

Chapter 6

WEST TEXAS: THE LAST FRONTIER

William and Juliet's two youngest children, Mary McClellan Ratliff and William R. McClellan, both married to Ratliff kin, did not stay in the Washington County area. For many years the Ratliffs and McClellans lived near each other in Fayette County. Mary's husband, Charles, farmed and William McClellan was a merchant in the community of Ledbetter. Toward the end of the century, however, the two families moved to Coleman County, just west of Brown County. This was the area of West Texas pioneered some 30 years before by the McCains and the Gillilands. Since the end of the Civil War, the area had attracted many of the orphaned McClellan grandchildren, now young adults.

In Coleman County, Charles Ratliff was "engaged in the grain and pecan business."^[446] The Ratliffs remained in Coleman until 1896–1897 when they retired to Fort Worth. Their eldest son, George William Ratliff, Jr., was working in Fort Worth at the time. This was probably instrumental in the elder Ratliffs' decision to move to Fort Worth. Their son had attended the University of Texas for one year before marrying a Coleman County girl. George William Ratliff was working in Fort Worth as a railroad mail agent by 1890. Fort Worth was the railroad center for that part of Texas, and soon all three of the Ratliff sons were employed by the railroad mail service. In 1914 the Ratliff sons were living from El Paso to Texarkana in far northeastern Texas. The eldest, George William, Jr., was living in Denison, north of Dallas. He was in charge of District 4 for the railroad mail service. This district covered North Texas and eastern Oklahoma.^[447] Mary McClellan Ratliff, 61, the youngest daughter of William and Juliet McClellan, died in Fort Worth, on January 20, 1906, of exhaustion and "broncho-pneumonia."^[448]

William R. McClellan was very successful in Coleman County, where he was a banker and a farmer. A prominent citizen in Coleman, William served in the Texas Legislature representing the 108th District, which included Coleman and Brown counties. He served three terms around the turn of the century.^[449] William had long been active in the Democratic Party, having attended the party's state conventions for at least 20 years. William R. and Lou McClellan sent all of their children to college, including their son, Claud. Claud McClellan, like many other McClellan relatives, went to Add-Ran where he was the school's first football captain. He also served on the committee that selected the

horned frog as the school's mascot.^[450] The horned frog is still the mascot at the school, which changed its name to Texas Christian University (TCU) in 1902. Claud McClellan later became a lawyer in Coleman. His father, William Robert McClellan, was the youngest of William and Juliet McClellan's ten children. He was also the last of his generation to die. Death came September 26, 1922, in Coleman, Texas, where he is buried.

While Mary McClellan Ratliff and William R. McClellan represented the previous generation, they were, because of their age, contemporaries of the children of their older McClellan siblings. Many of the orphaned grandchildren of William and Juliet McClellan, like their aunt and uncle, decided to make their homes in the West Texas counties of Brown, Coleman and Callahan. If death and the Civil War had forced a retreat of the McCains and Gillilands, it was a temporary retreat. Thirteen, when his mother died in Brown County, and 16 when his father died in Arkansas, young William Eli Gilliland was back in Brown County a year after the end of the Civil War. He was eighteen years old, only two years younger than his uncle, William R. McClellan was. He made several trips back and forth until 1870 when he came back to Brown County to stay.^[451] Others in the family would soon follow him to West Texas.

William Eli Gilliland, his two sisters and twin brothers lived with their McClellan grandparents after the death of their parents. Apparently William E. Gilliland was soon off on his own and married by 1872. His sisters, Jennie and Judy, stayed with their grandparents until their marriages in 1879. In 1880 Albert, 21, one of the twin brothers, was still living with his grandparents, probably helping with his grandfather's farm. The previous year, Albert had finished a year at Add-Ran. Two of his orphaned cousins, James Jared McCain and Charles Dunn, also lived in the McClellan household. Albert's twin, Sam Houston Gilliland, was living with another Dunn cousin, Alexander A. Dunn, in Ledbetter. Alexander Dunn, 21, was probably working as head clerk at the dry goods store of his uncle, William R. McClellan. Sam Gilliland was boarding with Alexander, his wife and two children, and working as a clerk, probably at the same store. The coming school year Samuel would attend Add-Ran.

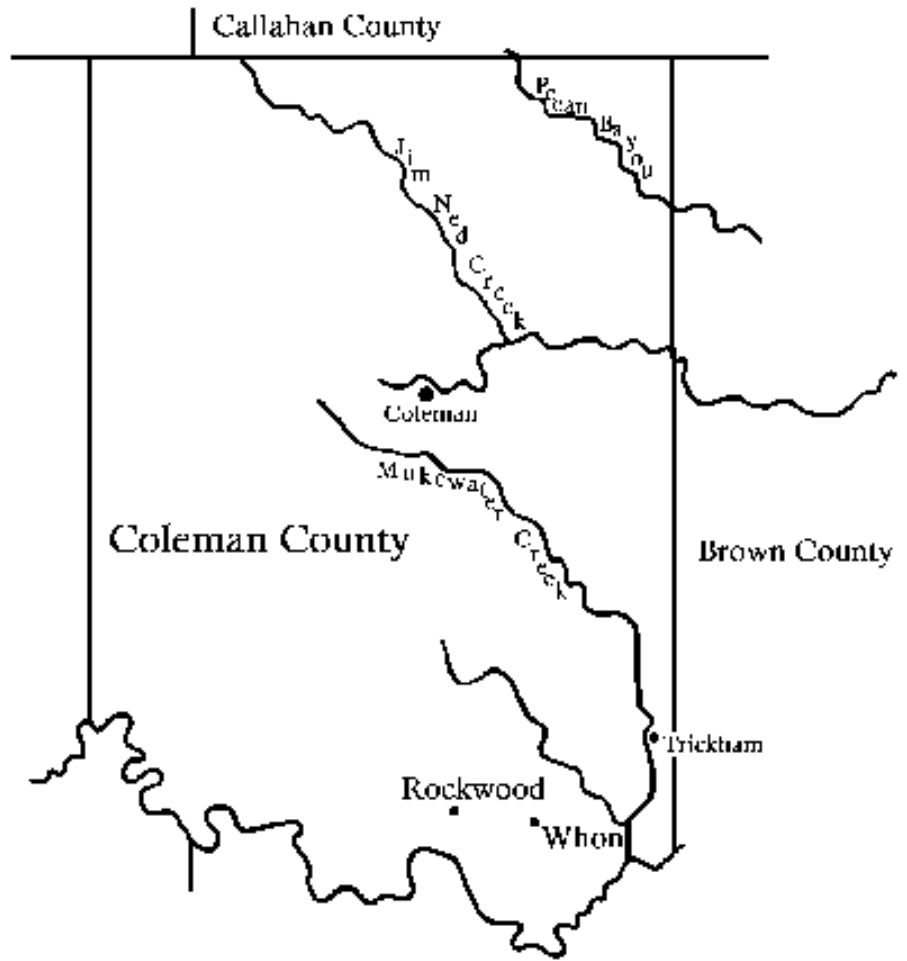
One interesting note is the age of the Gilliland children when they married. Up to this time the females in these families tended to marry around age 17 or 18, rarely earlier, although sometimes a little later. The males married in their early to mid twenties, although again, there were exceptions when the males married a little earlier, but rarely did they marry later. These particular Gilliland children, however, were somewhat different. The oldest, William E. Gilliland, met the norm, marrying at age twenty-three. The Gilliland girls were way off the norm. Jennie Gilliland did not marry until she was 26; Judy married at 24. The twin Gilliland sons also married later. Albert Gilliland came closer to the norm, marrying at about age 25. His twin brother, Sam Gilliland, however, did not marry until he was 32.

There are several possible factors that may have influenced this situation. The disruptive times following the Civil War may have been a factor, since these people should have all married in the early years of the 1870s. For the females, who would normally marry older males, the loss of lives in the Civil War could have affected the available pool of potential mates. It is not readily apparent if the

Gilliland children had any inheritance from their deceased parents. If not, this could have had an impact on the males, since getting started without any parental help would have been more difficult. This also may have delayed educational goals, specifically of the twin Gilliland brothers, who were attending Add-Ran sporadically as money was available. Consideration perhaps should also be paid to the influence of the McClellan grandparents. With the arrival of railroads in the Washington County area, the people of the McClellan Settlement and nearby Union Hill drifted away to areas closer to the new source of transportation. Two of these new town centers were Burton in Washington County and Ledbetter in Fayette County. Ledbetter attracted several McClellan families, including McClellan son William Robert. Ledbetter, was not far away from McClellan's Settlement, but in the horse and buggy age, it was not near in case of an emergency. The other surviving McClellan son, Albert McClellan, farmed in Lee County, west of Washington County. Some of the Gilliland and Dunn grandchildren lived close to their McClellan grandparents. It could be that they were the designated family members to care for the aging senior members of the family. Any of these factors could have played a role in the delayed marriages seen here.

Three of these Gilliland children would move to West Texas; two would stay in southeast Texas. Albert Gilliland was one of the two who remained. In the 1880s he worked at a store in Burton, and in 1887 he married Etta (Henrietta?) Black in Burleson County, north of Washington County. When William Robert McClellan decided to move to Coleman County, he sold his dry goods store in Ledbetter to his nephew, Albert Gilliland, and Albert's partner, Mr. Shermerhorn. Albert and his partner operated the store for the next few years. The store failed "because of excessive credit extended to farmers and the sharp decline in the price of cotton during one of the periodic money panics of the early 1890s." [452] It appears that Albert stayed in related businesses since in 1910 he was working as a salesman for a retail store. In 1919, after 31 years of marriage and five children, Albert and Etta Gilliland divorced. Albert moved to Houston where he died in 1935 and is buried at the Washington Cemetery, just northwest of downtown Houston.

The oldest daughter of the Gilliland family, Jennie Gilliland, married Albert Collier, September 15, 1879, in Washington County. There appears to be a family connection between the Colliers and the Ratliffs. Jennie Gilliland's aunt, Mary McClellan, had married George W. Ratliff. George Ratliff's mother was Susan Collier, a probable relative of Albert Collier. [453] It appears that shortly after the birth of their fourth child in 1894 Jennie and Albert Collier divorced. Jennie went to school at Sam Houston Normal Institute to get her teacher's certificate as previously mentioned. After getting her certificate, Jennie taught in the Lee County area. Jennie and her children lived near her brother, Albert Gilliland.



Jennie Gilliland Collier was about 40 years old when her marriage failed. She would be the family breadwinner until all four children were grown. One hundred years later, this single mother may have been considered a bit of a heroine. In the last part of the nineteenth century, however, the situation must have been difficult for Jennie and her family.

Divorce was extremely unusual during this time. One woman writing about these Gillilands considered the fracturing of the Gilliland family by the death of their parents and lack of contact with their other Gilliland relatives as being factors in these two divorces. Perhaps the writer is correct, although there were probably other factors at play here. Around the turn of the century, there were enormous changes occurring in parts of Texas. While the Gillilands had managed to stay way ahead of civilization for at least 200 years, civilization was arriving in southeast Texas with a vengeance. It was accompanied by the Industrial Revolution, which had swept years earlier through the northern United States. Major changes can stress long accepted social structures. A rural society, where these people grew up, had long had structured roles of behavior that were appropriate for the functioning of that particular society. The change in roles, from self-employed farmer, to an employee of a manufacturing concern, for example, sometimes created stresses that fractured individuals and families. One might also argue that certain personalities are more flexible and can tolerate change better than others do. If one subscribes to the idea that pioneers are self-selected, it could be contended that dedicated pioneers, like the Gillilands, might have preferred frontier type societies. The pioneer personality could perhaps be somewhat rigid and asocial; this personality would not be comfortable with the compromises necessary to live in a more settled society. Whatever the case, these two families certainly faced difficulties and social censure as the result of their divorces. It is said that Jennie Collier was later institutionalized for mental problems. It is possible, however, that this was not due to family stress, but rather to what is now known as Alzheimer's Disease, which runs in some of these families.

The three Gilliland children who went to West Texas had much happier outcomes. William Eli Gilliland, as previously noted, made several trips to Brown County immediately after the Civil War. He apparently went to help his aunt, Susan McCain, "in gathering and selling her cattle"[\[454\]](#) after her husband, Abe McCain, died. William E. Gilliland should have had some experience in dealing with cattle when he and his family lived in Brown County in 1860–1861. This probably explains the trips back and forth to Washington County, even after the death of Susan McClellan McCain in late 1870. William ("Billy") went to live in Brown County in 1870 and married a local girl, Dicie Windham, daughter of Dr. John D. and Frances Monteith Windham.[\[455\]](#) The young couple moved into a log cabin near the Windham ranch, which the groom had built himself and finished with shingles, and flooring he hauled from Austin. He wrote later that he never saw a "wild Indian, though I traveled over the frontier a great deal, one trip alone with an ox-team to Austin after lumber to floor my new log house. This was in 1873."[\[456\]](#) Nevertheless, Brown County and the surrounding area were still very much a frontier.

The Civil War had forced many settlers in the Brown County area to retreat eastward when the federal soldiers were pulled out to fight in the war. The absence of the army left the settlers unprotected from Indian raids. With the end of the war, settlers returned, although slowly at first.

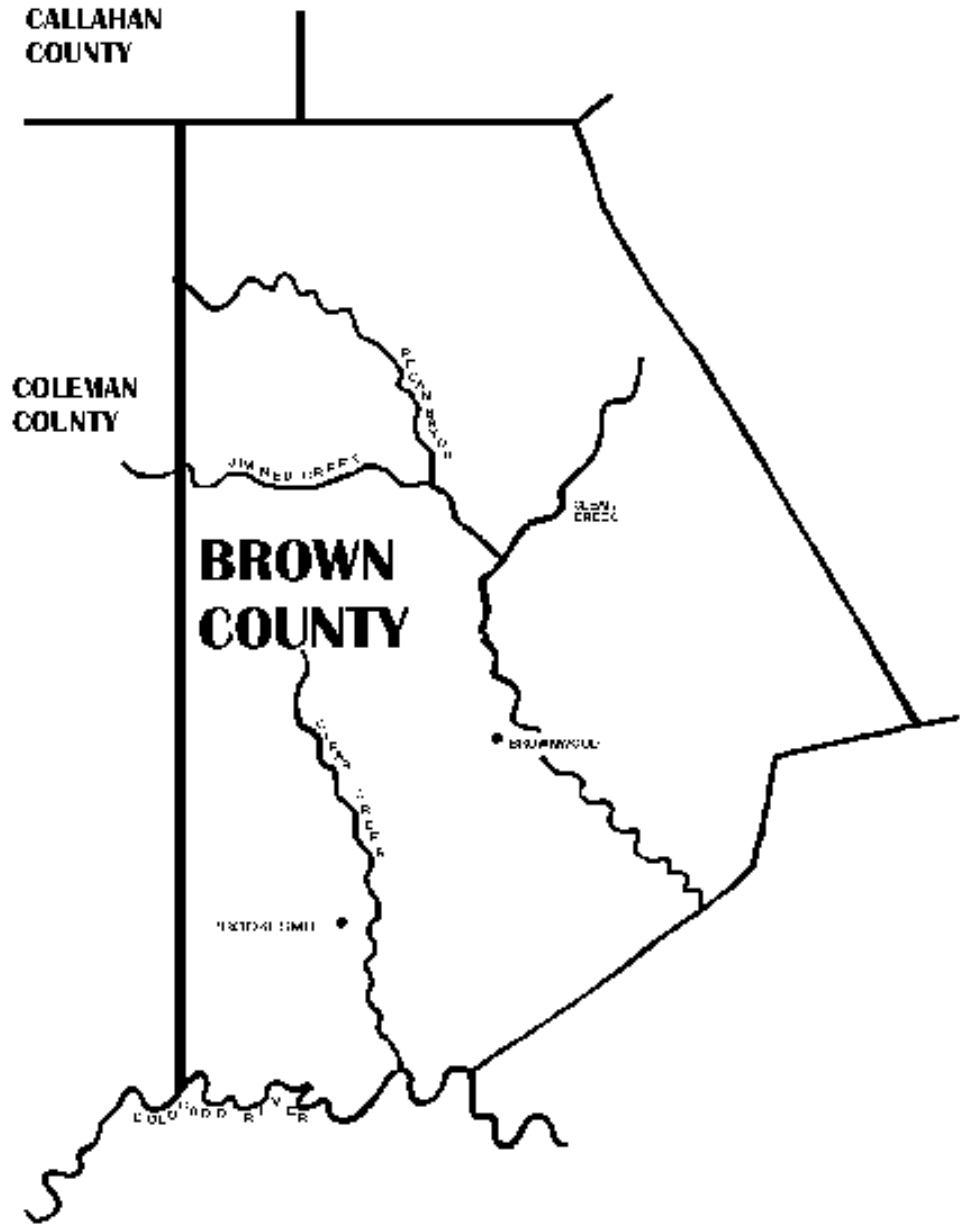
Despite William E. Gilliland never seeing a “wild Indian,” the Indians continued to cause problems until 1873. That year Indians killed the wife and 12-year-old daughter of Bill Williams in the area where the town of Bangs is now located in western Brown County. Mrs. Williams was “not killed dead, but thrown into the fire and so badly burned that she died some weeks later.” It was in this same year, 1873, that the “last battle with the Indians was fought in Brown County...by Capt. W.J. Maltby’s company of Texas Rangers on Clear Creek.” [\[457\]](#)

In 1870 the entire population of Brown County was “only 544, consisting almost entirely of stockmen and their followers.”[\[458\]](#) It was not until the late 1870s that a significant number of settlers began coming into Brown County. This increase in settlers was presumably due to the elimination of the Indian warfare more than any other factor.

By 1880 William E. Gilliland and his wife, Dicie, were living near Bird’s Store in Brown County with their three daughters. Over the next seven years William served as a deputy sheriff and managed a store for his Windham in-laws in Tecumseh, Callahan County, just northwest of Brown County.[\[459\]](#) In 1887 the William E. Gilliland family moved to Baird, Callahan County, to found the newspaper, *Baird Star*. William and his family operated the newspaper until William’s death in 1929.

One of the twin Gilliland sons, Sam Gilliland, soon followed his older brother to the frontier of West Texas. Sam went to work for “Doc” Windham, presumably Dicie Gilliland’s father. Sam worked the cattle on the Windham ranch near Tecumseh.[\[460\]](#) Described as “an old trail driver and cowpuncher,” Sam is quoted in a local history of the area. Readers of the book are told that they may take the following story as a cowboy “windy” or an “example of the cowboy’s easy philosophy”:

"In 1885 we drove about 600 head of cattle out on the Plains. We loaded the cattle onto the T. & P. at Baird billed to Van Horn, a little white spot on the world’s surface, and left out about 2:00 p. m. After traveling the balance of that day and night we reached Van Horn about eleven o’clock the next day, where we got our first meal since we had started. We held the cattle there that day and night to graze before starting north with them. I was put on the first herd at night. When morning came, before we had a chance to get any sleep, the Boss yelled for all hands to ‘hit the saddle.’ We drove all night and all



the next day and night, trying to get to water which was sixty miles away. We didn't stop, and was I tired and sleepy!

"When I finally got a chance to spread a bedroll and crawl into it, I heard a diamond-back rattler open up under my blankets. I just laid still. My side-kick asked me if I wasn't going to get up and get him out. We could hear them rattling in the brush all around us. I says, 'No, we know where he is.' The next morning I made a good snake out of him—a dead one." (461)

In 1888 Sam Gilliland moved to Trickham, Coleman County, where he worked for the Dunn and McClellan Store, owned by relatives. He continued in that job when the store was sold. In 1891 he married his college sweetheart, Linnie Rawlins. [462] The young couple went to live in Coleman, county seat of Coleman County, where they lived the rest of their lives. At first Sam worked as a bookkeeper, but he decided to run for public office. He won the race for Public Weigher, serving three terms. Later he was County Treasurer, County Tax Collector and County Tax Assessor. Sam and Linnie Gilliland's son, V. Rawlins Gilliland was County Attorney for Coleman in later years. [463]

The third Gilliland child to move back to West Texas was Judy Gilliland Hennigan. Judy married James Edward Hennigan, April 10, 1879, in Washington County. James Hennigan, 34, was 10 years older than Judy and a widower with three children. The Hennigan family was a rather late arrival in Washington County, not coming until after the Civil War from

Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, where the Hennigans had lived for almost a century. Mecklenburg County, North Carolina was settled by mostly Scotch-Irish emigrants who followed the Great Wagon Trail down from Pennsylvania to Virginia and on into North Carolina to the edge of its border with South Carolina. The land is gently rolling with pine and other trees and plentifully watered. The area was considered to be backwoods by those who had settled in North Carolina's coastal area, but Mecklenburg people were fiercely independent and proud and settlement grew rapidly.

On March 9, 1779, Dennis Hennigan bought 100 acres of land on Crooked Creek, then located in eastern Mecklenburg County.^[464] Dennis Hennigan, born about 1744, married his wife, Margaret, about 1769. In 1780, one year after his first land purchase, Dennis bought 100 more acres on the Big Branch of South Crooked Creek. Nineteen years later Dennis bought 25 more acres, making the total 225 acres.

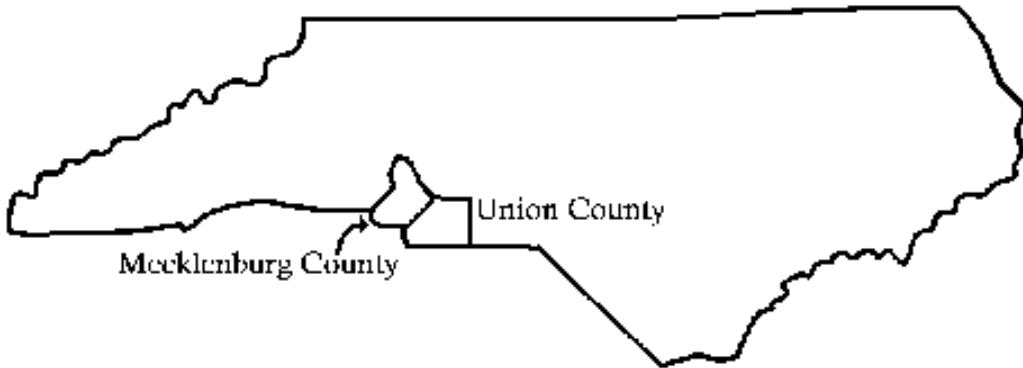
It is not known where Dennis lived before coming to Mecklenburg County or where he and his wife, Margaret, married. It is possible that, unlike so many of his Scotch-Irish neighbors, the Hennigan family had emigrated from County Cork, Ireland.^[465] As the years passed in Mecklenburg County, the Hennigan family grew to at least nine children, four sons and five daughters, who grew up on the Crooked Creek land.

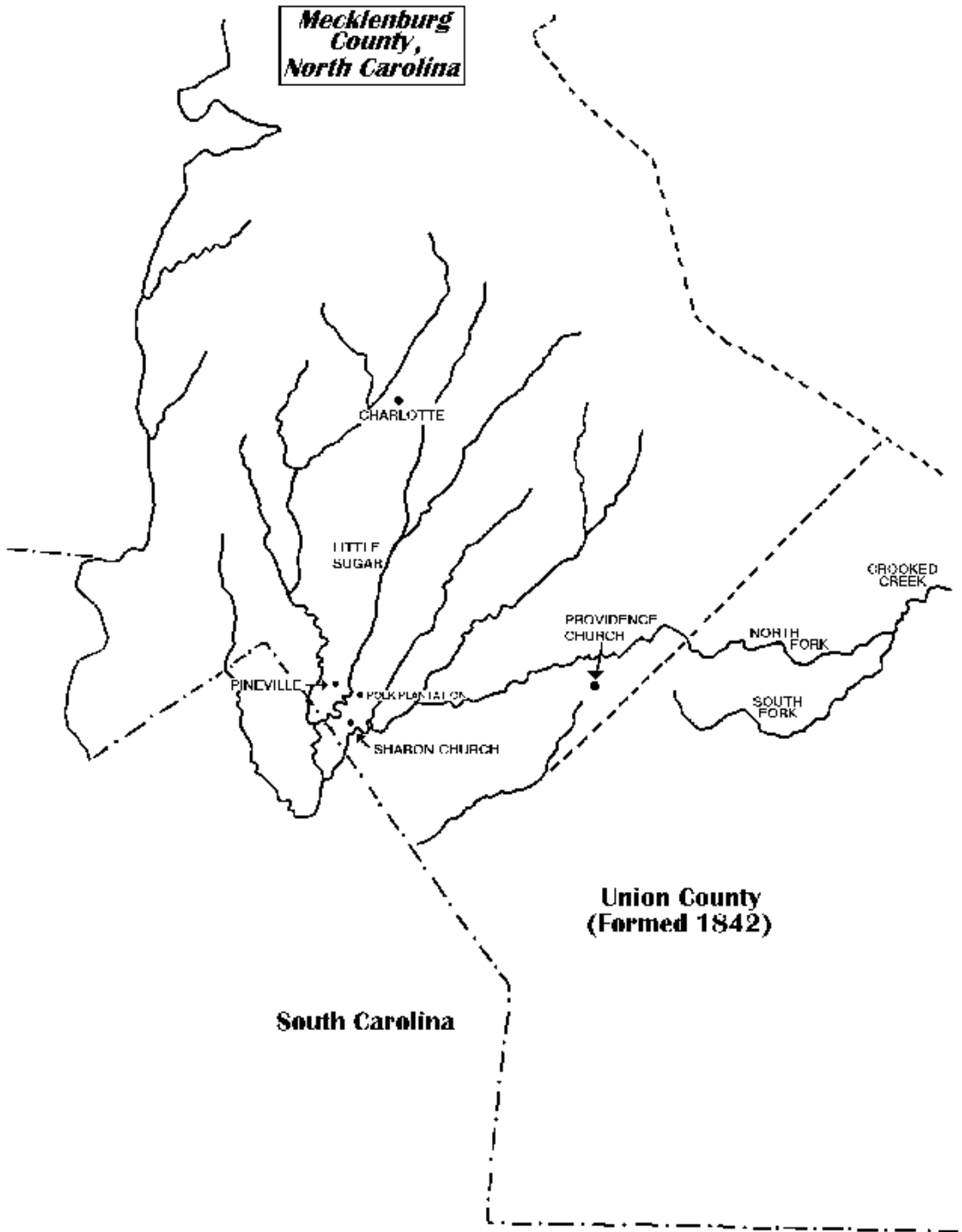
Dennis and Margaret's oldest child was Samuel Hennigan who was born about 1771, before the American Revolution. Dennis deeded 100 acres of his land to his son, Samuel, in 1809. Samuel, who had married Nancy Stewart in about 1797, was already the father of four children when the land was given to him. Eventually Samuel and Nancy had seven children. By the 1820s, their oldest son, John Hennigan, had moved to northern Alabama. By the time Samuel Hennigan died in 1835, one son, Robert Hennigan, and maybe another son, Samuel Stewart Hennigan, had also migrated to northern Alabama. Their father, Samuel Hennigan, mentions this westward migration in his will, stating, "But the Crop now pitched and pitching I do not wish Sold but to be appropriated to the use of My beloved Wife and Son Ambrose in enabling them to Move to the Western Country." Apparently his widow Nancy did move to Alabama with most of her children, since in 1850 Virginia-born Nancy Stewart Hennigan, 75, was living in Lawrence County in northern Alabama.

James Hennigan appears to be the only son of Samuel and Nancy Hennigan to remain in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. The second to last born of the seven children, James was 23 years old when his father died in 1835. In 1834 James had married Sarah A. Stewart in Mecklenburg County. Sarah Stewart could have been a relative of James' mother. Two years later James and Sarah were the parents of a daughter, Nancy E. "Nannie" Hennigan. Whether due to childbirth or another cause, Sarah A. Stewart Hennigan was dead by 1840, leaving behind a young widower and a small child.

On the 1840 census, the small household of James Hennigan consisted of himself, another unidentified man, daughter Nannie, and three slaves, including one young adult female, who it is

North
Carolina





supposed had the care of Nannie. About two or three years later, the widower, James Hennigan, married his second wife, Susannah. Since there is no record of their marriage in North Carolina, it is possible that Susannah came from South Carolina, which lies directly south of Mecklenburg County. James and Susannah Hennigan had two children, James Edward, born in 1844 and Susan A., born in 1846, before Susannah died on February 5, 1846. Susannah Hennigan was only about twenty-two years old when she died.[\[466\]](#) She is buried at Providence Cemetery where on the tombstone she is only identified as the wife of James Hennigan.

Twice a widower and the father of three young children, James Hennigan married for a third time in 1848 to Margaret Harriet Orr. It appears that Harriet Orr was the daughter of Nathan and Margaret Orr. The Orr family lived south of Pineville on the old Polk Plantation that had been owned by the father of the future President of the United States, James Polk. James Polk's father, Samuel Polk, had moved his family to Tennessee in 1806. [\[467\]](#) The plantation was described as becoming the "property of Nathan Orr and finally that of the late James Hennigan, Esq."[\[468\]](#) In a book published in 1902, a Joab Orr and his family are described as living at "the place now known as the Henigan (sic) place, south of Little Sugar Creek, where President Polk is said to have been born."[\[469\]](#)

The twelve-year marriage of James Hennigan and Harriet Orr produced four children, three boys and one girl. The three boys, Dick, Jack and John grew to adulthood. Little Margaret Eugenia Hennigan, however, who was born in September 1851, died the next month, on October 15, and was buried in the Sharon Cemetery. This was not the only daughter that James Hennigan was to lose. His eldest daughter, Nannie, 26, died in 1862 at the Macon, Georgia, home of D. W. Orr.

Before the death of Nannie Hennigan, James Hennigan was to experience another death in his family when his third wife, Harriet Orr Hennigan, 31, died, March 27, 1860. Harriet was laid to rest in the Sharon cemetery where her baby daughter was buried. James was 48 years old.

Despite all the death and ensuing sorrow that these events entail, James Hennigan appears to have been successful in his financial life and the family lived well. In discussing the Polks one writer said, "In 1851 Mr. Hennigan, the last owner of the property moved one half of the building (the Polk's

residence), apparently the better portion; but with a badly decayed roof, to his barn-yard, and near his handsome residence.”[\[470\]](#) In 1860 James Hennigan had \$4,150 in real estate and personal property valued at \$30,000 for a total value of \$34,150, an exceptional amount for the times. The \$30,000 in personal property reflects the value of the 30 slaves, nine of who were females, and 21 of who were males, including one who was a blacksmith.

When the Civil War broke out, James Edward Hennigan joined the Confederate army. At eighteen James E. Hennigan was the eldest son in the family. He enlisted May 5, 1862, in Company F, 49th North Carolina Volunteer Infantry as a private. Rising to become a 1st corporal, James Edward Hennigan fought throughout the war. He suffered wounds and illnesses[\[471\]](#) and finally, “with four other of his company, was surrendered by General Lee to General Grant at Appomattox on the 9th day of April, 1865, closing his war career.” [\[472\]](#)

After the death of Harriet Orr Hennigan, James apparently married for a fourth time. The name of this fourth wife is unknown except for her initials, “E. M.,” which appear on the probate papers of James Hennigan’s estate in Mecklenburg county. A child, Oscar Hennigan, was born of this marriage.

James Hennigan was to live out his life in the county in which he was born. He died August 19, 1876, at age 65. James was buried at the Sharon Cemetery, joining his third wife and baby daughter. His fourth wife and widow, E. M. Hennigan, was the administrator of the estate, and there was a sale of the estate in November 1876 that brought \$916.75. With other assets of the estate added in the total value of the estate was \$1456.26. Of the \$1,456.26, only \$955.74 was cash in hand, the remainder being in credits to the estate. In 1878 this cash was divided among the heirs with each receiving an equal portion of \$159.29. There were six heirs listed, the widow, Mrs. S.A. Walsh (Susan), D.W. Hennigan (Dick), John C. Hennigan, W.J. Hennigan (Jack) and Oscar Hennigan, who was noted as a minor. Perhaps James Edward Hennigan received no share because he lived in Texas.

Several years before, James’ eldest son, James Edward Hennigan, left Mecklenburg County and moved to Texas. With him went his wife, Margaret B. “Maggie” Watt, whom he had married in Mecklenburg County, August 16, 1866. Maggie was the daughter of J. B. Watt, a Presbyterian minister in Mecklenburg County. Maggie’s mother had apparently died before Maggie’s marriage, as her father was married to a much younger woman by 1860. It appears that the young couple, both 22, left Mecklenburg County soon after their marriage and their first child, Lillian, was born in Washington County, Texas. In the aftermath of the destructive Civil War, it is unlikely that much would hold the young couple in North Carolina. New opportunities in Texas offered more. Notably, the mothers of this couple were both dead, and the fathers were remarried. As with the Smith families, this is usually a

marker for an incipient move; the young couple had no parental or other family restraints that would keep them in Mecklenburg County.

It was unusual for people settling in frontier areas to move without relatives. The relatives might not be brothers or sisters, they could be aunts, uncles, cousins or in-laws. Lacking relatives, people sometimes moved in the company of friends. It is not clear if James and Maggie Hennigan came to Washington County, Texas, with any relatives, although relationships are not always obvious. Then again, Washington County in the late 1860s was not exactly a frontier area. At one point Washington County was the most populous county in Texas, although it lacked a significant town or city. It was a county of rural dwellers, not town dwellers.

A potential candidate, however, for a Hennigan relative comes from examining those living near the Hennigan family on the 1870 census for Washington County, Texas. The next family listed on that census was the Woodruff family. John E. Woodruff, 46, was born in North Carolina and his wife, Betsy, 44, was born in Alabama. All the three Woodruff children listed were born in Alabama. Betsy Woodruff, born about 1826, was 22 years older than James E. Hennigan was, but it is possible that she might be a daughter of John Hennigan, eldest brother of James Edward Hennigan's father. John Hennigan had moved to Alabama in the 1820s. This would have made Betsy (Elizabeth?) Woodruff a first cousin of James Edward Hennigan. Since an Armstrong is listed with the Woodruff family on the same census, there may be some connection between the Woodruff and Armstrong families listed next on the census. The patriarch of the Armstrong families seems to have been John Armstrong, 71, who was born in North Carolina. It is possible that the surrounding Armstrong families are related; all the younger members of these related families were born in Alabama. Thus the migration path of the Armstrongs was like that of the Hennigan families who also went to Alabama.

By 1870 James and Maggie Hennigan were the parents of a two-year-old daughter, Lillian. James was farming and Maggie was keeping house. The fourth member of the household was four year old Andrew Baker, a black child, who was born in Texas and grew up in the Hennigan household.

The Hennigans had two more children, a daughter, Mina, born about 1871, and a son, James Franklin, born in August 1872. Since there is no further record of Mina Hennigan, it appears that she may have died before reaching adulthood. The age difference between the children indicates the possibility of miscarriages or infant deaths. Perhaps these would have been a factor in the early death of their mother, Maggie, who died between 1872 and 1878.

When James E. Hennigan and Judy Gilliland married, Judy became the stepmother of the three Hennigan children. One year later the first of the children of the new marriage arrived. For about the first seven years of their marriage and through the birth of five children, the Hennigans continued to make their home in Washington County. In about 1886, however, they decided to move to Brown County, where Judy's parents had moved in 1860, some 26 years before.

In deciding why the Hennigans chose to move to West Texas, it again appears that the death of the senior members of a family could be an important factor. In 1880 W.B. McClellan, Judy's grandfather died.^[473] Less than five years later, Juliet McClellan, Judy's grandmother also died. The McClellans had been mother and father to Judy and other McClellan grandchildren. So when the Hennigans decided to move to West Texas in 1886, there was little to keep them in Washington

County. It is likely that it was a move long anticipated since many relatives had already left for West Texas. Two of Judy's brothers, as well as aunts and uncles and other kin had already made the move in the last 16 years. The Hennigans were not the last of the families to make the move.

The family of Sam McCain did not join his kin in West Texas until close to the turn of the century, but he was already living in north central Texas before his final move. Sam McCain, the son of Abram and Susan (McClellan) McCain, met and married his wife, Bertha May Peebles, in Dublin, Texas. Dublin, where the first three McCain children were born, is in western Erath County, which is midway between Fort Worth and Brown County. The McCains and their three sons settled in Rockwood, southern Coleman County in 1898. This is just west of the south Brown County home of Sam's cousins, the Hennigans and the Dunns. In 1903 this McCain family was instrumental in the founding of the small community of Whon, also in Coleman County.

The Brown County of 1886 was very different from the Brown County that the Gillilands moved to in 1860. With land opening to farming, Brown County's 1870 population of 544 rose to 8,414 in 1880.[\[474\]](#) Transportation had also improved. While the Gillilands traveled by wagon and horseback from Washington County to Brown County in 1860, it is more likely that their daughter and her family traveled by railroad. The first railroad came to Brown County in 1885 by extension of the railroad line from Round Rock, north of Austin. By 1891 another railroad came to Brownwood from Fort Worth.[\[475\]](#)

Another new resident of south Brown County was Judy's first cousin, James B. Dunn, who with his wife, Almah, and their four children accompanied the Hennigans to Brown County. James Dunn was the oldest child of Martha McClellan Dunn, sister to Judy's mother, Janie McClellan Gilliland. The Dunns and the Hennigans lived close together in Washington County near Judy and James' McClellan grandparents. Since Judy Hennigan and the Dunns were close to the same age, they probably had been friends as well as relatives for a long time. In southern Brown County they would be close neighbors in the Clear Creek area near the town of Brookesmith.

Brown County, in the days of the McCains and Gillilands and their cattle herds, was a land of open range with no fences. Although land prices were very low, it was not necessary to own the land to graze cattle. The arrival of barbed wire and the cattle boom of the early 1880s profoundly affected land prices in Brown County. Land prices soared from an average of a dollar an acre in 1881 to five dollars an acre in 1885.[\[476\]](#)

Brown County, with its rich grasses, was primarily cattle country. Yet it was also good land for growing crops, particularly wheat. On every census until his death, James E. Hennigan is listed as a

farmer, not as a stockman or rancher. It is probable that like other Brown County farmers of the era he grew not only wheat, but corn and oats as well. Despite drought years in 1886 and 1887, and an occasional severe winter, farming was becoming more attractive in Brown County with the coming of the railroads that could carry farm produce to markets.

In 1885, one year before the Hennigans moved to Brown County, Charles E. Dunn, brother of James B. Dunn and likewise first cousin to Judy Hennigan, bought 521 acres of land in south Brown County along Clear Creek for himself and James E. Hennigan. Unfortunately, the land, bought from W.D.R. McConnel, proved to be a bad deed. This resulted in a lawsuit in 1890 in which Dunn and Hennigan lost the deed to all but a few of the 521 acres.[\[477\]](#) Nevertheless, the Hennigans remained in the area and farmed. While crop farming was probably the primary occupation of the Hennigan family, it is likely that the family raised livestock as well, since the area was favorable to livestock production.

In many ways this time was a golden age for farming in Texas. Before the coming of the railroads, in much of Texas farming consisted of subsistence farming, that is, raising food for the consumption of the family on that farm. Now the farmer was raising crops and/or livestock for the benefit of markets far away from the farm. For many years throughout the South and in many parts of Texas, cotton had been the cash crop for farmers. Cotton was grown in Brown County as shown by early photographs taken in the county showing cotton bales loaded on wagons. A cash crop was one that brought in money or cash, which the family could use to buy things not produced on the farm. Before the existence of such markets and the ability to get to them, farmers would barter farm produce in exchange for such nonfarm items. With cash from selling cash crops, whether cotton or cattle, people were able to buy more manufactured goods.

The McClellan family had stressed education for their orphan grandchildren and this emphasis continued in the Hennigan family as well. In 1885 the eldest Hennigan child, Lillian Hennigan, daughter of James and his first wife, Maggie, went to Hood County near Fort Worth to attend Add-Ran College. It is likely that her educational goal was a teacher's certificate as few other professions were available for women then.

Gertrude Hennigan was the eldest child of James Edward Hennigan's second family. She was redheaded in her youth and walked with a limp because of a buggy accident. The education of Gertrude was recalled in the late 1960s by Gertrude's daughter, Edith Parks Odom, who wrote: "Mother attended North State College [\[478\]](#)(as it was called then)—took state exams and made high 90s—got her certificate and started teaching. Mother was brilliant in Math....She made \$60.00 a month teaching and rode horseback home weekends." Gertrude's duties did not include just teaching, recalled her daughter, writing that Gertrude "sewed for all the children (She was the oldest). Later in life she wouldn't sew a stitch! She had had it."[\[479\]](#)

Her sister, Bessie Hennigan, followed her into the teaching profession:

"...old Lickbranch School...was on the Frank Lovell place...As people came to this part of the county, they made their home farther north, and so when a new and larger school was needed, they built it about three miles north of the old one on railroad land. It was built near a good, clear, everlasting spring on the Asa Matthews survey....The name of the school was changed to the Forrest Hill School. There were 55 pupils and seven grades in one room, all taught by one teacher. The teachers who can be remembered were...Bessie Hennigan." (480)

Later, Gertrude and Bessie's next youngest sister, Mary, also followed her sisters' example and became a teacher. Wilder Dunn, a first cousin of the Hennigan sisters and the son of James B. Dunn, also became a teacher. Bessie and Mary Hennigan and Wilder Dunn were all listed as Brookesmith teachers in the certification book for 1907–1923.[\[481\]](#) Wilder Dunn later became a school principal in the area. Teaching for many young people of this era was the transitional occupation between the farm and the new jobs of the Industrial Revolution. For young men, teaching offered a career ladder leading to principal and school superintendent jobs. A young and growing population in Texas guaranteed growth in the teaching profession.

One of the earlier settlers into the Brown County area was Clay (W.C.) Parks, son of John and Elizabeth (McMillen) Parks of Anderson County, Texas, located southeast of Dallas, in East Texas. The Parks family settled in Texas in 1839, moving from the area around Marshall County, Mississippi. While all of their 10 children were born in Mississippi, John and Elizabeth Parks were originally from the south central Tennessee county of Lincoln, where the two met and married in 1822. Lincoln County, Tennessee, is just to the east of Giles County, where Juliet and W.B. McClellan may had wed in 1822.[\[482\]](#) John Parks became very successful in Anderson County, Texas, and at his death left a large estate.[\[483\]](#)

Clay Parks was an active rancher in the Brown County area, running his large herds with the Coggin brothers, other large-scale ranchers of the area. Clay had a younger brother, Bedford Parks, who had stayed in Anderson County. Well educated, Bedford had attended the McKenzie Institute in



Red River County with some of his brothers. This Methodist institution later combined with two other schools of higher education and became the present day Southwestern University located in Georgetown, Texas, north of Austin.

Bedford Parks served in the Civil War in Hood's Regiment, becoming a captain and serving as a company commander. He fought in some of the major battles of the war, including Second Manassas, Antietam, Gettysburg and the Wilderness. After the war Bedford returned to Texas, where he became a lawyer and served in the Texas Legislature. He married three times.

Bedford's first wife died in about 1872, leaving him with three small children. He married Mary Ellen Goodson Parks, widow of his brother, John McMillen Parks. With Mary's three young children, they made a family of six children to which they added three sons.

Bedford's new wife, Mary Ellen Goodson, born in Alabama on April 2, 1850, was the eleventh child in a 15-child family. In 1859 when Mary was eight years old her father, John Alexander Goodson, age 50, died in Pickens County, Alabama. Pickens County, Alabama, is in west central Alabama, where it adjoins with the state of Mississippi. John Goodson's widow, Elizabeth Dooley Goodson, 49, was left with children ranging in age from 20 to three. Within a few years Elizabeth Goodson followed her older children to Bullard in Cherokee County, Texas, arriving there by 1865. This East Texas county abuts on the eastern border of Anderson County, home of the Parks family.

Mary Goodson, 17, married John McMillen Parks, 34, as his second wife shortly after the Civil War. By age twenty-

five she was a widow. Within two years she married her brother-in-law, Bedford Parks. Their eldest son was Wade Hampton Parks, named after a Confederate general. Mary Goodson Parks, 32, died November 11, 1882, leaving Bedford Parks with nine children. Wade Hampton Parks was six years old. Wade's father, Bedford Parks, married for a third time to his cousin, Eliza Adelaide Parks, daughter of Aaron and Martha Woodruff Parks.

Bedford decided to sell out in Anderson County and move to the North Texas county of Baylor. The eldest son of Bedford's second marriage, Wade Hampton Parks, moved with the family, but soon after headed south to work on the Brown County ranch of his uncle, Clay Parks. Wade H. Parks, 24, was living in Brown County as a boarder with the family of John A. Small. in 1900. The Small family lived in south Brown county near Brookesmith and the Hennigan family. Wade Parks had an aunt, Martha Elizabeth Parks or "Little Matt," who was married to Lee Henry Small and lived in Brown County. The John Small with whom Wade lived may have been a relative of Lee Henry Small. While Wade had both an aunt and an uncle in Brown County, there does not appear that there was much contact with their families in subsequent years. Since his mother was dead and the remaining family had left Anderson County, there was no family home to return to visit where the children could meet relatives. For whatever reason the descendants knew little of Wade Parks' family or history. Wade's daughter, Edith, knew that she had a grandfather who had been a Confederate captain, but she thought that it was her grandfather Hennigan, not her grandfather Parks.

In 1904 Wade H. Parks married Gertrude Hennigan, but according to their daughter, Edith Parks Odom, it was a secret marriage for two years. It appears that Gertrude was about to marry a man named Jess Walker and that is why, Edith writes, Wade and Gertrude married secretly. Another factor, perhaps the most likely cause for the secrecy, was that once female teachers married they were not allowed to continue teaching. During the time that they kept the marriage a secret Wade H. Parks

went to Mexico.[\[484\]](#) What Wade did in Mexico is unknown, but it is assumed that Gertrude continued to teach.

A handsome man, Wade had deep set eyes and dark wavy hair of which he was very proud. He also was a very private man; even his wife and children did not know his age. Somewhere along the way, Wade attended a commercial course and wrote a beautiful hand according to his daughter. He also had an interesting ability to wake himself at whatever hour he wished, by just deciding beforehand when he wished to rise. He liked philosophy and knew the Bible almost by heart, but never went to church. His daughter used to send him hair brushes and silk pajamas as he loved the finer things of life.[\[485\]](#)

Some two and half years after their marriage, in 1906, Wade and Gertrude's first child, Edith Jane Parks, was born. At that time they were living in San Antonio where Wade appears to have been working for a grocery concern. A few months before Edith's birth, Wade's father, Bedford Parks, had come to "a famous and highly recommended resort near San Antonio, where he remained under the care of a San Antonio physician until his death."[\[486\]](#) He was buried in the Confederate Cemetery in San Antonio.

By 1913 the Parks family was back in Brownwood in Brown County. That year Gertrude and Wade's second child, Robert Morris Parks, was born in Brownwood, six years after the birth of their first. When Robert was born, Wade was employed as a salesman for a wholesale grocery company.[\[487\]](#) Six years later, in 1919, Wade was still employed as a salesman for a grocery company. Wade and Gertrude and their two children lived at 306 Henley.

In that year, 1919, Gertrude's father, James Edward Hennigan, died after a long decline. At one point the

Brownwood Bulletin newspaper gave almost daily updates of J. E. Hennigan's impending death. On March 8 Gertrude Hennigan Parks was the first called to Brookesmith "on account of the serious illnesses of her father."[\[488\]](#) Both Haney Hennigan of Phoenix, Arizona, and his sister, Lucy Hennigan, of Pensacola, Florida, arrived in Brookesmith within the next three days. J.E. Hennigan briefly rallied and then worsened again. Yet despite the dire newspaper items, J. E. Hennigan did not die for eight more months, "following a lingering illness through which he struggled valiantly, but vainly against the Grim Reaper."[\[489\]](#) His stated cause of death was "general debility," while the contributory cause was "hephritis acute."[\[490\]](#)



James Edward Hennigan was a county commissioner for many years according to a descendant. He also served as commander of the Camp Stonewall Jackson, United Confederate Veterans. His granddaughter, Edith Parks, remembers James Edward Hennigan: “He had been used to servants growing up and never took kindly to hard work. I remember him. He used to visit us: long white beard, piercing black eyes, handsome...He had never gotten over the Civil War.” On a more amusing note, Edith recalled attending movies with her grandfather in the silent movie era. Then movie theaters had organs that played before and during the movies. It seems that it was standard to play “Dixie” at which time Grandfather Hennigan would let out a loud rebel yell. His mortified granddaughter would “slink down in (her) seat terribly embarrassed.” Edith wrote, “He and Dad used to sit up until 2–3 o’clock talking about the war. He was buried from our house in Brownwood. I was in (my) senior year of college and I came home for the funeral. He was buried in his Confederate uniform.”

Before the death of their grandfather, Edith and her brother, Robert, would ride the train from Brownwood to Brookesmith to visit their Hennigan grandparents. Before going into the Hennigan house, the children were expected to wash up at the basin outside the back door. Robert, on one occasion, refused to wash since it was very cold and the water was icy. Edith proceeded to dump the wash water over Robert, effectively cleaning him up and quickly taking care of the whole matter. Edith frequently had a brusque, no nonsense manner of dealing with her younger brother when he was left in her care. On one occasion she had the opportunity to go for a car ride, one she could not take if Robert came along. So she simply locked him in the closet until she returned!

Putting his years of experience in the grocery business to use, Wade soon opened a grocery store at 909 Austin Ave. in Brownwood and after a short residency at 1006 Irma, the family moved to 1801 Ave. E. that would be their permanent home. It appears that Wade operated the Parks Grocery at the Austin Ave. location for almost 20 years. Wade also ran the Parks Dairy in Brownwood. His daughter wrote that Wade “cared tremendously about good food. I’ve seen him leave the store, come home and show our cook how to cut just the edge off of fresh corn and then scrape the rest.”^[491] Edith had her own way of puncturing her father’s business-like facade. Grocery stores of that time would take orders over the telephone and have a delivery boy take the groceries to the customer’s home. Edith, on at least one occasion, called the Parks Grocery and, pretending to be a customer, started ordering outlandish items until finally her father caught on with an exasperated “Oh, Edith!”

Edith’s brother and father were not the only recipients of Edith’s practical jokes. After the death of her husband, Edith’s maternal grandmother, Judy Hennigan, moved to Brownwood. One day Judy, who was almost blind by this time, was out in her yard when Edith, knowing her bad eyesight, approached her. Edith pretended to be someone soliciting for charity, causing her grandmother to quickly offer money before Edith dropped her ruse.

It is possible that Wade was involved in other business activities or that he suffered business reversals. For two years in 1929 and 1930, the 909 Austin Ave grocery store was the B. R. Mason grocery, and the Parks home at 1801 Ave. E. was vacant.

By the mid 1920s, Edith Parks was attending school in California. When she came home from college, there would always be a gift from her father waiting for her, a new typewriter or her room re-

papered or salt-rising bread (her favorite). Yet she was expected to wear hose when her father came home and had to be on time when dinner was ready.

Edith always viewed her mother as a strong person. She said that she only saw her mother cry once, when her father had put some money in a bank during the Depression only to have the bank never reopened. In 1926 on one of Edith's visits home, Gertrude was lying down on the sofa when Edith noticed that Gertrude appeared to be pregnant. Thus, 20 years and 18 days after Edith's birth, the third child of Wade and Gertrude was born. Named William Roy Parks, he preferred and was called Bill. The middle name Roy was for the husband of his aunt, Ellie Gower. His brother, Bob Parks, sometimes called him "Willie". On the other hand, his older sister Edith always called Bob Parks "Robert". The three siblings would remain close for their entire lives.



**Edith Parks and
unidentified Hennigan
Relation**

[446] Johnson, *A history of Texas and Texans*, v. 5, p. 2234.

[447] *Ibid.*, v. 4, 1915, p. 1732.

[448] City of Fort Worth, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Standard Certificate of Death, registered number 92.

[449] *The Twenty-seventh Legislature and State Administration of Texas 1901*, Austin: Ben Jones, p. 151-152; see also the papers of John McClellan Marshall of Dallas, copy in possession of author.

[450] Information from an application for membership in the Children of the Republic of Texas for Victoria Joanna Mary Marshall, daughter of John McClellan Marshall.

[451] *Frontier Times*, Bandera, Texas, October 15, 1923, p. 23.

[452] D. T. Gilliland papers, photocopy in possession of author.

[453] Thomas Ratliff is buried at the Ledbetter, Fayette Co., TX cemetery. Later Jennie Gilliland Collier and her daughter, Ruth, were buried next to him, at one end of the Samuel H. McClellan family plot. The family connection is difficult to see by the tombstones only. Thomas Ratliff was the father of Lou Ratliff McClellan, wife of William Robert McClellan, the youngest child of W.B. and Juliet McClellan. Lou McClellan was the aunt-in-law of Jennie Gilliland Collier. Mary McClellan, the youngest daughter of the W.B. McClellan family, married George W. Ratliff, whose mother was Susan Collier. Susan Collier Ratliff might have been an aunt of Albert Collier, husband of Jennie Gilliland Collier, and perhaps

sister-in-law of Thomas Ratliff.

[454] Simmons, Dessie Little, and Fred Simmons, *Robert Young, Sr.*, p. 141.

[455] A brother of Haynie Gilliland, W. E. Gilliland's father, had married a Rebecca Monteith. Frances and Rebecca might be relatives, considering the unusual surname.

[456] *Frontier Times*, Bandera, Texas, October 15, 1923, p. 32.

[457] *Ibid.*

[458] Hunter, C. L. *History of Central and Western Texas*, Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., p. 323.

[459] Simmons, Dessie Little and Fred Simmons, *Robert Young, Sr.*, p. 142.

[460] *History of Coleman County and Its People*, Coleman County Historical Commission, San Angelo, Texas: Anchor Publishing, n. d., p. 323.

[461] Gay, Beatrice Grady. "Into the Setting Sun", *a History of Coleman County*, p. 192–193.

[462] Linnie Rawlins was the daughter of John Martin Rawlins and Polly Minerva Parks Rawlins. Linnie was born

(June 24, 1865) at Thorp Springs, Hood County, Texas. Her mother Polly Minerva Parks was born (May 9, 1832) in Indiana as was her father. Polly Parks was the daughter of Meredith (Maraday) Parks (b. February 25, 1800 in North Carolina) and Malinda Sharp Parks (b. February 26, 1803). Maraday Parks was a son of George Parks, (b. 5 Aug 1759 VA), who was a son of John Parks (b. May 18, 1706 in Virginia), who was a son of Thomas Parks I). This made Linnie Rawlins Gilliland the fourth cousin of Wade Hampton Parks, who married Sam Gilliland's niece, Gertrude Hennigan (information from Phyllis J. Kumler of Bellflower, Illinois, 1994).

[463] *A History of Coleman County and Its People*, p. 647–649.

[464] In 1842 the Crooked Creek area was part of the area divided off from Mecklenburg County to form part of Union County, North Carolina.

[465] Robert M. Parks told the author in 1962 that his family came from County Cork, Ireland. Since he appeared to know little about his Parks ancestry, probably due to the death of his paternal grandparents before his birth, it is logical to assume that he was referring to his Hennigan ancestors, especially since he spent time in his youth riding the train with his older sister from Brownwood to Brookesmith, where he visited his Hennigan grandparents. Subsequent research on the Parks family indicates no link to Ireland. The other possible family to which he was referring could be the Gillilands, his maternal grandmother's family, but since she was left an orphan by age nine and had little contact with her Gilliland relatives, it is unlikely that she would have known much about her father's family. She grew up in her maternal grandparents' McClellan family. Research on that family shows that they migrated from Ulster, Ireland, not County Cork.

[466] In the book *Southwest Brown County, Texas Community History* edited by Estill Franklin Allen, a Hennigan family history was written by Mary Frances (Aiken) Hennigan who said of James Edward Hennigan that "he grew up as an only child on a plantation." However, a granddaughter of James Edward Hennigan, Edith Parks Odom told the author that James Edward Hennigan had only one sibling, a sister named "Sue".

[467] Hunter, *Sketches of Western North Carolina*, p. 92.

[468] Ibid.

[469] “Joab Orr...was noted for his skill in playing the fiddle. This appears to have been his chief delight, and to see that the dancers kept step with the music. Joab Orr had three beautiful daughters, naturally smart, and if living in the civilization of the present day, and had the advantages of education that are enjoyed now, they would have been leaders of the fashionable world, as their father was the leader of music, especially on the violin.” (Alexander, J.B., *The History of Mecklenburg County from 1740 to 1900*, Charlotte, NC: Observer Printing House, 1902, p. 250.)

[470] Hunter, *Sketches of Western North Carolina*, p. 92.

[471] National Archives, Confederate Index: Hennigan, James E., Co. F, 49th North Carolina Infantry, Private, Corporal; enlisted May 5, 1862, age 18 at Charlotte, Mecklenburg Co., N.C., volunteered; on muster roll for July & August 1864, rank given as 1st corporal; paroled at Appomattox Court House after Lee's surrender, April 10, 1865; C.S.A. General Military Hospital, Wilmington, N.C., April 30, 1863 (?) for Dyspepsia (a condition of disturbed digestion); General Hospital, Petersburg, VA, July 28, 1862 for Pneumonia, returned to duty Sept. 1, 1862.

[472] *Brownwood Bulletin*, Brownwood, Texas, November 25, 1919.

[473] See Appendix B, p. 191 for William B. McClellan's will.

[474] Havins, *Something about Brown*, p. 37. The population growth in Texas in the late nineteenth century was extremely rapid. Between 1860 and 1880 Texas gained about one million people, from only 604,215 to 1,591,749. (Jordan, Terry G. with John L. Bean Jr. and William M. Holmes. *Texas: a Geography*, Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1984, p. 48.)

[475] Ibid., pp. 58–59.

[476] Ibid., pp. 59–60.

[477] See Appendix B, pp. 193–194 for the full text of the case.

[478] North State College is now called North Texas University. It is located in Denton, Texas, northwest of Dallas, Texas.

[479] Letter from Edith Odom to the author, undated. The letter went on the say, “She always told me about the expensive suits she would buy—and wear several years—always said it didn’t pay to buy cheap clothes.”

[480] Weedon, Pattie Cross. *Early Communities of Lake Brownwood*, n.p., 1980, p. 21.

[481] *Southwest Brown County, Texas Community History: Brookesmith, Coggin, Buline, Indian Creek, Mount View or Salt Branch or “Clabber Hill”, Rice and Winchell*, edited by Estill Franklin Allen, 1984, p. 4.

[482] Lincoln County, Tennessee is where Eli Gilliland enlisted for service in the War of 1812.

[483] Parks, Joe. *The Parks Family*, Austin: p. 54.

[484] Letter from Edith Parks Odom to author, undated.

[485] Letter from Edith Parks Odom to author, dated July 30, 1969.

[486] Parks, *The Parks Family*, p. 150.

[487] Brown County, Texas. Index to birth records, p. 196 (under Parks, Robert Morris).

[488] *Brownwood Bulletin*, Brownwood, Texas. March 8, 1919.

[489] *Brownwood Bulletin*, Brownwood, Texas, November 24, 1919.

[490] Brown County, Texas, Death Index, p. 109.

[491] Edith Parks Odom letter to author dated July 30, 1969.