

BACHELOR JIM MUNN

August 2, 1819 - October 12, 1899

Quotes from those who knew him



Bachelor Jim came to oversee slaves of his father, John Munn, until John died in 1848. John had five children that he and Margaret Blue raised: Thomas, Lovie, Laura and Margaret. Bachelor Jim was peculiar and hard to get along with. Cynthia, his wife, told him that when the children were large enough, she was going to take them and leave him. She and the children moved to or near the towns of Eastland or Gorman, Texas with other Munns. (W.E. Hirst 12 July 1971 ltr)

I never saw my grandfather, James J. 'Bachelor Jim.' Grandmother never told us anything about him. She had scars on her temple. My mother told me grandfather hit her so hard she fell on gravel which made the scars. (Aunt Nettie Dean, daughter of Laura, 13 June 1973 ltr)

This was the time that several of the sons of Edward Munn (#1 son of Duncan) moved to Comanche County (Gorman, Deleon area) and Cynthia took the children, including married daughter, Laura Munn Westmoreland, who went and lived near them. This accounts for my father's generation and Aunt Nettie's calling the same people aunt and uncle. Bachelor Jim was 42 years old when he married and Cynthia Evelyn Stokes, was 25 years his 'junior' at sixteen years-old. He was called Bachelor Jim to distinguish him from the James Munn at Mount Moriah who was the third son of Duncan. (C.F Munn 25 June 1971 ltr)

John Munn, father of Bachelor Jim, lived beside Duncan Munn in Montgomery County North Carolina. Apparently, John died a little later (1840's), and Bachelor Jim went and joined with James Munn, son of Duncan in Mississippi. He was an overseer of slaves for his uncle, James Munn, in Mississippi. Mr. Hirst said that Bachelor Jim would take sick slaves and treat them and restore them to their health. This makes for the account for his having some nine slaves at one point.

(Information from Irvin Munn)

BLACKMON L. SHIRLEY

1819-1933



The oldest man to be presented in this book is Blackmon L. Shirley who saw things happen through a century and 14 years. His life began in the famous Sequatchie Valley in Eastern Tennessee near a town called Pikeville in 1819. When the Civil War came along Shirley was 42 years old, but he entered the Union Army, joining the 5th Tennessee Cavalry, and served throughout the war. Little is known about his early life in Tennessee, other than that he was one of a family of 15 children, most of whom were long-lived. He had one brother who was 101 and several brothers and sisters who lived to be almost 100.

He was 61 years old when he came to Texas in 1880, but this did not daunt him. He bought land east of Springtown and became a prosperous farmer. His first marriage had been in Tennessee. His second wife was Cassie Dilbeck, whom he married in Parker County. Thirty-six years ago (that would have been about 1909) he married Mrs. Annie Moore, a 35 year-old, widow and mother of five children. She presented Black Shirley with a daughter when he was 92. That same year, 1911, he was baptized into the Church of Christ.

Mr. Shirley firmly believed in the simple style of living, a belief bolstered by stern necessity in the younger years of his life and by habit during the later years. This made him the wonderful piece of human machinery that he was and it kept him in such physical condition that, until the time when he was 100 years old, he was still doing many chores about his farm and could ride a horse about the place looking after his cattle and fences. For nearly one hundred years he had his "mawnin's mawnin" and used tobacco in some form during that period of time. He once said: "My father used to line up the whole family before breakfast and give each member of the family from the baby up a little shot of corn licker. None of my family were ever drunkards either." He quit his "mawnin's mawnin" when he was 107 because he did not like the "blind t'ger brand."

His death came in 1933 in Springtown and at his funeral, to top the rarity of his 114 years, was the presence of two daughters, Mrs. Sarah Jane Fitts, 91 years old, and Gladys Shirley, 22 years old, a difference of 69 years in their ages. His other children at the funeral were: Another Mrs. Fitts, who was 90; Mrs. Casey, 86; Mrs. Freiley, 84; John; and Filander who lived near Springtown.