

THE KEITH FAMILY OF HIWASSE, ARKANSAS

By Maxine Holloway

The Keith Family of Hiwasse have a long history typical of those millions of immigrants who came from their homelands and settled the frontier in America where they forged an independent way of life which they liked best. The Keith's had flourished in Scotland for seven hundred years. On old Scotland maps, several Keith properties are identified and there are still Keith's listed in the northeastern part of Scotland. In 1720, James Keith (at age two) arrived with his parents at Fredericksburg, Virginia - nearly 60 years before it became the United States. When James grew up, he married a Miss Noride and settled in what is now Floyd County, Virginia.

James Keith's son, William, married a Miss Allen and settled in the western part of Floyd County also. William's son Daniel (Born: 1874) married Judy Cannady and they moved to Edmonson County, Kentucky where he lived to be 99 years old. Daniel was a farmer and a banker.

Daniel and Judy raised eight children. Their fourth child, named John, was born 20 July 1818. He married Mary Woods Edwards (Born: 22 December 1809) and was a land owner and a circuit riding Baptist Minister around Warren County, Kentucky for over 50 years. John and Mary also had eight children and raised one orphan (Sallie Harmon, Born in 1860 in Tennessee). Their seventh child, James Henry, (Born on 22 February 1854) married Sallie and they had three children born in Kentucky - Nola, Born: 1877; Donnie G., Born: 6 February 1880, Died: 30 October 1953; and Earl, Born: 6 March 1882.

In the spring of 1882, James Henry, Sallie, and their three children, left Kentucky by horse and wagon for the Oklahoma land rush. They did not get any free Indian land and settled on some bleak, desolate, and treeless land near Attica, Kansas and lived for a time in a sod house. Their son Troy was born there in 1885. After some severe winters in that part of Kansas and when coupled with the low price of farm products there, the family decided to leave Kansas.

Their next home was on the banks of the Verdigris River - in Indian Territory (Now Oklahoma) near a settlement called Coody Bluff. Two more children were born there: Madge, Born: 1890, Died 1966; and Loyd, Born: 1892.

In 1895, the James Henry Keith family moved again by horse and wagon to Benton County, Arkansas and settled north of Spavinaw Creek about



Packing Apples in Wooden Barrels at the Keith Orchards - circa 1905

two miles south of Dickson, which would later become Hiwasse, Arkansas. They came to this location because a niece of Mr. Keith, Cora Grayson Rucker, and her husband were growing apples nearby which were producing well. James Henry Keith was instrumental in acquiring the railroad routing through Dickson to ship his apples which would result in the town being renamed Hiwasse.

In a few years James Henry Keith, and his sons, had developed apples that out-produced all others. In 1904, at the St. Louis World Fair, their apples won a gold medallion and they were shipping box-car loads of apples on the new railroad, under the label "Keith's Blue Ribbon Apples, Hiwasse, Arkansas." In 1919, their orchards covered 400 acres and was the largest producer in Arkansas.

That same year, James Henry Keith died (26 August 1919) from an illness which had kept him bedfast for some time. He and Sallie and their two Children (Madge and Donnie G.) are buried in the Keith Cemetery, south of Hiwasse.

James Henry and Sallie's older son, Earl, married Bea Davis, a teacher in the Hiwasse school system. They had two children; Clay, and Angie Madge - who also became a teacher in the Hiwasse School System.



James Henry and Sallie (Harmon) Keith's Home.
Built 1900-1910 Near a Wonderful Spring.

Their son Troy, married Gertie Banks. They had five children: Dwight, Thelma, Nadine, Charles, and Bernard. Charles Keith was credited with shooting down the First Two Japanese aircraft which attacked Pearl Harbor on Sunday, December 7th, 1941 and started World War II. Only 29 of the attacking Japanese aircraft were shot down by the Americans in the Japanese sneak attack.

Another of James Henry and Sallie's sons, James 'Russell' (Born: 17 January 1896 - after the family came to Arkansas, and died: 30 October 1970) was a local character around Hiwasse where he lived all his life. He always had interesting tales to tell and was an practical inventor. Among his inventions was a better type of orchard spray nozzle and one of the first and best automatic poultry waterers. He designed the first steel building trusses and in his small factory he was always busy making benches, rose trellis, and cattle feeders. Russell married Gladys Edwards (Born: 28 December 1898) on 23 May 1926. Russell and Gladys had three children: June, John H. (J.H.), and Carolyn.

KEITH FAMILY OF HIWASSE [Cont'd]

'Loyd' Henry Keith was two years old (Born: 18 August 1892) when his parents, James Henry and Sallie (Harmon) Keith, came to Benton County. He married Pearl Banks (Born: 26 August 1892) in Bentonville on 8 September 1913. She was the daughter of George and Edith (Crouse) Banks and a sister to Gertie Banks who married his brother Troy. After their marriage, Loyd and Pearl moved to a log cabin about two miles southeast of Hiwasse. Their first child, Geneva Lucille, was born on 6 January 1916 in that log cabin.



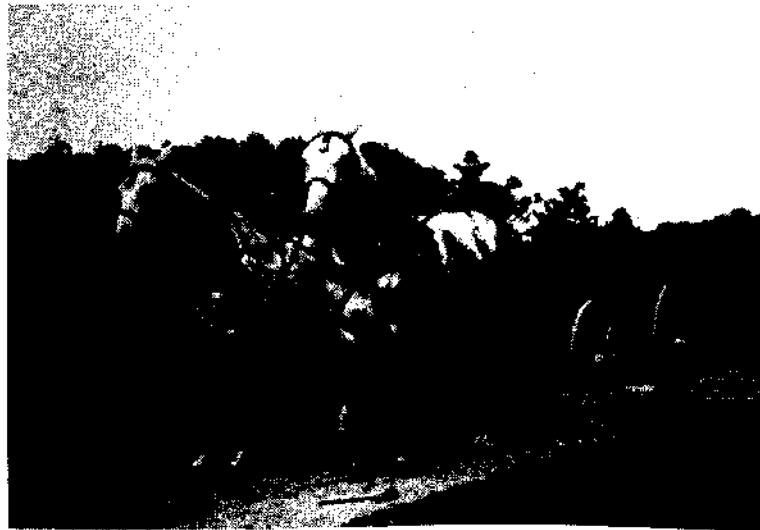
Loyd Keith with his Team of Black Mules
circa 1915

Loyd and Pearl later moved about a mile further west and developed a lake and Country Store where folks nearby could buy what they needed. Their last child, Loyd 'Hurshel' was born there on 21 August 1921. The Keith's lost nearly everything except a small farm in the big crash of 1929.



Keith's Lake Grocery Store - circa 1920

Hurshel married Louella Irene 'Billie' Douglas (Born: 1 November 1921) on 9 December 1941. He enlisted in the U. S. Navy on 29 September 1942 and served until after the end of World World War II - 6 December 1945. Afterwards, Hurshel and Billie returned to Hiwasse and bought the John Parker place one mile south of Hiwasse and started farming and raising turkeys. The turkey raising evolved into a large scale operation. With their son, Allan Lee Keith, they raised 100,000 or more turkeys each year. Hurshel and Billie have spent all the years after World War II building up their farm. Hurshel's hobby is the team of mules which he works and



Loyd Keith With His Daughter Geneva on the Wagon Seat
Beside Him - circa 1918.

hitches to a large wagon which he built himself. Billie, a neighbor once said, deserves a Good Neighbor Award for all the nice things and good deeds she has done for sick folks and folks who have lost loved ones. Both Hurshel and Billie work at being good neighbors.

Hurshel and Billie's son, Lawrence 'Larry' (Born: 14 July 1945) married Regina Logan, a school teacher, and live on a farm adjoining them while working for First Brands in Rogers. Larry and Regina have one son, Paul L. Keith, who married Kristin Cordes

Their daughter, Paula Jo, (Born: 17 July 1949) married Gary Hutcheson and have two daughters: Sherry Lynn (Born: 21 Feb. 1970), a school teacher, and Christie Michelle (Born: 5 March 1975) who married Jason Lafayette.

Their daughter Sally Lou (Born: 29 June 1954), married Carl Bennett, is a Registered Nurse, and lives in Siloam Springs.

Their son Allan Lee Keith (Born: 15 July 1958) married Brenda Poulter of Gravette in June 1979. They had a son, Andy Ray Keith, but were divorced in 1983.

Their daughter, Betsy Pearl (Born: 18 April 1961) married Michael 'Mike' Meek, live in Gravette, and have three children: Ashley Christine (Born: 21 July 1987), Brett Allan (Born: 29 September 1990), and Brandon Thomas (Born: 25 October 1993).

Loyd and Pearl's daughter, Geneva, married Arnold Dreisoerner (Born: 8 November 1905) in Kansas City, Missouri. They lived in Blue Springs, Missouri until 1947 when they moved to Gravette and bought the Gravette Department Store from Geneva's Aunt, Doris Seiler, of Sulphur Springs. Arnold and Geneva worked hard and made their store - and Gravette - a good place to

shop for clothing and other dry goods - for 39 years! They renovated a beautiful apartment over the store so they would always be near the business and were active in the Gravette Christian Church. Arnold passed away on 10 March 1975, but Geneva continued to operate the store until 1986 - while including "Geneva's Real Estate" to the business. After closing the store, Geneva moved to a small farm south of Hiwasse where she lived until she died - on 10 November 1993. She and Arnold are both buried in the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery.



Loyd 'Hurshel' and Lovella 'Billie' (Douglas) Keith - circa 1943



Dreisoerner's Gravette Department Store - Early 1960s

KEITH FAMILY OF HIWASSE [Cont'd]



Arnold and Geneva Dreisoerner and their Son
Don Dreisoerner - circa 1947

Geneva and Arnold had one son, Don A. Dreisoerner, who was born 27 September 1936. He married Jane Williams (Born: 24 March 1945) and they have two children: Nikki Lee (Born: 15 July 1969), and Tad A. (Born: 20 August 1971). They live in Blue Springs, Missouri and Don works for an Electric Company.

These are some of the records and history of the Keith family who, until recently, have nearly all lived within a few miles of the town of Hiwasse. Their efforts and enterprise, since the family first came here in 1895, have contributed a great deal to making the Hiwasse Community "a great place to live today."

- By Maxine Holloway
and Don Dreisoerner -

QUERY

FLYNN

With her Membership Renewal, Glynda (FORD) ELLMAN, indicated that she is looking for descendants or persons with data on 'Nellie' Net FLYNN, whose Maiden Name was Antinetta/Antinella Priscivall FORD. She is sometimes listed as Arminta P., and was Married to Edward FLYNN in November 1870. She was Born in April 1848, Died in 1923/24 and was buried in Elm Springs Cemetery. Her Funeral Service was held at the Methodist Episcopal Church probably at Hebron, sometimes called Mt. Hebron.

Anyone with information on 'Nellie' FLYNN please directly contact: Glynda Ford Ellman, 1710 Oakwood Drive, Troup, Texas 75789. Telephone: (903) 842-3878. E-Mail: gfordellman@tyler.net.

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MAY AND KEITH FAMILIES OF ARKANSAS *By John L. Schlaud*

John L. Schlaud of Grand Blanc, Michigan, whose wife Dorothy has been a Life Member of the BCHS for many years, has published an impressive book, titled above, on the May and Keith Families of the Maysville area of Benton County. The last Issue of *The Pioneer* (Vol. 43-1) featured a story on the Keith Family of Hiwasse. Although both Keith Families originated in Scotland and they must have been related in eons past, I have found no relationship between them. One settled in central Benton County, the other, 60 years earlier, settled in the far western part of the county along - and across - the Indian Territory border (Now Oklahoma).

The town of Maysville was named for the May family and is arguably the oldest town in the County. Bentonville also claims this honor as Osage (Forerunner to Bentonville) got a Post Office in 1836 before Beatie's Prairie (Forerunner of Maysville) in 1840, but in all the early stories about Maysville it claims to be the first town in Benton County - based on (Among other things) that John Martin May settled there in 1830 and William Bird Keith and his wife Sarah Ruth (May) Keith had what has been reported as the First White Child born in what is now Benton County. (John Keith, Born: 8 July 1834; Died: Circa 14 December 1896). (Pictured Alongside) I have a couple of other nominations for this last honor (Including Eliza May) that I will put forward at another time, but it can be positively stated that there was a thriving community at Maysville (Including a Methodist Church started in 1830) before there was a settlement of note in Bentonville.



CENTER: John Keith - Perhaps, the First White Child Born in what would become Benton County. **IN BACK:** John's Daughters - Martha Belle (Keith) McCall and Fount (Keith) Abercrombie. **BESIDE AND IN FRONT:** His Grandchildren - John Larken, Loda Margaret, and Ethel L. McCall. **LOWER RIGHT:** Mattie Gillet (Who John Raised) - the Daughter of Emma Dee (Keith) Gillet, another of John's Daughters by then deceased. (Circa 1895)

But regardless of what or who came first, Mr. Schlaud's 397 page Hardback Book with a computer count of 302 pictures (No I didn't count, but I believe it!) and a 54 Page Index, is as thorough coverage of a families history as I have seen. He covers all Nine generations of Mays and Keiths since their arrival in what would become Benton County and the book plainly shows the tremendous amount of research, work, and expense which went into this legible, well printed, book.

Of special interest to me was hundreds of short notes on many Individuals, along with pictures, which adds a dimension to the book above the "Tombstone Information" that such books must contain. In going through the book I noted pictures and mention of members of the BCHS, e.g. Peggy Witty and Carol McGhee Schruggs. As the May and Keith Families have been in Benton County so long, it is not surprising that they are related to most of the ante-bellum families of the west side of the county.

Dorothy Kay (Weishuhn) Schlaud is the Sixth Generation from Reynolds May from which Nine Generations and 3,431 Descendants are recorded in this book. Mr. May's Tombstone in the May-Keith Cemetery at Maysville clearly has "Runnels" on it but most other records indicate "Reynolds", as he was probably named after his mother, Elizabeth (Reynolds) May.

The Schlaud's have generously donated a copy of this book to the BCHS and it can be seen at the Berry Research Center at the Peel House. For those who live too far away, Mr. Schlaud has indicated that although the First Printing has sold out he may have it reprinted if he gets enough requests. To encourage him to do so, write or contact direct: John L. Schlaud, 6303 Woodside Drive, Grand Blanc, MI 48439-8543, (810) 694-8543. E-Mail: jschlaud@juno.com or jschlaud@tir.com. - Editor -

QUERY

ANDERSON

Alan Anderson is trying to make contact with a long lost line of his family. He is looking for any descendants of Andrew J. Anderson who died in Bentonville on 21 July 1910 and who had three living children at that time: Arthur J., Born March 1889; Florence E., Born November 1870 (Married a Farrel); and Alice P., Born March 1893 (Married a Reynolds).

This is all the information he has on this branch of his family and he would appreciate any assistance. Alan Anderson, 2714 70th Ave., SE, Mercer Island, WA 94080.

INFORMATION REQUEST

STACEY

Kenneth Anderson has written *The Pioneer* and requested any information that our Members might have on Silas Scruggs Stacey, MD, who established a Health Resort near or in Sulphur Springs in 1874. He is not shown in Federal Census of 1870 and 1880.

If you have information on Dr. Stacey please write: Kenneth Anderson, P. O. Box 14320, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74159.

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