



WILLARD NEWS

The Newsletter of the Willard Family Association of America, Inc.

WillardFamilyAssn.org



101ST WFA REUNION IN WINNSBORO, TEXAS



On October 2, 2009, Karen Willard opened the dinner meeting at 5:00pm and welcomed 11 family members to the 101st WFA Reunion. The dinner was a Texas barbeque and was served at the Winnsboro Depot, a restored former railway station. Following dinner, William Paul Willard, a Winnsboro native, gave a history of the Willard family's migration from Virginia to Arkansas, with the final destination of Texas in the late 1800's. His grandfather was an early settler and once owned a 300 acre farm. (Sounds like a similar tale of the Willard family in Grafton, Mass.). The Willard Family Cemetery is in the center of what was once his father's farmland.

The Annual Business Meeting was called to order at 11:15 am on October 3 by Karen Willard. The minutes of the October 17, 2008 Board Meeting were read and approved.

Karen read the Membership Report from Majorie Travis. There are 766 members, including 21 overseas members, 405 of whom are Life Members. In 2009, 13 new members joined, including 3 Life Members. Many of the new members join through the WFA web site. There are approximately 30 missing Life Members. Richard Willard, #195 of Houston, has been missing for 3 years. Three members died during 2009. Of special note was the celebration of Dr. Roger Robinson's 100th birthday on July 22. He is the founder of Willard House and Clock Museum and is an Honorary Life Member. There was a question regarding the membership period: when do annual memberships expire? The assumption was in December, but clarification was requested.

Karen moved to make a donation in the amount of \$250 to the Willard Cemetery Association of Winnsboro; Rodney and Dudley's sister seconded the motion; it was approved unanimously. The donation will help the association provide perpetual care for the cemetery.

John Stephens gave the treasure's Report for Kay Willard. Income in 2009 is \$2,624.13; expenses are \$5,821.80; the balance of all funds in checking, CD's and Fidelity accounts is \$142,583.59. The WFA was very fortunate not to have lost any funds during the past year.

John Stephens gave an update on the WFA Archives. Two loads of materials were transported from Barbara Willard's home in Willimantic, CT to the Grafton Historical Society in Grafton, MA during the summer. It may be possible to purchase Bill Willard's genealogical collection. We need to follow up on the women in New York who volunteered to be the Historian at the 100th Reunion.

The meeting adjourned at noon. Lunch was held at the Willard Family Cemetery on the outskirts of Winnsboro. Billy Paul Willard gave a tour of the Willard gravesites. A pizza lunch was held in the cemetery's pavilion. The remainder of the afternoon was free to sight see in downtown Winnsboro.

Several family members met for dinner at the Brewery Café. Following dinner, Karen organized a group for an evening of Shape Note singing at the Depot.

SHAPE-NOTE & SACRED HARP SINGING

The following is an excerpt from *Sacred Harp: History & Tradition* by Steven Sabol of the Washington D.C., area Sacred Harp Singers, revised December 24, 2003:

At Sacred Harp singings and conventions, participants sing the powerful and harmonious American music from *The Sacred Harp* the most enduring of the shape-note tune books popular in 19th century rural America. This tune book, in its several editions, has given its name to a tradition of unaccompanied community singing and fellowship surviving to the present day. While “harp” is an old word for a hymnal with music, in a broader sense, the “sacred harp” is the human voice or ensemble of voices.

Sacred Harp music is written in “shape notes” which resemble standard round notes in every respect except that the head of each note has one of four shapes to indicate its interval from the key (tonic) pitch. This system was based on the practice originating in Elizabethan England of singing the seven notes of an octave with four-syllable solmization. The major scale is sung as *fa, sol, la, fa, sol, la, mi, fa*, while the minor scale (3 half-steps down from the major scale) is sung as *la, mi, fa, sol, la, fa, sol, la*. The logic of this system was probably based on the fact that each half-step always leads up to *fa*. The four-shape system (*fa* = triangle, *sol* = oval, *la* = square and *mi* = diamond) was invented around 1800 in the Northeastern U.S., and it enabled many untrained singers of the day to sight-read

music without having to understand key signatures. Shape-note music immediately became popular, and it strongly stimulated the expansion of the singing-school movement, which had arisen in New England around 1720, enabling many Americans to learn to sing written music.

Traditional Sacred Harp singings and conventions follow time-honored practices. Singers (referred to as “the class”) sit in a hollow square facing each other (one part on each side). The “arranging committee” announces in turn names of singers who wish to lead songs (“lessons”) of their choice in the center of the square. Each leader chooses a song that has not already been sung (“used”) that day and chooses the verses and repeats to be sung. The leader faces the tenor (“lead”, melody, air) part: altos are to the rear, the basses to the right and the trebles to the left. Pitching is done without any instrument either by the leader or by an experienced singer with a good sense of relative pitch. The chosen pitch is often slightly lower than the written pitch to enable more comfortable singing. The leader sings the tenor (lead) part if possible and determines the tempo by beating of the hand (up and down with 2 or 3 beats per measure, but with slow 4/4 songs occasionally in a criss-cross pattern with 4 beats per measure). Many singers also beat time with the leader. In fact, some seats in the front rows should be reserved for the most experienced singers, who through their time-beating support the leader and help keep the class together.

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This music was composed by W.L. Vaughn especially for the reunion.

The singers sing without instrumental accompaniment for their own enjoyment and inspiration rather than for a listening audience. They sing with remarkable volume, intensity and enthusiasm. The treble and tenor parts are usually sung by both men and women, generally singing an octave apart: thus, the 4-part harmony actually has 6 parts. Dynamics tend to be de-emphasized in favor of a uniformly strong sound with the pulsing rhythm and drive. The atmosphere of a Sacred Harp singing is basically one of community singing rather than choral singing, so there is usually little concern about the blending of voices or the perfection of the execution of the music. Although Sacred Harp and related shape-note music can be rendered beautifully and movingly within the alternative context of disciplined and expressive choral performance, this is never the context found at traditional singings.

Each tune (except for long hymns) is sung first by singing the syllables of the four shape notes (*fa, sol, la, mi*), followed by singing of the words. This practice conforms to and honors the singing school tradition and assists in learning the tune. The initial solmization is very helpful to those who do not sight-read standard music and is also surprisingly helpful to those who do. While “singing the notes” becomes intuitive with experience, it is of secondary importance at singings, Greater importance and personal satisfaction lie with singing the spiritually meaningful words, creating powerful music together in a friendly and accepting atmosphere, building friendships among other singers and remembering deceased singers. These form the essence of the Sacred Harp tradition.

REUNION STORIES

William Lee Willard, son of John M. Willard and Martha J. Egnew, and in the first generation of this line of Willards to be born in this part of Texas. He was born 3 November 1866 in Wood County and died about 1880 there.

According to family legend, he was killed when he fell from a wagon and was either run over or a bale of cotton fell on him. Earlier he had told his mother that he wanted to be buried under a cedar tree that he had seen while hunting with his father. He was indeed buried under that tree. The tree stood for many years but was finally cut down because of damage to near-by tombstones. William Lee Willard was the first to be buried in what became the Willard Cemetery. His gravestone has a carving of the spreading oak tree on it.

His death was especially sad for his parents in that he had 4 older brothers and sisters who had all died before they were much more than a year old and so he was the first of their children to survive childhood.

The following story is about William’s cousin, once removed, that was told both Friday night and again out at the cemetery:

William Theodore Willard, son of Lemuel Lafayette Willard and Martha A. Crow, was born 7 August 1872 in Franklin County, Texas (the county next to where the cemetery lies). He died on 23 March 1897 of gangrene, several days after he’d been stabbed in the gut in a fight. (The assailant’s descendants say that Dr. Bently who treated him deserves a share of the blame for his death as the doctor “used dirty instruments to sew him up”). This Willard, too, is buried in the Willard Cemetery.

Here’s the story as we heard it: Harriet Swanner went around heatedly complaining to all who would listen that William Theodore Willard had been seen kissing or hugging a married women, (Willard was unmarried). William T. Willard denounced her as a “lying (name for female dog)”. This clearly didn’t set well with Harriet’s husband, Will Swanner, and a verbal confrontation ensued. The next day – and the court depositions are not in agreement on the motives or actions on the fateful day—Will Swanner and a buddy encountered, whether by plan or accident, William T. Willard at Musgrove Switch where the Post Office was. One version is that Willard struck Swanner over the head with a large hickory club (that he’d either brought on purpose or just happened to find to hand). The two men grappled and Swanner pulled a knife out. Witnesses to the altercation were unable to pull the men apart before Willard was wounded. Then came the attentions of the unsanitary Dr. Bently and a few days later Willard was dead.

Swanner and his buddy, who was also his brother-in-law, Will Alexander (Mr. Alexander married Mr. Swanner’s sister, Zulu), were charged with murder (accessory to murder for Alexander). The fight took place almost on the county line, between Franklin and Wood Counties, and the men were actually tried twice, once in each county and had a hung jury the first time but guilty the second. The whole legal ordeal lasted about 10 years and nearly bankrupted the Swanner family. He finally, according to his descendants, pled guilty to manslaughter and was sentenced to 3 years, just to end the process.

This doesn’t end the story, though, as all those who avidly follow the “soaps” on TV know. Zulu died shortly after her husband Will Alexander came home from his prison term for accessory to murder. Will Alexander then married Willard’s cousin, Annie Crow, and moved to Oklahoma. To be fair, though, in that community at that time, it was hard to find a spouse that you weren’t related to in some fashion.

(Editor’s note: Karen Willard sent me the above two stories. She sent a correction to the last story, clarifying who was married to whom. Hope I got it right.)

WEBMASTER REPORT

The WFA website, www.willardfamilyassn.org, continues to receive 2 or 3 requests per day looking for specific names in the names index. There are several requests a week from non-members wondering if they are part of the descendants of Simon. We have received queries from Holland and UK asking about Willards still in those regions. We are hosted on Webb66 for a quarterly charge of \$29.85.

A request has come asking to add Facebook to the website. There have been serious abuses on some sites that have caused several webmasters to refuse to add it to their sites. On the other hand, this is an increasingly popular communication tool among the younger generations replacing email, blogs etc. What do you recommend?

NECROLOGY

Following are the names of members on the Necrology list compiled since our January 2009 newsletter as well as those from previous years of whom we have recently been notified:

Martin Stevenson Willard, Jr. Wilmington, NC

Gabriella Holmes Willard Wilmington, NC

Stephen Ross Willard, Life #557 Monroe, WA

Joseph E. Willard Rutland, MA

MISSING LIFE MEMBERS

We are looking for Life Members whose newsletters have been returned to us as of November 1, 2009. Please notify membership Chair Marjorie Travis if you can help us with any information.

Life #, name and last known address follows:

- 89 Helen Apgar – Hightstown, NJ
- *** 266 Louise Willard Beech – West Sand Lake, NY
- 248 Jane W. Bradley – Santa Anna, CA
- *** 523 Winifred Cagle – Topeka, KS
- 287 Coreva Carpenter – Dryden, NY
- 613 Jeffrey Willard Cournoyer – West Swanzey, NH
- 113 Mrs. John H. Devoll – Palatine, IL
- 328 Margaret A. Garner – Corpus Christi, TX
- 119 Mrs. Sherwood Goslee – Needham, MA
- 540 Sean Kevin Jones – El Dorado Hills CA
- *** 295 Willard Rogers – Germantown, NY
- 58 Mrs. Richard H. Russell – Harvard, MA
- 513 Kenneth M. Wightmaan – Lake Oswego, NY
- *** 155 Carl W. Willard – San Clemente, CA
- 416 Charles E. Willard – Republic, MO
- 538 Charles O. Willard - Horseshoe Bend AR
- 444 David Charles Willard – Lafayette, LA
- *** 322 Dwight F. Willard - Sun City, CA
- *** 350 John D. Willard III – Annapolis, MD
- *** 244 John H. Willard – Winchester, Ontario, Canada
- 326 John H. Willard – Denver, CO
- *** 497 Mark D. Willard – Old Greenwich, CT
- *** 489 Paige Anne Willard – Ellicott City, MD
- *** 195 Richard W. Willard – Houston, TX
- 274 James W. Wolfe – Reston, VA
- 342 Mary Swain Wood – Dallas, TX

*** Indicates person missing for three years or more.

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

We welcome the following new Life Members to the Willard Family Association:

Kristen Leigh Willard – Hermosa Beach, CA

Andrea H. Willard – Smithtown, NY

Louise R. Sherman – Orange, MA

Have you considered giving a WFA Life Membership to your children or grandchildren? Are you looking for an easy, thoughtful, long lasting gift? The solution is as quick as writing a check for \$250.00, made out to the Willard Family Association of America, Inc., and mailing it to WFA Treasurer, Catherine A. Willard, PO Box 591, Athol, MA 01331-0591.

**WILLARD FAMILY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.
185 Grant Street, Lexington, MA 02420-2126**

Membership dues for Calendar Year 2010

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Membership | \$15.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership
(spouse and minor children) | \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership | \$250.00 |

Make your check payable to *Willard Family Association of America, Inc.* and mail to the Willard Family Association, 185 Grant Street, Lexington, MA 02420-2126. If you wish to receive a membership card, please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

E-mail address _____

If you have not already done so, please tell us your connection to the Willards.

2010 WFA REUNION

The 2010 reunion is being planned for October 22, 23 and 24 in Wethersfield, Connecticut.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

A Willard Family Association scholarship application is included in this newsletter. Applications have to be received by April 1, 2010 to be considered.

SHOWDOWN IN BLACKWELL STABLE

The following is a portion of a letter we received from Laura Willard Woods, Life #586, of Rocklin, California:

My grandfather, George Chester Willard, was born in Maine and came on horseback, as a teenager, to Truckee, California.

Your Newsletter of July 2009 has prompted me to write. David Willard's letter with reference to a relation being Wyatt Earp reminded that George Chester Willard was the first Marshall in Rocklin, California. His son, Ernest Lester, was the first paid law officer when Rocklin became a city and George Chester's first son, Alfred Hinckley Willard, was a California State game Warden advancing to Chief of Patrol before retiring. So the Willards have been law-men.

I am enclosing an article by our Rocklin Historical Society's long-time historian, Ruben Ruhkala, who passed away in August 2009 at age 99. He knew that Alfred Willard was my father so he made a special point of giving me this article.

Showdown in Blackwell Stable

By Ruben Ruhkala

A gunfight occurred in Rocklin, California on February 18, 1914, between town Marshall Sam Renaudi and a saloonkeeper by the name of U.S. Holmes, his place of business being on Railroad Avenue. Ernest Willard related details of this to me while he was the cities only employee, which included being Chief of Police. This was about fifty years ago.

Ernest's father, George Willard, had been the town Marshall but resigned on June 30, 1913. He continued to assist Renaudi as a deputy. During this period of time, there were many saloons doing business in town but Holmes business was getting most of the complaints. Holmes was not complying with midnight curfew law, and citizens were complaining about the noise at that late hour. This condition had been going on for some time. On February 9th, Renaudi found Holmes open after the 12:00 pm curfew, but U.S. Holmes told Renaudi he was complying with the Curfew, it was only the lunch counter that was open till 12:25 and he was not going to close for anybody even the city trustees, as he had every right to stay open. Marshall Renaudi had been authorized to enforce the ordinance and could close Holmes down. This irked Holmes as this was his livelihood. He was unable to cope with this threat.

Renaudi and Holmes were known to have a very unfriendly relationship and could not get along together. Holmes started drinking heavily and had been around town brandishing a pistol saying there were certain people he was going to get. On the afternoon of the 18th of February, Ella Hovey, who worked for Holmes in the restaurant he ran in conjunction with his saloon quit her job and said she would not ever return. This enraged

Holmes. He went to her home and threatened to kill her and her father if she did not return to work. Later that evening, Holmes went back to her house. Marshall Renaudi, Deputy Willard and Willard's son Alfred followed. They heard the threats and pleading of Ella Hovey. Alfred pushed open the door. Holmes told Ella to see who was there. When she went to the door Alfred grabbed her and pulled her outside and got her away in the dark. Holmes quieted down. Marshall Renaudi, Deputy Willard and an unidentified man went to Blackwell's Stable on the southwest corner of Pacific Street and Rocklin Road to discuss the problem, hoping Holmes would cool down and be peaceful. This discussion was taking place several hours after Ella had been freed from Holmes. Holmes sent word to Renaudi to meet him at Blackwell's Stable for a showdown. This presented an even more serious problem because he carried a gun, was seething with anger and blamed Marshall Renaudi for all his troubles. The discussion was still going on, about what to do about Holmes threats against Ella Hovey and Marshall Renaudi. About 11:00 pm, Holmes entered into the stable in a surly mood and told Willard and the unidentified man to be quiet. Holmes did not see Renaudi because Renaudi had just left momentarily. Deputy Willard was talking to Holmes trying to soothe and calm him down and maybe get close enough to over power him before he got his gun and could use it. About this time, Marshall Renaudi returned and was told that Holmes was inside. Renaudi called for Holmes to come out and be arrested. Holmes replied, "If you want me, come and get me". Deputy Willard was continuing to talk to Holmes, but then Renaudi appeared in the doorway in back of Willard. When he emerged a little to the side of Willard, and could see Holmes he again ordered Holmes to surrender for arrest, but instead Holmes went for his gun.

Renaudi, seeing this, drew his gun and fired at about the same time as Holmes. As many as five shots were fired, one hitting Renaudi, three hitting Holmes and one shot going wild. Both Renaudi and Holmes were seen by Dr. Fletcher of Rocklin, and then taken to Sacramento Hospital where they died. Holmes died the next day and Renaudi the day after.

The details of this shoot-out were derived from several newspaper articles and an account by Ernest Willard, whose father was the deputy talking to Holmes when the shoot-out took place.

It was known by a few people that a shoot out might occur between Marshall Renaudi and U. S. Holmes and were gathered about the stable when it did happen, including two teenage boys who were hiding behind bales of hay and a blacksmith anvil. They were there during the shoot out or a few moments after and said they were scared to death bullets might hit them. Their sister, Helen Halonen Plamondon, a native of Rocklin, related this to me.

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WILLARD ITEMS FOR SALE

Coverlets: \$50.00 plus postage of \$10.35

Tote Bags are \$30.00 plus postage of \$3.50

Pillows: \$25.00 plus postage of \$3.50 (limited supply)

Henry 2 Books: \$55.00 plus postage of \$10.00

Reprint of "History of the Willard Family Association of America"
 by Stephen F. Willard, Jr. (The Blue Book): \$6.00

New colored Coat of Arms suitable for framing: \$29.95

Limited supply of old style: \$14.95

Make check payable to the Willard Family Association and mail to:
 Catherine A. Willard, WFA Treasurer, P.O. Box 591, Athol, MA 01331-0591

*Book "Grains of Rice... with an occasional dash of salt". \$20.00 plus
 \$5.00 postage. Contact – Joella Groser Schultz, 1200 E. Silvertree Dr., Tuscon, AZ 85718*

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Please send address changes, with old and new address, to Marjorie Travis, 185 Grant St., Lexington, MA 02420-2126. mwtravis @ verizon.net

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