

- **Claiborne County Progress**

Nell Quesenbery Report

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DAVID AND MARGARET MOORE

By Nell Quesenbery

Before the Irish poet William Yeats died, he had this epitaph carved onto his stone: "Cast a cold eye on life and death; horseman, pass by!"

Beyond the Jennings, Burch, Yoakum, Thompson Chapel and many other of our oldest cemeteries - see, pale shadows move - who are they?

David and Margaret "Peggy" Moore! Those beloved old figures are my great, great, great, great grandparents. The shadow of who they were comes to me along with gentle traces of their love. Suddenly, to me, once again, they become real and are important.

Margaret was a daughter of our early Claiborne County settlers, the Shermans. Margaret's sister, Catherine, married William Thompson, who owned large tracts of land, including the site where Thompson's Chapel Church now sits. Temperance married William Wallace, who also owned many servants and much farm land. While still another sister married Esquire Burch, who owned farm lands near the Straight Creek Church, including what is now Burch Cemetery.

Some of the surnames of the lineal descendants of Margaret's sisters are: Simmons, Cardwell, Butler, McCarthy, Burchfield, Ford, Jones, Greer, Hansard, Robinson, Goin, Walker, Gose, Mayes, Davis, Ousley, Skaggs and Wells.

David and Margaret owned the lands on the lower Straight Creek Road, adjoining Margaret's sister and her husband, Esquire Burch.

At the turn of 1800, Margaret was thirty-three years old. She had already borne several of the children she and David would have. Girls who would especially be known for their dark-eyed beauty

and both genders of their singing ability. Of these children, I am David and Margaret's direct lineal descendant thrice, while my husband Jack is their lineal descendant only once.

Four of their children married four of the children of Fielding Lewis Sr. and Mary Gamble Lewis, those old settlers who owned much of the rich Long Bolton section near Bear Creek. Two of the children married Jennings men, Anderson and John of Lone Mountain. Sarah Jane married Isom Leabow, also of Lone Mountain.

The Moores lived on their farm until David's failing health caused them to come to live with their daughter, Zelphia, and her husband, Anderson Jennings of Lone Mountain (Jack's and my line). Anderson, having suffered a stroke, also was in impaired health.

Upon the death of Anderson (1858), David and Margaret, now 91 years old, moved to Blount County, Tennessee, to live with their daughter, Sarah Jane Leabow. There David, still faithfully writing to his children in Cherikon and Linn County, Missouri, sickened and died, while Margaret, who never suffered ill health, lived on.

She was a tall slender old lady with great black eyes. Those still brilliant eyes, now hooded by folds of the old flesh, sat in a face whose fine profile was not too grotesquely disfigured by time. Old "Peggy" Moore was now 106 years old.

Of her children, many were now dead. Zelphia, Mary (Polly) Jennings had died back in 1866, right after the War. Peggy had lived through the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the late Civil War. Her man, David, gone, too, it had been many years since she'd felt the touch of his calloused gentle hand on her old flesh.

Still, she was not unhappy. The days of her past were warm and real to her as she gazed into the fire, or sometimes out the window to the distant fields.

Being quick to take "picks" and forming strong lasting loves, she had many of Sarah's children and grandchildren to choose from. Also, she could still break beans, peel apples, sweep the hearth, keep the fire and feel so useful!

This morning, when she awakened, she could hear Sarah in the kitchen. She knew the biscuits were rising in the wood cook stove as she smelled the pungency of salted streaked meat frying. Upon entering, she could see no one was in the living room. Patting the stray curls of her gray hair into a

neater bun, she pressed her gnarled old hands down her flowery long-sleeve shirt waist and long dark skirt.

She pulled the straight back cane bottomed chair closer to the good coal fire. Taking up the poker, she chugged up the bed of fire until she felt its warmth. Then standing, Peggy found her pipe and tobacco on the mantel, sitting back down. Peggy began to reach toward the fireplace for a live coal to light her pipe. At that moment, death struck the 106-year-old Peggy Moore. She keeled to the side of the chair, dead.

Matha Moore Jordan is descended from David and Margaret Moore through their son, Samuel Moore. Samuel married Mary Ann “Polly” Lewis on June 16, 1811, in Claiborne County and later moved to Missouri. Matha is writing a book about the descendants of David and Margaret Moore.

We have never met, but Matha and I are firm good friends and pen pals. Matha arranged for the first Moore reunion in June 1979 in Waco, Texas. Fifty-seven cousins attended from many different states. Matha, who also writes a “Moore” newsletter several times a year, arranged for a second Moore reunion this year, whence sprang forth the idea for her book on the Moores.

All the Moores of Claiborne County are kin. Some of today’s surnames of these descendants are: Jennings, Yoakum, Hodges, Marchio, Payne, Stump, Herrell, Quesenbery, Cheatham, Atkins, Gose, Haynes, Evans, Fannon, Cole, Owens, Beeler, Baltrip, Bledsoe, Hurst, Stooksbury, Hughes, McBee, Phelps, Coffee, Stanifer, Cabbage, Bentley, Williams, Rice, Love, Rosenbalm, Greer, Wells, Lane, Lewis, Leabow, Hardins, McCollough, Callebs, Walker, Holt, Mason, Meyers, Harris. This list of surnames just barely begins to list the many Claiborne County people who, if they knew their family lines, could trace back to David and Margaret.