

JAY FAMILY ASSOCIATION

JAY AND ALLIED FAMILIES REUNION

Hopewell United Methodist Church

Murrayville, GA

October 21 & 22, 2005



Confederate Soldier Dedication at the Grave of CSA Veteran Isaac Morrow Jay

The Reunion began on Friday morning with President Vince King welcoming all cousins to the Hopewell United Methodist Church in Murrayville, GA. An hour or so of visiting and sharing followed. The program officially began with each cousin introducing themselves and giving their Jay or allied family line.

Friday's first speaker was Jeb Bramlette of Cleveland, GA. Jeb spoke on the history of the Hopewell Church, one of whose founders was our ancestor, David Jay. Jeb related where the Jays lived in proximity to the current

church. Jeb said approximately 400 graves are in the adjoining cemetery, and most buried prior to 1900 were related to the Jay or other allied families. He noted the cemetery is maintained by deposits to a foundation specifically founded for that purpose.

He continued with detailed stories of Bramlettes, Gamblins, Elrods, Welchels and other allied families and their involvement in establishing Methodist Churches from South Carolina to Tennessee, Georgia and Texas.

Vince King then reported on 2004's Jay Family fun events including our Reunion in Murrayville in April, Jay Day in Buffalo Gap, TX (a reunion of the descendants of Robert Marion Jay who went to Texas in the 1860's) and our Jay Family Association Meeting and Reunion in Round Rock TX in October 2004. He led a fun "Cousin Discussion" showing examples of the many ways we Jays are related through different lines of our Jay ancestors.

Next was a presentation of the relationships of Jays to American Methodism. Vince discussed Bishop Francis Asbury's role in establishing the Methodist Church in America. He gave evidence of David Jay Sr's relationship to the Bishop. David probably initially met Bishop Asbury through his wife Elizabeth's father, Rev. Daniel Earp. This evidence came from the Bishop Asbury's Journals. Of note was a reference to Bishop Asbury officiating at David and Elizabeth's wedding, as well as a later visit with them.

Circuit riders, revivals and the role of the camp meetings as religious and social gatherings were discussed. Setting up brush arbors was common at Camp meetings. David may have been a circuit ride in Tennessee and most probably set up a church there. He was in Georgia in the early 1820's as evidenced by his signature on an early Hall County GA Marriage Certificate.

Continuing with another angle of researching our ancestors, we learned of Georgia Map sites that are available on the Internet including 1)Hargett Manuscript Library at the University of GA, 2) GA DOT Maps, and 3) GA Archives which includes the Land Lot Maps for early Cherokee Counties.

The morning ended with a presentation on South Carolina's County Formation. Understanding the history of county formations is very important in determining the migration patterns of our ancestors. We learned of three distinct periods in South Carolina's development from Royal Counties 1671-1769 to Judicial Districts 1869-1785 and current County formations from 1785 to present. When looking at deeds, it is important to note the date and the county formation period in use at the time to understand where the property was actually located.

Newberry County SC deeds have been indexed 1785 to the 1840's and have been abstracted 1785- circa 1820's. Earlier deeds are in the state archives for anything prior to 1785.

Following a break for lunch, Joe Bailey gave a detailed history of the Nimblewill area in Lumpkin County, GA which was the last residence of David Jay Sr. The body of evidence would point to David being buried in the Old Methodist Cemetery located in Nimblewill. Joe gave details of meetings he held with residents of the area to learn as much as possible about Nimblewill. He also spoke of the family history of those with marked gravesites. Joe said Nimblewill means “symbolize it to be their common will for it to be a nimble or active growing place.”

Other topics Joe addressed were:

Jay, GA is close to Nimblewill. It is not known how Jay got its name; however, it was founded in the 1880's and its first postmaster was Jay S. Adams.

Old Soule's Methodist Cemetery which was first called Nathan's Chapel is one of two cemeteries in GA with slot and tab tombstones. Martha Jay Martin (daughter of John Jay and Sally Bramlette) and Elijah Martin are buried in the cemetery.

Lumpkin County Campground was established in the 1830's. It is a Methodist Camp Meeting site, “a place of rest when crops were laid by“. The “Jay Tent” in the campground is believed to have been that of John Jay, William's son. John may have been one of the first 40 people who gave money to buy the property for Methodist camp meetings.

Friday ended with site visits to Old Soule's Cemetery and the Lumpkin Campground.

Saturday began with more visiting and registration of cousins who were unable to attend on Friday. Vince King opened the meeting by thanking Kate Hurley Faulkner and Hopewell Church for allowing us to meet there. Attendees introduced themselves and gave their family lines.

Jeb Bramlette gave a Bramlette Family history detailing the relationship of the Bramlettes and the Jays. He showed many family pictures, identified the people and told stories about each individual. Since many Bramlettes, McClures, and Hurleys were in attendance, this presentation was very well received.

After a break, Vince gave us a look at William Jay and Mary Vestal and their descendants. He began in Frederick County VA in 1742 with William and Mary's meeting and continued with a look at their Quaker

documentation, and finally the known history of their children's lives. He tied this information to David Jay Sr's migration to Georgia as well as the migration of other children to Ohio and other Midwest areas.

After lunch, the group was included in the dedication ceremony of Isaac Jay and John Elrod's graves by a Georgia Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. The dedication party was joined by our cousins Wesley and Thomas Jay, who are members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans of Saint Andrews Camp of Alto 2009 in Texas. The dedication was quite impressive including prayer, a poem, the laying of flowers on the graves and a gun salute.

The Reunion ended with the JFA Business Meeting held at 2:35 on Saturday afternoon.

Thank you to:

Joe Bailey, Reunion Chairman and Program Participant

Jeb Bramlette, Program Participant

Kate Faulkner, Representative of Hopewell Methodist Church and our Jay cousin

Sue Bailey and Lee Hedden, Lunch Coordinators

Vince King, JFA President and Program Participant

Program Notes: A donation of \$344 was collected from those in attendance as a love gift to Hopewell United Methodist Church. Friday's attendees numbered 30 and Saturday's 61. Those who registered are included on the attached list. Many participants were delighted to be able to purchase Vince King's newly published book, The North GA Jays...the Descendants of David Jay, Sr. during the Reunion.

Report prepared by Gail M. Hedden, 2005 Reunion Committee and JFA Secretary



