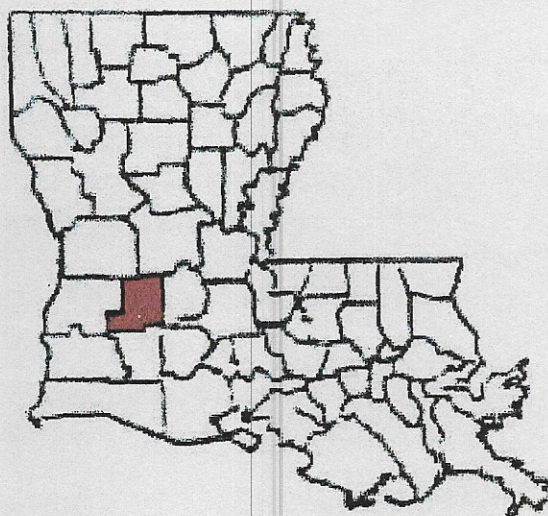


ALLEN GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

July, 2018

P.O. Box 789, Kinder, La. 70648

Issue No. 256



CROSSROADS

COVERING

Kinder, Oakdale, Oberlin, Elizabeth, Reeves,
LeBlanc, Mittie and surrounding communities.

ALLEN GENEALOGICAL and HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2018

President --- Betty Sarver

Vice President --- Durvin LaFleur

Secretary / Treasurer / Editor --- Fran Clemmons

Reporter / Tourism Envoy --- Steve Fontenot

ALLEN GENEALOGICAL and HISTORICAL SOCIETY was organized May 1985 to collect, organize, process, and preserve genealogical material. The purpose of the Society are to promote interest in genealogy, to assist and encourage genealogical researchers in gathering material on historical events and people of Allen Parish, and to help complete family histories. AGHS was incorporated in March 1990.

AGHS regular meetings are held every other month on the first Tuesday of the month at 10:00 am in the genealogy room of the Kinder branch of the Allen Parish Library located at 833 4th St., Kinder, La. Workshop meetings are held the following month on the first Tuesday of the month at 10:00 am in the genealogy room of the library. Members are willing to help visitors with research and to answer questions they may have.

MEMBERSHIP fees are \$15 per calendar year per person and includes an annual subscription to **CROSSROADS**. Any Correspondence and your dues should be sent to AGHS, P. O. Box 789, Kinder, La. 70648

CROSSROADS is published semi – annually. Please let AGHS know any change of address to assure delivery. Queries are free to members, \$3 each for non – members and will be published as space permits. When sending in a query, please include all pertinent information such as names, dates, and places along with your name and address.

EDITORIAL POLICY We encourage and welcome contributions of genealogical and historical material that pertain to Allen Parish locations and families for inclusion in **CROSSROADS**. The Society does not assure responsibility for accuracy for any copyright infringement of submitted and published material. We reserve the right to edit and/or reject material we deem not suitable for publication.

DONATIONS of genealogical and historical materials such as books, periodicals, family histories, newspaper clippings, old photos, filled out 5-generation charts are accepted by the Society and each item donated will be cataloged and placed on file in the genealogy room of the Kinder Library to be used for research. Memorials and honorariums are also welcomed by the Society.

BOOKS PUBLISHED BY ALLEN GENEALOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The following books are published by the AGHS and are available for purchase at the prices listed plus \$2 each for shipping and handling.

Rev. Paul Leeds' Congregational Church records("Marriages & Funerals"—1895-1957—vol.1) \$25

Rev .Paul Leeds' Kinder Congregational Church records(1893—1957—volumes 1, 2, 3, & 4) each \$25

Rev. Paul Leeds' Bethany (Green Oak) Church records \$15

Congregational Church records of the Indian Village, Edna, and Emad Communities \$15

Congregational Church records of Elton and China Communities \$15

Congregational Church records of Iowa, La. \$15

St Peter's Bayou Blue Indian Congregational Church records(1901-1957(includes St Luke's early church)) \$15

China Cemetery, Elton, La. \$8

LeBlanc Cemetery, Allen Parish \$8

Indian Village Cemetery, Kinder, La. \$15

Sonnier Cemetery, Allen Parish, La. \$8

Resthaven Cemetery, Oakdale, La. \$8

Lyles Cemetery—Barnes Creek, Reeves, La. \$15

Index of Surnames in all recorded Allen Parish Cemeteries \$10

St Augustine Cemetery, Basile, La. \$15

Ancestor Charts—five generation charts—Allen Parish ties \$25

THESE BOOKS MAKE GREAT GIFTS FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS!!!

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PLEASE mark your calendar with the following Allen Genealogical and Historical Society meetings, the first Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m., to be held in the genealogy room of the Kinder Library located at 833 4th Street in Kinder, La.

August 7, Sept.4, Oct. 2, Nov.6, Dec.4

Welcome New Members

Colonel Don Ladner (US Army Retired), 22076 Rostrom Road, Welsh, La. 70591

Leavon R. Ladner, 22076 Rostrom Road, Welsh, La. 70591

President's Greeting

Summertime is definitely here! But the heat has not deterred our group from working diligently. We have several projects underway and I really appreciate how everyone on our staff is willing to do all they can to see them done well.

We continue to help those who call on us for help finding ancestors and/or documents pertaining to their families in Allen Parish. It gives me great pleasure when I can fulfil a need along these lines for someone. Many times this research makes us realize what a small world we live in and how in this age we are privileged to span the world through cyberspace to collect our family's history.

Wishing you all of ancestor seekers happy hunting,

Betty Sarver

Allen Genealogical and Historical Society President

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR.....fran clemmons

I start this letter to you today with a thank note to the **AGHS** newest members, Colonel Don Ladner(US Army Retired) and Leavon Rostom Ladner. I thank them very much for their contributions for this issue of **CROSSROADS**. Colonel Ladner submitted for this publication a speech that he has given in person to historical/genealogical societies in SW Louisiana. Ms Leavon Ladner submitted an article about two Kinder families on an outing that ended in tragedy. She also gave the **AGHS** collected writings by her friend Frances Ethelinda Jemison Andrus to be used in the publication of **CROSSROADS**. I used a couple of the writings in this issue and will have more in future publications.

I need your attention and **HELP** in getting material to publish in **CROSSROADS**. Any advice, or comments, and even criticism you may have to offer, I would appreciate very much.

AGHS regular meetings are held every other month on the first Tuesday of the month and workshop meetings are to be held the following month on the first Tuesday of the month. The meetings are held in the genealogy room of the Kinder branch of the Allen Parish Libraries located at 833 4th Street, Kinder, Louisiana at 10:00 A.M. The Society extends an invitation to you to come join us on August 7, 2018 and bring someone with you. Coffee and fellowship begin when you arrive.

The Most treasured

Heirlooms

Are the sweet memories of our Family that we pass down to our

Children

Sharing Family Stories and Memories

Facts get recorded

Stories get remembered

Genealogy is all about stories! Dates and names are meaningless without context. That's what makes genealogy such a fascinating pursuit---Learning about the lives of your ancestors and where they come from and what they did and what was going on around them at that time.

Family stories are lost over three generations unless they are recorded and preserved. It is important for you as a genealogist to leave for your future descendants in writing your own memories and stories. You are the best person to write your story and family history. Start writing by making a list of the stories you wish to tell, then elaborate on each one of them one by one in a journal in your own unique handwriting(family will treasure it as a piece of you). Keep a notebook near at hand to write down a memory or memories that randomly pop into your thoughts, that you may add to your journal. Gather memories from other people such as family members and friends. They could share some of their stories about your descendants from their point of view. These collected memories about your descendants answer what you really want to know about your ancestors. Who they were? What they liked? Why they did the things they did? While gathering facts and stories is important to forming a picture of who they were, and who you are, do not neglect your feelings and thoughts on things important to you. It is said, "photos are worth a thousand words" so don't neglect to have pictures taken of yourself. Preserve the memory of yourself. Preserve photos of where you live, things you love, family and friends you enjoy spending time with. Take time to photograph and relate the stories behind items that mean something to you so that they aren't tossed in the trash. The best way to preserve your story is the old fashioned way; pen, paper and photographs. Preserve your story as it is happening for all those who might be going through your book to learn more about you.

MAMA'S Bed Pan

"No siree, you cannot borrow my bed pan. I may need it anytime. I'm sorry, but no, goodbye." (Why do people want to borrow my bed pan. They know I need it on my cases.)

Mama was a maternity nurse. She had given birth to eleven children and knew much of what was needed. There was a need in our little town for someone to work with the doctors in delivering babies. There was no hospital so babies were delivered at home. Sometimes the baby was delivered by a midwife or granny as they were sometimes called and they had no medical training. So mama enrolled in a maternity nursing course given by Red Cross and passed with flying colors. Now she was ready to go to work — having a large family, the money would be welcome.

Her first case was a newly married neighbor. Then is when she realized she needed a bed pan, so ordered one; probably from Sears Roebuck. In those days, the 1920's women stayed in bed nine full days - getting up and dressed on the tenth day. The mother was bathed and fresh bed linens put on the bed without the mother leaving the bed. So, mama brought her bed pan on each case.

The doctor would call mama when he was notified the lady was in labor. She would pack her suit case, grab her bed pan in a bag and was ready when the doctor got there. Mama would stay with the patient until she was up and dressed on the tenth day. When the doctor arrived for his last checkup of the patient he would drive mama home but she never left her bed pan.

Mama often went out of town and out of state on the cases and she always - yes, she always took her bed pan!!

One case was just ten miles from our town. She was packed and ready for her ten day stay when the doctor arrived. After the baby arrived and the mother had been made comfortable and the doctor had gone, the new father informed mama he would take care of his wife and the new baby and she could do the washing and cook and clean the house. This was before the days of automatic washing machines. The doctor arrived the next morning and when he heard the father had mama doing the housework and etc., he told her to get her things he was taking her home. So she did and she took her bed pan too!!

For a full ten-day stay mother was paid, I believe, ten dollars for the delivery and one dollar for each day and when she got home she would give each of us girls one dollar. For a while there were two of us and then there was only me. Just think a whole dollar! Kids weren't given allowance then as they are now.

But anyway mama had her bed pan, and papa had his trucks.

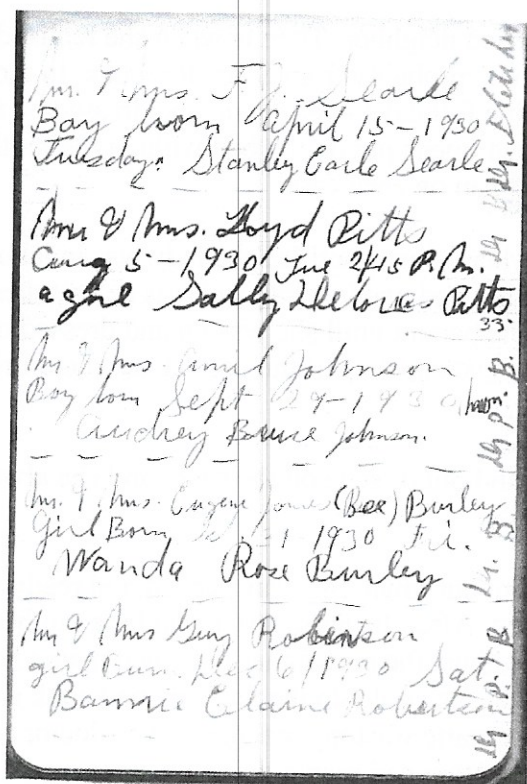
Story by Frances Ethelinda Jemison Andrus

My Babies

Susana Ester Philbrick Jemison acted as a mid-wife in the Kinder area for over twenty years (1920-1941) and assisted in the births of some 58 babies. She recorded the births of what she called "My Babies" in a small 3" x 5" notebook which she kept for years, then later passed down to her relatives.

Susana's daughter, Frances Ethelinda Jemison Andrus, wrote about her mother's work as a maternity nurse in a writing titled "Mama's Bed Pan".

Original Notebook List of My Babies



Notebook list deciphered as best as we could. Please excuse any errors.

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Joe & Mable Davidson | Fern A. Davidson | Dec. 19, 1920 | Dr. Buck |
| Mrs. J. D. Bilbo | Baby | | Dr. Buck |
| Mrs. Daisy Roberts | Twins - David & Clair | May 23, 1921 | Dr. Buck |
| Joe & Mable Davidson | Joseph Claude | | Dr. Buck |
| W. V. & O. B. Royer | Marjory Elouise | Feb. 14, 1921 | Dr. Buck |
| Frank & Thelma Searle | Boy - Frank Joseph | Oct. 14, 1925 | Dr. Buck |
| Lucy & Charlie Simons | Boy - Charles Stuart | Nov. 1, 1925 | Dr. Buck |
| W. V. & O. B. Royer | Girl - Joyce Bell | Dec. 7, 1925 | |
| Edith & Bernal Reynolds | Boy - James Albert | Apr. 28, 1926 | Dr. ???? |
| Lenora & Lloyd Pitts | Girl - Elizabeth Sue | May 16, 1926 | Dr. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. Tucker Buck | Boy - Tucker Buck, Jr. | Jun. 23, 1926 | Dr. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. Wallace | Boy - Bernie Hubert | Jul. 10, 1926 | Dr. ??? |
| Mr. & Mrs. Minerva Huette | Boy - Dead | Aug. 3, 1926 | Dr. Huffman |
| Dr. & Mrs. Will Buck | Boy - Stuart | Nov. 8, 1926 | Dr. P. Buck ?? |
| Carl & Leola Everette | Girl - Ruth Yvonne | Dec. 26, 1926 | Dr. Earley ??? |
| Bill & Vernice Burleigh | Boy - Eugene James | Mar. 5, 1927 | Dr. Buck |
| Joe & Mable Davidson | Girl - Elsie Pauline | Apr. 25, 1927 | Dr. Buck |
| Ernest & Laura Jemison | Girl - Mary Susana | Jun. 29, 1927 | Dr. Griffiths |
| Charles & Zella Harvey | Boy - C. Elmer | Aug. 30, 1927 | Dr. Buck |
| Alie & Alton Baker | Girl - Dorothy Belle | Oct. 1, 1927 | Dr. P. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. Clinton Perkins | Boy - Clinton, Jr. | Dec. 4, 1927 | Dr. P. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. Lon Moody | Boy - Edwin Morris | Jan. 11, 1928 | Dr. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. W. C. Normon ? | Boy - William Elmer | Oct. 8, 1928 | Dr. P. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. L. W. Pruett | Boy - Richard Lawrence | Dec. 1, 1928 | |
| Mr. & Mrs. F. B. Howard | Boy - Fredrick Benjamin | May 17, 1929 | Dr. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. J. C. Davidson | Boy - Cyrus Atley | Feb. 24, 1929 | Dr. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. C. G. Everett | Girl - Betty Zane | Oct. 24, 1929 | Dr. Jamison |
| Mr. & Mrs. Ray Pierson | Girl - Grace Ida | Mar. 5, 1930 | Dr. W. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. Frank Lawrence | Girl - Agnes Marie | Mar. 9, 1930 | |
| Mr. & Mrs. F. J. Searle | Boy - Stanley | Apr. 15, 1930 | Dr. Fletcher |
| Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd Pitts | Girl - Sally Delores | Aug. 5, 1930 | Dr. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. Ann Johnson | Boy - Audrey Bruce | Sep. 29, 1930 | Dr. P. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. Eugene James Burleigh | Girl - Wanda Rose | Oct. 31, 1930 | Dr. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. Guy Robinson | Girl - Bonnie Elaine | Dec. 6, 1930 | Dr. P. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. W. V. Royer | Boy - William Valentine | Jan. 13, 1931 | Dr. P. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. John L. Baker | Boy - John Lewis, Jr. | Jul. 5, 1931 | Dr. P. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. Chester Andrus | Girl - Mrytle Marianne ? | Aug. 6, 1931 | Dr. P. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. J. J. Wallace | Girl - Bertie Lois | Sep. 28, 1931 | Dr. P. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. Heard Rogers | Boy - Paul Leeds | Oct. 5, 1931 | Dr. Carter |
| Mr. & Mrs. E. S. Jemison | Boy - Ernest Samuel, Jr. | Jan. 8, 1932 | Dr. Griffiths |
| Mr. & Mrs. Chas. Andrus | Girl - Ellen Ray | Jan. 21, 1933 | Dr. Hefline |
| Mr. & Mrs. Charles Kontz | Girl - Caroline Ruth | Jan. 21, 1933 | Dr. P. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. C. C. Everett | Boy - Walter Wilhem | Mar. 4, 1933 | Dr. P. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. C. W. Rostrom | Girl - Alma Marie | Jul. 22, 1933 | Dr. Arceneaux |
| Elmer & Mildred Smith | Girl - Peggy Ann | Nov. 26, 1933 | Dr. W. Buck |
| Lloyd & Lenora Pitts | Girl - Billie Marie | Sep. 24, 1934 | Dr. W. Buck |
| Elmer & Mildred Smith | Girl - Aldyth Janet | Feb. 23, 1935 | Dr. W. Buck |
| George & Grace Roberts | Boy - John Calvin | Jan. 19, 1934 | Drs. W. Buck & Heflin |
| Henry J. & Eulalie Unkel | Boy - Michael Tessier | Sep. 24, 1935 | Dr. Pete Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. C. W. Rostrom | Girl - Leavon Ahmeda | Jan. 5, 1936 | Dr. Arceneaux |
| Mr. & Mrs. Chas. Andrus | Girl - Shirley Elaine | Feb. 4, 1936 | Dr. Stagg |
| Mr. & Mrs. Glen Hanchey | Girl - Gail Evelyn | Feb. 26, 1937 | Dr. Will Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. P. Buck | Boy - Robert Clyde | Nov. 12, 1937 | Dr. P. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. William Chapman | Boy - William Houston | May 22, 1938 | Dr. Sorrels |
| Mr. & Mrs. Chas. Andrus | Girl - Frances Mae | Nov. 10, 1939 | Dr. Stagg |
| Mr. & Mrs. L. J. & Arlene Savant | Girl - ?? Carole | Jan. 16, 1941 | Dr. P. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. Clyde Chachere | Girl - Claudia Belle | Jan. 27, 1941 | Dr. P. Buck |
| Mr. & Mrs. James Floyd Porteau | Boy - James Floyd, Jr. | Aug. 8, 1941 | Dr. P. Buck |

Lake Charles outing ended in tragedy for two related Kinder Families

By Leavon Rostrom Ladner

Beautiful, smiling, but sometimes treacherous, Lake Charles in Imperial Calcasieu Parish claimed three victims in the twinkling of an eye as they drowned during a sudden squall.

Seeking a respite from the summer heat and a way to celebrate Independence Day 1900, two related Kinder families consisting of nine members left their adjoining farms near Kinder bound for Lake Charles in a covered wagon to spend the 4th.

The Charles Julius Phelps and Andrew Johnson families drove to the lake bank near the Southern Pacific freight depot and encamped in a grove of trees. After spending the Holiday sightseeing, they spent the night at their camp and the next morning decided to go over to Westlake before returning home.

A skiff was procured, but it was not large enough to contain everyone so Mr. Johnson and an older son decided to walk the trestle, leaving Mr. Phelps to bring the women and children over in the boat. When they were skirting the log boom a sudden squall of wind and rain swept over the lake. It caught the boat and forced it against the logs, the boat filled with water and sank. Mr. Phelps made an effort to save them all, he grasped his baby, Hazel Amanda, with one hand and caught his little boy, Loyd Andrew, and placed them upon the boom. He grasped the little Johnson boy, Andrew Albert, age 10 and set him on the logs, he reached his 15 year old sister-in-law, Almeda Johnson, and brought her to the surface. Mrs. Johnson in her dying struggles, pulled her son, whom Mr. Phelps had just rescued, under the water. Mrs. Phelps had gone under as soon as the boat sank.

The tragedy occurred in full view of the Bel mill employees who hurried out and across the logs to the rescue, but they could not reach the spot in time to help the unfortunate ladies and the Johnson boy. Mr. Phelps and his little children were taken at once to the mill and the bodies of the drowned members of the party were dived for. Those of Mrs. Johnson and her son, Albert, were found almost immediately and Mrs. Phelps a little later. Mr. Phelps's sister-in-law, Almeda Johnson, was almost gone when she was taken from the water, but in a little while she recovered.

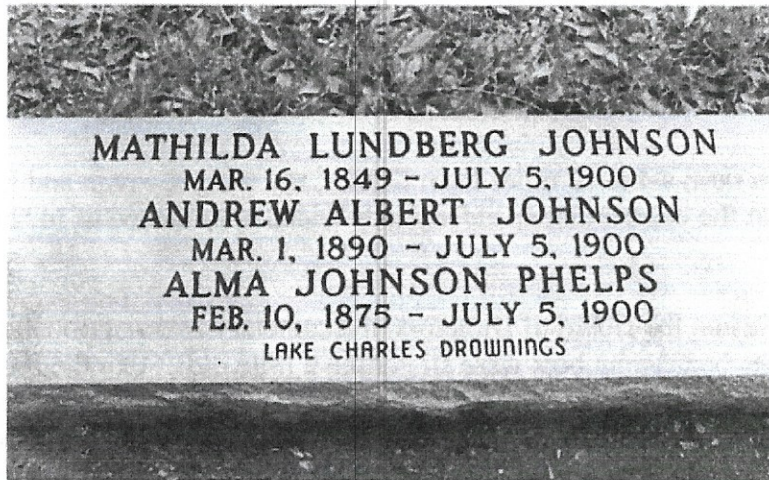
News of the disaster was sent to Andrew Johnson and his son who were at Westlake waiting vainly for their loved ones. The grief of the sadly depleted family was pitiful and will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it.

The three are all buried together in the Orange Grove Cemetery in Lake Charles, LA.



Front Row – Mathilda Johnson

Back Row – Alma Eugenia Johnson Phelps, Almeda Johnson, Andrew Albert Johnson



Headstone in Orange Grove Cemetery

If Tombstones Could Talk -- Tales from a Country Graveyard



Colonel Don Ladner
US Army Retired

I am flattered to be asked by the Allen Genealogical and Historical Society to submit for publication a version of a speech I have given in the past to various historical/genealogical societies in SW Louisiana.

Let me begin, however, by stating that there is nothing more historical than what we find in our cemeteries across this land, be they large and cosmopolitan... or small, quaint and country.

And what we have discovered during these past 20 plus years while volunteering in a small country cemetery has most assuredly deepened our interest in both history and genealogy.

In this article, I hope to share with you a few stories of our most memorable experiences from the past 20 years... what I call "*If Tombstones Could Talk -- Tales from a Country Graveyard.*"

Our Involvement.

Although we live on a farm some 12 miles from Kinder, my wife, Leavon and I, attend church in Kinder and it was at the church that an elderly lady friend approached us to "help out" in the cemetery.

She told us that she was on the Board of Directors of a cemetery association which looked after the cemetery... that the board members were all getting a little old... that the President of the board didn't want to hold board meetings any longer... and that he had turned over the association check book to a man who was supposed to keep the grass cut in the cemetery, but the man wasn't doing his job. In fact, she told us that when someone died, family members had to go out to the cemetery and cut the grass around the deceased person's burial site.

She went on to say that this so-called custodian told her that the association's bank account was about to run out of money... and that the ladies needed to hold a bake sale to raise more funds for cemetery maintenance. What really alarmed me, however, was when she told me that the

association had some \$33,000 in their bank account when this custodian took over just two years earlier... and now, according to the custodian, it was "all gone".

To make a long story short... a public notice was placed in the local newspaper, a public meeting was held, and a new Board of Directors was elected. I was elected to serve on the seven-member Board and Leavon was asked to serve as the volunteer Secretary to the Board.

The next day I asked the custodian for the Association check books, bank statements, etc. He informed me that he had "thrown them away" because the new Board didn't need that "old stuff, etc.". I immediately went to the bank and asked them to remove the custodian from any association with the cemetery account and to conduct a historical search of the association's records for the past two years... which they did.

A quick review of the bank statements revealed that over the past two years, the cemetery custodian had written out to "Cash" almost \$30,000. When I confronted the custodian with my findings, and threatened to press theft charges against him, he agreed to repay the association the money he had misappropriated. With his re-payment, the Board, which included several of his long-time friends, decided not to press charges against the custodian... but now, disgraced in his community, he sold his house and left town.

Now, the road ahead for the cemetery was quite clear to me... (1) to restore the community's trust and confidence in the cemetery and the association... (2) to get the cemetery cleaned up and to maintain it in accordance with community standards... and, then, (3) to work to improve the cemetery and make it "A Place of Community Pride". All these things we did!

We took some of the money we recovered and built new limestone roads in the cemetery, a new brick entrance-way and put up a new flag pole. We took down an old, rusty wire fence around the cemetery and built a new wrought-iron fence. We built a meditation area and added some benches. We laid a water line and installed faucets throughout the cemetery... and we pressure washed all of the vaults and tombstones in the cemetery... some for the first time in 100 years.

And, then, Leavon and I got busy reading the cemetery and recording the names, DOB & DOD of some 1,000 folks buried there. Next, we computerized all the cemetery records and I created a website so people around the world could "visit" the Kinder Cemetery from afar and do their genealogical research.

As we walked the cemetery grounds, I was reminded of a poem written by Thelma Greene Reagan on why we read and record cemeteries. I would like for you to read it now....

THE RECORDING OF A CEMETERY

Today we walked where others walked
On a lonely, windswept hill;
Today we talked where others cried
For Loved Ones whose lives are stilled.

Today our hearts were touched
By graves of tiny babies;
Snatched from the arms of loving kin,
In the heartbreak of the ages.

Today we saw where the grandparents lay
In the last sleep of their time;
Lying under the trees and clouds -
Their beds kissed by the sun and wind.

Today we wondered about an unmarked spot;
Who lies beneath this hollowed ground?
Was it a babe, child, young or old?
No indication could be found.

Today we saw where Mom and Dad lay.
We had been here once before
On a day we'd all like to forget,
But will remember forever more.

Today we recorded for kith and kin
The graves of ancestors past;
To be preserved for generations hence,
A record we hope will last.

Cherish it, my friend; preserve it, my friend,
For stones sometimes crumble to dust
And generations of folks yet to come
Will be grateful for your trust.

After we went on-line with the cemetery website, we received many, many grateful notes and e-mails from folks all over the country thanking us for our efforts, making monetary contributions, requesting additional information on someone buried in the cemetery, or asking for a photo of their ancestor's tombstone, etc.... all of which we were glad to send them.

History.

Now, let me say a few words about the historical significance of this little, country, graveyard.

Someone once said, "If you wish to learn a community, first visit its cemetery." Well, Leavon and I certainly found this to be true as we walked among the historical gravesites of many early pioneers of this region -- farmers, timber men, cattlemen, railroad workers, and old soldiers. buried throughout the cemetery. Reading their tombstones was like turning the pages of a history book.

We found the gravesites of Civil War veterans— soldiers who fought for the South and other soldiers who fought for the North... and who later moved south to live out their remaining days as neighbors and friends of their former enemies. We found the gravesites of veterans from the Spanish-American War— one of the shortest and most pathetically one-sided wars in modern history. There were gravesites of veterans of WW I— the war fought to “end all wars” and “to make the world safe for democracy”....

And there were gravesites of veterans of WW II— the great patriotic war in which there was the loss of almost 400,000 American lives, but, in which, there were also 1,000 acts of courage by American servicemen and women every single day.

We found the gravesites of veterans of the Korean War—“the forgotten war”... and we vowed never to forget them... their courage and their heroism. And, we found the gravesites of veterans of the Vietnam War— the first war in American military history lost due to the lack of national will... although the American military forces never lost a single battle in that war.

I must say that one of the more interesting tombstones we found in the cemetery was that of a German POW who was captured by the Americans while fighting with Rommel in the Afrika Corps in World War II. Repatriated to Germany after war's end, he returned to the US to marry a female Major in the US Army. Former enemies from two different worlds, they are now buried side-by-side as husband and wife in the Kinder Cemetery.

Another interesting tombstone we found was that of Perley Day Wilder... interesting when you realize that he was the brother to Almanzo "Manly" Wilder the husband of Laura Ingalls Wilder the famous author of such American classics as "The Little House on the Prairie".

Other burials in this historic cemetery included: more than a dozen former mayors of Kinder along with Hobo "Curly", who according to old-timers we talked to, visited Kinder almost every year and Pete, the Russian carnival worker, who died while working with a traveling carnival that came to town. Both Hobo “Curly” and Pete were buried in pauper's graves by the association.

It seemed to Leavon and I that almost every tombstone in this historic cemetery pointed to a footnote in the history of this region and this country. As we walked among the gravesites, the

tombstones of veterans who fought in all of America's wars seemed to shout out at us... "Hey, look at me... I fought and died that you might live free."

And then, we came upon a gravesite that touched me like no other... the tombstone read: 1LT Douglas B. Fournet, US Army, born 7 Mar 1943 -- died 4 May 1968.

LT Fournet, a native of Lake Charles, heroically and gallantly gave his life to save his fellow man in the Republic of Vietnam on 4 May 1968 for which he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor—this nation's highest military honor. LT Fournet's MOH Citation reads, "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty."

Allow me to say as an aside that LT Fournet's wife, Marilyn, was expecting their first child when Doug was killed in Vietnam... that Marilyn later gave birth to a son, Bill, who grew up without his father... and that I was later honored to meet Marilyn and Bill, get to know Bill's wife and sons... and, hold in my arms Doug's grandson who was named after him. I am still in contact with Marilyn and Bill today... and watch with pleasure Doug's grandsons grow up.

When I, as a veteran of the Vietnam War, discovered that the Kinder Cemetery was the final resting place for the area's only Medal of Honor recipient and that flags were not being placed on the graves of veteran's on special occasions such as Memorial Day or Veteran's Day, I knew exactly what had to be done...and I set about doing it.

I told the Mayor and other Board members that I intended to honor this brave soldier, as well as, all the other veterans buried in the cemetery with a special ceremony on Memorial Day. Also, that we would place a small American flag at each veteran's gravesite, and that we would collect and fly their casket flags in an Avenue of Flags along the roadways throughout the cemetery on both Memorial Day and Veterans Day. This we have done for the past 23 years... and as I have told everyone who would listen... we will continue to do this as long as there is breath in this old body.

The Memorial Day Ceremony we conduct every year is designed to pay special tribute to the more than one million American patriots who have given their lives for their country for the freedoms we enjoy... and in the defense of liberty around the world. Although, by design, we dedicate each ceremony to the memory of the fallen dead of a particular war and present a history lesson on that war, every year we conduct a Roll Call of the veterans of all of America's wars buried in the cemetery preceded with a short historical brief of each of those wars.

Besides honoring the soldier dead in the cemetery, my other purposes were to teach our children and grandchildren about Memorial Day—its origin and history... and to instill in our children and grandchildren patriotism and love of country.

In order to accomplish this, we did several things: (1) Invite the local elementary school choral group to sing every year at the ceremony, (2) Invite elementary, junior high and high school students to attend the ceremonies, (3) Invite some students to participate in the ceremony in various roles, i.e. speaking, singing and playing taps, and (4) Having a group of young ladies participate in our ceremonies by serving as flower girls and going throughout the cemetery placing fresh flowers on the graves on each and every veteran buried therein.

This tradition goes back to Civil War days when a widow of a Confederate veteran took her children to the local cemetery to place fresh flowers on her husband's grave. While there, she noticed the graves of some soldiers from the North-- far from their homes (with no flowers)... and filled with compassion she decided to place flowers on their graves as well.

For the past 23 years, my own family has been totally involved in the Memorial Day Ceremony we hold each year: (1) I deliver the main address each year, (2) Leavon is in charge of the music; (3) my son, Christian, an Army veteran participates each year and Tolls the Bell for our Roll Call of Deceased Veterans; and (4) our two granddaughters have served as flower girls for several years.

Now, let me shift gears a bit and relate to you some true tales from our country graveyard... tales you might could hear if "Tombstones Could Talk".

My first little story doesn't have much to do with history, but was very touching to me. One Veterans Day, Leavon and I were out walking among the graves in the cemetery... graves all decorated with small American flags... when a mother with four kids drove up into the cemetery, stopped her car and got out. As she looked around, surveying the entire cemetery, we thought that she might be looking for one particular gravesite or something of that nature.

So, I walked over to her, introduced myself as a cemetery volunteer, and asked if I might be of some assistance. "Can I help you find someone in particular?", I inquired. "Oh, thank you, no!," she replied... "I am from Lake Charles, but drove out to this little, county cemetery this morning because I know how crowded the cemeteries in Lake Charles will be.... and, I just want to quietly pray for all the veterans... and to teach my children something about Veterans Day." "Well," I said, "We have well over 100 veterans buried in our cemetery... so I best leave you alone and let you get started. Oh, by the way... our Civil War veterans are buried over there in Sections A & B... the oldest part of our cemetery."

After commending this young mother for what she was doing, I walked away. Before driving out of the cemetery, however, Leavon and I observed this mother walk hand-in-hand with her four children down the rows of graves (starting in Section A), stop at each gravesite decorated with a small flag, and, then, kneel in prayer... before proceeding to the next one.

Deeply touched, I knew for sure when I drove away from the cemetery that one day I would write and tell others the story about the actions of this young mother... and then it suddenly

dawned on me... I don't even know her name. But, you know what, I thought... it doesn't really matter... I'll just refer to her as the mother who brought her kids to the cemetery on Veterans Day to pray for all the veterans.

Now, I would like to relate to you two other tales from our country graveyard. Both of these stories I sent out in an email to my family and close friends shortly after I wrote them... so, with your indulgence, I will let you read what I wrote::

Subject: Faithfulness

Dear Ones,

His name is Johnny... in his 60's and never married. He is a "bag boy" at the local Supermarket. He "bags" your groceries and takes them out to your car for you. He is not allowed by store policy to receive a tip for what he does... and, I don't imagine he would want a tip even if he were allowed to take one. He seems content to do what he does... bagging groceries, making small talk with the customers, and living his life to the fullest.

Leavon and I first met Johnny some 10 years ago when we volunteered to manage the local cemetery. One day, as Leavon and I were walking among the graves "reading" the headstones in an effort to update the cemetery burial records, we noticed a person drive into the cemetery in a small truck. We watched from afar as the driver of the truck got out of the vehicle and walked over to a particular gravesite. There he knelt, made the sign of the cross, and, then, proceeded to bow his head in prayer. After a few minutes, he arose, walked back to his truck and drove away.

The next day, the scene we observed the day before repeated itself... the same truck, the same man, the same routine. This time, however, Leavon and I made it a point to intercept the man before he departed the cemetery. We introduced ourselves as the new volunteers in the cemetery and he introduced himself as "Johnny". He proceeded to say that he had just come out to pay his respects to his parents who were buried in the cemetery. When I remarked that we had seen him there the day before, he said, "Oh, I come out every day."

Later, Johnny explained to me why he visits the graves of his parents every day. He said he lived with his parents until they died and that his mother told him before she passed away, "Johnny, don't forget me". .. and "I want you to come and check on me".

Last Saturday, several of us "regular" volunteers were working in the cemetery when Johnny arrived to pay his daily respects to his parents. Having observed Johnny do this over the past many years, someone remarked, "Oh, that's old Johnny doing what he does every day." I replied, "You know, the Good Book says to honor your father and your mother so that your days will be long on this earth. If that be true, Johnny is going to live to be 120 years old. I have never in my entire life seen anyone so faithful in honoring their parents."

Johnny has not forgotten what his mother asked of him before she died... and for the past 25 years, Johnny has "checked on her" every single day. Johnny, I salute you! Great is your faithfulness. Would that we all were so faithful.

Have a GREAT day and may all your Saturdays be special.

Don

Second story:

Subject: Saving Grace

Dear Ones,

The old cemetery records were written by hand and the entries are not easily discernable. As you turned the yellowed pages of the record book, you could easily see that the first name of the person buried in Lot 38 was "Grace". The last name, however, could not be deciphered so easily. A walk through the cemetery would provide no further clues as to the identity of this "Grace" because there was no headstone marker on her burial site.

For years after Leavon and I voluntarily took over the records keeping for this cemetery, we wondered just who was this Grace buried there years ago with no headstone to mark her grave. Last month, a telephone tip led to our re-opening the files on this "cold case". An elderly lady called to inquire about the availability of a burial space for her daughter in Lot 38, which was purchased by the lady's husband over 50 years ago. I told her that her daughter, did indeed, have a reserved space... as did she... in Lot 38. Then I inquired as to who was this lady named Grace who was buried in their family plot. What she related to me in answer to my question was most interesting.

She told the story of a middle-aged lady who was killed in a traffic accident as she was driving across country to visit her merchant seaman husband. "Her body was brought to the local funeral home where my husband worked," she said, "and was kept there for several days as authorities searched for her relatives. What the authorities discovered was quite disturbing... the dead lady's family had disowned her for marrying a man they didn't approve of.. and when the dead lady's husband was located, he wanted nothing to do with his wife's body. That's when my husband stepped in and had this lady buried in our family plot" "That's quite commendable," I told the elderly lady, "Now, I need to find out more about this "Grace" lady because I would like to put a headstone on her grave."

After several weeks of searching, Leavon and I finally solved the case of "Grace". Digging through burial records at the funeral home led us to her birth date, as well as, the date of her death-- 5 June 1957, but the handwritten records still did not precisely clarify the spelling of her last name. A trip to the genealogical library and a computer search of the obituary files for

everyone with the first name Grace finally provided us with Grace's last name-- Baranski. A quick review of old newspaper files provided us with two articles regarding the accident in which Grace was killed. Needless to say, Leavon and I were elated at our findings and headed directly to the monument company to order a headstone for Grace.

After we related the story of Grace to the lady who owns the monument company and ordered a headstone marker for Grace's grave, I asked what the cost of the marker would be. "Nothing", she answered, "You two have done enough. This one is on me." "Thank you so much for your generosity", I replied, "In doing this, we are saving Grace from almost complete anonymity... and, by the way, would you please add 'In Loving Memory' to her headstone."

Have a GREAT day and may all your Saturdays be special.

Don

Now let me end this article on a somewhat lighter note.

Every historian and genealogist finds him/herself in a cemetery at some point, checking dates or confirming the resting place of an ancestor. Monumental inscriptions are fairly similar and run of the mill for the most part. But, every now and again, someone strives to stand out from the crowd. The following are actual epitaphs taken from monumental inscriptions.

1. **Playing with names in a Ruidoso, New Mexico, cemetery:**

Here lies
Johnny Yeast
Pardon me
For not rising.

2. **Memory of an accident in a Uniontown, Pennsylvania cemetery:**

Here lies the body
of Jonathan Blake
Stepped on the gas
Instead of the brake.

3. **In a Silver City, Nevada, cemetery:**

Here lays Butch,
We planted him raw.
He was quick on the trigger,
But slow on the draw.

4. **A lawyer's epitaph in England:**

Sir John Strange

Here lies an honest lawyer,
And that is Strange.

5. **Someone determined to be anonymous in Stowe, Vermont:**

I was somebody.
Who, is no business
Of yours.

6. **Lester Moore was a Wells, Fargo Co. station agent for Naco, Arizona in the cowboy days of the 1880's. He's buried in the Boot Hill Cemetery in Tombstone, Arizona:**

Here lies Lester Moore
Four slugs from a .44
No Les No More.

7. **In a Georgia cemetery:**
"I told you I was sick!"
-

8. **John Penny's epitaph in the Wimborne, England, cemetery:**

Reader if cash thou art
In want of any
Dig 4 feet deep
And thou wilt find a Penny.

9. **On Margaret Daniels grave at Hollywood Cemetery Richmond, Virginia:**

She always said her feet were killing her
but nobody believed her.

10. **In a cemetery in Hartscombe, England:**

On the 22nd of June
- Jonathan Fiddle -
Went out of tune.

These posthumous writings will often summarize a life. If accurate, they can point the reader to that which was most important to the deceased. Did this person enjoy life? Was she cared for? Did he make a difference? Did she leave a legacy?

When you die, how will you be remembered? How would you like your epitaph to read?

Columnist Nick Clooney printed some epitaphs from people still alive, written by themselves. Some were humorous, some serious. Some hoped that their own original epitaph would be close to the way they might be remembered.

One lady said she wanted this epitaph on her tombstone: Tried everything twice. Loved it both times! I just wonder what she was referring to.

One that I truly love came from Charlie Mechem, former head of Taft Broadcasting. Charlie wished that this might be put on his tombstone:

"Dear God,
Thanks for letting me visit.
I had a wonderful time."

Isn't that terrific? And could it be said about you...that you were grateful for the visit and had a wonderful time? If we could all say that... we will have lived a life worth living!

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for reading my article. I have enjoyed being with you in this manner. In other words: "Thanks for letting me visit. I had a wonderful time."

Don Ladner
Colonel US Army Retired
Board of Directors
Kinder Cemetery Association

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Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ St: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Please type or print clearly all information. Use a separate form for each person you are seeking information on. Please capitalize the last name of each person you are seeking information on. Fill in all the applicable blanks. If not applicable, place a dash in that space. Place a question mark where the information is speculative. Use "ca" for any date that is approximate or a good guess.

Subject's name: _____

Date and place of birth: _____

Date and place of death: _____

Father's name: _____

Father's birth year: _____ Death year: _____

Mother's maiden name: _____

Mother's birth year: _____ Death year: _____

Spouse's name: (Maiden name): _____

Spouse's date and place of birth: _____

Spouse's date and place of death: _____

Date and place of Wedding: _____

Subject's children: _____

Subject's siblings: _____

Subject's places(s) of residence: _____

Subject's military service: _____

Any additional information on subject: _____

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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:



My Family Lineage

B. _____

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D. _____

B. _____

M. _____

D. _____

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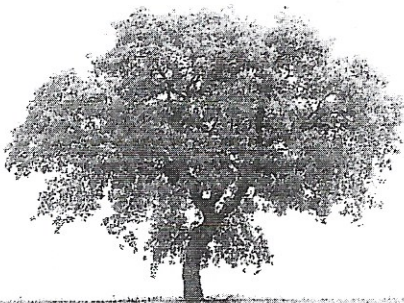
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