

Roark - Conner Family News

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Issue No. 27
January 2001

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

by *David Roark*

Happy New Year to everyone! This marks the beginning of year 2001 and our 42nd year as an organized family group. As citizens of the United States of America and members of the Roark-Conner Association, we now have new presidents. I don't know how Mr. Bush feels, but I am scared to death.

I do want to thank the nominating committee, the officers and directors and each of you for the confidence you have shown in electing me to this office. My concern relates to performing at a level that will justify that confidence. The sincere words of encouragement, support and a willingness to cooperate and contribute that have come from so many of you is much appreciated. I will need all your help and guidance. I would also appreciate your prayers. With God's help and our combined efforts we can continue to move forward.

Serving with me as officers and directors will be: Vice-President--Darwin Lane; Secretary--John J. Roark; Treasurer--Carol Mathews; Directors--Howard Scott, Helen Conner Lee, Thomas Roark, Liz Conner. Newsletter Editor, Chuck Gross, and Past President, Doris Thornton will serve as ex-officio members. Reba Wilson has agreed to continue to meet with the Board in a consultant capacity. It is an honor for me to be associated with this outstanding group of individuals.

I would like to especially express my gratitude to Darwin Lane for agreeing to serve as our new VicePresident. Darwin is a trusted friend that I have known all my life. He was taught in grammar school by my mother, has gone duck and goose hunting with my father and has played "Rook" with our family on several occasions. He was an outstanding leader in the Hamilton County Public School System for 40 years (37 years as principal) until retirement and is now serving in "high-leadership" positions with the Retired Teachers Association on both a local and state level. He has served on the Community Advisory Panel for the Du Pont Company in Chattanooga since it was established in 1991. He is a competent leader with the experience, in 1991. He is a competent leader with the experience, contacts and determination that is so important to our

continued success.

The 2000 reunion was great. There were so many people who did so many things that it is impossible for me to recognize all of them by name and deed. Doris Thornton did her usual superb job of handling all the details, either personally or by delegation. Liz Conner provided a very interesting and informative presentation at our Saturday Night Banquet. Carrol and Jenna Mathews handled the registration in an admirable fashion. Marylyn Smith led us in an enjoyable Fun Fest. Thomas Roark and family accompanied by Charles Beal did a great job with the music. Helen Conner Lee and her social committee provided excellent desserts. Darwin Lane provided many NICE door prizes. Ola Mae Neal effectively coordinated the birth and wedding announcement ceremony and eulogy service. Dr. Charles Beal challenged us with a great sermon on Sunday morning at the "Old Salem Church" site. Chuck Gross did his usual good job with the "sound" for all activities. Howard Scott provided chairs for the Sunday Service. A special word of thanks goes to Joan Franks who allowed our group to visit "Brown's Ferry Tavern" and to Marlieta Carmichael for allowing us to meet at the Joseph and Juda Carr Roark Homestead for lunch on Sunday. Many other contributions were made by many other people. Thanks!!

On Sunday afternoon, after our lunch at the Roark Homestead, several of us (about 32 people) traveled to Tazewell, VA for the Oct. 9 unveiling and dedication of the State Historical Marker marking the site of the James Roark Family Massacre. Doris Thornton has provided detailed coverage of the event in another article found in this issue. We all owe a great debt of gratitude to James

The Roark-Conner Family News is published three times a year by Chuck Gross, Editor, 3

. The e-mail address is:

and others like him who sacrificially gave of themselves to enable us to have the lifestyle we enjoy today. Also, I want to thank John Roark for all the work he did in bringing the "Historical Marker Project" to a successful conclusion. Thanks to all of you who made monetary contributions to the project.

How closely related to James Roark are you? I've found that I am 8 generations down the line. James, Timothy, James P., John B., Jacob L., Jefferson Arthur, Coulter Allison and David Coulter Roark. The fact that I have grandchildren brings the total to 10 generations. This is very interesting to me. Because of this interest, I am continuing my efforts to identify as many descendants of James as possible. I now have 5,273 descendants (8,283 names) on my report. In my opinion, this total represents about one third of his descendants. I would really appreciate hearing from any of you who might NOT be on "my list." It was Chuck Gross who aroused my interest in genealogy 3 or 4 years ago, by sharing his information with me. Thanks Chuck.

Looking ahead to the future there are several projects, goals and concerns that will require our continued attention. For example, we need to attract more "young cousins" to our group. Please share any thoughts or suggestions in this area. Maybe some of you have ideas in other areas that you would like the association to consider. I would certainly welcome your comments. I can be reached at 423-961-2321 (home phone), deroark@mindspring.com (e-mail address), 423961-2396 (fax) or P.O. Box 344, Birchwood, TN 37308.

Looking Ahead

Calendar of Roark-Conner Association Events

April 6, 2001 Board Meeting - Hawthorne Suites, Chattanooga, TN (open to all)
April 7, 2001 Conner Cemetery Workday
April 28, 2001 Roark Cemetery Workday
June 2001 Newsletter to be mailed
Sept 2001 Newsletter to be mailed
Oct 12, 2001 Board Meeting - Hawthorne Suites, Chattanooga, TN (open to all)
Oct. 12 -14 Roark-Conner Reunion - Hawthorne Suites, Chattanooga, TN
Oct 27, 2001 Old Slate Creek Cemetery workday - Western Cocke County, TN
January 2002 Newsletter to be mailed

Happenings

Births

Samuel Michael Parker was born December 1, 2000 in Graham, North Carolina. His parents are John Harrison and Lori Anne Parker. Samuel is a grandson of John Melvin (Jack) and Louise Parker

Christopher and Melissa Beavers have a baby daughter. **Megan Inez Beavers** was born November 28, 2000 in East Ridge, Hamilton Co., TN. She is a granddaughter of Julian and Sylvia Newell Beavers. The families all reside in Birchwood, TN.

Sarah Kathleen McVey was born October 17, 2000 in Nashville TN. She is the daughter of Richard and Jennifer McVey, II and the granddaughter of Michael and Rebecca Roark Walker of Ooltewah, TN.

Brendan Ignatius Yemn was born Oct. 18, 2000 in Mobile, Alabama. He is the son of Warren and Chlin Renee Tennyson Yemn, II, the grandson of Charles Richard and Diana Young Tennyson and the great-grandson of William Latt and Clara Mildred Pendergrass Tennyson.

Mason Ryan Kennett was born Nov. 12, 2000 in Ringgold, Georgia. He is the son of Michael Todd and Mary Louise Burke Kennett, the grandson of Roy Winchell and Charlene Tucker Kennett, and great-grandson of Glenn Franklin and Audra Irene McKinney Kennett.

Brock John Huerter was born March 18, 2000. He is the son of Scott Andrew and Janin Becker Huerter and the grandson of Lawrence Wayne and Marcheta Gilchrist Huerter of Conroe, Texas.

David Michael Krebsbach was born Feb. 2, 2000 in Kennesaw, Georgia. He is the son of David Christopher and Jennifer Kelly Krebsbach, the grandson of Thomas and Juanita Jean Kennett Krebsbach, and the great grandson of Glenn Franklin and Audra Irene McKinney Kennett.

Shaun Bailey Parker was born June 28, 2000 in Jasper, Georgia. He is the son of Shaun David and Dawn Parker, grandson of David Lee and Carol Ann McKinney Parker, and great-grandson of Howard Samuel and Helen McKinney.

Wade and Kelly Ledford are the proud parents of twin girls. **Morgan and Madeline Ledford** were born Dec. 9, 2000 in Cleveland, TN. Kelly is the daughter of Jimmy and Joy Roark Taylor and a granddaughter of

(Happenings, Continued on page 3)

Haney and Irene Allison Roark.

Marriages

Mary Jane Roark Benton and James William German were married Jan. 23, 2000 in Cleveland, TN. Mary Jane is the daughter of John Burke and Pearl Lee Cox Roark and the granddaughter of Thomas Asbury and Mary Maude Priddy Roark.

Scott Corman and Cathey Amyx were married at the Mt. Grove, MO Baptist Church, October 20, 2000. They are residing near West Plain, MO where Scott is CEO of First National Bank of West Plains, and Cathey is an elementary school nurse. Scott is the son of Clair and Joanna Conner Corman, Pomona, MO.

Joe Stambaugh and **Chryl Knidle** were married September 21, 2000 at the Grace Baptist Church, Granite City, IL. Cheryl is the daughter of Lamon and Carol Kindle and great-great granddaughter of James Madison Conner. Joe is an Illinois State Trooper, and he and Cheryl recently moved into their new home in Granite City, IL.

Kristi Michelle Huerter and Chris Herring were married July 15, 2000 in Conroe, Texas. Kristi is the daughter of Lawrence Wayne and Marcheta Gilchrist Huerter and the granddaughter of Troy and Letha Roberta Roark Gilchrist.

Deaths

Roy Lee Samples passed away Jan. 11, 2001 in Lake Lady, Florida. He was a son of Alfred and Coral Woods Samples and a grandson of James and Una Vesta Samples.

John Louis Bacon of Georgetown, TN died Friday, Dec. 22, 2000 in a local hospital. He was 88. John Louis was preceded in death by his parents, Fred and Emma Roark Bacon and maternal grandparents John Lewis and Victoria Conner Roark.

Michael Metcalf of Chattanooga, TN died Thursday, Dec. 21, 2000, in a local hospital. He was 48. He was preceded in death by his mother, Billie Jo Allison Metcalf Beasley and maternal grandparents James and Della Pendergrass Allison.

Mason Ryan Kennett, infant son of Mike and Mary Kennett, died Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2000 in a Ringgold, GA hospital. He is a grandson of Roy and Charlene Kennett of Valley Head, Ala. and a great-grandson of Glen and Irene Kennett. Mason was born Nov. 12, 2000.

Thomas Rose died Tuesday, Nov. 21, 2000 in Chattanooga, TN. He was 72 years old. He was born June 2, 1918 in Chattanooga. He was preceded in death by his wife, Jessie Lee Fine Rose. She was a daughter of Laura Adelle Eledge and John Lafayette Fine and a granddaughter of Philip and Surilda Pendergrass Fine.

Thomas was buried, by his wife Jessie Lee Fine, in National Cemetery in Chattanooga, TN on Monday, Nov. 27, 2000.

Betty Jo Paterson of Harrison, Tennessee died Monday, Nov. 13, 2000, at her home. She was 62. Mrs. Patterson is a daughter of Jesse Bryan Talley, Sr. and Bessie Mae McCallie Talley, a granddaughter of James William Talley and Elsie Jane Smith Talley, and a great-granddaughter of Joel A. Talley and Sarah Elizabeth Roark Talley.

Betty Grace Irwin Parker, wife of Clarence Parker, passed away Nov. 17, 2000 in Levy Co., Florida. Clarence is a son of John Wesley and Effie Pearl Roark Parker and a grandson of John Lewis "Jack" and Victoria Darleska Conner Roark

Billie Jo Allison Metcalf Beasley died Dec. 7, 2000. She was 69. Billie Jo is the daughter of James R. and Lou Della Allison and the granddaughter of James W. and Nancy A. Allison and James T. and Nancy J. Pendergrass.

Recovering and Treatment

(A Note from Sherri Gross)

As many of you know, I was bitterly disappointed to not be able to attend the reunion in October due to my surgery for a broken hip. Although I couldn't be there in person, the cards signed by everybody and the people I spoke to on the phone, lifted my spirits greatly.

My orthopedic surgeon is very pleased with how well the fracture is healing. I'd been walking with two crutches but around Christmas, was able to get down to using just one. My goal now is to get away from using any crutches or canes. I'm still in physical therapy and my therapist (or terrorist) is pleased with the amount of flexibility I've regained. Now we're working on building strength and endurance so I can get back to walking without assistance.

Thank you so much for your thoughts, prayers, cards and phone calls; you don't know how much they meant to me. I'm going through some tests to find out why bones that are healthy seem to break so easily. Right now, I don't have any test results and still have another test to go through, but I'll keep you posted with whatever I find out.

Thank you again for all your expressions of love and

(Happenings, Continued on page 13)

News from the Laura Roark Shropshire Families

by Reba Wilson & Betty Glover, reporters

The *Washington Post* announced Jan 6th that Juleanna Glover Weiss is press secretary for Vice-President Dick Cheney. She will have an office in the vice-president's section of the White House. Juleanna is the daughter of Mary Lou and Dr. William Lloyd Glover, Jr., and the granddaughter of William. Lloyd Glover, Sr. and Betty Shropshire Glover.

Juleanna is married to Jeffery Weiss a director of Murson-Marstellart Public Affairs in D.C. They have two children, a son William (Will) James, age 2 1/2 and a daughter, Evelyn Blythe Weiss, age 9 months.

Bill & Betty Glover and Reba Wilson flew to D.C. to spend the holidays with families of Jere and Dr. Lloyd Glover. They had 18 adults for Christmas dinner at Jere Glover's home.

Kathy Swaim Tyner, founder and owner of the K.D. Acting Conservatory of the Southwest, recently held opening ceremonies of the Trinity River Art Center in Dallas, Texas.

This art center adjoins the acting conservatory, and its main mission is to provide an outreach to children-at-risk. It provides a state-of-the-art, well lit, reasonably priced performance facility, as well as gallery space for local artists.

Entertainment of the evening included vignettes of Mark Carrol's celebrated Cole Porter Review: "Hot Cole" and the singing voice of artist Trella Hart.

Chattanooga Library in now on-line

Do you know that you can access the Chattanooga Hamilton County Library on the Internet? The URL is: www.fib.chattanooga.gov.

News from the John B. & James T. Roark Families

by Marcheta Huerter, reporter

To quickly introduce myself, I am the daughter of Roberta (Roark) Gilchrist and Troy A. Gilchrist. My mother was James Roark's youngest daughter. She was born July 13, 1915, and died this past year, January 14, 2000. She always talked about her relatives in Tennessee, and my family visited there in 1955. As my dad backed the car out of the driveway on our way to Mexico, he happened to ask my mother where she wanted to go. She answered Birchwood, and that was exactly where we went. Mom was armed with her new 8

mm movie camera about which she had not really bothered to read the directions. The film from that trip is all a blur as she took many pictures from the car traveling 55-60 miles per hour. We found the Roarks in Birchwood for we found the names on the cemetery markers. We also stopped in on the Coulter Roark family as evidenced by their names on the mailbox. This suited me just fine for at thirteen the fact that two good-looking boys lived there, David and Dee, was reason enough to look up unknown cousins. We ended up staying with Emma and Heman Roark. We also went to see the parents of Zane Gray Roark, Jacob Roark and his wife.

According to family history told to me by my uncles when I was a little girl, my grandfather, James Thomas Roark, son of John B. Roark and Nancy Cameron, came to Indian Territory (Oklahoma) as a young man. It seems he got in trouble with the law in Birchwood for shooting out the glass lamps of the street lights sometime in-the late 1890's . He was released and told not to do that again. He got on his horse, rode down the street, shot them out again, and then lit out for Indian Territory. He met my grandmother, Lucrea Adeline Calvert, a young woman whose family also came from Tennessee and who moved to Missouri, then came to Paradise, Texas. They met in Paradise, married, and had seven children, four sons and three daughters.

James T. (Jim) Roark was a man with a great zest for living. He enjoyed barn dances and music. He often played his banjo for rural gatherings, and according to my mother, loved to jig (clogging). He passed his love of music to his sons and daughters; several of whom could play guitar, organ, and piano by ear. Jim never did anything by half measures. He went into the mule business, but instead of buying a few mares and a donkey stallion, he bought a whole herd. I have several pieces of correspondence and bills of sale from that period in his life. He raised cattle, chickens, and cotton. He took great risks which eventually cost him much of his land after his death in the 1930's' Most of the risks involved helping out his sons. He was one of the first to own a car in Fleetwood and Terral, Oklahoma. In fact, he owned two. However, to get to his farm, the cars had to travel over huge sand dunes, so the family would ride down the hills, and then everyone would get out and push up the hills. Jim served as a sheriff in Jefferson County for a time in the 1920's. He died on December 9, 1930, of cancer of the liver.

If at first you don't succeed, don't try

Dedication of Historical Marker

by Doris Thornton

Thirty-two members of the Roark-Conner Association experienced a dream come true October 9, 2000 near Roark's Gap in Baptist Valley, Virginia. We gathered with members of the Tazewell County Historical Society to dedicate a historical marker to commemorate the March 18, 1780 massacre of the wife and seven children of our ancestor, James Roark. A skip of snow and cold temperatures heightened the sense of history as we stood around the marker for the unveiling by Chuck Gross, who began this dream for us many years ago. The marker reads: "**Roark's Gap Incident**. During the French and Indian War (1754-1763) and the American Revolution (1775-1783), European powers encouraged their Indian allies to attack frontier settlers. Such conflicts took place as settlers moved into lands that once were Indian territory. During the winter of 1780, a food shortage caused hardship for people and animals. While James Roark, an early settler of this region, and two of his sons went on a hunting trip, Indians attacked his home, on 18 Mar. 1780. The Indians, alleged to be Shawnee, killed Roark's wife and seven of his children. This event was unanticipated by the settlers because snow covered the ground."

The dedication service was held inside the nearby Yost Chapel Freewill Baptist Church due to the extreme cold outside. Dr. Tom Hatcher, President of the Tazewell County Historical Society, brought greetings and commended us for our interest in preserving history and honoring this first documented incident in Tazewell County. Doris Thornton led the dedication service which honored James Roark and his family by recalling the values that they lived: a commitment to family, a willingness to work, a drive for freedom, a willingness to face risks which they backed up with courage and faith. She recalled the tragedy of this sad family incident resulting from a "clash of cultures" and challenged the group to celebrate their lives by embracing those same values as we face our own "clash of cultures" today. David Roark, our new president, gave a moving prayer to conclude the service.

Following the dedication service, we drove to what is believed to be the James Roark homesite and cemetery. A natural spring borders this property and several members walked down to stand on its banks. We then drove to the lovely home of Dr. and Mrs. Roy Wright which was built in the 1700's on land that is nearby the James Roark homesite. Mrs. Wright graciously showed us the unusual markings and carved initials she discovered while doing rubbings of some of the original logs. They seem to be a part of the Roark name. It was a hallowed moment to

where James Roark himself may have one day stood.

Pisgah Church hosted us for a delicious lunch which was most welcome after our cold travels. John Roark gave a keynote address describing the conditions under which the early settlers lived and challenging us to remember the problems they faced and the hardships that they overcame. He described the ongoing conflicts with the Indians and with the soldiers of the Revolutionary War, describing the massacre and the efforts of James Roark to cope with that tragedy. He encouraged us to remember these pioneers for who they were and what they were "...and to remember their indomitable courage, their enduring fortitude, and their remarkable strength of character."

John Roark took Chuck Gross's dream, and with his knowledge and "can do" attitude, coordinated bringing it to life. He was assisted by the research of Pat Surface, of the Tazewell County Historical Society, who found the documentation of the massacre and graciously assisted in the planning for the dedication services. She and other Society members hosted us for a delightful reception the evening prior to the dedication. We are grateful to each of them for all that they did to assist us in our search for family roots and to celebrate with us in our dedication of the historical marker. We are grateful, also, to the many members of the Roark-Conner Association who generously gave the resources to make this dream a reality.

Roark Cemetery Work Day Set

by Chuck Gross

Everyone is invited to meet at the Roark Cemetery at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 28, 2001, for our annual cleaning of the cemetery. David Roark will coordinate our activities. Bring a rake, shovel, pitch fork, and join the fellowship and fun. This is the John & Margaret Gross Roark Family Cemetery and is located southwest of Birchwood.

Plan to attend, even if you can not do manual labor. Bring a picnic lunch and drinks. We spread our lunch and enjoy the fellowship.

The cemetery is located at 4453 Parker Loop Road, Birchwood, TN. If you have any questions call David Roark at (423) 961-2321.

Are you hurt or feeling down and out?

Then visit Dr. Dallas Roark's website for hurting:
www.thehealingsite.org.

News from the John & Permelia Roark Family

Stella Mae Scharf, reporter

In late September Lester Conner of Arlington, TX (grandson of Ellen Roark Gross) and his daughter, Cara, had an enjoyable second trip to Ireland, returning to some of the favorite places of their earlier visit, as well as numerous new sites. They were accompanied by Cara's half-brother Nicholas, for whom all points visited were new experiences.

In October Marie Gross Storey (granddaughter of Ellen Gross) drove from Austin, TX to attend the Roark-Conner Reunion and the unveiling of the historical marker at Tazwell, Virginia.

John and Aggie Roark and their son, Dan, and family spent Thanksgiving holidays at adjacent cabins on the Comal River at New Braunfels, TX. Excursions were made to interest spots in the area, including the Alamo in San Antonio. Dan's son, Conner, is on the honor roll in a "gifted and talented" class and is to be rewarded with a trip to the state capitol in Austin at spring break.

Dan Max Roark of Austin, TX (son of Maurine and Max W) hosted his mother for Christmas holidays. His daughter, Sophie Claire, is preparing to return to U.T. Austin to earn a Master's Degree in Historical Architecture, as that is the field in which she is currently employed.

Lynda Arnold (granddaughter of Oscar and daughter of the younger John Wesley) and husband Dr. Tom Arnold, entertained her parents and other members of both families at Thanksgiving before leaving for a vacation in Punta Mita, Mexico. At Christmas, Lynda's sister, Jamie, of Houston had as guests her mother and husband, Bobbie and Bill Bell. Shortly afterward Jamie left for a ski trip with friends. Tommy Arnold, son of Lynda and Tom enjoyed a ski trip with six friends while on winter break from Abilene Christian University.

Michael Roark (only son of the younger John Wesley) has recently moved into a newly purchased home in San Antonio and is being assisted in its decoration by his sister, Lynda.

Joyce Choate (daughter of Oscar Roark) spent a week at Arlington, Texas during Christmas visiting several of her daughters. Her sister, Stella Mae, enjoyed having all four of her children and families visit during the holidays.

Word has been received from Sally Cowan (daughter of Arthur Roark, who was a son of Oscar) and her husband, Bruce, of the arrival on December 6, 2000 of their sixth grand-child, Parker Douglas, born to their son Robert Cowan and his wife Sandra.

Dora Maye Todd, of McKinney, TX (daughter of

Maye Roark Luce) enjoyed Christmas at the nearby home of her daughter, Beth Parker, and family. Also visiting there were Dora Maye's son, Jimmy and family, from Plainview, TX.

News from the Martha Jane Conner Witt Family

Dorothy Harris, reporter

Received a Christmas card and a letter from our lost cousin, Betty June Witt, who lives in Kerrville TX. We had been unsuccessful in locating her and it was truly a miracle that she was found. Gene Shamburger and her son-in-law, Bill Burns, went to her old address and were told by the man who had bought her house that he did not know where she moved to. But he noticed an older lady at her mailbox across the street and suggested they ask her. The guardian angel, out for her mail, was Betty's good friend of 40 years.

Can you imagine the surprise for Gene and Bill. She called Betty June and drove them across town to her house. They had a really good time recalling earlier years and Gene was able to tell her so much about her Daddy, Nathaniel Haney Witt. Betty's Mother, Auby, died when she was 9 years old so Betty went to live with an aunt. Uncle Nat died when she was 18 years old, so she had a lot of questions. He was 74 years old when he died in 1948. He is buried in Springtown Cemetery.

Betty has gotten the last two newsletters, thanks to Mary Ann Witt Stamps of Dimmitt TX (where her dad once lived). He owned a hotel there. Mary Ann's Dad was Marvin Silas Witt who married Melvina Woods of Dimmitt.

Alva Simpson is having some health problems. She was 95 years old on December 17. Let's pray she feels better real soon. Jeanna and Carrol are so good to look after her.

Our great grand son, Devin Carlisle, 6 months is still in the hospital with chronic lung disease, but is up to 15 lbs. Has had many setbacks but his doctor says he may go home in 2 months.

Little Sydney Colleen Jones was born June 23rd.-00. Her proud parents are Marc and April Jones of Carrollton TX. Her grandmother is Jane Taylor and great grandmother, Juanita Witt. Juanita is home from the hospital, but is not doing too well. She has heart related problems that we hope get better soon.

Until next time,
Dorothy Harris



The Identification & Preservation of Historical Sites Committee Meeting
 Darwin & Joyce Lane, David Roark, Edgar Roark,



Board Meeting
 John Roark, Ola Mae Neal, Doris Thornton, Chuck Gross, Carrol Mathews, Mildred Buie, and Liz Conner



A group acting out a skit night, Oct 6th
(from left to right) W.G. Roark, David Roark, Linda Gross, Carolyn Benton, Aggie Roark, Doris Thornton, and Ken



David Roark, incoming President, presenting a plaque to Doris Thornton, the outgoing President, for



The business meeting ended with our annual memorial Service to remember the individual who had died since the last reunion. This year we had



Brown's Ferry Tavern
 Several people toured Brown's Ferry Tavern, home of Joan Franks on Saturday afternoon



A group at the Sunday morning worship service. Thomas Roark led the singing and Rev. Charles Beal



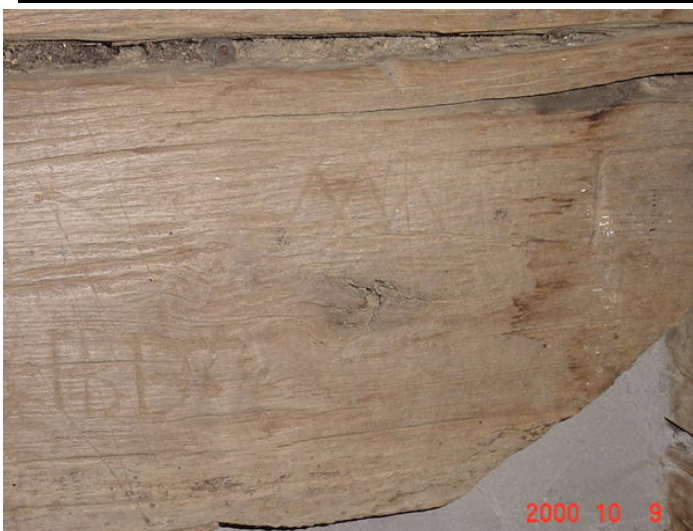
Imogene Shamburger, age 93, from Brownwood, Texas, leaving the worship service and going to the Joseph & Juda Carr Roark homeplace for Sunday dinner. Jimmy Burns, Imogene's grandson, is watching out for her safety.



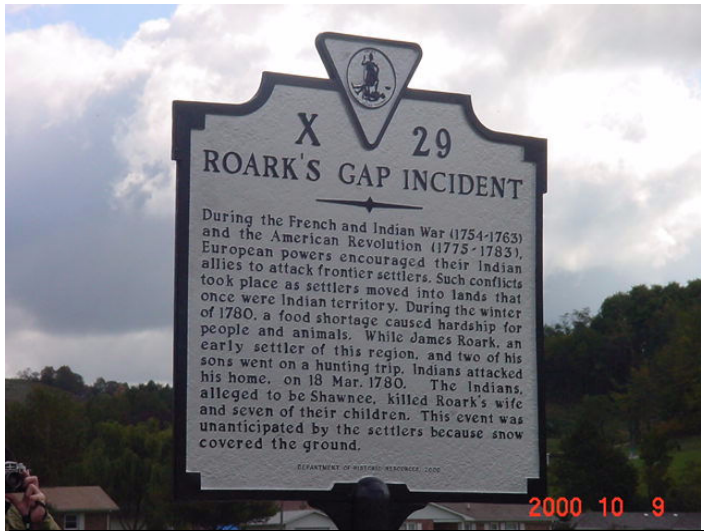
Thomas and Jo Lea Roark and family. Tom lead the singing Friday night, Sat morning, and at the worship



The Sunday night reception hosted for the Association



One of the exposed logs in Dorothy Wright's home, showing the marking, which is believed to be Masonic.



The historical marker dedicated on October 9, 2000. 32 of our members journeyed to Tazewell to take part in the

OUR FIRST REUNION

by Jean Roark Delzell

My sister, Ann Roark Crowover, and I arrived in Chattanooga on October 6, 2000 to attend our first-ever Roark/Conner Reunion, the 41 st such meeting.

After checking into our very comfortable rooms, we headed for the Registration Desk where we were pleasantly greeted by Carrol and Jenna Matthews who passed out information packets and general info with a smile. So far so good!

We had learned through our first newsletter that family photos and memorabilia would be welcome, and we had come prepared to share. We found the display room to be a fine place to meet some of our unknown "cousins."

The Friday Night Funfest was a grand mixer. Marylyn Smith did a marvelous job of presenting games and entertainment to include everyone. My favorite was Charades -that game certainly got every one's attention and participation! We quickly realized that a great many of us had experienced the same kind of upbringing. How else could the audience have made such quick work of the portrayals of Saturday Night Bath; Ringing the Chicken's Neck; Milking the Cow; and Hog Killing Time to name a few. Marylyn came up with a real winner, but she was up against a bunch of experts who'd been there and done that. Everyone had a great time!

Darwin Lane's accumulation of prizes was impressive. He must have worked overtime rounding them up! There was much laughter and lots of comments as each lucky person showed off his/her prize.

The Saturday trip to view Joan Franks' Brown's Ferry Inn was an unexpected treat. It was a rare privilege to be invited to tour this historic treasure. Thank you, Darwin, for making such a splendid visit possible.

We were somewhat overwhelmed by the tremendous turnout for the Saturday night Banquet -that was certainly impressive. The catered dinner was delicious and the sound of pleasant conversation hummed through the meal. President Doris and Ken Thornton very kindly provided some TLC by sharing the First Timers' table for the evening. That was unexpected but oh so appreciated.

Elizabeth Conner proved herself a capable and knowledgeable speaker as she shared portions of Conner history in her presentation of, "in the Mountain's Shadows."

Our cousin, Jim Roark, of Akron OH had referred me to Doris Thornton's e-mail address, and she responded promptly and thoroughly to all my inquiries.

Her

encouragement was a strong factor in our decision to attend the 41 st reunion. Doris was the only person I "knew" when I arrived.

Visitation after all the meetings was especially welcome -we enjoyed meeting so many new "cousins" and appreciated their friendliness and willingness to share family history.

We arrived at the Pavilion on Sunday morning and were fortunate enough to participate in a most satisfying trip. We were invited to join a group tour of Conner Cemetery. For the first time Ann and I viewed the gravesites and stones of our great-great grandparents, James and Jerusha Blythe. What an awe inspiring experience! We express our appreciation to John J. Roark, David Roark, and Carrol Matthews for their diligence in seeing that we did have this opportunity.

It was heartwarming to see that the element of worship was included in the program's events. After reading some of the back issues of the Newsletter I learned this has been a long standing tradition.

Lunch at the Joseph Roark Home Place was another highlight of the weekend. Some of those I had opportunity to visit with were Marleita Carmichael -her love for her family, both present and past, was so evident in her conversation; Reba Shropshire Wilson who so generously shared her vast knowledge of family history; and W.G. Roark who shared some of his ready wit with us, which we greatly enjoyed.

Throughout the weekend we were constantly amazed at the tremendous amount of work that was done by so many members. I've concluded that some of these Roarks/ Corners could just possibly even be labeled Workaholics!! You may well believe your efforts did not go unobserved. Even our husbands, who are neither Roarks nor Conners agreed this was a good meeting and that they enjoyed it too.

Another strong impression was the spirit of friendship, helpfulness, and a genuine enjoyment of each other, which I observed. This seems to me should be the Heart and Soul of any Family Reunion.

Ann and I thoroughly enjoyed our First Reunion, and we are already planning to see you in October, 2001!

Old Slate Creek Cemetery

On October 28, 2000, three men, David Roark, Allen Roark, and Ken Gamble traveled to Cocke County, TN and performed some cleaning and preventive work on the Old Slate Creek Cemetery. They pruned sprouts and trees on the perimeter of the cemetery and mowed the cemetery, with a lawn mower. Plan to participate in 2001 on October 27th.

THE FARM

An Essay, by Pasty Lee Roark

written in 1986 and the winner of Chautauqua Creative Writing Contest. Copyright The Writing Corner

I remember the farm in Virginia where I lived as a child with great fondness. The cool fresh air and the untouched beauty of the mountains will always be a part of me. Beneath the blue azure skies, nestled in a quiet green valley, home was a tranquil paradise.

The Clinch River flowed through the forty-seven acre farm like a horseshoe with our house in the center. From almost every room of the mountain style ranch home, you could see the winding river, and the towering mountains, which became a natural playground for my sister and me.

During the hot summer days we rode our horses down to the river. The ducks quacking loudly would glide hastily across the water as we pulled our small canoe to shore. With a rush of their wings, the flying squirrels would fly out of the woods. The splash of the paddle took us slowly down the river.

A small stream flowing through the middle of a mountain sounded like musical chimes as it made its way over the rocks into tiny refreshing sparkling waterfalls. As the sun streamed through the leaves of the trees on the mountain sides, the pure drops of water sparkled like diamonds in the air. We waded barefoot in the cool refreshing water, playing in the little waterfalls as the water flowed on down the mountain into the Clinch River. On the other side of the mountain, a large cave seemed to beckon you to explore the depths of its mysterious dark tunnels. The cave at one time had been a home for Indians. Arrowheads and small pieces of earthen clay dishes were found just inside the cave.

Farther down the river we stopped to gather fresh, tangy blackberries and raspberries growing along the bank. The berries, along with the walnuts we had gathered, became our lunch.

Seeing a small deer running through the leaves, we followed it. Walking barefoot through the green moss, and leaves, we followed the deer to a cave out of which a small spring of cool water flowed.

On top of the cave were the bluest violets I had ever seen. We gathered a bouquet of wildflowers, purple violets, white daisies, and bluebells.

Then leaning over the cave, we would look at the reflection of our selves in the spring water below. Using a large green leaf from an old oak tree, we would quench our thirst.

After a swim in the river, where our parents had built a swimming hole with a dam of rocks, we walked across the creaky swinging bridge to a small hill overlooking a meadow.

Dad had fenced in the meadow for a family graveyard. As children we were afraid of the graveyard. Later as adults we learned to care for the grounds.

Running through the meadow with Shep, our sheep dog wagging his tail and barking loudly, our Mother came to meet us. We ran barefoot through the bluegrass to give the bouquet of flowers to our Mother.

Our Mother is no longer there. Her spirit joined the Angels and now she in the Heavenly Choir. Later as a young adult I visited the meadow and layed the wildflowers and blue violets there, where she found peace and rest from all earthly care. I often think of a picture Mother had hanging on the wall of an Angel watching over two children picking wildflowers near a cliff.

The farm was unoccupied for many years. It began to turn back into the wilderness it once had been. The velvet grass of the land and river bank began to grow into weeds.

The horses, the wild ones, our horses, White Sid and Brown Sugar, the cows, even old Bessie with her loud bell ringing around her neck, are gone. The puppies with their soft warm noses and soft furry little kittens, and the lambs we fed with bottles are all gone.

Although Dad has moved back, and the farm is pretty again, it will never be as beautiful as my summer home where I spent many of my illusive days. This farm was located in the hills of Tazewell, VA

Dedicated to My Mother by P.L.R. Note: The farm has been sold.

Chattanooga Touch Set For National Prayer Breakfast

reported by Darwin Lane

Chattanooga will be well represented at the 2001 National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C., scheduled for Feb. 1. Third District Congressman Zack Wamp of Chattanooga will chair the event, and he has invited his pastor, Dr. Fred Steelman of Red Bank Baptist Church, to offer the pre-breakfast prayer.

In addition to Dr. Steelman, Congressman Wamp has invited the Chattanooga Singers from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga to perform at the breakfast. A delegation of 30 other Chattanoogaans will also attend the huge gathering of 6,000 which will include heads of state representing 160 countries.

Known Roark-Conner descendants who are members of Red Bank Baptist include Carl, Carla and Ola Mae Neal; E.B. and Helen Gross Etter; and Darwin and Joyce Roark Lane.

News from the James Madison Conner Families.

Marjorie Dudley, reporter

Dorothea Conner Lindsey is continuing her chemotherapy treatments on a monthly basis and is feeling some improvement has occurred. She is able to take care of her personal needs in her home at West Plains, MO.

Pvt. Jody Boone, daughter of David and Dawn Boon, Granite City, IL, enlisted in the Marine Corps and is completing her boot camp training at Paris Island, NC. After her basic training she will go to schooling to train as a clerk in the field of law and order. Jody is the great granddaughter of Roland and Mary Conner Miller.

Jeff Huff, son of Dorothea Conner Lindsey, West Plains, MO, has taken a teaching position with Southwest Missouri State University at West Plains, MO. He will be teaching CAD, Computer Aided Drafting, in the Enhanced Technology Dept.

David Joseph Love was ordained as a minister at the Berean Christian Church, Murphysboro, IL, July 23, 2000 where he will be serving as a youth minister. David graduated May 6, 2000, from Manhattan Christian College, Manhattan, KS. He is the son of Don and Nancy Love, Rosalie, KS and grandson of Marvin Conner, El Dorado, KS.

Susan Dudley, St. Peters, MO, is now working as a parish nurse at the St. Johns United Church of Christ, St. Charles, MO, which her family attends. Susan had been employed as a pediatric nurse at Children's Hospital, St. Louis, MO. Susan is the wife of Bill Dudley and daughter-in-law of Paul and Marjorie Dudley, Gerald, MO.

Pat and Susan Tiehan have recently moved into their new home in Shawnee, KS, with their 2 1/2 year old twins, Alexandria and Jacob. They have also changed jobs. Pat is a Bio-Med technician at Kansas Union Medical Center, and Susan is the Internet services creative director at United Missouri Bank, both employed in Kansas City, MO. Susan is the daughter of John and Ruth Conner Edgeller, West Plains, MO.

Peggy Dudley, Union, MO, will be a guest of the American Council for International Studies on a flight to Paris, France, January 11-15. There are other teachers participating to familiarize them with educational opportunities in France, and also they have tours to other countries. Peggy is an eighth grade history teacher at Pacific, MO. She is the daughter of Paul and Marjorie Conner Dudley, Gerald, MO.

We are looking forward to our Conner Reunion at Branson, MO, June 23-24. We invite descendants of James Madison Conner, especially, and any others

who want to attend.

News from the Tom & Minnie Roark Family

Jo Ann Roark Stringer, reporter

Greetings to all for 2001. We hope you have a healthy, prosperous, and wonderful year.

We had our annual family reunion the Saturday following Thanksgiving at Mildred's home in Columbus, GA. Our program consisted of a tribute to our mother, Minnie Belle Price Roark. Grandson George organized and presented a pictorial slide and musical (consisting of her favorite hymns) presentation. It brought back so many wonderful memories of her life and her many contributions to our family's life. We are grateful for her influence in our lives.

Vaughn, Jean, Debbie Roark Jones, Leslie Jones, and Mildred recently attended the graduation from basic training in the U. S. Navy of Roary Jones, grandson of Vaughn and Jean. It was held at the Great Lakes Training Center, near Chicago. They traveled there and returned before the big snow and ice storm hit the region.

Rebecca Beal, wife of Eric, has returned home near Dallas, Texas from emergency surgery and is recuperating nicely.

It will be a year on January 18th since Virgil's death. We all miss him very much. He was a good brother, husband, father, and grandfather. We cherish our memories of him.

Best wishes for the new year.

The Association Needs a Webmaster

by Chuck Gross

Are you a webmaster? Are you interested in designing web sites? Would you be willing to work on re-designing our Roark-Conner website?

I established a site on my personal web space and have been updating it as the newsletters are mailed (three times a year). I am interesting in turning the task over to someone who knows more than I do and can post a much better web site and keep it updated.

I am planning to present the subject of our association getting their own domain and having some ISP to host the domain. Our association needs someone who would like to serve in this capacity. Many of us "old timers" are not that up to speed with the latest computer and Internet technology.

If interested contact Chuck Gross at: cfn@mindspring.com.

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(Happenings, Continued from page 3
concern.

Bill Gross will start follow-up treatment Jan. 19th, after the removal of a cancerous tumor of the bladder last Sept. Bill is home and off work until April. Bill is the son of Oscar H. Gross and the grandson of Mary Ellen Roark Gross.

50th Anniversary

W.G. and Edna Roark will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Feb. 16, 2001.

Roark- Conner Association
Membership Application

New Re-newal

Annual membership cost is \$5.00 for each household. This includes the Roark-Conner Family News

(Name)

(Address:)
(City) _____ (State) _____
(Zip) _____
Phone: (____) _____ - _____

To give a gift membership to a child or friend, send the above information for each.

Mail check payable to:

(Do Not make check payable to the editor of the newsletter)

The old idea that you should first learn to be a good "follower" before you can become a good "leader", must have gone out with "old math".

Birchwood Bits

by Hoyt Branham

Excerpts from Birchwood news reported in the Dayton ('Tennessee) Herald-News

September 24, 2000

David Roark, has spent many hours putting down topsoil and seeding his relatives' graves in the Birchwood Baptist Cemetery.

Friends of the Cherokees held a meeting at Decatur recently to discuss the progress on the park at Blythe Ferry. They are in need of funds to finish the parking lots.

October 12, 2000

Jesse Roark reported the Birchwood Coonhunter's Club recently had the largest hunt they had ever held, the U.K.C. World Champion Semi-Finals for the Southeastern Zone. The winners will proceed on to the finals. The Birchwood coonhunters are a civic minded group and have raised money for the Shriners Crippled Children Fund and donated to the Birchwood Seniors and Birchwood School. Jesse and Dale Roark have been avid coonhunters all their life and their Father ,Carl "Pepsi" Roark was a sawmiller and bear and coon hunter all his life. November 9, 2000

David Roark, Kenneth Gamble and myself spent several hours hunting for the Pendergrass Cem. located near Bakewell and we talked to several old timers in the area including Leonard Morgan and Johnny Fritts. We were looking for James Pendergrass and wife's grave site. We found the cemetery near the Pendergrass Ford on Possum' Creek.

Conner Cemetery Work Day Set

by Chuck Gross

Everyone is invited to meet at the Conner Cemetery at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 7, 2001, for our annual cleaning of the cemetery. David Roark will coordinate our activities. Bring rakes, shovel, pitch fork, and join the fellowship and fun as we maintain our association investment in restoring the cemetery.

Some of the men will inspect the Cookson Cemetery to see if the association wants to make it part of our effort to maintain old family cemeteries.

Plan to attend, even if you can not do manual labor. Bring a picnic lunch and drinks. We spread our lunch and enjoy the fellowship.

The cemetery is located at 13825 Birchwood Pike, Birchwood, TN. If you have any questions call David Roark at (423) 961-2321.

Back to Bethel, (Genesis 35:1-IS) a sermon delivered at the Sunday morning service at the Salem Church Site

by Dr. Charles Beal

You and I can well identify with Jacob at this point in his life. He was leaving home, alone, and penniless and only knew vaguely where he was going. He did not know what the future would hold for him. He didn't know how he was to survive, or whether he would survive, and, quite frankly, he was scared.

He had put in a full day of walking and now the night began to fall, so he stopped to spend the night. His only cover was the star-lit sky and his pillow was a rock. There in the loneliness of the night, he fell asleep. As he slept, he had a dream. There was a stairway set up upon earth that led to heaven, and the angels of God were going up and down on it. Above the stairway stood God. God made a promise to Jacob: "I will be with you wherever you go. I will take care of you and I will bring you safely home again."

And in response, Jacob made God a promise. "If You will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then You shall be my God; and this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be Your house, and of all that you shall give me, I will surely give the tenth unto you." (Genesis 28:20-22).

Jacob arose and went on his way to Paddan-Aram, his mother's homeland, and there he spent 20 years before he was able to return home. In all those years, God had fulfilled His part of the agreement. He had been with Jacob and had kept him in all of his travels. He had given him bread to eat and clothes to wear and had brought him to his father's house in peace. God had done what He promised to do.

But now almost 10 years had elapsed since he returned to his homeland, and Jacob had not fulfilled his part of the agreement. He had not been back to Bethel. He had not built an altar there. He had not given his tenth unto the Lord.

WHY THE DELAY?

Why did Jacob wait for almost ten years? God had been faithful to him, but he had delayed to do what he had promised.

Perhaps he had felt that He was too busy. He was now a wealthy man with many flocks and herds to look after. He had to think about grazing land and watering places for them. Jacob did not stop to think that it was God who had given him that wealth to start with.

Perhaps he felt that His family would not understand. His wife had come from a family that worshiped idols. Their servants worshiped idols. They would not be sympathetic. They would not understand going out into

the wilderness to worship a God, who to them wasn't

there!

Perhaps for him, the experience had grown dim. When God has fulfilled His side of the agreement, it is so easy for us to forget ours. We resolve to make sacrifices when the experience is new, but when it grows old we want to explain it away, or water it down.

There may have been an element of fear. Suppose he goes back to Bethel and nothing happens. Suppose God is not there, and there is nothing but the cold stone. He will lose the experience he had.

THE COMMAND TO RETURN

Well after 10 years, God spoke to Jacob and said: "Arise, go to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared to thee when thou fleddest from the face of thy brother Esau." (Genesis 35:1).

God ought not to have to command this kind of obedience. But in our delay, He sometimes has to say: "O. K., it is now time for you to fulfill that promise you made to Me". Sometimes He has to speak with threats, and sometimes with judgement.

But Jacob listened to the voice of God. He knew that he had to come back to God, and do what he had promised God he would do.

GETTING READY TO MEET GOD

Jacob spoke to his family. He had let them choose for themselves long enough. He had exerted no spiritual leadership. Now he speaks with authority to his family as their spiritual leader. "We are going to Bethel, to build an altar unto the God who appeared to me". What a wonderful thing it is when any person says to his family: "Many years I have made promises to God. Now we are going to begin to keep those promises".

He buried his family's idols. When you prepare to meet God, you must get rid of everything that takes God's place, anything that comes ahead of Him. The only thing to do with them is to what must be done to any dead thing: Bury it! Jacob collected all the idols in the camp and buried them.

Jacob took a bath and put on clean clothes. And so did everyone else in the camp. This outward cleansing is a picture of that inner cleansing that comes with confession of sin and turning from it. There was physical cleansing; moral cleansing; spiritual cleansing.

When Jacob returned to Bethel, he found God just where he left Him before. When we wander from God, God is always just where we left Him. God has said: "I will be found by those who seek me."

Jacob reestablished communion with God by building an altar where he said he would. He can now worship and he can now meet God because he is prepared. The experience is not just as great as it was before.

The change is now complete. Ten years before, God gave him a new name: "Israel". "Prince of God". But the Bible goes on calling him "Jacob", "the deceiver". But after this experience, the Bible uses the two names interchangeably. It tells us who the new man is: "Israel". But it also reminds us of the man he used to be: "Jacob". It can call him "Israel" now because he deserves the new name.

WHAT ABOUT OUR PROMISES?

I am sure that all of us can identify with the fears of Jacob. Some of you in particular. There was a time when many of the people of the peaceful little community of Birchwood were told: "You are going to have to sell your farms and move away from this place. Your farms will be flooded, and you must live somewhere else."

And as the time approached, you were filled with fear and apprehension. "Where will we go?" "What kind of community will it be?" "Will we be accepted there?" "Will we be able to earn a living there?"

And so you moved away, leaving so much behind you. You left the old house where you had lived all of your life, your school and your friends, your family: uncles, aunts, cousins, brothers and sisters.

Or, it may be that your going away had to do with going away to school, or going into military service, or leaving to find a job. Whatever the reason, going away brought with it fear and uncertainty and apprehension.

I wonder if perhaps at that moment of leaving the old familiar surroundings for new experiences you, too, made God some promises: "Father, if You will go with me in this new venture of life..." "If You will protect me and help me find a place to live..." "If You will help me find a job, or gain an education..." "If You will provide for my needs, and help me to be successful in life..." "If You will spare my life in war and bring me safely home..." "THEN I WILL..."

What was the other side of the promise that you made? "I will seek to live a pleasing life to You." ..."I will attend church regularly and serve you to the best of my ability." ..."I will seek to rear my family to honor You and serve You." ..."I will seek to be a good steward of my time and my talents and my possessions." What was the promise you made to God as you, like Jacob, left your familiar home to face an uncertain world?

The second question is this: "How well have you done what you promised God you would do?" As was true of Jacob, God has kept His part of the agreement. He has been with you, and protected you, and met your needs. He has prospered you and has given you a family and a home. He has enabled you to make a living. He has not only give you the necessities of life, but He has given

you many of the luxuries.

Perhaps you are saying today: "Yes, I made a promise to God. But I didn't know how hard it would be to keep it. I promised something I was not willing to do. Now I would like to get out of my promise. What can I do so I will not have to keep the promise I made to God? The answer is very simple: You can get out of your part of the agreement when you are ready for God to take back His part.

One man said to his pastor: "Pastor, when I had an income of ten dollars a week, I promised to give God a tenth of my income. That wasn't too bad. But now my tithe amounts to \$500 a week, and that is too much. How can I get out of that promise? The pastor replied: "There is only one way. I will be glad to pray that God will reduce your income until your tithe is only a dollar a week again!" You see, I can take back my part only if I am willing for God to take back His part.

But there is another choice: That is to renew the promise and keep it, That's what Jacob was asked to do. God told Jacob to go back to Bethel and do what he had promised God he would do.

For some of you, your "Bethel" was the old church that stood on this plot of ground. Faced with uncertainty; faced with moving away from family and friends and home, you made God some promises. And you have come back to your "Bethel" today. I ask you to do what Jacob did: renew the promises you made to God and begin to keep them. It is never too late. Just begin now.

The result will be the same as the results that came to Jacob: You will find that God is here, just as real as He was when you made the promises. You can take up now where you left off then. The rest of your life will be different. God will give you a new name. He will give you a new nature. He will give you a new future.

As you drive through the countryside, you often see beautiful white churches beside that road, with the old cemetery out to the side. But there is a very real sense in which every church has its cemetery, right up to its walls. No, it is not marked with a gateway and fence, and a variety of headstones. You can pass right by it and never know it is there.

The cemetery I am talking about is the one where lie buried our convictions, and good intentions, and unfulfilled promises. Each of these represents an experience in which the heart has been touched, the will convinced, a promise made but never fulfilled in action. The cemetery does not wait for the day of resurrection when God will bring the dead to life. It only waits for the one who dug the grave to come with a shovel and dig it up, and then go and do that which was promised.

News from the Ben & Lilly Roark Moon Families

by Willa M. (Swetie) Eslick, reporter

Greetings Cousins and Friends,

I really really missed our reunion this past October and I hear that it was one of the best with a large attendance.

Our trip to Glorietta was wonderful, we did sight seeing going and returning. Our, first night was in Sikeston, MO., I know you have heard of Lamberts and the famous throwed rolls. Next, Oklahoma where we saw the fabulous Oklahoma City National Memorial, it was so very impressive , we had an excellent tour guide. Also we saw the famous Big Springs and the Will Rogers Memorial Museum, then--on--to Tulsa and Amarillo, we arrived at Glorietta Monday afternoon. The Senior Adult Chautauqua was very inspirational and well attended.

We went to downtown Santa Fe (but I did not purchase any of their beautiful jewelry). In Albuquerque we saw the world famous Hot Air Balloon Festival, it was fabulous even if we had to arise at 4 AM to get there. I took the Aerial Tramway to the top of Sandia Crest where it was so cold we could hardly stand it but the view was just breath taking and we had lunch there.

From there we began our trip towards Huntsville, from Amarillo to Dallas and had dinner at the famous Traildust Steak House. Our next overnight trip was Vicksburg, MS., where we toured the famous Battle Ground of the Civil War. The 12-day trip covered more than 3500 miles, we had a fabulous bus, 3 staff members from the church -they really took excellent care of "We Seniors" and we had so much fun. I was tired of riding and glad to get home.

Now for some sad news, on January 10, Ruth Moon's younger brother drowned in the Tennessee river, he was fishing, had on his life preserver, two men saw his boat circling with no one in it and they found his body floating a distance from his boat. I doubt if they will ever know what happened. His memorial service was on January 11.

Brother Moonie is recuperating in Utah following surgery on his other knee. He is in therapy so I was unable to talk with him.

Roark has undergone surgery this year, minor, overnight in the hospital and seems to be doing all right.

Vicki, Lilly Ben's oldest daughter who lives in Chicago, came and spent Christmas with me, we drove to Nashville to be with Barbara, who now lives there, and her younger son and his family. We had a great tine and I have missed her -wish she would move

South.

The Clayton family is OK, their son, Scot, continues to suffer with back pain following spinal surgery months ago, is not able to work at this time. Their daughter, Beth and her family, continue to live in Gallatin, TN and are doing great.

I want to thank all of our retiring officers for the outstanding job they have done and to welcome and congratulate the incoming officers. I know they will do an excellent job also.

The best ever New Year.

Life in Times Past

by Idella Moon Kelly

Editor's Note: This article is taken from the Idella Moon Kelly collection of information about the area of the old James County.

Recreational Sites

All boys along the river learned to swim. They enjoyed fishing and boating. In fact, couples or groups would go boat riding for pleasure and families were swimming, fishing or having fish fries or picnics where a cool breeze blew from the south western direction over miles of water, bringing refreshing breezes. The only trouble was the pesky mosquitoes. We tried to keep them away by burning old rags.

Blue Springs was a group of several "bottomless" springs - so deep they were a dark blue. Groups came from far and near to enjoy picnics here near the river, after they explored the cave in the big hill.

It was fun to visit the summer fisherman's hut. He made a little garden on the lower river bank. Here squash, corn, beans, tomatoes and other quick growing plants shot up in the rich loam and produced luscious vegetables.

Low Water

During droughts the boys would see how far they could ride their horses into the river. One summer Rosval Cross, Harmon Moon, and Hohman Lovell rode all the way across the Tennessee River.

This was the summer that a big crowd of us waded far out or walked on sand bars almost to the Big Island out from the Jack "John Lewis" Roark Landing.

News from the Haney Berlin Conner Families

Martha Helen Byrd, reporter

My last letter I told you I would report on my Mediterranean cruise with two of my daughters, Jan Wyly and Deranne Boothe and her husband, Jimmy Boothe. It was a delightful trip and Barcelona was a great place. At Gibraltar we took a taxi up to the top to see the Rock Apes. They were clean, with long silky blond hair and even "friendly" by jumping on my two daughters' shoulders! In Lisbon in the Alfama section the streets were paved with marble stones. The Maritime Museum was well worth visiting. Saw so many, wonderful places, but can't mention them all:

My granddaughter, Laura Kathryn Wagar, known as Katy, graduated with honors May 2000 from Episcopal High School here in Baton Rouge so for her graduation present I took her to Alaska. Another granddaughter, Marilyn Jan Boothe, who we call Mimi, also graduated with honors same month with her Master's Degree from the L.S. U. Medical Center in New Orleans in Communication Disorders, so she was included in our trip to Alaska. I could not leave out Allison Boothe, working on her Ph.D. at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Alabama and Lauren Byrd in her second year at L. S. U., two other granddaughters. So, on July 24, 2000, I took these four granddaughters on a 7-day cruise on the Sun Princess from Vancouver, Canada through the Inside Passage to Ketchikan, Juneau, Skagway, Glacier Bay, College Fjord, and off the ship at Seaward. We loved the side trips taking a helicopter ride to walk on a glacier, train

trip to White Pass Summit, girls took a dog sled trip and kayak trip and said it was wonderful but they were sore and their hands hurt. We watched salmon going upstream -what a sight! Glacier Bay was spectacular. We watched huge pieces fall into the water and heard them make a tremendous noise.

Alaska is beautiful. The best part of the trip for me was being with four of my granddaughters for a whole week all to myself!

January 15 is my sister, Ida Mae Byers' 85th birthday and our other sister, Louise Corner, is having a dinner party for her. We are all looking forward to being together with the family. Ida Mae and Louise stay so busy playing bridge and they love it. Our parents, Margaret and Haney Corner, were wonderful bridge players.

My son, Richard Byrd, moved his family from Lafayette, Louisiana to Baton Rouge two weeks ago. They are now settled in their lovely home in Sherwood Forest. The address is 936 Trammel Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70815. His wife is Addie and their three sons are Corner, Taylor and Justin. Richard is a manager at Toys R Us. It is so good to have them back in Baton Rouge.

On Saturday, December 30, 2000, my daughter and her husband, Deranne and Jim Boothe, celebrated the engagement of their daughter, Mimi Boothe to Kris Wilson with a delightful party at their home in McComb, Mississippi. They will be married May 19, 2001.



Seated left to right: Martha Helen Byrd, Lauren Byrd and Allison Boothe standing left to right: Katy Wagar and Mimi Boothe. On the Sun Princess on a cruise to Alaska the summer of 2000.

Wanted -Family news reporters

There are several families who are not represented by reporters providing family news to this newsletter. If you would like to become a Roark-Conner Family News reporter, contact the editor, Chuck Gross at :

The news of our expanded family is the most important element of our association. Family members like to read about events in the lives of other families. Be sure your family is connected by getting your family news to your family reporter.

Roark-Conner Family News Reporters!

484-3489, reporter for the **James Madison & Eliza Jane Bare Conner** families.



Roark-Conner Family News

