, Jr.

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

JO DEE JESSIE BIDDLE [jdbiddle@msn.com] began a correspondence, 10/31/2005, about another branch of the John Jessee, Jr. family, which follows.

I am Jo Dee Jessie Biddle b. 1967, daug. of Larry Joe Jessie, b. 1939, son of George W. Jessie, b. 1910, d. 2003, son of Robert Lee Jessie, b. 1871, d. 1931, son of George W. Jessie, b. 1829. I went looking for more info on the elder George W. and found [the Jessee Website and Database]... I am admittedly new at this so I'm not sure how to add to any of that, but there was at least one more child after 1869 [not formerly listed] because my g.grandfather was born in 1871, Robert Lee. He had 10 children with Bunnie Akers Jessie, one of whom is my grandfather George W. Sybil also lived with him for many years until her death.

I have more info about the Jessie/Jessee family - at least about Robert's (he was known as Lee to the family) descendants if you're interested.

I can prepare a GEDCOM file as I have Family Tree Maker. I've just begun to enter all this information so I'll have to key all my grandfathers siblings in. I have a few obituaries, funeral announcements, two of my grandmother's family bibles, photos... some identified, some not, and birth dates of all my grandfather's siblings. My grandfather has two surviving siblings, James A. Jessie of Ohio and Racine Jessie Ison of Grayson, KY. Aunt Racine is the youngest, and barely remembers her father since he died when she was young. She has not been able to provide much information. Uncles James has a different take on family research - he has always said he didn't want anyone digging because all they'd dig up would be bank robbers and rum runners. I personally think that makes it all the more interesting! Alas, from what I've seen so far, our family were farmers and coal miners. Not much drama yet! Aunt Clara, James' wife, was able to provide a few names and dates from memory, and I know she has more obituaries and such stashed away.

I also have more of my grandmother's possessions to go through and may find a few more things but I think I already found most of her family-history keepsakes. The other side of my paternal family are Bledsoe's...another long family line from Scott County, Virginia. Now if only my mother's side were so easy, what with one side immigrating from Ireland, and the other from France.

I responded as follows: I am so glad you wrote. I am indeed interested in learning about your family line, and would want to record all the descendants of Robert Lee Jessie if you will share that information [She provided me a GEDCOM File]. I agree with you, most of the Jessee/Jessie family were farmers, coal miners, or ministers, and sometimes all three. And those horse thieves and other scoundrels makes it all interesting.

We are cousins by virtue of both Archer A. Jessee and his wife Nellie Smyth. He is my gg-grandfather, Joseph Jessee's brother, and she is my gg-grandmother, Cynthia Smyth's sister. We are about 4th cousins, two different ways. You can find quite a lot of pedigree information I have for George Washington Jessee, born 1829, in my database. We both descend from John Jessee, Jr. first of the 15 children of John and Frankey Lea Jessee, from whom most Jessee/Jessie in America descend. She followed up with more stories of her family.

I do have the following recollections of my grandfather which I will put down here for posterity:

I do remember my grandfather telling some stories, such as his mother, Bunnie, waking him up in October 1929 when the stock market crashed, to tell him that he might as well stay in bed because all the mines had closed.

I think he worked on his father's farm for a little while after that before the mines started opening back up again. He had a horrendous injury in a mine accident that nearly cost him his leg. He was in one hospital when an orderly came to take him to have the leg removed. He called his brother (not sure which one) to come get him, while he fended the orderly off with a bedpan. His brother took him to another hospital where they were able to save his leg. They let him out long enough to marry my grandmother at a Reverend's house in Hitchens, Kentucky (this would have been the early 1930's). He was on crutches and he had to go back to the hospital afterwards.

He had a mischievous streak..., but apparently not so much that she wouldn't marry him. She was a pious woman, and never have I met someone more Christian than she. She was a Bledsoe, a name also associated with Colonial Virginia and roots going very deep in Scott County.

Grandpa told another tale that happened here in Indiana (they moved here in 1934 or so - following my grandmother's parents). A neighbor used to brag about how well constructed his chicken coops were and how no thief would be able to steal his chickens. My grandfather and another friend set out to prove the neighbor wrong and managed to take off with one of the chickens. The following Sunday, they invited the neighbor over for supper and the dish, of course, was fried chicken. They allowed the neighbor to brag about his coops again before they informed them of the source of his meal.

Based on what I'm reading so far about other Jess/e/ee/ie's, my grandpa sounds very much like one!

II. Archer Jessee

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

BILL AND FAY JESSEE wrote in response to the photos of two classes in the Jessee School, about 1903, and some notes on the back that were provided in the Summer 2005 Newsletter. There was a question about who was the Lola Jessee listed there. Bill writes that it is his aunt, **Lola Hanson Jessee (1899-1986)** daughter of Vincent Jessee, Jr. and Celia Thompson, and he provided me an original pamphlet from her funeral. Fay Jessee is also a John Jessee, Jr. descendant.

VIRGINIA GILMER PORTER [dporter@rtconnect.net] from Newcastle, Wyoming also wrote in response to this inquiry, 6/22/2005.

I have received my July Jessee Family Newsletter and once again, find it most informative. Now, to help you out a little bit. On page 10 of this last issue, you printed pictures of Jessee School classes. In Photo 1, you mentioned **Lola Jessee**, with whom you are not familiar. She is a "step" great-aunt of mine so I'll share the lineage with you:

Vincent Jessee, Jr. b.1844 (son of Vincent Jessee b. 1800) was married twice. The first marriage was to **Virginia Ann Gilmer**, my great-grandmother. She died and he married a woman named **Celia Thompson**. They together had four children, Beecher Burke Jessee, a set of twin girls, Bulah and Bertie who died as infants, and Lola Jessee. Lola married Charles Boyd Sutton so that is why there is a notation of that name on the picture.

I have a dear friend whose name is Gose and I'm going to see if he can help Peggy Lee Simmers (page 18) with the history of the Gose relatives she's seeking. He has all of his family's history so maybe it will work. At least it's worth a try.

Thank you again for the tremendous job you do.

MARSHALL BLAINE JESSEE, JR. [jessee22@verizon.net] from the same branch of the family sent along this note and the two photos of Vincent and Mary E. Jessee. [see following page]

This is most distant photo on one of my Jessee lines (Vince, Vince, Scott, Marshall, and me Marshall Blaine Jessee Jr. Also down your line of John Jessee Jr. to Mary Jessee wife of Dot (Daughter) Gilmer.



Vincent Jessee

ARCHIE & DORIS JESSEE [aejessee@telis.net] wrote, 9/15/2005, with this wonderful family photo.

Doris and I were privileged to have our 5 children and 10 of our 12 grandchildren here at our home in Nevada City, CA during the weekend of 4th of July. We had a photographer come out and take a few pictures. I hope you are able to view the picture I'm sending with this email.

God has been so good to us to give us such a lovely family. Yesterday was a special day for Doris and I. It was our 54th wedding anniversary. Today I have been trying to make some New



Mary E. Jessee Gilmer

Years resolutions so we can manage to get through another year. Ha. Ha. (Probably not a bad idea!)

We have been pretty well healthwise. During the months of October and November we have volunteer work projects. Then hope, after the 1st of the year, to spend some time out of the snow, in the Southwest, for about 3 months. Come and go with us.

III. William Jessee

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

IV. Lea Jessee

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

RICHARD "DICK" JESSEE (Hayfork, CA) wrote, 12/19/2002, with information regarding the family of **Madison and Ray Jessee** and his descendants. Madison was the son of **Archer Catron Jessee, son of Lea Jessee and Barbara Gose**, and the first Jessee pioneer in California, before the Gold Rush.

I am Richard Jessee, the son of Ray Jessee and we live on a ranch in Hayfork, CA. My father Ray has spoke about our ancestors and I recognize most of the names [on the Jessee



Archie and Doris Jessee Family, 4th of July 2005

Genealogy Service]. My father Ray was Justice Court Judge for over 30 years here in Trinity County. We live in the old ranch house where my father held court. [Regarding my grandfather, Madison "Matt" Jessee] He was a constable in Santa Maria in his late years, and my uncle Bert Jessee was a loan officer for Bank of America in Santa Maria. Albert Jessee, Bert Jessee's son, married Governor Earl Warren's daughter, Honey Bear Warren. She was quite a tennis player. Another Uncle, Clarence, was a blacksmith and horse shoer.

Dick followed up Saturday, June 25, 2005:

Ray Jessee is the son of Madison and Margaret Elizabeth (Earl) Jessee. Ray and Georgia (Cuddeback) Jessee had two children, Millicent Glow Jessee Ow Sunday, and

Richard Raymond Jessee. My sister Millicent married Bob Ow and they had three children, Robert (wife Kim, children Robert, Lisa, and Nicholas), Debbie (husband Bob Martin, children Jessee and Shannon), and Melinda (married, has a son). Millicent's second husband is Emory Sunday, but I don't have complete names, birth dates, or marriage records for this side of the family. I, Richard Jessee (born 29 OCT 1926, Santa Maria, CA), married Lonnie Ellis (born 3 MAR 1948, LaJolla, CA) on 25 OCT 1974, in Hayfork, CA. My father, Justice Court Judge Ray Jessee preformed the marriage at our ranch here in Hayfork. We have four children, Emily Georgia Jessee (born 6 JAN 1975, Weaverville, CA), Melisa Ann Jessee (born 26 DEC 1975, Weaverville, CA), Nathan Ray Jessee (born 20 FEB 1977, Weaverville, CA), and Matthew Clay Jessee (born 13 MAY 1988, Redding, CA). Our daughter Emily married Jeffery Martin Allan on 28 May 2005 at our ranch in Hayfork, CA.

MARILYN PITTMAN wrote, 9/11/2005, about her research regarding her great-grandparents, **W.E. Luttrell and Martha Patsy Jessee**, daughter of Lea Jessee, and had these photos sent to me.

I am putting all my proof together to prove my pedigree. Have mine, my parents, my grandparents, Great Grandparents W E Luttrell and Martha Patsy Jessee. And notes we wrote as my Grandmother told us back in the 1970's that Martha's Mother was Barbara Gose or Gost and Barbara's father was Steven. ... There's



books on the history of early Jackson County Mo that mentions Martha Jessee's parents.

V. David Jessee

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

VI. ELIZABETH JESSEE GOSE

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

VII. Mary "Polly" Jessee Kiser

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

VIII. Frances Jessee Stone

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



HOWARD T. MAYHEW JR. [HTM92941@aol.com] wrote, 11/12/2005, with a welcome correction of information.

Trying to add side families to the information I have on 'Lewis County (Wa.) Families'. And happened upon your entry @ RootsWeb.com. I do believe you have a minor error. You show Joseph C. Reynolds' (b. 1892) father as Joseph C. Reynolds (b. 1847). Information I have is that this would be his GrandFather (see DoB & attached file) and that his father was Joseph b. abt 1870. Information sent is all I have on this line at this time. Any corrections appreciated. As always willing to help and/or share.

IX. Sarah Jessee Vermillion

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

X. Boedicia Jessee Gose

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

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

XI. James Jessee

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

IRIS ROBERTA LAMBERT HALL, a descendant of James Jessee, was a regular contributor who shared a lifetime of research, and more than a bit of wisdom. I am sorry to report her passing. Her son **James M. Hall** was kind to write to us, December 2, 2005:

Dear Mr. Jessee,

I'm sorry to say that my Mom, Iris Roberta (Lambert) Hall, passed away in early November. Although she hadn't made a big deal about it (she never did), her health had declined noticeably during the month of October and, after falling at home due to a dizzy spell on the 26th, she had to be taken to the hospital and placed in intensive care. She passed away on the 6th of November and was buried at Roselawn Cemetery in Pueblo on the 10th. She didn't appear to suffer and, if there is any blessing in this, it is that she got to see all of those closest to her in her final days and her mind was clear to the very end.

Although I don't know if you ever actually met her, I do know that Mom subscribed to your family newsletter and corresponded with you on genealogy questions fairly frequently. Her extensive collection of family research files will soon be transferred to our newly conscripted family archivist, Laura Ann (Tomky) Cassidy, the daughter of Mom's beloved niece, Linda Gail (Larson) Tomky (my sister for all intents and purposes). If you would like to contact her about Mom's research, she can be reached via email at: Laura Cassidy lauracassiday@yahoo.com.

Sincerely, James Hall

The following is from her obituary provided by Montgomery & Steward, Funeral Directors, Inc.

Iris Roberta Hall: Born in Pueblo, Colorado on Aug. 11, 1925; Departed on Nov. 6, 2005 and resided in Pueblo, CO.

Iris Lambert Hall, lifelong resident of Pueblo, loving wife, mother, daughter, sister, aunt and friend, passed away November 6, 2005, at Parkview Medical Center in Pueblo. She is survived by her devoted husband of 57 years, Marion L. (Hatch) Hall, of the family home, her son and daughter-in-law, James M. Hall and Winifred E. Parker, of Livermore, California; brother, James M. Lambert of Boulder Creek, California; and nieces and nephews, Linda G. (Larson), Thomas C. and Christopher B. Tomky of Rocky Ford, Colorado; Laura Ann (Tomky) and Robert Cassidy of Hudson, Colorado; Cari Jo (Larson), Robert, Jeffrey, Justin and Amber Keeney of Pueblo; Edith, Nancy and Brian Lambert of Canon City, Colorado; James M., Nicki and Cristi Lambert and Linda (Lambert) and John Shivers and Jack Provinzano of Boulder Creek, California; David and Jinny Vigil and family of New Mexico and many dear friends who will all miss her.

She was devoted to her family and spent long periods caring for her parents, Ira J. and L. Mabel (Peterson) Lambert and her younger sister, Gail E. (Lambert) Larson, all of whom predeceased her after extended illnesses. She was also predeceased by her nephew, Gregory A. Larson, brother-in-law, Wm. E. Larson and brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Francisco A. and Helen (Hall) Vigil.

Iris attended the Methodist Church from early childhood. A graduate of Centennial High School, she was secretary at Hinsdale School and W.A. Wills Ford for several years before beginning a 40 year career as a legal secretary. She retired in 1987 after over 30 years with Bartley & Glover Law Office. Iris enjoyed family research and spent many years researching and traveling with her husband to areas where their families had lived. She was a past officer of the Southeastern Colorado Genealogy Society, as well as member of several other societies throughout the country, and served many years as a volunteer in the Family Research Department of the Pueblo Public Library, assisting others interested in researching their family histories. She was also a member of the Pueblo Newcomers Club.

During World War II, Iris was a Red Cross Nursing Aide and after the war, received recognition for having served over 1500 hours of volunteer work at St. Mary Hospital. Most of this time was spent in service on the maternity floor. On several occasions when large groups of wounded or ill servicemen arrived at the Pueblo Air Base en route to military hospitals in this part of the country, she assisted the staff at the Base Hospital with their care until they could be transferred. Later, she was a Red Cross Volunteer Aide for several years in the admitting room of Corwin Hospital.

Funeral to be held at the Montgomery & Steward Chapel, Pueblo, at 2 p.m. Thursday, November 10, with the Rev. Mike Lipinski officiating. Burial will be at Roselawn Cemetery, Pueblo. The family respectfully suggest that in lieu of flowers, memorials in her name be made to the Family Research Department of the Pueblo Public Library through the funeral home or direct to the library. Online condolences, www.montgomerysteward.com

XII. REBECCA JESSEE BURK

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

KATHRYN BURKE GREEVER, JACK HOCKETT, IMOGENE BURKE VERBAL, and RUE BURKE STEVENSON published *Some Descendants of John Burk, 1656-1699, Middlesex Co., Virginia*, available

from the Iberian Publishing Co. Order online at www.iberian.com. All royalties go to the Russell Co. Historical Society and Russell Co. Library Family History Room.

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

XIII. Jane Jessee Fuller

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

XIV. George Lea Jessee

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

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

ROBB FOSTER [:rfoster@symbionics.net] exchanged email and much information during October and November, 2005, with information about his branch of the **George Lea Jessee Family**.

Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2005 8:11 AM

I have a question that I hope you can help on... My name is Robert Foster and like yourself, I am doing research on my family Tree... I seem to have encountered a road block, but it would seem somehow your tree might help complete the gap.

My Fathers name is **David Anderson Foster** and his Father's name is as well, although, technically Deward Bellmont Foster; it had to do with getting a job. My great Grand Father's name is **Horace Foster**. I can find that Horace Foster married Victoria Jessee in Russell Cty on April 27th 1885 listing M.C. and Mary C. Jessee as her parents. However, I cannot seem to find any other clues than that. I can find a birth record of a Martha B. V Jessee on Nov. 20th, 1866 and this would seem to match both in parent names and time frame; as on the marriage record she lists that she was 19 years old. Additionally, the birth record states the parents as Martin C. and Catherine Jessee as the parents. Could my great Grandmother Victoria, be your relative Martha B. V Jessee? I'm not sure who else to turn to.

One other interesting fact is that in your tree I can find a Horace Foster Jessee born just 4 years after the marriage of Horace and Victoria. That would be the other clue that has me thinking somehow there is a relation. If you know of anyway that I can get the proper answers to prove or disprove this connection, I would be eternally grateful (I'm hoping, though that I'm right... I'm new to this and it's baffling at times as to the difficulty of this undertaking...).

Another interesting aside... I can't seem to find my Horace Foster in TN... My father said his name was Horace Martin Foster and the only Horace I can find in TN is a Horace L. Foster that is in the right time frame... I know his name, I know most of his kids names... on the surface you would think that this would be easier than it is...

-Robert Tredick Foster

I responded, 10/13/2005, as follows:

Your investigation and logical track down is excellent, and I do believe you have found Victoria. Based on all your information, I am sure she is listed as Martha Jessee in my database, RIN 8310, whose parents are Martin Counts Jessee and Mary Catherine Goodwin. As I have no marriage or descendants information for her, you are my first contact with this branch of the family. I will be glad to receive information on her marriage and descendants. We would be cousins, probably about 5th cousins or so.

I find Horace Foster Jessee to be from the John Jr. and son Stanford line of the family (also my line), while Martin Counts is from the George Lea Jessee line, and they were two of the brothers among 15 sibling. Both these lines lived in Reeds Valley, Mill Creek area, so all lived within a couple miles of each other. So connections are very possible.

Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2005 10:56 PM

You have no idea how excited this makes me feel; this, I'm sure you know, is no easy task. Most of the information that I have I have pulled from the internet and I will pass along the links and if possible, at a later date, try to send you actual documents as I can get them... I'm still a little sketchy on some of the details, though and I would like to be as complete as time and of course, money permits.

I have included below what my father sent to me, that should give you a little idea about Martha's line (Though I would think she may have preferred Victoria; There were a lot of Martha's in Russell County from the look of it). What I found interesting was the Horace Foster Jessee; though speculating, I would think that the Jessee family was very tight knit and that "Big Jeff" thought enough of my g. grandfather to name one of his kids after him. I see other middle names of Foster, though, and I could be wrong about the name. It is, however, intriguing. Since I don't know all the names of the their children, wouldn't it be cool to find a Thomas Jefferson Foster...

For background to the e-mail, Olga was my grandmother's sister, who, with my grandmother, fled the Red Army when they took over Estonia. She met my grandfather, who was working on the Siberian Railroad... I had forgotten until my father reminded me that the US Military was in Russia during the First World War. On this side of my family, I fear that Stalin made them part of the "Strawberry Fields". They were unfortunately part of the "intelligentsia" and the line may only exist with her son and my grandmother's children.

One other thing... I'm curious to see if the Mary Catherine's Goodwin family is the same Goodwin Family of My stepfather... They came from Clifton Forge, VA...

Below is the e-mail from my father.

Robb, I do not have any additional information on Olga. Remember she was married to Chad Wheeler - the elder Wheeler

and had one son - Chad The lived in Lakeland, Florida. Chad, if he is still alive, was born only a couple of weeks before me - perhaps August 28, 1929. Chad had two children who now live somewhere in Florida. Chad's last address was Mother's father whose name I have never known died in 1901 and her mother remarried a man named Albert Makku. I am not sure of the Albert or the spelling of Makku. I am not sure of the spelling. Grandmother was referred to a Babinka which I am sure is slang in the way we called your maternal grandmother Meema. My father was Deward Bellmont Foster. I am not sure of the spelling of Deward. He took his older brother David Anderson Foster's name in order to get a job. I was never a Jr. though I did not know this for many years. Louise Foster in Knoxville later became Louise Allen when she married Fran Allen. Grandfather was Horace M. Foster and grandmother Victoria Jessee Foster. There were nine children in Victoria Jesse's and Horace Martin Foster's family. I only met Louise and Myrtle. Aunt Myrtle was married to a Maples whose first name I do not know. They were farmers at a farm near Knoxville. She had ten children. Of the ten children I only remember one of her sons - Foster Maples. Foster Maples and I were in the Korean conflict at the same time. Dad told me that Foster Maples got into a fight with an officer while in combat in Korea and was sent to a prison - I think in Atlanta I do not know how correct this information is but I am sure that Foster Maples probably lives in Knoxville and could give you a great deal of information. Dads brother Dutch married Mildred and had one son - Marty(Martin). Martin Foster lives somewhere on the west coast probably San Francisco. Dad's brother David lived in New Orleans and had one daughter who at one time was an airline stewardess. I think her name was Lillian. Dad's other brother was Walter who was gassed in WWI while fighting in Europe. Walter suffered from breathing difficulties and eventually died from them in the 1940's. Dad said that his father Horace Martin Foster died in 1901. Dad's father was an attorney in Knoxville, Tennessee; Victoria lived until the 1950's as I recall.

Sent: Wednesday, November 02, 2005 2:19 PM

I hope all is well. I got to thinking about you as I've been trying to get the descendants, of Martha "Victoria" in line so that I can send you a file for you to use should you wish. I'm using Family Tree Maker (didn't cost that much) and am trying to put it together properly and then export a file that will be useful to you... I hope. [He did and extended our database by many dozen records].

I saw a couple of other related Jessee websites and I thought it was interesting that they were mentioning music as a running Jessee theme and trait... I too am a musician and have just enough guitars as to make my wife frown, but few enough so that she doesn't throw me out of the house. Although I'm 43, I'm in a rock band that plays once a month in Chantilly (...and surprisingly, only sing in this band). It's pretty interesting it is to find out that people related to you share the similar traits; without the benefit of contact. Makes an argument for nature over nurture... Take care and all the best, Robert Foster

CAROLYN SUE JESSEE, wrote, 6/22/2005, with this photo of her adorable family, and a bit of news from the Reunion and about the Andrew Jackson Jessee home, that has been sold again!

Hi Jim, I thought I would try to cheer you up somewhat by sharing my children and grandchildren with you (my pride and joy). Andan Scott Ernsberger, born 3/4/05 in the first and second pictures; Third picture seated left to right first row, Anzlee Logan Ernsberger born 12/27/1998, Kerrigan Noel Ernsberger born 2/26/03, and Andan Scott Ernsberger; middle row, my son-in-law Scott Ernsberger born 6/29/1975 and my daughter Sonja Christine (Doust) Ernsberger born 3/26/76; last row but not least is Kenzley Suzanne Ernsberger born 10/4/2000; Then the 4th and final picture is the three girls with the one lonely boy!! Hope this cheers you up. (I personally believe they look like Jesse's, don't you?)

I asked Carolyn if I could have her permission to publish one of the photos featured here, and if she had any news of the reunion. she responded as follows.

Please, be my guest. I will be honored and proud!!! That brings up a thought - I seem to recall at the reunion someone making an announcement that before anyone takes pictures of any children, that we should get permission from adults before doing so. Don't recall who made that announcement though. It was one of the board members. I suppose that is a good idea - you can't be too safe these days, I guess. I'm not really sure how I feel about that - I can understand, but - geez - this is a picnic and pictures are bound to be taken, aren't they??

Yes, we went to the reunion. Only about 75 attended. Some new Jessees and I don't recall their names. The A J Jessee home had a for sale sign again. Someone called the real-estate office about it while we were there and it was in the process of closing - at a mere \$159,000 - whoever bought it at auction last year at \$73,000 made them a quick buck in just one-years time!!

I actually don't have a lot of news to report about the picnic. We did miss you, and others asked about you also. They were disappointed about not seeing you. Judy Jessee and her brother Robert and wife Carolyn weren't there this year. Missed them also. That was another good thing due to the Newsletter - it brought a brother and sister together. If not for that, I'm not sure they would have found each other.

Also, I missed Sandy Jessee very much. Dad read a list of known deceased since the last reunion and called for a moment of silence to remember them.



Carolyn Sue Jessee's daughter, Sonja Christine Doust Ernsberger, with husband, Scott Ernsberger and children.

XV. Martin Jessee

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

MISSING LINKS, PROBLEMS AND OTHER CONUNDRUMS.

BRENDA JOHNSON [SeaRvrGal@aol.com] wrote, 9/20/2005, with this inquiry about **Tivis Sykes**, and his possible Jessee birth mother, **Virginia Bostick Sykes**.

You haven't heard from me in quite awhile but I am a researcher on the Sykes line. I saw your note on Tivis Jessee and it has quirked my attention again on my "abandoned on the doorstep" relative. You may, or may not, remember that my grandfather's (Tivis Sykes) mother, Virginia, was the one who was abandoned as a newborn. My mother let slip a comment one day while I was asking her AGAIN about any information she might have had on her grandmother. She said, "Well, everyone knew she was a Jessee." The Jessee's were always close to the Sykes there in the hills. I also heard that my grandfather named his second son after a close friend of his (who I had heard a rumor that it was his cousin), Beecher Jessee. Virginia has named some of her children using the same names of some of the Jessees'. I don't think I will ever be able to "crack this nut" but the hints and clues keep coming. I think I will look at the Jessee women who were childbearing age at that time and lived in the vicinity. Anyway, thanks for listening (or reading :).....ongoing and forward.....

You may use the letter in any of your inquiries and/or publications. In this endeavor, any help is soooo appreciated. I did find another photo of her that I will try to attach. She was born July 30, 1853 in Russell Co. Her parents are listed as Valentine and Rachel Bostic. She died Nov. 7, 1937 at the age of 84. Her parents are listed as such on her marriage license. My mother told me that she was put on the Bostics' doorstep because they were an affluent family for the times. All the dates I have are acquired thru genealogy. We knew the family story growing up. I sure wish (I know this is the lament of ALL researchers) I had talked to my grandparents about our family history more. I think I liked the boys and rock and roll music more at the time...sighhh. Ahhh, Youth! The photo enclosed is supposed to be of Virginia and her daughter, Emmerite, taken on the main street of Lebanon, VA.



Virginia Bostic Sykes and her daughter Emmerite

CORRESPONDENCE

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

PEGGY [sampeggy@bellsouth.net] sent, 12/17/2005, this note, photo, and inquiry if anyone knows anything about this **William Lea Jug**.

Jim, I sent you a copy of this picture sometime ago... I just wonder if this could have been any of Frankey Lea's family. This jug is old and has been in our family for years. It came from Bristol, Tn. What do you think?



RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

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

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

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE--CIVIL WAR AND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS SYSTEM offers a search service that is truly astounding. Please go to this service and look up the surname JESSEE and all variations of its spelling for all the various services, north and south. There are over 83 Jessee listings for the Confederacy, and some 30 who fought for the Union, including several Colored Jessee soldiers listed for the Union, among many interesting facts.
<http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/soldiers.htm>

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA CONTROLLER'S OFFICE provides the following Website to trace unclaimed property, mostly abandoned bank accounts and the like. I did a search for Jessee and came up with 103 listings in California, some of them my own first cousins! **<http://www.sco.ca.gov/col/ucp/index.shtml>**

Welcome to the State Controller Steve Westly's Unclaimed Property (UCP) Program Web site

You may be richer than you think.

The State of California is holding more than \$4.8 billion in Unclaimed Property. These assets have been turned over to the State for safekeeping by banks, businesses and other organizations as required by law.

There is no charge to file a claim for Unclaimed Property. Last year, more than 239,000 accounts were returned, and the average amount received was almost \$1,000! You can use this Web site to search for property you may have lost or forgotten. There are 7.6 million accounts, so there is a good chance that you, a friend or family member has unclaimed property.

It may be more than worth your while to see if your own State has such a service!

LORI JESSEE [lorij83@msn.com] sent this Website of interest to us **Civil War** buffs.

Cousin Jim, I am VERY interested in confederate history and I got looking around online because I wanted to see a listing of Virginia soldiers. I found this site and a great number of soldiers with the last name of Jessee. I thought this may would interest some.

www.geocities.com/Area51/Lair/3680/cw/cw-va.html

Civil War Rosters: VIRGINIA LINKS

This is a directory of Civil War Rosters/Muster Rolls that have been found on the internet. Since only 50-60% of all rosters are on the internet, some units will not be listed. If you find a roster that is not listed, please forward URL to me and I will gladly add it.

NOTE: If you can't find your unit or regiment on these pages, please check the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors page.

Soldier List
Regiment List
Sailors List

KAREN KELSIE [KSKelsie@aol.com] sent along this site to search for WV Birth, Marriage and Death Records - **www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_select.aspx**

THE FAMILY DATABASE

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

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

Please go to: www.jessee.org

Our database is now over 44,000 records. I do mean "our" database, as it is made up of the tens of thousands of hours of your research, the results of which you have generously and kindly shared with me over the years. I have concerns about the downside of this computer revolution, the Internet, and the ethics of genealogy research, but still conclude that greater good is done by making our work public. However, I am using the filters provided by the World Connect project to delete information on living persons.

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

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

Nevertheless, I have had so much expressed gratitude from dozens, if not hundreds, of people who have been helped in their research by our database, that I persevere. I certainly do welcome corrections, updates, additions, and documentation of information, and you who are receiving this newsletter have been very generous in that regard.

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

OUR PURPOSE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HOW TO HELP

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

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

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

I am asking for a minimum subscription of \$15 a year for two issues of the newsletter. I need and appreciate your additional donations in defraying the considerable cost of research, printing, and postage of the newsletter and other materials I send without charge to inquirers. Additional donations also support those who can't afford to pay.

NEWSLETTER REPRINTS

Back editions are available on the Website, and you are free to print them from there. I have some separate original sets of prints: #1-7, #8-9, #10-11, #12-13, #14-15, #16-17, #18-19, #20-27 (although I am out of certain years and without some attachments that have become obsolete). **You may request these for \$75 for copies of any and all back issues still in print, and a subscription to the current year.**

The Jessee Family Newsletter

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

The mailing label above indicates the status, expiration date or last issue of your subscription. It is based on your current subscription, donations, or assumed interest. **I am providing you the first issue of the new subscription year free as a reminder to please renew for the remainder of 2006 at the new rate of \$15 per year, for two more editions.**

Please inform me of any errors or corrections needed regarding your expiration date or degree of interest in receiving this newsletter. I have continued to provide a copy to some whose subscription has lapsed, because I believe you want it, wish to be informed about JHF and other family news, or have specifically asked to receive it gratis. I have indicated those as "sponsored." Please inform me if you wish to continue receiving it gratis or if you wish it to stop.

A special thank you to those who have provided those precious additional gifts and donations that keep me going. These donations allow me to provide complimentary copies to history and genealogy societies, libraries, major contributors of research materials, and to sponsor to those who cannot afford to subscribe.