

# RALPH SKELTON: AN EARLY ARKANSAS TERRITORY PIONEER

Dwain H. Skelton\*

Ralph Skelton was born, on 14 May 1787, on John's Creek, a north tributary of the Enoree River, in Union County, South Carolina. He was the sixth of eight sons and two (possibly 3) daughters born to William and Sarah Skelton. His parents moved to Union County, SC sometime around 1770. When they were married, and where they lived, before going to South Carolina is currently unknown. William F. Medlin, in his book; List of Quaker Families in South Carolina and Georgia, indicates William Skelton was the head of a household associated with the Cane Creek Monthly Meeting as early as 1773. Others seem to think that group did not receive official sanction until 1775-1779. Perhaps William Skelton was hosting gatherings in his home prior to the Cane Creek Monthly Meetings being sanctioned in Union County, South Carolina.

Ralph received no formal schooling. Neither he nor either his first or second wife could even sign their names to legal documents. From that, it must be assumed, they could not read or write. That has made it difficult to document, with absolute certainty, the history of those early Arkansas Territory pioneers.

Until his marriage, on 16 December 1810, to Fanny Lathom, Ralph was with his parents as they moved from Union County, SC to Elbert County, GA to Warren County, KY to Knox County, Indiana Territory. Shortly after his marriage he enlisted in the Indiana Militia to support the "War of 1812" effort. Records from the United States Department of the Interior, dated 2 October 1854, show Ralph Skelton was a private in Captain Montgomery's Company, Indiana Militia, War of 1812, and

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\*Dwain H. Skelton served in the United States Air Force for over 30 years, spending most of his time in Kansas and Missouri. He and his wife, the former Betty Anderson of Springdale, live in Easton, Kansas.

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therefore was issued Land Warrant #84069 for 40 acres. He served from 11 August until 12 September 1812. The Land Warrant was assigned to Ralph's son, Robert, and was located upon the South East quarter of the South East quarter of Section twenty two in Township fifteen North of Range thirty West in the District of Lands subject to sale at Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Ralph sat on the Grand Jury for the October term in 1815 in Gibson County, Indiana and deeded land there in 1816. Possibly, that land was from Fanny (Lathom) Skelton's inheritance from her deceased father, Jonathan Lathom.

In a deposition for his claim for Arkansas Public Land Donations, at the Fayetteville Land Office, Certificate #1; Claim #1; dated 16 September 1833, Ralph Skelton briefly described where he initially settled after moving from Indiana Territory and why he was forced to abandon the land on which he had settled. He stated he was "compelled to remove in consequence of the Treaty with the Choctaw Indians ceding the county wherein he resided to them." Elijah Tollett also filed a claim with the Fayetteville Land Office, Certificate #2; Claim #4; dated 22 April 1834, in which he stated Ralph was one of his close neighbors and more precisely described the area they abandoned as "on the Mountain Fork of Little River about 15 miles northwest from the Little River Salt Works" (The Historical Atlas of Oklahoma indicates it may have later been called "Mabbet's Salt Works"). That area is currently located in McCurtain County, Oklahoma and may very possibly be inside the Quachita National Forest, covered by the waters of the Broken Bow Lake. Ralph further stated he "resided there on 24 May 1828 — and removed about the last of October or first of November 1828 east of the present boundary line of the Territory of Arkansas to what is now called Washington County." His claim was eventually approved and on 25 February 1845 he received an Arkansas Land Patent for 320 acres in Washington County, Arkansas: SW, Sec. 32, Twp. 16 N, R 30 W and NE, Sec. 6, Twp. 15 N, R 30 W (two diagonally adjoining quarter sections).

Also, in his 1833 claim for Public Donation Lands, Ralph mentions a wife (unidentified) and four children: Jonathan, Jane, Pamela, and William. An examination of the 1850-1870 United States Census for Washington County, Arkansas leads one to believe his wife was Cassannia Conner and the four children were: Jonathan L., b. ca: 1818, Martha Jane, b. ca:

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1822, Permelia, b. 25 September 1825 and William M., b. ca: 1828. This raises a question as to what became of Ralph's first wife, Fanny Lathom, and the other children she could have given him between 1811 and 1820. Ralph and Fanny Lathom were reportedly married in 1810, in Knox County, Indiana Territory.

Several of the men among the early Miller County settlers were veterans of the War of 1812. Ralph Skelton was one of those Veterans. We don't know exactly when he settled along Mountain Fork of Little River or what route he took to get there, but he possibly resided there for a little more than a decade. He would have been in his very early twenties when he and Fanny were married. They probably spent six or seven years in Knox County, Indiana Territory before they made their way to the land that was to soon become Old Miller County, Arkansas Territory.

Old Miller County was created by an act of the Congress of the Territory of Arkansas on 1 April 1820. It was cut out of Hempstead County, Arkansas Territory. The Red River Valley, from Mound Prairie, Arkansas to the mouth of the Kiamichi River, was all included in the county of Hempstead in 1819. A large portion of territory belonging to the Republic of Mexico was included in the boundaries of Old Miller County. For several years those pioneer settlers did not know to which government they should show allegiance.

Nine different treaties were negotiated between the United States and the Choctaw Nation from 1786 until 1830. Three of those treaties (1816, 1820 & 1825) impacted Ralph and his near neighbors. During that period of political confusion, the Early Arkansas Territory Pioneers did not hold title to the land on which they had settled.

The seventh treaty, the Treaty of Doak's Stand, signed on 18 October 1820, involved a land swap. It provided for the exchange of 5,169,788 acres, the southwestern one-third of the remaining Choctaw land fronting the Mississippi River, for a 13,000,000 acre tract of Quapaw land lying beyond the Mississippi River between the Canadian-Arkansas and Red Rivers. Part of that agreement involved the Choctaw Nation moving west of the Mississippi River. Before they could complete the move, the part of their new land that lay in western Arkansas Territory, had already been partially settled by white pioneers.

It was incumbent upon the United States to relocate those white settlers. Old Indians, who lived in the area, believed the Red River had

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been blocked for a generation by "The Great Raft", a log jam that totally closed the river to navigation. It was 1816 before it could be cleared. Once that was done, the lands on the western fringe of Arkansas Territory were open to easier settlement. Family legend has it, Ralph Skelton joined a group of Indiana Territory families who constructed a large raft to carry them down the Ohio to the Mississippi to the Red River and then up it to their proposed new land. They could not have known what the politicians in Washington City had planned for that area. Consequently, about 200 families became "Squatters" on land that was to be included in the Treaty with the Choctaw Indians that was finalized on 24 May 1828. It became necessary for those families to give up their homes and go elsewhere.

The 1820 (reconstructed) Arkansas Census shows Ralph Skelton in Miller County in 1821. Unfortunately, all early Miller County records were destroyed during a court house fire in 1828.

In late 1824, several Choctaw Chiefs went to Washington City to complain that many white people were already living on the land in Arkansas which had been part of the Treaty of Doak's Stand. On 20 January 1825, the eighth treaty was signed between the Choctaw Nation and the United States. The Choctaw ceded about 2 million acres to the United States. This included the "land lying east of a line beginning on the Arkansas River, one hundred paces east of Fort Smith, and running thence due south to the Red River." The United States agreed to move any white settlers to the east side of the new boundary line and prevent any more from settling on the west side. Since Ralph could neither read nor write, had no title to his land, and didn't even know if he had taken land in Mexico or the United States, he was very reluctant to accept the word of some stranger who rode up to his log cabin and told him he had to abandon his home, his cultivated land and any crops he had planted.

Several families had lived in this disputed area for some years. One of the commissioners, chosen to negotiate with the Choctaw, was Andrew Jackson. Many of the settlers had served with Jackson in the War of 1812 and thought of him as a friend. However, they were unaware those Washington Politicians had decided to offer the Choctaw another tract of land, west of Arkansas Territory, that included their homes. Also, unknown to the Pioneers, Jackson has instructed Major William Bradford, of Fort Smith, to remove the "Squatters." Trouble was brewing!

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In 1820 and 21, the Choctaw frequently raided the settlers and stole most of their horses, leaving them to raise their corn with hand-held equipment. About that same time, Capt Robert L. Coomb, of the United States Army at Fort Jessup, following orders from Major Bradford, burned most of the cabins above the mouth of the Kiamichia River, on both sides of the Red River. For some reason, Capt. Coomb returned to the area later and drove out the families who had returned to attempt to harvest their crops. That really upset the remaining settlers.

A makeshift Pioneer Militia was formed, north of the Red River. The Captain had to retreat back down the Red River, protected by his men, with that group of upset "War of 1812 Veterans" trying to get a shot at him. He succeeded in reaching the area of "The Great Raft" without being wounded.

While the Pioneer Militia was following Capt. Coombs down the river, the Indians "came down upon their families and made havoc among those who were in camps but had no protection." Could this explain what might have happened to Ralph's wife, Fanny, and their earlier children?

We next find Ralph listed on the 1823-1829 Arkansas Sheriff's Census and Tax lists in Washington County, Richland Township, for the year 1829. Thus we must assume he had located land, on which he wanted to settle, in the newly formed county of Washington, Arkansas Territory.

The 1830 Federal Census for Arkansas shows Ralph Skelton with: 1 male 0/5 (William?), 1 male 10/15 (Jonathan L.?), 1 male 30/40 (Ralph), 1 female 0/5 (Martha Angeline?), 2 females 5/10 (Martha Jane & Permelia?) and 1 female 15/20 (Cassannia?). If Ralph was born in 1787, as is generally represented in other records, he should have been 43 and shown in the 40/50 bracket, not the 30/40 bracket.

On 20 August 1838, Ralph bought and took title to 40 acres of land in Washington County, Arkansas identified as SWSW, Sec. 29, Twp. 16 N, R-30 W. On 12 April 1843, he sold that land to Jones Peerson for \$225.00 (Washington County, Arkansas Deed Book D, page 453).

In May 1839, Ralph served on a Washington County, Arkansas jury that found a Fayetteville, Arkansas merchant, Willis S. Wallace, innocent of killing an Indian. The Wallace Family had opened their store, on Sunday, and sold a barrel of whiskey, which somehow led to a fight.

In 1840, Ralph is listed on the Washington County, Arkansas Census in the following manner: 1 male 0/5 (Alfred?), 1 male 5/10 (Robert?), 1

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male 10/15 (William?), 1 male 20/30 (John L.?), 1 male 50/60 (Ralph), 1 female 0/5 (Prudence?), 1 female 5/10 (Sarah?), 1 female 10/15 (Martha Angeline?), 2 females 15/20 (Martha Jane & Pernelia?) and 1 female 20/30 (Cassannia?).

On 21 October 1842, Ralph sold 160 acres of land (E, NE, Sec. 6, Twp. 15 N, R-30 W and W, SW, Sec. 32, Twp. 16 N, R-30 W) to Samuel Alexander. The sale price was \$650.00 (Washington County, Arkansas Deed Book E, page 008).

On 13 March 1844, Ralph sold 40 acres of land (NE, SW, Sec. 32, Twp. 16 N, R-30 W) to John Miller, Sr. The sale price was \$50.00 (Washington County, Arkansas Deed Book E, page 079).

On 25 February 1845, Ralph received a patent on 320 acres of land (SW, Sec. 32, Twp. 16 N, R-30 W and NE, Sec. 6, Twp. 15 N, R-30 W) in settlement of his 1833 claim of Arkansas Public Land Donation as a consequence of the Treaty with the Choctaw Nation.

On 23 July 1845, Ralph sold 40 acres of land (SE, SW, Sec. 32, Twp. 16 N, R-30 W) to James Chambers. No sale price was given (Washington County, Arkansas Deed Book E, page 265). It should be noted that Ralph sold "right of possession" on approximately 200 acres of land before he had been granted official title to the land.

The Federal Census taken for West Fork Township, Washington County, Arkansas, in 1850, lists as family #77, Ralph Skelton, head of household, age 63; and Catherine, wife, age 30; with children: William, age 22; Robert, age 16; Prudence, age 14; Alfred, age 12; Mary, age 10; Phebe, age 8; Jacob, age 5; and Elizabeth, age 1. All of the children are shown as having been born in Arkansas. Jonathan L., Sarah, Martha Angeline, and Martha Jane appear to have married by then.

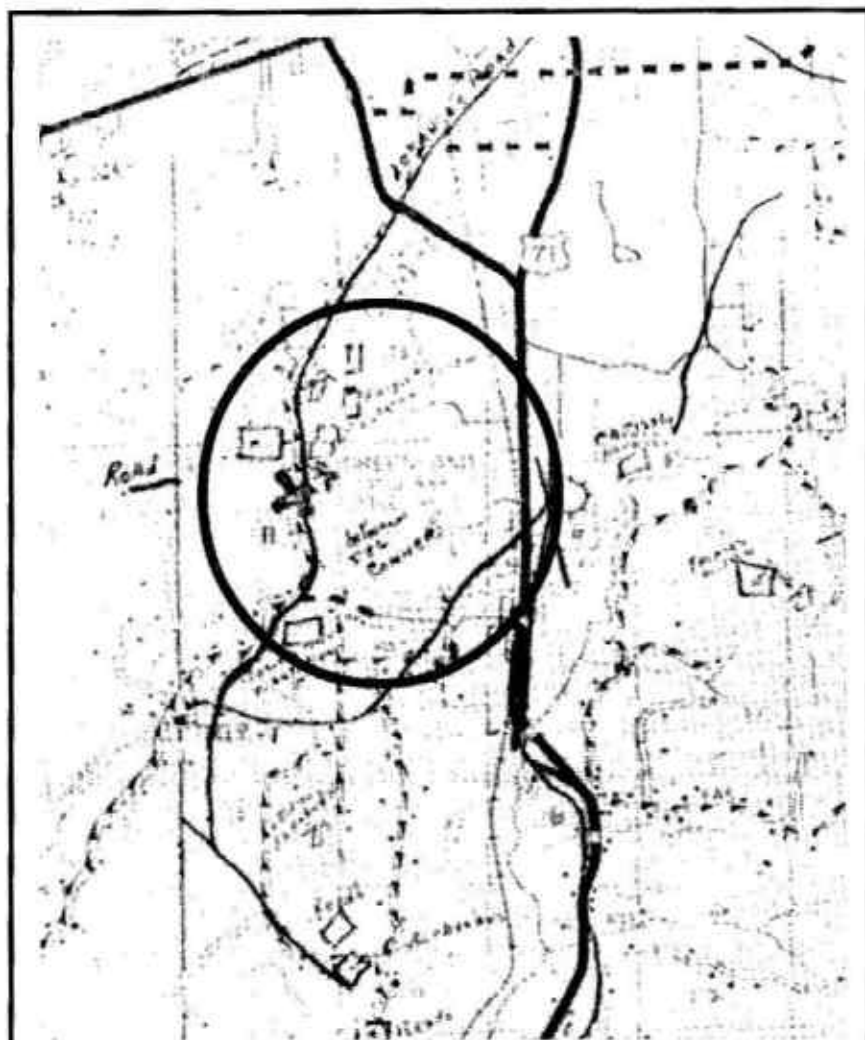
The Federal Census, taken 3 September 1860, for West Fork Township, Washington County, Arkansas, shows the 27<sup>th</sup> family visited was that of Ralph Skelton, age 75, born in South Carolina; and wife, Cassannia, age 48, born in Indiana, with children: Mary, age 18; Pheby, age 14; Jacob, age 12; Betsey, age 11; and Catherine, age 8. All the children were born in Arkansas. Cassannia is shown as being unable to read or write. Several of the ages listed disagree with previous and/or future enumerations.

The 1870 Federal Census for Westfork Township, Washington County, Arkansas shows family #79, enumerated in the order of visitation, was



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that of John Brashears, a farmer, age 36, born in Arkansas. His wife is shown as M. A. Brashears, age 26, born in Arkansas, who cannot read or write. M. A. Brashears is assumed to be Martha Angeline (Skelton) Brashears. Living with them is a 58 year old female, K. A. Skelton, born



Detail of map showing the location of Ralph Skelton's homestead near Greenland, ca. 1831-1834. It is based on a later transportation map with the 1831 information added. The map is housed in the Fayetteville Public Library's Genealogy Department.

*Detail courtesy of the author.*

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in Indiana, who cannot read or write and an 18 year old female, named Kitty Skelton, who is attending school that year. K. A. Skelton is assumed to be Cassannia (Conner) Skelton, and Kitty Skelton is assumed to be Catherine Skelton, who later, on 17 September 1870, married Edmond Winkle of Washington County, Arkansas. The three Brashears children, J. W., B. A. and W. L. were all shown to be born in Arkansas. Ralph Skelton was dead at the time of this enumeration and Cassannia and Catherine were living with the Jonathan Osburn Family.

Ralph Skelton died on 30 March but the year is still in question, perhaps it was 1861 or 1862. He is buried, along with several of his children and grandchildren, in the Baptist Ford Cemetery, approximately half a mile south of Greenland, Washington County, Arkansas.

On 28 November 1878, Cassannia Skelton, age 64, appeared before Presley R. Smith, Clerk of the Washington County, Arkansas Court, and made application for a pension, based on Ralph Skelton's service in the Indiana Militia. In her application, she stated Ralph died in Washington County, Arkansas in March 1861. However, his headstone shows his death as 1862. Cassannia (Conner) Skelton was an elderly woman who could neither read nor write and it would not be prudent to place strong confidence in any dates to which she applied her mark (X).

According to the Knoxville Pension Office, Certificate #26403, Cassannia Skelton got her pension and was being paid \$12 a month at the time of her death, on 16 November 1900. She is buried in the Sunset Cemetery, Washington County, Arkansas. Family legend is there was a bad snow storm when she died and it was not possible to take her to Baptist Ford Cemetery to be buried beside her husband. Several of Ralph and Fanny (Lathom) and Cassannia (Conner) Skelton's children can be found in the Baptist Ford, Sunset and Hazel Valley Cemeteries in Washington County. Members of three generations of their descendants are resting in cemeteries all across Washington County, Arkansas.

Your help is requested in resolving the following questions:

1. the date and place of William and Sarah Skelton's marriage,
2. the location of the Quaker Records for early Union County, S C (1750-1800),
3. the date of William and Sarah Skelton's deaths in Indiana Territory and their burial places,
4. the number of children born to Ralph and Fanny (Lathom) Skelton,



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5. the route taken by Ralph and Fanny from Knox County, IN Terr. to AR Terr.,

6. the date of Ralph and Cassannia (Conner) Skelton's marriage,

7. method of transporting Ralph's family from Miller County to Washington County.

and;

8. what became of William Skelton's son, Robert's, wife and children after Robert (b.ca: 1768) died in Union County, South Carolina ca: 1793?

Thanks, in advance, for your interest and thoughts.

Dwain H. Skelton  
28507 219<sup>th</sup> Street  
Easton, Kansas

# THE WILLIAM AND JOHN THADDEUS SKELTON FAMILIES

compiled by  
Alan Gordon Skelton

It was with reluctance that I accepted the job of preparing this record of the Skelton family for the FLASHBACK because I am one of the younger members of the fourth generation of Fayetteville Skeltons, and never lived in Fayetteville except during the first year of my life. I believe that what we presently know of the history should be recorded, however, and so I have undertaken the task.

I remember that when I was a child my parents spoke of a family history collected by Uncle Gordon Vernon Skelton. Not long ago a cousin, Nellie Skelton Handsaeme, sent me a copy of that history. I believe the one she gave me was copied from the original. I understand that Gordon visited Fayetteville around 1903 and asked his parents, John Thaddeus and Mary Rebekah Vernon Skelton, to relate the story of the family to him. His history was chiefly an outline (at least the copy I have is). There were a few errors and incomplete portions in it. I have drawn on that history and have supplemented it with dates and other information that I have collected in various places.

Perhaps this report will be the starting point for an even more complete history of the family. Those who have first-hand information should fill in the history with narratives that will supplement such meager statements as, "He went to Texas in 1863 as a war refugee. He died there in August 1864." Of course, it would be interesting to know more: which route did he take? Was his life in danger in Fayetteville? Were there letters from Waco? I am referring to William Skelton, whose family was decimated by the Civil War.

The project has been worth while. I have met some nice people and learned much about my relatives. (I have found some, too, who don't answer letters!) The family record actually has benefitted in some instance; for example, I discovered that the Arkansas History Commission had no record of John Thaddeus' Civil War service. That has been remedied with the Commission graciously photocopying the documents I had collected.

My thanks for assistance go to the following: my sister, Margaret Skelton Stolzer; my aunts, Bess Carter Chitwood (sister of my mother, Josephine Carter Skelton) and Cora Melton Skelton (wife of Charles Dean Skelton, my uncle); my cousins, Nellie Skelton Handsaeme, Helen Vernon Skelton Middlekauff, Richard Lang Skelton, Mary Vernon Skelton, and Robert Renic Logan. Dr. J. Hayden Anderson, a grandson of my Grandfather John Thaddeus' sister Cornelia, has given me assistance at times. Professor Lemke has encouraged me in my searches and work on the history. He has shown interest in preservation of the Skelton Cemetery, a project the widely scattered fourth generation Skeltons are working on.

William Skelton was born in March 1801 (probably on the 12th day) in Virginia. When he was 12 years old he ran away from his home in eastern (Hawkins County more than likely) Tennessee to middle Tennessee. He did not return except for a short while after he was grown. His father was John Skelton who was born in Virginia on 11 August 1765.

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John married Elizabeth "Betsy" Roberts 10 December 1789. John died 12 March 1859. Elizabeth Roberts Skelton was born 1 October 1774 and died 23 March 1851 in Hawkins County, Tennessee. She was the daughter of Joseph Roberts, a soldier of the Revolution. John had two brothers: William and James. His brother William was a soldier in the Revolutionary War.

John's sons were Alexander, Thomas, Reuben, James, Carter, William and two or three more whose names are unknown. There were two or three daughters whose names likewise are not known. Reuben went from Tennessee to eastern Illinois. James and Carter emigrated to northwest Arkansas and southwest Missouri and are buried in a cemetery near Cassville, Missouri. All these sons had families. Alexander's sons, John and Louis, and a daughter went to Texas, the boys possibly to Collin County. Another grandson of John Skelton went to Cherokee County, Texas. It has been said that most of the Tennessee Skeltons lived near the Georgia line. William knew little about the history of his family.

William married Mary Elizabeth "POLLIE" Gordon in Warren County, Tennessee, on 7 October 1824, near McMinnville. Pollie Gordon Skelton was born 30 November 1807. Her father was James Gordon who died 6 September 1820 in Tennessee. It is believed that James Gordon served in the War of 1812. Research to find out about this is being made by the author. Pollie's mother was Elisabeth Stockstill Gordon who was born 12 March 1788 and died 3 June 1848 in Arkansas. Elisabeth Gordon is buried at Gehring's Chapel north of Fayetteville a short distance off Highway 71. Hers is one of the group of nine burial vaults whose construction is described in FLASHBACK, v. 4, no. 2, March 1954 as being different from others in Washington County.

The Gordon children were Pollie (Skelton) who was only 13 when the youngest child was born; Rebekah (never married) 13 March 1809-1884; Louanna (Lewanna) born c.1811, died 1867, married Alexander (?) Standfield; Parthena (Perthana) who married Tom Banks, died c. 1863; Nancy who married \_\_\_\_\_ Parish, died in Tennessee; Troy Washington, died 26 August 1875; Phila Ann, who married \_\_\_\_\_ Irby, died 1860; Rachel born 1815, married Hosea Cardwell, died 1899; Melvina who married Clint Davenport, died 14 August 1901; Laura died in infancy. Some records do not list this many children in the Gordon family. The Gordons (Elisabeth and her other daughters) are reported to have come to Arkansas in 1836 to be near Pollie Gordon Skelton. Several of the family are buried at Gehring's Chapel. Land records show that Elisabeth Gordon owned the Northwest Fractional quarter of Section 3, Township 16 North, Range 30 West. Troy Gordon owned the Northwest quarter of the Southwest quarter of Section 3 and the Northeast quarter of the Northwest quarter of Section 10, Township 16 North, Range 30 West.

William in the company of Troy Gordon, Alexander (?) Standfield and Hosea Cardwell is reported to have journeyed to the Fayetteville area in 1827. The exact route of several hundred miles these pioneers took is not known. Troy then probably remained in Arkansas while the others returned to Tennessee for their families. William settled in Fayetteville during the winter of 1829-30. According to some stories he built the second house between Fayetteville and Springfield, Missouri. During his youth William had learned a trade, for he was a hatter, and a very successful one from all accounts. William's signature appears on

the 1840 census for Washington County as Assistant Marshall. In 1863 William went to the vicinity of Waco, Texas with Hezekiah Appleby as a refugee of the War. They are reported to have had twenty wagons in their train which included slaves and stock. The route taken by Appleby and William is not known. Polly Gordon Skelton and part of the family remained in Fayetteville but some of the daughters accompanied him. Appleby and William both died near Waco of typhoid fever within a week of each other. The date of William's death is 2 August 1864. According to some, John Thaddeus Skelton located his father's grave after the War and appropriately marked it. The location of the grave is not presently known (1960) although efforts to ascertain its location have



William Skelton



Elisabeth Gordon Skelton

been made by several. John T. Skelton probably visited in Waco several times after the War. He is said to have talked to several of William's former slaves. During the War William's home in Fayetteville was burned by Union soldiers, and his wife and family removed what possessions they saved and themselves to the home of a friend of the family. Pollie Gordon Skelton died 16 February 1886. She is buried at Mt. Comfort near several of her children. William's Bible containing some of the family record is in the possession of Robert Renic Logan of Fayetteville (1960).

William and Pollie Skelton had the following family: Melvina Elizabeth, James Alexander, John Thaddeus, Louisa Mary, Nancy Adeline, American Ann, Troy Hamilton, Helen Tennessee, Cornelia, William Lycurgus, and Martha Wallace.

Melvina was born 24 July 1825. She married Alexander Denny 24 July 1840. She died about 1845 (some reports say 3 March 1848). Denny had been a captain in the Seminole Indian War in Florida. There were four children: William, Mary, Anna and Laura. Pollie and William Skelton reared the children following Melvina's death. Captain Denny was a blacksmith by trade. He died about 1880 at the home of James VanHoose.



James Alexander was born 9 September 1826 at McMinnville, Tennessee. He married Melinda Lindley 17 January 1853. He served in the Mexican War as a sergeant in Enyart's Co., Arkansas Mounted Volunteers. In the Civil War he was in Churchill's Division as a volunteer not a regular. He had volunteered only a day or two before the Battle of Pea Ridge. He was wounded on 7 March 1862 and died 9 March 1862. He is buried at Mt. Comfort. There were four children: Thaddeus, Molly, Lilly and Cornelia. Molly married \_\_\_\_\_ Wilmoth; Cornelia died in the early 1880's.

John Thaddeus (information on him appears later).

Louisa Mary was born at Fayetteville 31 July 1832. She married Joseph (possibly Josiah) Smith Thompson 2 January 1876. She died 7 May 1884. One daughter, Valeria, married John West of Viney Grove; another daughter, Mattie, married \_\_\_\_\_ Watson, clerk of Benton County.

Nancy Adeline was born at Fayetteville 26 May 1834. She married Major Lafayette Boone 17 November 1864. Nancy and her baby died 13 October 1865. She is buried at Mt. Comfort. Boone was badly wounded in the Battle of Corinth, Mississippi. He lived until 9 August 1900. There were no other children.

America Ann ("Meck") was born in Fayetteville 29 May 1836. She never married. She died 22 March 1892 and is buried at Mt. Comfort. "Meck" was crippled from a childhood illness.

Troy Hamilton was born 8 September 1838 and died 20 August 1841.

Helen Tennessee was born 30 December 1840. She married George Washington Stuckey 4 July 1861. She died 30 April 1910 and is buried at Johnson, Arkansas. There were two children: William and James.

Cornelia and William Lycurgus, twins, were born at Fayetteville, 31 January 1843. Cornelia married Robert Seaburn Anderson 28 November 1865. She died 8 November 1913 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery, Fayetteville. They had a number of children. Lycurgus was killed 3 October 1862 at Battle of Corinth, Mississippi. He was a lieutenant in Robard's Co., Stirman's Regiment. Major Lafayette Boone was in the same outfit. Manning Davis was 1st Lieutenant. Lycurgus joined the army at about 18 years of age as a member of the Arkansas State Guards. He later joined the regular Confederate Army. He was killed in a small skirmish the evening before the main battle.

Martha Wallace was born at Fayetteville on 14 July 1846. She married James H. VanHorse on 13 June 1869. She died in 1930 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery. They had no surviving children.

John Thaddeus was born at McMinnville, Warren County, Tennessee on 16 April 1829. He and his brother James went to California from Fayetteville (possibly in the spring of 1850). They started in April and went overland and returned the following February by way of the Isthmus of Panama. John and Mary Rebekah Vernon (of another pioneer Arkansas family) were married 13 December 1857 at Cehring's Chapel, by the Rev. Thomas Standford, a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Mary Rebekah Vernon Skelton was born 19 June 1836 in Bledsoe County, Sequatchie Valley, Tennessee, near Pikeville. She arrived in Washington County with the Vernon family 9 November 1846.

John Thaddeus enlisted at Camp Rector 4 August 1862 in the Confederate Army as a Private in Co. F, 1st Regiment Arkansas Cavalry. He was appointed 2nd Corporal 1 October 1863. J. Fen Rieff was his captain. Rieff was killed at the Battle of Pine Bluff and then Co. F was commanded by Lt. Edward "Ned" Walker. Lt. Jim Furguson had been incapacitated some time before the battle as a result of an accident. He had been thrown by a horse and had a broken leg. Afterwards Co. F was in Gordon's Regiment Cavalry (Col. Alexander Gordon), Cabell's Brigade. Co. F was primarily made up of men from northwestern Arkansas. John Thaddeus was on outpost duty nearly all the time. He was in the following battles in addition to innumerable skirmishes: Prairie Grove, Fayetteville, Poison Spring, Marks Mill, Pine Bluff and Saline.



John Thaddeus Skelton and Family

At Fayetteville, he was hit by a spent ball. At Prairie Grove the hat brim over his left ear was cut off by a ball. Otherwise, he seems to have come through the War without mishap. Family history says he was on Red River when the general breakup came in 1865 and that he never surrendered. W.A. "Bill An" Vernon, Mary Rebekah's brother, was with John Thaddeus throughout the War and had the same service record. Vernon likewise was not wounded although a bomb shell fragment tore a hole out of the shoulder of his coat at the Battle of Pine Bluff.

In order to settle his father's estate, John Thaddeus brought friendly suit in Chancery Court, Washington County. The Court permitted a settlement to be made that took care of the rights of the various heirs. John T. bought the farm and moved on it in 1870. Records of the court action can be found in Records of Washington County, Arkansas, beginning in Chancery Record "B" at page 538, In Vacation of Chancery Court, May 1867. According to records the farm of William Skelton at that time was made up of the following lands:

Township 16 North, Range 30 West: Section 3,  $W\frac{1}{2}SW\frac{1}{4}$  &  $NW\frac{1}{4}$   
 Section 4,  $NE\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$  &  $SE\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$   
 Section 10,  $14\frac{1}{2}$  acres off north  
 side of  $NE\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$  &  $NW\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$   
 Township 17 North, Range 30 West: Sections 34 and 35,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  acres.



Land records indicate that at one time William owned the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , Section 7, Township 16 North, Range 30 West. It is not known how he disposed of this land.

Like many another man during reconstruction days, John Thaddeus availed himself of a walking cane sword which he kept handy. He is said to have operated a wagon train for a number of years following the War. John Thaddeus Skelton died of pneumonia 22 January 1908 and Mary Rebekah died of pneumonia 19 January 1918. They are both buried in the Skelton Cemetery in Fayetteville. The Cemetery is located about one-quarter mile almost due east of the Veterans Hospital. The John Thaddeus Skelton farm was sold by the family in 1911 to B. A. Boyles. The Fountain Motel, 1965 N. College on U. S. 71 and 62 North, owned by Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Johnson is on the site of the old home.

The children of John Thaddeus and Mary Rebekah Skelton were: William Robert, Pollie Thaddeus, Gordon Vernon, James Lee, Charles Dean, John Edgar, Frederick Skillern and a boy who died at the age of about three weeks with the measles. The infant's name is believed to have been Audley Lycurgus.

William Robert ("Bob") was born 2 April 1859 at Fayetteville. Bob was educated in Fayetteville and attended the University of Arkansas. He married Victoria Adelaide Steere, daughter of Simon Bolivar Steere and Sarah Margaret Wells Steere, on 3 December 1882 at Fayetteville. In the spring of 1884 he and his wife went by covered wagon to Spearfish, South Dakota to homestead. They returned to Fayetteville in 1889 because of Victoria's health. In 1899 they moved to Seattle, Washington where he followed the carpenter's trade and was a builder, too. He acquired several pieces of property near the University which he later sold. In 1910 he moved again, this time to Alberta, Canada. He homesteaded there and following farming until he retired. When he did retire in 1935 he lived in Drumheller, Alberta. He died 13 August 1939 and his wife died 10 October 1940. They are buried at Michichi, Alberta. There were a number of children born to this couple. Six of the children are buried at Fayetteville (presumably in the Skelton Cemetery; their names are not known to me). Two children died elsewhere, when quite young: Elizabeth Ellen in Spearfish, South Dakota and Grace Irene in Mt. Vernon, Washington.

Three children reached maturity and are living in 1960: (1) Nellie Victoria Skelton Clark Handsaeme who was born 12 November 1883 in Fayetteville. Nellie is a graduate of Oregon State College at Corvallis and of the University of Washington, Seattle. While attending Oregon State, Nellie lived with her Uncle and Aunt, Professor and Mrs. Gordon Vernon Skelton. She is a widow and retired school teacher and lives in Forest Lawn, Alberta, Canada. Her first husband was Rexford Clark whom she married 25 June 1908. He died 6 August 1923. She married August Eugene Handsaeme in 1937. He died 11 January 1945. He served in World Wars I and II and was a casualty of the second war.

(2) Willie May Skelton Dayton was born in Spearfish, South Dakota 16 July 1887. She lived for a time in Canada, but she had her husband returned to the state of Washington in 1923 to make their home. Willie is a widow and lives in Seattle. Her husband, Carl Otto Dayton, died 10 October 1958; they were married 6 March 1904.

(3) Jessie Lee Skelton Ewing was born in Fayetteville, Arkansas 16 September 1889. She was the only one of the three girls who was not married when the family moved to Canada. She married Lee Ewing there in February 1912 and their home is at Albert Park, Alberta.

Pollie Thaddeus, the only girl in the family of John Thaddeus and Mary Rebekah Skelton, was born in Fayetteville 18 August 1862. She graduated from the University of Arkansas. On 26 November 1895 she and Thomas Marion Logan were married. He was the son of Francis Marion Logan and Mary Ann Grubb Logan. She died 24 September 1949 and her husband died in 1943. They are buried in Evergreen Cemetery, Fayetteville. Their only child, Dr. Robert Renic Logan, is a professor of business administration at the University of Arkansas (1960). He holds degrees in business administration and engineering. He was born at Fayetteville 30 September 1897. He married Bess P. Hodges 6 April 1933. She died 5 September 1945. On 29 August 1959 he married Ouida Wheeler.

Gordon Vernon Skelton was born in Fayetteville 11 March 1867. He graduated from the University of Arkansas. Gordon and Mary Elizabeth Lee Taff were married on 27 June 1893 at Fayetteville. She was the daughter of Albert Gallatin Taff and Thurzah Ann Patterson Taff. Following a period during which he taught at Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, he was for many years Professor of Civil Engineering and later Professor of Highway Engineering at Oregon State College. He died at Corvallis, Oregon 16 October 1939, and his wife died there 10 November 1951. Their bodies were cremated.

They had three children, all of whom are living in 1960: (1) Mary Vernon Skelton born 20 December 1894 at Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She has degrees from Oregon State College and for a number of years was employed by that college. She is now retired and lives in Corvallis. (2) Albert Gordon Skelton was born 10 February 1897 at Corvallis, Oregon. He is a graduate of Oregon State College and is Division Engineer of the Portland Division of the Oregon State Highway Department. He married Helen Jones. They live in Portland, Oregon. A veteran of World Wars I and II he recently retired from the U. S. Marine Corps Reserve as a Brigadier General. (3) Joe Taff Skelton was born 2 July 1899 at Corvallis, Oregon. He is a graduate of Oregon State College. He is an engineer in the Bridge Department of the Oregon State Highway Department. He married Esther Nordstrom 12 June 1924; they live in Salem, Oregon. He was in the Navy in World War I.

James Lee Skelton ("Jim") was born at Fayetteville Arkansas 27 August 1870. He attended the University of Arkansas. He married Josephine "Josie" Carter, daughter of John Hall Carter and Tennessee Sisco Carter, on 24 December 1893 at Fayetteville. He was employed as a teacher in the State Agricultural School, Second District, at Russellville, Arkansas for a time. Most of his life James followed the plumber's trade. Subsequently they lived in Henryetta and Norman, Oklahoma. He died in California in 1951 and is buried there at Norwalk. Josie died in Norman, Oklahoma, 9 November 1946 and is buried in the IOOF Cemetery in that place.

They had five children; three are living (1960): (1) Maxwell Lee Skelton born 30 November 1894 at Fayetteville. Max attended the State Agricultural School at Russellville and Tennessee Military Institute at Sweetwater, Tennessee. He was a plumber. In World War I he served

in the 58th Division. He was gassed and seriously wounded in the War. He moved to California for his health. He and Loma Josephine Smith were married 7 January 1925. He died 2 February 1932 at Hemet, California and is buried there. (2) Jackson Carter Skelton was born 5 February 1901 at Fayetteville. He attended school at Fayetteville, Russellville and Henryetta, Oklahoma. He is a plumber and lives at Monterey Park, California. (3) Margaret Josephine Skelton Stolzer was born 14 January 1907 at Fayetteville. She is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma and was employed in editorial work by a geological association before her marriage. She and Herbert Boss Stolzer were married 28 August 1930. They live in Tulsa, Oklahoma. (4) John Thaddeus Skelton was born 2 August 1909 at Fayetteville. He held degrees from the University of Oklahoma. He was married to Mattilee Newman. He was an administrative librarian and was employed at the University of Oklahoma, University of Missouri, and Jackson County, Missouri. He was Director of the Jackson County Library which he helped establish. He died 9 January 1957 and is buried in Memorial Park Cemetery, Kansas City, Missouri. (5) Alan Gordon Skelton was born 3 August 1912 at Fayetteville. He holds degrees from the University of Oklahoma and has held positions in public schools in Texas, the Geological Library at the University of Oklahoma, Mid-Continent Oil & Gas Association, Tulsa and has been Head, Research Center Library at the U.S. Army Engineer Waterways Experiment Station, Vicksburg, Mississippi since 1947. He and Martha Hope Butcher were married 26 January 1940.

Charles Dean "Charley" Skelton was born 8 September 1873 at Fayetteville. He attended the University of Arkansas. He married Cora Elizabeth Melton 22 September 1897 at Fayetteville. She is the daughter of Preston Woolley Melton and Eliza Thomas Smith Melton. For a number of years Charley farmed. Then he went into the produce business as a salesman and then as manager of the Hays, Kansas branch of W.O. Anderson Comm. Co. for over 20 years. Subsequently he was head of the wholesale fruits and vegetable department of B. E. Budges Co. at Goodland, Kansas. He was fatally injured in an explosion at his place of business in July 1947. He is buried at Hays, Kansas.

They had four children, two of whom are living (1960): (1) Paul Skelton died at the age of 13 of typhoid fever and is buried in the Skelton Cemetery at Fayetteville. (2) Elizabeth died at the age of 3 of diphtheria and is likewise buried in the Skelton Cemetery. (3) Helen Vernon Skelton Middlekauff was born 1 October 1903 at Fayetteville, Arkansas. She is a graduate of the University of Arkansas in home economics. She taught one year in high school in West Virginia and then was bookkeeper and secretary to her father. She married Jack Kenneth Middlekauff 28 December 1928. They live in Hays, Kansas. (4) Henry Arthur Skelton was born 26 September 1905 at Fayetteville, Arkansas. He attended the University of Nebraska. He has been successively a salesman and business executive. He was employed for a number of years by Phillips Petroleum Co. Subsequently he has been employed for the last several years as Personnel Manager of all the branches of S. Riekes and Sons Company of Omaha, Nebraska. He and Margaret Catherine Glissman were married 31 July 1938.

John Edgar Skelton was born 12 July 1876 at Fayetteville. He graduated from the University of Arkansas in 1897. He was a chemical engineer who was subsequently employed in various parts of the United States although for the most part he resided in California. He was employed



from 1905-1912 with the Mathieson Alkali Works, Saltville, Virginia; from 1913-1917 he was part owner of a drug business in Alhambra, California; from 1918-1920 he was with Texas Iron & Steel Co., Torrance, California as a metallurgist; from 1920 to 1933 he was with Natural Soda Products Co. as chemical superintendent. He married Minnie Lang in June 1901. She was the daughter of Christian Lang and Pauline M. Lang. He died in Rosamond, California in August 1937. His wife died 3 February 1959. They are both buried in Inglewood Park Cemetery, Inglewood, California.

They had four children, all of whom are living (1960): (1) John Edgar Skelton, Jr. was born 15 December 1904 in Birmingham, Alabama. He is a lawyer. He graduated from LaSalle University. He married Ellen M. Boulger 19 June 1933. They reside in Covina, California. He is vice-president of the San Gabriel Valley Water Co. (2) Roberts Frederick Skelton was born 15 October 1908 at Saltville, Virginia. He is a graduate of the Los Angeles School of Optometry. He lives in Los Angeles where he has a private practice. His wife is the former Regina H. Brin whom he married 7 August 1933. (3) Richard Lang Skelton was born 25 September 1917 at Alhambra, California. He is a graduate of the University of Southern California. He is Chief Plant Engineer of Douglas Aircraft Co., El Segundo, California. He married Harriet Ann Sebelins 26 December 1942. They live in Palos Verdes Ests., California. (4) Mary Louise Skelton Scanlon was born 17 April 1920 at Alhambra, California. She was married to John Thomas Scanlon 12 December 1953. He died 27 March 1959. She is a graduate of Sawyers School of Business, Los Angeles. She lives at Redondo Beach, California.

Frederick Skillern "Fred" Skelton was born at Fayetteville 2 January 1879. He drowned on 2 August 1900 in the Illinois River near Wedington Arkansas while on a picnic with a group of friends. A boat accidentally turned over. He is buried in the Skelton Cemetery at Fayetteville.

Going back to Mary Rebekah Vernon Skelton's family we find that her father was born 12 August 1800 in Virginia near Charlotte Court House. He moved to Blount County, Tennessee in 1816. He married Rebekah Hutcherson 8 May 1822 at Pikeville, Tennessee. He died 8 November 1869 in Washington County, Arkansas. Rebekah Hutcherson Vernon was born 28 November 1801 in Grainger County, Tennessee. She died 14 September 1849. She and Robert Vernon are buried in the Oxford Bend Cemetery in Washington County.

Rebekah Hutcherson Vernon was one of thirteen children: Charles; Alfred; John; Heseekiah; William; Louis; Nancy (married \_\_\_\_\_ Peters); Betsy (married a William Vernon); Patsy (married an Anderson Vernon); Sally (married \_\_\_\_\_ Robinson); Christopher; Rebekah; and one other child whose name is not known. Betsy and William Vernon had one son and three daughters: Anderson, Martha Jen, Becky Ann, Sarah Elizabeth. Sally Robinson's children were Martha Jen, Hester Ann, Mary Rebekah, Eliza and Heseekiah.

Mary Rebekah's brothers and sisters were: Emoline who was born 5 October 1824, married Audley Skillern 16 February 1841 in Tennessee, moved to Arkansas in 1846, died 24 February 1908, buried in Oxford Bend Cemetery; William Anderson ("Bill An"), born 26 February 1828, died 24 December 1904, buried in Oxford Bend Cemetery (his monument is one of the largest in Washington County); Wyatt Cardwell born in 1833, died in 1836; Martha Ann Levina born 18 March 1840, buried at Oxford Bend.

Robert Vernon was the son of Robert Vernon, Sr. Robert Vernon, Sr. married Elizabeth Hambleton in Prince Edward County, Virginia on 19 January 1792. He was born in Virginia in 1771 and died in Tennessee 2 March 1851. He had six brothers, all of whom fought in the Revolutionary War, it is believed. Two were killed in the War. One brother was the father of a Thomas Vernon who lived in Arkansas. Elizabeth, the wife of Robert Sr., died some time after 1828.

Inasmuch as the Skeltons and Skillerns were apparently always close, the following information on the Skillerns is given:

Audley and Emoline had the following children: Josiah Crawford, born December 1842 and died in infancy; Mary, born 16 May 1844; Jane, born 1846, died 23 May 1887, married Luke Kantz in November 1870; Narcissa, born January 1849; Sarah, born 4 September 1850; Nancy, born 2 July 1853; Elisha, born 23 June 1855; Josephine Helen, born 20 August 1857, died September 1894; James Dean, born 9 May 1861; William Vernon, born possibly in 1864; Florence L., born 14 February 1867, died in infancy; John, born 8 November 1869. Audley Skillern's father was John Skillern who died in 1846. His mother was Elizabeth Anderson Skillern who died in 1841.

Rebekah Vernon Skelton and her father lived with the Skillerns following the death of their mother and wife. During the Civil War, Rebekah also made her home with them while John Thaddeus was in the Army.

The following remarks of Mrs. Bess Carter Chitwood are included because they confirm a picture of John Thaddeus and his wife Mary Rebekah conveyed to me by many people. Mrs. Chitwood was born in Fayetteville and is a graduate of the University of Arkansas and the University of Oklahoma.

"Among my happiest childhood memories are the hours I spent at Grandfather and Grandmother Skelton's farm near Fayetteville. Really they were no kin to me, but were the only grandparents I ever knew, as I was an orphan brought up by my sister, the wife of James L. Skelton. Never, however, did the elder Skeltons make any difference between their own grandchildren and me.

"Once when they bought gay, candy-striped material for dresses for Nellie, Willie, and Jessie, Bob Skelton's daughters, they bought enough for me also.

"How I used to love the comfortable cot with a sheepskin on it in the room with the big fireplace! Here Grandfather rested when he came in from the field. Nearby was the stack of St. Louis papers he read.

"In a drawer of the bureau Grandmother kept ready his and her burial clothes. Every few years these would be used for best and carefully replaced. Grandfather's shirt she made by hand from cloth she bleached herself.

"On one side of the fireplace hung the Almanac; on the other a turkey wing to fan the fire. How good food tasted baked in a spider over coals raked onto the hearth!

FROM THE SKELTON FAMILY ALBUM



**LYCURGUS SKELTON** and his twin sister **CORNELIA SKELTON**

born at Fayetteville, Ark., 31 January 1843.

He was killed 3 October 1862 at battle of Corinth, Miss. He was a lieutenant in Hobard's Co., Stirman's Regt., Confederate Army.

Cornelia married Robert S. Anderson 28 November 1865. She died November, 1913 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery,



**JOSEPHINE ("Josie") CARTER SKELTON**  
and her husband, **JAMES LEE SKELTON**,  
and at right her sister, **OPHELIA CARTER**.

Josephine and Ophelia were daughters of John Hall Carter and granddaughters of Houston Sisco, pioneer of Carroll County, Ark., and veteran of the Mexican and Civil Wars.

James Lee Skelton was the son of John T. Skelton and grandson of William Skelton, Washington County pioneer.

James Lee Skelton and Josephine Carter Skelton are the parents of Alan G. Skelton, Vicksburg, Miss., who holds membership in both the Arkansas Genealogical Society and the Washington County Historical Society.

The photo at the left is the only photo in our files taken by L. Burno, Fayetteville photographer.

*L. Burno, - Fayetteville, Ark.*