

Jane Chaney, Texas Housewife

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Introduction

The following material is another installment in the continuing series on the many descendants of Christopher Chaney, Texas Patriot. Each article focuses on the family of one particular individual, his or her spouse, and their children. For now, the focus is on the family of Jane Chaney, one of his six known daughters. Hopefully, the following will provide some new and interesting family history for other researchers. Of course, it is hoped that others will step forward with new information.

Coming of Age in Sabine County

1. Jane N. Chaney was born circa 1824 in Washington County, Virginia.¹ So very little is known about this daughter of Christopher and Rebecca Chaney because she left so few records. Even her middle name is a mystery. She appears explicitly in only two census schedules and a handful of deeds. Jane was just twelve years old when the family moved to Sabine County, Texas in 1836. Her father died that same year. Jane came of age during the early years of the Texas Republic under difficult circumstances. No doubt life on the family farm without a father was full of hard work for her as well as the other children, especially the teenagers.

She married John Mackey of Sabine County. Because the early county records were destroyed in a courthouse fire, no record of their marriage has survived. It is presumed, however, that they married circa 1844. John, who was born circa 1822 in Louisiana, was the son of Charles and Naomi Mackey.² Genealogical research on females can pose difficulties, not the least of which is the fact that much must be inferred from records that were made by or about the various men in her life. Early on, records of her father or brothers yield clues. Later, records of her husband yield more clues. Another difficulty is the fact that at least two men named John Mackey were in Texas during this period. The other John Mackey was born circa 1820 and lived on the Colorado River in Colorado County. He saw military service during the Texas Revolution and the Civil War.

John McKy first appears on the tax rolls of Sabine County in 1842 as agent for his widowed mother Mrs. N. McKy.³ John paid the taxes for a 1,000-acre tract in Sabine County, a 320-acre tract in Harrison County, five town lots, ten slaves, and one silver watch. In 1843, John McKy paid the taxes for a 900-acre tract, seven slaves over 10, five slaves under 10, and one clock. In 1844, John McKy paid the taxes

¹ *Christopher Chaney, Texas Patriot*, Texas State Genealogical Society Quarterly, *STIRPES*, Volume 41, Number 4, December 2001.

² Nacogdoches Archives, R. B. Blake Collection, Volume 85, Pages 80-180. Stephen F. Austin University Library, Nacogdoches, Texas.

³ Real and Personal Property Tax Rolls, Sabine County, Texas, 1837-1910. All Texas real and personal property tax rolls, Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin, Texas.

for a 900-acre tract, seven slaves over 10, and five slaves under 10. He does not appear on any of the later tax rolls in Sabine County. On January 6, 1845, the Sabine County Land Commissioners issued an unconditional certificate for a Third Class Headright for 320 acres of land to John Mackey.⁴ It is presumed that John sold or bartered his rights to the land as an attachment to the certificate records a transfer of the title to the certificate from James N. Doyle to Jacob Dearing on September 24, 1849. John Mackey must have sold his rights to the certificate to Doyle sometime previous.

John and Jane Mackey moved to Guadalupe County in early 1850, sometime after the tax rolls were made but prior to the taking of the census that year. Where they resided between 1844 and 1850 is uncertain. John is listed in the census as 28 years of age, a farmer, owning real estate valued at \$900, and born in Louisiana.⁵ Apparently, he owned real estate located in Sabine County and leased his farm in Guadalupe County. Jane is listed as 26 years of age and born in Virginia. Living with them was a man named William Harris, who apparently worked on their farm. John's personal property included four black male slaves aged 27, 20, 20, and 9.⁶ His farm consisted of 400 unimproved acres valued at \$800.⁷ He owned farm machinery and implements valued at \$100. His livestock consisted of one horse, one mule, and twenty swine valued at \$270. The farm produced fifteen hundred bushels of indian corn, presumably for feeding the hogs.

John Mackey first appears on the Guadalupe County tax rolls in 1851 with five town lots at Pendleton in Sabine County and four slaves worth \$2,800.⁸ In 1852, he paid taxes for the five town lots, four slaves, two horses, and two cattle. John Mackey did not purchase land in Guadalupe County until June 17, 1853.⁹ On that date, he bought a 767½-acre tract of land from Edward C. Pettus for \$3,000. The large tract was located along the southwest bank of the San Marcos River and was part of the original Pettus Headright. Just nineteen days later, John sold a portion of his newly acquired tract to William McKaughn for \$2,000.¹⁰ It is curious that Jane did not sign the deed. The sale of the 133-acre parcel left John with 634½ acres of land. Yet, the 1853 tax rolls indicate that John paid taxes on only 459½ acres of land valued at \$3,353. No deed was recorded that shows John sold off the 95 acres. He also paid taxes that year on four slaves valued at \$3,500, four horses valued at \$450, and one yoke of oxen valued at \$50. Thus, it is presumed that he had sold his town lots in Sabine County before 1853. John Mackey paid taxes in 1854 on only 329 acres of land valued at \$2,309. Again, no deed was recorded showing that he sold the 130 acres. It is presumed that both sales actually took place, but that the grantees failed to record their deeds.

⁴ Texas Land Grant Records, Unconditional Certificate No. 62, File No. BEX-3-6632. Archives and Records Division, Texas General Land Office, Austin, Texas.

⁵ 1850 Census, Population Schedules, Guadalupe County, Texas, Page 3. All Texas census records at Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin, Texas.

⁶ 1850 Census, Slave Schedules, Guadalupe County, Texas, Page 496.

⁷ 1850 Census, Agricultural Schedules, Guadalupe County, Texas, Page 1.

⁸ Real and Personal Property Tax Rolls, Guadalupe County, Texas, 1846-1888.

⁹ Land Records, Guadalupe County, Texas, Deed Book E, Page 400. Guadalupe County Courthouse, Seguin, Texas. (Hereinafter cited as Guadalupe Deeds.)

¹⁰ Guadalupe Deeds, Book E, Page 668.

That year his four slaves were valued at \$3,600 and his four horses at \$150. The following year, in 1855, his 329 acres were valued at \$2,303, his four slaves at \$3,600, five horses at \$300, and two yoke of oxen at \$80.

John Mackey acted as a surety for his brother-in-law Edmund Pendleton Gaines. On February 27, 1854, John Mackey and Jas. H. Durst signed a bond for \$750 to Governor E. M. Pease.¹¹ The two sureties were guaranteeing the authenticity of the Certificate of Public Debt issued to James Gaines for his service as Senator for the Republic of Texas for the years 1841 and 1842. James Gaines had transferred his title to the Certificate to Edmund Gaines who then was trying to receive payment from the State of Texas.

Curiously, the 1856 tax rolls reveal that John Mackey paid taxes on only 339 acres of land valued at \$3,390. It seems, therefore, that he successfully evaded paying taxes on much of his real estate that year. In addition, he paid taxes on four slaves worth \$3,600, five horses worth \$630, twenty cattle worth \$120, and a yoke of oxen and sixty hogs worth \$170. On January 18, 1856, he again purchased the same 767½-acre tract of land from Edward Pettus for \$2,000.¹² The record is unclear whether the second deed represented the receipt of the final payment or simply a correction of the first deed. It also is unclear whether the total sale price was \$3,000 or \$5,000. On June 9, 1856, John Mackey and his wife Jane sold another portion of their land to Philip Walker for \$770.¹³ Jane signed the deed to release her dower rights in the property. The 308-acre portion of the Pettus Headright was located between the San Marcos River and Yorks Creek. That sale should have left John with just 326½ acres. The fact that he paid taxes on 13½ acres more is an indication of the approximate nature of land measure in that era.

On June 9, 1856, John purchased the same tract of land from Edward Pettus for the third time.¹⁴ Although the deed record is unclear, it can only be assumed that this third deed represented the receipt of the third installment payment of \$2,000. Thus, the total purchase price for entire 767½-acre tract was \$7,000. John had by then sold off 441 acres for a total of \$2,770. That left him with 326½ acres for which he had paid \$4,230.

In 1857, John Mackey paid taxes on 339 acres of land worth \$3,300, four slaves worth \$3,600, eight horses worth \$650, and twenty cattle worth \$120. In 1858, John paid taxes on 340 acres of land valued at \$1,700, four slaves valued at \$4,000, eight horses valued at \$400, twenty-five cattle valued at \$125, miscellaneous property valued at \$140.

In 1859, John paid taxes on 340 acres of land worth \$1,700, four slaves worth \$4,000, nine horses worth \$600, and miscellaneous property worth \$80. On November 24, 1859, John and Jane Mackey sold their remaining interest in that tract to his mother Naomi Mackey for \$1,500.¹⁵ In 1860, John Mackey is listed in the census as a 37-year-old farmer, who owned real estate valued at \$3,000 and personal property

¹¹ Public Debt Papers, 1848-1860, Payments for Services to the Republic, Certificate No. 1024, Microfilm Roll 154, Pages 562-563. Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin, Texas.

¹² Guadalupe Deeds, Book F, Page 587.

¹³ Guadalupe Deeds, Book H, Page 11.

¹⁴ Guadalupe Deeds, Book H, Page 127.

¹⁵ Guadalupe Deeds, Book I, Page 262.

valued at \$8,010.¹⁶ He also is listed as born in Louisiana. His wife, Jane, is listed as 30 years old and born in Virginia. His mother Naomi Mackey was living with them. In spite of the fact that they had sold their remaining interest in the old Pettus Headright, John paid taxes on the 340-acre tract valued at \$3,000. His personal property included eight slaves, a 38-year-old black male, 28-year-old black male, 25-year-old black male, 18-year-old mulatto male, 37-year-old mulatto male, 21-year-old black male, 7-year-old black male, and 45-year-old black female.¹⁷ Yet, he paid taxes on only four slaves worth \$4,800, eleven horses worth \$550, and fifty cattle worth \$300. The county agricultural schedules for 1860 have not survived.

So far as can be determined, John Mackey saw no military service during the Civil War. He was old enough to be exempt from conscription, but not too old if he had wanted to serve. He may have been the Jno. Mackey who appears on a muster roll of Colonel James Bourland's Border Regiment of Texas Cavalry.¹⁸ The regiment was organized in August 1863 to defend the northwestern frontier from marauding Indians then playing havoc among the white inhabitants. Through the remainder of the war, the regiment saw active service along both sides of the Red River. The regimental return dated September 1864 states that Jno. Mackey was in arrest at Gainesville. No further record of his military service has been located.

No record of any kind has been found indicating that John and Jane Mackey had any children. No further record of any kind for her has been found. The exact date of her death and the location of her burial remain a mystery. It is presumed that Jane died intestate sometime during or immediately after the Civil War. On November 15, 1866, her widower husband married Mrs. Harriet Perry.¹⁹ Their marriage license was returned by Rev. C. M. Rogers, who performed the ceremony in adjoining Caldwell County. She was the widow of Asa H. Perry, whom she had married at Lockhart in Caldwell County on September 24, 1857.²⁰ Her complete maiden name was Harriet W. Odom.

In 1870, John Mackey reported to the census enumerator that he was 48 years of age, was a farmer, owned real estate valued at \$1,500 and personal property valued at \$700, and had been born in Louisiana.²¹ His wife Harriett reported that she was 33 years old and was born in Texas. Living with them were her children Maggie and Ida Perry and David James. John Mackey's farm consisted of 30 improved acres and 200 acres of woodland valued at \$1,500.²² The farm machinery and implements were

¹⁶ 1860 Census, Population Schedules, Guadalupe County, Texas, Page 312.

¹⁷ 1860 Census, Slave Schedules, Guadalupe County, Texas, Page 14.

¹⁸ Compiled Military Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations From the State of Texas, John Mackey, Private, Company F, Bourland's Border Regiment of Texas Cavalry. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

¹⁹ Marriage Records, Guadalupe County, Texas, Volume C-D, 1856-1873, Page 155. Guadalupe County Courthouse, Seguin, Texas. (Hereinafter cited as Guadalupe Marriages.)

²⁰ Guadalupe Marriages, Volume C-D, Page 18.

²¹ 1870 Census, Population Schedules, Guadalupe County, Texas, Page 437.

²² 1870 Census, Agricultural Schedules, Guadalupe County, Texas, Precinct 5, Page 1.

valued at \$50. His livestock included fifty horses, eight oxen, and twenty-five swine valued at \$700. That year his farm produced three hundred bushels of indian corn, three bales of cotton, slaughtered animals worth \$20, with total production valued at \$400.

John Mackey died testate in Guadalupe County. His will was proven by U. F. Porter and entered for probate on April 27, 1875.²³

The State of Texas

County of Guadalupe

Know all men by these presents that I John Mackey, of said County and State being at the present time in good health and of sound mind and memory and knowing the certainty of death do by these presents for the purpose of placing my worldly affairs in such situation as may conform to wishes in case of death make and publish this as my last will and testament, desiring the same to be recognized and probated as such and requiring no further action Wareon than may be necessary to have the same recorded and without requiring any administration or security of my Executor for the trust.

In the first place my just debts to be paid by heir or Executor out of the Estate left by me in their hands and believing that my blood relations will not question the right to do so as I may please with what little I have or may have. I therefore will and dispose of to my beloved wife Harriett W. Mackey the whole of my property real personal and mixed which consists in part of the tract of land upon which I now live being a part of the Pettus League on the San Marcos River and any and all other property and money that I may possess at my death and having those things herein according to my right to do with my own as I may choose and dictating this to be my last Will and testament. Constitute my wife Harriett my sole Executrix to carry out this my desire. I sign seal and embody the same as my Will as aforesaid by a ser all for a seal this 4th day of April AD 1874.

Witnesses

John Mackey

M. E. Smith

U. F. Porter

As is often the case, the story of a Nineteenth Century woman's life must be told through the records left primarily by her husband. Jane is no exception. The census schedules and county tax rolls indicate that her life was a relatively comfortable one. One can only imagine her daily life on their small farm. It is presumed that she managed the household and the house slaves. By joining her husband in signing various deeds, she demonstrates her literacy. As slaveholders, it is presumed that John and Jane Mackey supported secession and the Confederacy. Unfortunately little else can be gleaned from the scant record of her that has survived. What she and her husband felt about religion, politics, and the affairs of the day cannot be known.

Conclusion

The foregoing article summarizes all that is known about Jane Chaney and her husband John Mackey.

²³ Probate Records, Guadalupe County, Texas, Probate Minute Book F, Page 394.

The author is indebted to the staff of the Texas State Land Office, Texas State Library, Guadalupe County Courthouse, and Clayton Library in Houston for their patience, knowledge, and assistance. Special thanks are due to the author's cousin Julia Cauble Smith for her insightful review and valuable suggestions. The author invites comments, questions, as well as suggestions for further research from all readers.

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