

## Introduction:

In this letter from William Grimes to his brother Jesse in Texas, both of Duplin County, North Carolina. William relates that my ancestors Jesse Quin and his second wife Susan Jernigan are now residing on the father's old estate/lands and offers impressions of both people and the people they grew up with in Wolfsrape Township in Duplin County, NC.

Jesse Grimes (1788-1866) was a Texas pioneer and politician. Before moving to Texas, he fought in the War of 1812. He was a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence. He served as Senator in the Republic of Texas Congress and in the Texas State Legislature. Grimes County was named in his honor.

Grimes was born Duplin County, North Carolina on February 6, 1788 to Sampson and Bethsheba Grimes. In the War of 1812, he was in the West Tennessee Militia as an Infantryman Company. He married his first wife, Martha Smith, in 1813 and accepted grants in 1817 for his service in Washington County, Alabama near Loftin Quin in Chelsea of Shelby County, the 1st cousin to Jesse Quin. Martha died on her 9th childbirth in 1824. Jesse Grimes would go onto marry Rosanna Ward Britton in 1826. Jesse and Rosanna would go onto have six children of their own.

Grimes would relocate to Stephen F. Austin's second colony in Grimes County, Texas, in 1826. On March 21, 1829, Grimes was elected by the ayuntamiento, or town hall of San Felipe de Austin as a 1st Lieutenant of the 1st Company, the battalion of Austin. He was elected sindico procurador (city attorney) of the Viesca precinct in December 1830. In December 1831 Grimes was elected a regidor (city councilman). On October 5, 1832 he became a member of Viesca district's subcommittee of safety and vigilance. On October 6, he was appointed district treasurer.

During the Republic of Texas period, specifically in 1838, Jesse Grimes was the first Chief Justice for Montgomery County. The following year, he settled Grimes Prairie in Grimes County.

During the Texas Revolution Grimes represented Washington Municipality as a delegate to the Texas Convention of 1833. In 1835 he was a delegate at the Texas Consultation. As a part of the provisional government of Texas, he was elected to the General Council of the provisional government November 14, 1835. Grimes served as Washington Municipality's representative to the Texas Republic's Constitutional Convention of 1836 convened at Washington on the Brazos, Texas where he signed the Texas Declaration of Independence. On June 3, 1836 he formed a volunteer company in the Republic of Texas Army.

Grimes served as Senator from Washington County in the 1st Congress of the Republic of Texas from October 3, 1836 to September 25, 1837. He served in

the 6th and 7th sessions of the Republic of Texas's House of Representatives as the member from Montgomery County. He also completed Robert M. Williamson's unexpired term in the 8th Congress, representing Washington, Montgomery, and Brazos counties. He would be elected to the 9th Congress, which ended on June 28, 1845.

Once Texas became a state, Grimes would go onto serve as state senator in the 1st through the 4th Texas State Legislatures. He served as President p.t. of the Texas State Senate in the 1st Called Session of the 4th Texas Legislature and then in the Regular and Adjourned Sessions of the 6th Texas Legislature, and all three sessions of the 8th Texas Legislature.

Also note influences and then the similarities between the Republic of Texas Flag and the later design of the 1st North Carolina State Flag created at the outbreak of the US Civil War in 1861 and that he mentions his father's land and my relatives quickly in third paragraph of the first page. This was hard to find my friends.

## **TRANSCRIPTION**

January 1st, 1844

Jesse,

As Rosanna will leave in a few days for home, I will write you about matters and things which she could not recollect to relate in as satisfactory a manner as I wish to communicate them. And knowing that you would like to hear more about old N. Carolina I will commence there and come west. On reaching there I found nearly every place strange and very little like it was in our youth. But few of our acquaintance living and remaining at their former residence.

Austin Swinson has a large family, is living at the Ben Borders place. Jesse is at his fathers old place, John and Daniel are on the Sam Ward land. Levi on the E. Duncan place with a hosts of children. James, Edward and Stephen Winders are at and near their fathers old place helping each other to do nothing and appear to be happy and content. Daniel Jones is living where he first did on Poly Bridge and James Sullivan at the old muster ground (Wolfscrape) their fields look like they were covered with eternal snow, yet strange as it may seem they have been able to get children by their wives and that no few. Elijah Jones living at his fathers place, old people both dead. Sam and Betsy Sullivan living at their mothers place neither married til lately. Sam married a Jones, David's daughter, I expect. Betsy looks old and unhealthy, this might be expected as a matter of course from excessive heat and cold, which I presume all old maidens suffer.

Some of the young Jernigans are living at the old place and are sober, steady, industrious, intelligent and respectable as I was informed. **Jesse Quin married**

**Susan and is living at fathers old place, she is a fine looking woman and intelligent.**

Taking a south to west view of the place it looks natural, but on the North and East the land is cleared and the place looks strange. The houses are all in the same position they were since built, the marsh South is ditched, dryer and partly cleared. Arch Branch has built a cheap but comfortable house on the path leading to your old place on the first rising ground East of the road Has had a house some years at the cross which is intended for a kitchen also a Smith shop in which old Dickson Sullivan worked when he could get no whiskey. Branch has become so wealthy that he has divided his force and has taken for his portion a lazy negro woman that has no children to work on the farm, cook, whatever and is living at this place and calls it Troy. Bright AND James are living at the old place and has charge of the negroes and other things belonging there. Bright was minding Garners (snipes) Mill, sawing and grinding, he is said to be a mechanical genius, good at everything but for the want of firmness is good for nothing. His father treats him with disrespect and worships James. He is large and strong, favors brother James, has fair sense, is displeased with his fathers course and talks of leaving there. James is large and tolerable good looking, said to be steady and industrious, has no more sense than he believes he has nor quite as much and tries to hold him-self at par with the nation in which he lives. They have not improved much since the days of your youth, you know what they were then.

I have heretofore said a good deal about Joesph Grimes and his wife, his son John and his children, but this will be my last of the old people. Neoma died the 18th of May and Joe the 5th of November. The day I left him 10th April, he was 73 years old, would then shell a bushel of corn before sunrise, take it to his Mill (half a mile) on his shoulders, grind and take it back every morning before breakfast, was in good health but much reduced in flesh and strength, retained all his mental powers perfectly, he took his grand children (6) after the death of their mothers-has raised and educated them the three eldest are girls and are well featured, well disposed and well informed for their opportunity, the second oldest has married William Kornegay since I left, he was courting when I was there and Joe was pleased with the match. Since his death the single girls have wrote me that the whole of the property was to be sold land and all and they did not know what to do nor where to go. John was living there with his children but they had no confidence in him nor did they look to him for help or protection. Joe had between 40 or 50 negroes, very likely and valuable, besides money at interest and much valuable property.

I will return again to Branch family. John and Stephen Daniel married his two daughters and are living in the western district of Tennessee with Reuben, Ben and Bryant Branch, Abram and Herring Glisson their friends. My visit and course with Archy and son was not agreeable to their wishes and expectations, therefore, it has rendered me un popular with them and such as they can influence they were to have written to me soon after my return but have not done

so, except part of a letter James wrote in an unusual cold distant uphill manner. I shall not trouble them soon with another letter. To get your money was no small matter, when it was understood that your land could be sold for cash and that Branch could not get it without paying cash and the money that he had used also such running, borrowing, begging, planning and scheming perhaps you never have seen to save the land. Arch or Burrett never planned faster or consulted more friends for the time than was done on this occasion. I was glad to accommodate them as there had been so many calculations made upon the certainty of getting the land. Branch had to put a note into the Cape Fear Bank to raise the money, he had to borrow the note. I have learned was discounted and has to be renewed every ninety days. His neighbors told me there was no hope of his getting out of debt without selling property. William Herring was living at his old place with about the same property his father gave him. Daniel Herring was living east of his fathers old plantation, just in the edge of the woodland, has what negroes he got by his wife, has become steady and tolerable respectable. Has about 250 lbs of very dark flesh for a helpmate and about one dozen light colored children, their issue. Old Goshen has been worked upon until they have reclaimed a considerable portion of the most productive land they now cultivate. Turpentine is now taken by water from above our old place, those nearest the Railroad transport on that. The pine trees wherever I went were whitened with the process of making the staple of the State, for that and a few pounds of pork or bacon is the only means they have of raising money. Turpentine was selling at Wilmington for \$1.90 per barrel and terplings at half price. The people it is true have learned to live within themselves and use little if any money in the way of living. The Railroad starts from the extreme upper part of Wilmington, crosses the Northeast River about 400 yards below Campbells old place (where we used to cross) on high piers which extend through the swamp at the river, there is high plank walls on both sides and covered over like a house. The road makes a small bow after getting a little off from this place and then takes a perfect straight line to Waynesborough the surface is a plain the whole way. It runs about six miles west of Kenansville, has a depot every ten miles where they can take in wood and water if needed, which is done so quick that you would hardly perceive the cars had stopped. I have heretofore informed you what speed I travelled each way but will now take the Railroad for Ala. I started from Warsaw a depot, with Tavern, store, warehouse, post office, 55 miles to Wilmington, took my seat between 9 & 10 o'clock in the morning, arrived at town at 1 o'clock p.m. The Charleston Packet waiting, soon went on board, applied steam and put out, the weather fine but we did not arrive at Charleston (190 miles) til 10 o'clock next morning being behind time we missed breakfast. The Packet calculating on being in time was not provided for our accommodations. Carriages were in attendance to take passengers and baggages and mail bags to the Railroad without delay the passengers were soon in the cars and in very little time We arrived at Branchville, 72 miles. There, the Hamburg train had stopped for us to come up and the Columbia train was waiting. This is the meeting and passing place. After putting out the mails and passengers for Columbia we made our way for Akin, took dinner there and went to Augusta before night, waited for the cars to come

in from Madison, at dark took our seats, went up to Madison (105 miles), took the stage for Columbus sometime before day light the next day, sunset arrived at Franklin, Ala. (190 miles) and the next morning, daylight, I was at Selma and next evening, 5 o'clock, arrived at Mobile. Remained there 48 hrs, then left and reached home in 24 hrs. Whole distance 1315 miles traveling time about 6 3/4 days. I am now at home again and will speak of things here but I have nothing of particular interest to relate. First of the country, then of the people and lastly of prospects and circumstances. Our part and in fact all the first settled part of Ala. is either worn out or badly worsted and must soon be thrown away as worthless. Our rolling farms though once black and fertile are now red and barren. The soil has passed off into the valleys thence to the rivers and finally I suppose to the Gulf of Mexico, where I presume the present generation will not be benefitted by its being filled up and becoming like our Western prairies. After the soil leaves our country I presume the people will leave also. There has been considerable pow-wowing about Arkansas State and the Peninsula of Florida of late but none of us have taken our families there yet. I should went to Florida myself but those with whom I expected to go give out the trip for the present and I have not grieved myself to death about the disappointment. All the small water courses are too filled up that they overflow much worse than they used to and consequently the richest land on the creeks produces but little. My opinion is that the country looks worse than you imagine it does. I have kept you advised of the changes which have taken place amongst my neighbors generally but I will go over some of the latest. Beginning at the old Courthouse, Frisbie established a Tangard Shoe Shop at the spring Jackson and George Myers used before you left, and in January 42 sold that to a man from Sweden for \$1500. on time. The Tavern and land attached thereto to a French Jew that married Phil Cato's widow for \$2000. on time sale made at the same time the other was. Frisbie then went to the Cartwright place for which he gave \$800. repaired the place and has raised two crops and calls himself high on the scale of farmers. Lister is still at the Tindle place, has never built, the houses are nearly rotten down, he begins to look old but has not lost his taste for whiskey. His eldest son, George, studied medicine with his brother-in-law to years, then went to Europe and completed his studies in Dublin and London. In the former place he was in the public hospital where thence was plenty of subjects to practice on in surgery, midwifing, puking, purging, cutting, carving, fornicating and everything common and uncommon in every branch of his profession. He returned some three months ago and on Christmas Day took for his rib the entire portion of a northern lady, which has just ended a year of tuition for the girls of our neighborhood. She is a lady of good education and moral character and I presume without property. George is no doubt the best surgeon and midwife in the State and with a little practice become our best physician. The old man has not settled any of his children but now talks of doing so. Old John Worsham is living at the same place you left him at. The old woman died a few days ago. A Col. Thomas Prince married Flavel Vivien's widow and lives at the place near where Gillispie lived, has bought the land from there to mine, he is a great addition to our neighborhood, being a man of general information and a good citizen. Jerry Worsham is dead, the old woman and five

sons are living together. Old James McElwain is still living, his children all grown and but little account. William Smith lives where Chanbless settled, Jerry where M. Gilbert lived, neither thriving very rapidly. Dunbar has married again but become alarmed before our last fall count and put his wife out of the way for fear the Grand Jury might take notice of them. His children are all married and living near. His land is fully worn out and he bought two shares in the M. Shaw place. John Harris took a free mulatto for wife, was plagued by the Grand Jury and Sheriffs of our county, he concluded to quit God's land and go to Dog River and has actually taken refuge in the extreme corner of Mobile county, where he is completely hid from the visits of man and perhaps the law. Old Faith and Nelly are still living and it is said are both afflicted with jealousy. Sam is tall and his rear parts much elevated, he married Mary Johnson, her head would reach the place above mentioned and yet she continues to kick said place while Sam is standing erect, by means of forcing or drawing him to a chair or other place and mounting in it, she still keeps her grip and gives him the weight of her foot by the strength of her leg. Mr. Atcherson has been to Arkansas to look at the country and select a place. He only touched the near edge of the State but says he likes well and will go again to look. He may do so, but I don't believe it. The place he is living at is poor. Owing to the indebtedness of the people of our State at the change of prosperity there has been but little advancement of late in the way of wealth. In this county the sacrifice of property has been trifling, our citizens are generally out of debt now and are striving to live by industry and economy. If our land was rich, even with the present price of our staple, we could do veil, but poor land and no range for stock is the state of our entire country. For many years the large planters paid but little attention to stock of any kind but the scene is changing. Those that a few years ago raised but little or no pork are now raising enough and to spare. There has of late been fine breeds of hogs and cows introduced amongst us, which is of much advantage to us. We still continue to buy horses and mules but in much less numbers and reduced price.

Supposing that you keep yourself informed of all the political movements in the U.S. I shall pass that subject and say nothing only that Henry Clay, if he lives, will be our next President. Domestic, My last crop had like to have been nothing, on a piece of ground that I gathered a large crib of corn off last year. I only gathered one wagon load this and off 45 or 50 acres, but 16 bales of cotton. My own crop was about an average of the neighborhood. It is owing to the extremes of wet and dry during the growing season. I have old Harris's land, give \$1500. paid \$250. in cash and the balance in a negro woman and three children. I owe about \$408 dollars in State Bank which I expect to pay immediately if able. About \$85 dollars for schooling children and small Smith account is the sum totem of my indebtedness now and then will be due 1st July \$165. more for corn. I have just enough, forgot doctors bill don't know the amount, perhaps \$50. I now have as good land as any of my neighbors and hope I will make as good crops. Albert talks of going to Texas, I am giving all the encouragement I can, if he does, I want you to have an eye to his course. He is and I fear ever will be one of the unsuspecting kind, which you know will subject him to constant impositions. He loves frolic and

fun and has no hatred for whiskey, yet seldom gets intoxicated. When he sets in to do a job of work, he is not unhealthy. If you can recommend him to some place where he could get employment such as he would be able to do I should be pleased. He can do good work on a farm and has an education sufficient to do any common business and might have been a good scholar, if he had tried. He knows nothing about the need of money therefore, takes no care of it. Advise him against bad company and in things generally, so long as you have it in your power. He will have some money, if it could be laid out for land in new part of the country, I would be glad. As to \_ and claims, he knows nothing, and would be easily imposed upon. Try to keep him out of all traps and I presume there are many. Mary and Nancy are well, have two children each, as to the others, they are with me and Rosanna can tell you about them. She can also tell you everything about family affairs which I have wrote. Joel Jones left Duplin a few days before I arrive there last spring, with the portion of his fathers property that fell to him and Matthew and came to Sumter County where they both had been living. Joel and to of his negroes lived with brother James and died very suddenly, 28th October, returning from watering his horse, laid down by the way and died, and was found immediately. Rosanna can tell you about James and his children. She will tell you what kind of weather we had while gone to Godfrey's, but she will fail in a description of the road. Not being disposed to trouble you with a long spittle, I stop here and ask forgiveness for not writing more.

- Rec'd from Branch on sales of Father's Estate \$514.70
- Amt. of sales of 199 acres of land \$300.00 - \$814.70
- Sold \$800 N.C. for 15% in Ala. \$120.00 - \$934.70
- My traveling expenses to and from Carolina \$136.50 - \$798.20
- \$14.70 was paid in specie and was the first money paid -\$4 expense out on the road traveling to Sumter County. \$794.
- I am told that Ala. money is within 3 percent of par, I will see when we reach Mobile and if I cannot find a suitable negro, I will send you the gold.

I shall not accept anything for services, nor will I be particular to send the exact amount, saving to myself the fraction, which may not be convenient to make.

Wm Grimes

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**NOTE:** Made corrections in some grammar and spelling differences to make the document easier and more reliable to find in search engines.