

Mahala Chaney, Steadfast Widow

Michael A. Ports *

Introduction

The following material is the next installment in a series of articles on the descendants of Christopher Chaney, Texas Patriot. Each article focuses on the family of one particular individual, his or her spouse or spouses, and their children. For this installment, the focus is on the family of Mahala Chaney, his eldest known child. Hopefully, the following will stimulate others to step forward with new information or suggestions for further research.

The Difficult Early Years

1. Mahala Chaney was born May 11, 1817 in Russell County, Virginia, the daughter of Christopher and Rebecca Chaney.¹ Whatever schooling she received, she probably obtained in Virginia. It is presumed that Mahala arrived in Sabine County, Texas with her parents in 1836, when she was nineteen years old. As the eldest, she no doubt helped her mother tend the younger children along their journey. Unfortunately, no record describing that journey has survived. One can only imagine the men folk carefully loading their possessions and provisions into a wagon under the watchful eye of their womenfolk. On that long, difficult, and hazardous journey, Mahala most likely took her turn riding and walking. Perhaps they trekked through the Cumberland Gap to the Tennessee River, by boat down river to Louisiana, then cross-country into Sabine County. Perhaps they continued by boat down the Mississippi River to New Orleans, across the Gulf of Mexico, then up the Sabine River to their new home. One can only presume that they made at least part of their trip by water.

It is clear that she married James W. Tuttle circa 1836 or 1837, but just when and where is uncertain. Unfortunately, no record of their marriage has been found. His name does not appear on any Sabine County tax rolls.² Just when, where, and how James and Mahala met remains a mystery. James Wooster Tuttle, the son of Amasa Tuttle (1765-1841) and Sibyl Wooster (ca1774-1843), was born May 1802 probably at Derby, Connecticut.³ James W. Tuttle arrived in Stephen F. Austin's Texas Colony in 1831 from New York.⁴ On May 28, 1835, the single farmer applied for land. He later asked

¹ *Christopher Chaney, Texas Patriot, STIRPES*, Texas State Genealogical Society Quarterly, Volume 41, Number 2, June 2001.

² Real and Personal Property Tax Rolls, Sabine County, Texas, 1837-1896. All Texas real and personal property tax rolls at Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin, Texas.

³ Tuttle, George Frederick, *The Descendants of William and Elizabeth Tuttle*. Tuttle & Company, Official State Printers, Rutland, Vermont, 1883.

⁴ Stephen F. Austin's Register of Families, Volume 2, Page 39. From the originals in the General Land

for the same quarter of land for which a man named Deshienskey had applied, but who had since died. The register does not indicate whether James Tuttle ever received that or any other land from the Empresario Stephen Austin. The second entry in the register indicates that James W. Tuttle had arrived in Texas in 1832.⁵

James W. Tuttle filed a claim for back pay based upon his military service in the Texas Army on March 3, 1836.⁶ He had served in the army from October 3 through December 13, 1835. For his two months and ten days of military service, he was entitled to \$46.66²/₃. He signed his claim before Judge Joseph Baker of the Municipality of Austin on February 29, 1836.

On September 4, 1837, James W. Tuttle sold his right to a military bounty grant for 320 acres of land to David M. Brown for \$100.⁷ James was entitled to the bounty land based upon his service as a volunteer in the Texas Army from July 1 to October 1, 1836. Because the time period is the same, James may have served in the Texas Army with Christopher Chaney. Perhaps that is how he met Mahala. The transfer was witnessed by W. T. Lightfoot, L. H. Clark, and John P. Borden. Their signatures were sworn to and subscribed before Judge Aaron Briscoe at Houston in Harrisburg County.

On January 18, 1838, James W. Tuttle proved to the Fort Bend County Board of Land Commissioners that he had arrived in Texas in April 1831 and had married since the Declaration of Independence.⁸ Thus, he was entitled to a grant for one league and one labor of land. He exercised his right in two parts. The first part, comprised of one league or 4,428.4 acres of land, was surveyed on May 24, 1838.⁹ The land was located in what later became Grimes County. The first tract was in the shape of a square, 5,000 varas on each side. The Texas vara is a land measurement unit equal to 33¹/₃ inches. Also, one league of land equaled 25 labors of land. The surveyor characterized the vast tract as containing twenty labors of arable land and five labors of pasture land. Thus, James paid a mere \$56 for the entire tract! No doubt the relatively low cost of land was a very compelling attraction for many of the early pioneers. It probably trumped most of the other reasons that drew the early pioneers to Texas.

Office, Austin, Texas. Edited by Villmac Williams, Genealogical Publishing Company, Baltimore, Maryland, 1984. (Hereinafter cited as Austin's Register.)

⁵ Austin's Register, Volume 2, Page 71.

⁶ Payments for Services to the Republic, Audited Civil and Military Claims, 1835-1845, Military Claim No. 367, Microfilm Roll 127, Pages 95-98. Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin, Texas. (Hereinafter cited as Audited Claims.)

⁷ Texas Land Grant Records, Bounty Certificate No. 1119 and Transfer, File No. ROB-B-702. All land grants, survey field notes, and land patents at the Archives and Records Division, Texas General Land Office, Austin, Texas.

⁸ First Class Headright, Unconditional Certificate No. 54, File No. MON-1-40.

⁹ Survey Field Notes, Abstract No. 448, File No. MON-1-40.

The second part of the grant was comprised of one labor or 177.1 acres of land and was surveyed on March 30, 1838.¹⁰ The tract of land was located in what is now Waller County. The second tract also was shaped in a square, with each side 1,000 varas in length. The surveyor characterized the entire tract as pasture land. James thus paid only \$1.20 for the smaller tract. But, James Tuttle died before he could complete the laborious process of perfecting his Headright. On June 25, 1838, Mahala Tuttle petitioned the county court for letters of administration on her late husband's estate.¹¹ Mahala was required to file a \$5,000 bond with the court. Thomas Barnett signed the bond as her security. D. Randon and James W. Jones appraised the estate on July 7, 1838.¹²

For the improvements	\$300
For crops	200
For one Yoke Oxen	100
For one Horse	75
For one Gun	20
For one cow & calf	20
For saddle & bridle	10
	\$725

It is presumed that the improvements included their house, barn or stable, and other smaller outbuildings. The appraisers also noted that the estate included a land certificate for one league and labor of land which had been located and surveyed. But, because they had not seen the land, the appraisers declined to assign any value to it. Final settlement of the estate was postponed repeatedly. In March 1840, the County Court appointed Mahala Tuttle as guardian and testrix for James W. Tuttle a minor heir. A public sale of the estate was held at their late residence on August 3, 1838.

Improvements	\$300
Crops in the ground	200
One Yoke Oxen	98
One Horse	82
One Gun	30
One cow & calf	23
Saddle & Bridle	9
One Axe	3
	\$745

¹⁰ Survey Field Notes, Abstract No. 264, File No. MON-1-40.

¹¹ Probate Records, Fort Bend County, Texas, Probate Record Book A, 1838-1854, Page 7. Fort Bend County Courthouse, Richmond, Texas. (Hereinafter cited as Fort Bend Probates.)

¹² Fort Bend Probates, Probate Minutes and Records, Book A, 1838-1852, Pages 44-45 and 47.

But Mahala did not file the results of the sale until July 6, 1840. Again, the final settlement of the estate was delayed. Apparently James W. Tuttle had become indebted to Thomas Barnett, but the precise nature and amount of the debt was not recorded. On September 6, 1845, Nancy Gray as the executrix of the estate of Thomas Barnett filed a petition with the Fort Bend County Court explaining that the District Court had awarded one undivided third of the James W. Tuttle Headright to Thomas Barnett on April 4, 1843. The petitioners then asked the court to order that the Headright be partitioned into thirds. After further proceedings and delay, on November 7, 1848, the court issued a writ to partition the tract.¹³ The appointed commissioners, Hiram M. Thompson, J. N. Massey, and A. G. Owens, partitioned the tract into three equal parts without ever venturing to Grimes County. Each third consisted of 1,476 acres and was valued at \$738.

Mahala Tuttle, as administratrix of her husband's estate, filed suit in the District Court against Stephen Goodman and Thomas Barnett.¹⁴ On November 27, 1839, the defendants came to court and confessed judgment in the amount of \$308 plus interest from February 18, 1839 until paid, plus court costs. The court minutes do not record the nature of the dispute. But, it is interesting to note that Thomas Barnett sued Stephen Goodman. On the same day at court, Stephen Goodman confessed judgment in that matter for the same amount of money! Surely, the two suits were related somehow.

In 1840, Mahala Tuttle, as administratrix of J. W. Tuttle, first appears on the tax rolls of Fort Bend County.¹⁵ She was assessed for one saddle horse. It is curious that no one named Tuttle appears on the tax rolls there in either 1838 or 1839. Why his name does not appear on the early tax rolls is uncertain. Apparently, James died sometime after the two surveys were filed but before he could complete the process of obtaining his land patents. His widow Mahala filed a copy of the letters of administration with the land office. The letters of administration, issued on June 25, 1838, gave her the authority to settle her late husband's estate. Mahala then appointed Thomas Barnett as her agent to complete the land patent process. A patent was issued for the larger of the two tracts October 14, 1838 and one for the smaller tract on October 21, 1838.¹⁶ Thus, James Wooster Tuttle died in 1838, sometime after March 30th but before June 25th.

The children of James Wooster and Mahala (Chaney) Tuttle were:

2. i. James W., born circa 1838 in Fort Bend County, Texas.

¹³ Fort Bend Probates, Probate Minutes and Records, Book A, 1838-1852, Pages 425-427.

¹⁴ District Court Minutes, Fort Bend County, Texas, Minute Book A, 1838-1842, Page 87. Fort Bend County Courthouse, Richmond, Texas. (Hereinafter cited as Fort Bend Court Minutes.)

¹⁵ Real and Personal Property Tax Rolls, Fort Bend County, Texas, 1838-1889.

¹⁶ Patent No. 481 and Patent No. 513, Patent Volume 1, File MON-1-40.

A New Start in Montgomery County

On April 30, 1840, Mahala Tuttle married William Flint.¹⁷ Their marriage license was returned by John Farrar, a Minister of the Gospel. Very little is known about William Flint. His son, George Washington Flint, declined to report the state of his father's birth in the census of both 1880 and 1900. However, in 1910, he reported that his father was born in Kentucky.¹⁸ But, no record of him has been found there. It is clear that William Flint came to Texas sometime after October 1, 1837.¹⁹ The first record of him in Texas is his official qualification for a Third Class Headright in Harrisburg County. As a single man, he was entitled to 320 acres of land. However, there is no record that he ever followed through to locate, survey, and obtain a patent for his land. Most likely, he sold his interest in his Headright for cash or livestock. Perhaps, he paid off a debt with it.

He first appears on the Fort Bend County tax rolls in 1840. In addition to his poll tax, he was assessed for two silver watches valued at \$2. Sometime later that year, Mahala, her new husband, and her young son moved to their new property in Montgomery County. William Flint paid his poll tax there the following year.²⁰ In 1841, William was assessed for the 4,605 acres of land that comprised the J. W. Tuttle Headright.

On January 14, 1842, William and Mahala sold 300 acres of land to John Treadwell for \$255.²¹ Both William and Mahala signed the deed. Thus, in 1842, William M. Flint paid taxes on just 4,305 acres valued at 50 cents per acre. He also paid taxes on three horses and a carriage valued at \$80.

On January 20, 1842, William and Mahala Flint sold another parcel of land from the Tuttle Headright.²² John Treadwell paid them \$225 for a second parcel of 300 acres. On May 25, 1843, William and Mahala sold a third parcel of land to Uriah F. Case, who paid \$150 for the 150 acres.²³ Again, both William and Mahala signed the deed. The 1843 tax list shows that William Flint was assessed for 3,855 acres of land and six horses. In 1844, William Flint is listed as paying the taxes for Mahala Flint. They were assessed for 3,855 acres of land and four horses.

¹⁷ Marriage Records, Fort Bend County, Texas, 1838-1857, Book A, Page 22. Fort Bend County Courthouse, Richmond, Virginia.

¹⁸ 1910 Census, Fisher County, Texas, Enumeration District 95, Sheet 1. All Texas census records at Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin, Texas.

¹⁹ Texas Land Grant Records, Harrisburg County Clerk Return, No. 23.

²⁰ Real and Personal Property Tax Rolls, Montgomery County, Texas, 1837-1901.

²¹ Land Records, Grimes County, Texas, Deed Book Q, Page 414. Grimes County Courthouse, Anderson, Texas. (Hereinafter cited as Grimes Deeds.)

²² Grimes Deeds, Book D, Page 63.

²³ Grimes Deeds, Book Q, Page 362.

William Flint is listed as a debtor to the estate of Charles J. Birdsall of Montgomery County on October 2, 1844.²⁴ Unfortunately, only fragments of the 1845 tax rolls have survived. Among the missing pages are those for surnames beginning with the letter F. W. M. Flint and Mahala Flint signed that second deed to John Treadwell on January 20, 1842. But, the deed was not recorded right away. On May 13, 1845, Mahala, as the surviving widow of William Flint deceased, had to sign the deed again and attest to the authenticity of her husband's signature. Thus, it is clear that William Flint died in Montgomery County sometime after October 2, 1844, but before May 13, 1845. No probate was entered on his estate.

The children of William M. and Mahala (Chaney) Flint were:

3. i. George Washington, born March 2, 1841 probably in Fort Bend County, Texas.

Raising a Family in Grimes County

The twice-widowed Mahala Flint married Richard Nixon, but no record of their marriage has been found. They probably married in Grimes County in 1846 soon after Grimes County was created and organized from part of Montgomery County. Unfortunately, the Grimes County Courthouse was destroyed by fire in 1848. Thus, the first two years of county records, including all deeds, probates, and marriages, are lost.

Again, very little is known about her third husband. Richard Nixon had been a sergeant in the Texas Army. Based upon his military service from February 22, 1837 until April 12, 1839, he was entitled to 1,280 acres of land. He received his Bounty Land Certificate at Houston on April 22, 1839.²⁵ Just three days later, Richard sold his certificate to Perry E. Duncan. Unfortunately the title transfer documents do not record the sale price, but it does contain an original version of Richard Nixon's signature.

On November 20, 1837, James C. Eccles as assignee of Richard Nixon filed a claim for his previous military pay that was still due.²⁶ The claim file contains two interesting documents. The first is a certificate signed by Captain James Jervus on August 11, 1837 at Camp Chambers. The captain certified that Sergeant Richard Nixon, Company K, First Infantry had enlisted for the war February 22, 1837 at New Orleans and had not yet received any pay or bounty. The second is a signed statement from Richard Nixon that his captain's certificate was just and true and that he was not indebted to the Republic. His statement was sworn to before Judge Patrick Usher of Jackson County on August 18, 1837. No specific record of him has been found in New Orleans in 1836 or 1837. As was common during that period, he probably traveled through there on his way to Texas.

²⁴ Probate Records, Montgomery County, Texas, Probate Minutes, 1838-1851, Pages 147-160. Montgomery County Courthouse, Conroe, Texas.

²⁵ Military Bounty Certificate No. 9060, File No. BEX-B-923.

²⁶ Audited Claims, No. 5148, Roll 121, Pages 176-178.

Again, on April 23, 1839, Richard Nixon filed a claim because he had not been paid for his military service in the Texas Army.²⁷ The Secretary of War issued a certificate stating that Richard Nixon of Company K, First Infantry Regiment was entitled to pay from April 30, 1838 when last paid to April 12, 1839 when he was discharged. For that entire period, he earned a total of \$137.98 for his military service.

On May 6, 1839 at Galveston, Richard Nixon enlisted as a sergeant in Captain Adam Clendenin's Company B, First Infantry Regiment, commanded by Colonel Edward Burleson.²⁸ He served in the Texas Army until May 4, 1841. For that service, he received a certificate for 240 acres of land on February 11, 1853.²⁹ His land was located and surveyed in Nueces County on May 14, 1859 for C. W. and F. W. Coggill to whom he had assigned his certificate. No transfer for his certificate was filed. Thus when, where, and for how much the title transfer was made remains unknown.

Because Richard Nixon had arrived in Texas previous to October 1, 1837, he was entitled to a Second Class Headright for 640 acres of land. The Harrisburg County Board of Land Commissioners issued a certificate to him at Houston on October 11, 1838.³⁰ However, because he was a sergeant in the army, it was not possible for Richard to locate and survey his land. Therefore, on February 21, 1839, he appointed John Clark as his agent to obtain his Headright Certificate and to locate and survey his lands in his name.³¹ In exchange for locating and surveying his Headright, John Clark was entitled to one half of the land. R. Nixon signed the deed. His land was located "*on the waters of Sandy about 40 miles from Gonzales.*" The tract was surveyed for him on October 28, 1839.³²

Soon thereafter, Richard moved to Montgomery County. Someone named Nixon appears on the 1845 Montgomery County tax roll, but the first name is no longer legible. Whoever it was resided at John J. Whitesides' place. Richard Nixon paid the poll tax in Grimes County in 1847, but was not assessed for any other real or personal property.³³ Yet, Richard and his wife Mahala sold 150 acres of land on Gibbons Creek to James White on April 2, 1847.³⁴ The tract was part of the James W. Tuttle Headright. On October 19, 1847, a patent was issued to Richard Nixon for his lands in Gonzales

²⁷ Audited Claims, No. 9116, Roll 78, Pages 130-133.

²⁸ Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Defenders of the Republic of Texas, Volume 1, *Texas Army Muster Rolls, Receipt Rolls, and Other Rolls, 1836-1841*. Laurel House Press, Austin, Texas.

²⁹ Military Bounty Certificate No. 1227, File No. SPA-B-213.

³⁰ Second Class Headright, Conditional Certificate No. 982, File No. GON-2-21.

³¹ Land Records, Guadalupe County, Texas, Deed Book GT, Page 371. Guadalupe County Courthouse, Seguin, Texas. (Hereinafter cited as Guadalupe Deeds.)

³² Survey Field Notes, Conditional Certificate No. 982, File No. GON-2-21.

³³ Real and Personal Property Tax Rolls, Grimes County, Texas, 1846-1901.

³⁴ Grimes Deeds, Book B, Page 201.

County.³⁵ Presumably Richard Nixon died before 1848, when Mahala Nixon paid the taxes for 4,005 acres of the J. W. Tuttle Headright. For 1849 and 1850, she paid the taxes on only 2,529 acres of land having just lost one third of the original tract to the partition ordered by the Fort Bend County Court. Beginning in 1851, Daniel Stuckey paid the taxes for that land. So far as can be determined, Richard and Mahala Nixon had no children. Also, the records concerning the probate of his estate apparently have been lost.

Probably because he had died, Richard Nixon failed to pay the taxes on his tract of land located in Guadalupe County for 1846. Thus, on September 28, 1847, William G. King, the Guadalupe County Tax Assessor and Collector, sold his 640-acre tract of land at public auction Joseph F. Johnson.³⁶ The taxes due on the entire tract amounted to just \$1.60. Mr. Johnson's bid was \$5 for the entire tract. However, sometime after surveying the 640-acre tract of land, John Clark sold his half interest in the tract to Stephen R. Roberts of Washington County. On February 8, 1848, Mahala sold an undivided one half interest in the 640-acre tract of land to Stephen Roberts for \$1.³⁷ Thus, apparently, Mahala and her two orphaned sons, received nothing from her third husband's Headright because she lost half of it to the agent who located the land and lost the other half to the tax man. Unfortunately, the remaining records of the probate of her third husband's estate have been lost.

Starting a New Family Again

Mahala had been widowed three times in little more than a decade. But, her three husbands had not left her destitute. Together with her eldest son, she owned considerable real estate. But, turning that raw land into a working farm and ranching operation would be difficult work. With only two young boys to help, she did not remain a widow for long. Mahala Nixon married Daniel Stuckey on December 17, 1849.³⁸ He had been married previously, perhaps twice, before he left his home in Mississippi. Daniel appears in the 1850 Census of Grimes County with his wife, Mahala, and five children.³⁹ The three Stuckey boys, Robert, Prue, and Pad, were his sons by a previous marriage. James Tuttle and George W. Flint were his new stepsons. Daniel, a 50-year-old farmer, owned no real estate. Mahala was listed as 33 years old and born in Virginia. James Tuttle was listed as 11 years old and George W. Flint was listed as 9 years old. Both were born in Texas. It is interesting to note that the 11-year-old James Tuttle is listed as the owner of real estate worth \$1,476. The census schedules indicate that Daniel did not own any slaves.

³⁵ Patent No. 154, Volume 4, Conditional Certificate No. 982, File No. GON-2-21.

³⁶ Guadalupe Deeds, Book B, Page 199.

³⁷ Guadalupe Deeds, Book G, Page 349.

³⁸ Marriage Records, Grimes County, Texas, Marriage Book H, Page 20. Grimes County Courthouse, Anderson, Texas. (Hereinafter cited as Grimes Marriages.)

³⁹ 1850 Census, Population Schedules, Grimes County, Texas, Page 759.

In 1850, Daniel Stuckey farmed just 18 acres of improved land and 857 acres of unimproved land, valued at \$800.⁴⁰ His livestock included three horses, ten cows, twenty-four cattle, and fifty swine valued at \$295. With just \$15 worth of farming implements, he produced two hundred fifty bushels of corn, ten bushels of irish potatoes, one hundred ninety pounds of butter, one hundred thirty pounds of beeswax and honey, \$20 of home manufactured goods, and \$90 of slaughtered products. Some portion of the corn, butter, beeswax, and honey production may have been sold for cash, with the remainder reserved for home consumption.

Providence smiled upon Daniel and Mahala as they added to their considerable land holdings. On January 10, 1853, Daniel purchased a 100-acre tract from David H. Jones for \$180 and, on December 8, 1853, he purchased another 164 acres of land from Levin E. Jones for \$82.⁴¹ The two adjacent tracts, located on the Timothy Jones Headright, brought their total land holdings to 2,793 acres. Daniel paid taxes on the three tracts in 1854 and again in 1855. The 1855 tax rolls clearly indicate that Daniel had disposed of 1,476 acres of the J. W. Tuttle Headright. He had not sold that land. Rather, it had been partitioned away from him to his stepson James W. Tuttle by order of the Fort Bend County Court.

On September 21, 1855, Daniel and Mahala sold 876 acres of the J. W. Tuttle Headright for \$1,084.60 to David Turner.⁴² In 1856 and 1857, Daniel paid taxes on just 264 acres from the Timothy Jones Headright and 177 acres from the Tuttle Headright. On August 7, 1858, Daniel sold the 100-acre tract to Jeremiah Spurline for \$500, earning a 178 percent profit.⁴³ Mahala did not sign the deed. In 1858, Daniel paid taxes only on the 164 acres remaining from the Timothy Jones Headright. Thus, it appears that Daniel sold the last 177 acres from the Tuttle Headright between the tax assessments of 1857 and 1858. However, they did not sell that tract until two years later. On May 22, 1860, Daniel Stuckey, his wife Mahala, and her son James W. Tuttle, sold their entire interest in the labor of land granted to her first husband in 1841.⁴⁴ George W. Lawrence purchased the 177-acre tract for \$250. The tract was located in that portion of Grimes County that became part of the new Waller County in 1873. In 1858, Daniel paid the taxes for a 320-acre tract that was part of the G. W. Lawrence Headright in Bosque County.

In 1855, Elisha Floyd took an enumeration of the free white population in Grimes County between the ages of six and sixteen for public school purposes.⁴⁵ D. Stuckey was listed in

⁴⁰ 1850 Census, Agricultural Schedules, Grimes County, Texas, Page 4.

⁴¹ Grimes Deeds, Book C, Page 368 and Book A-2, Page 174.

⁴² Grimes Deeds, Book C-2, Page 566.

⁴³ Grimes Deeds, Book C-2, Page 530.

⁴⁴ Grimes Deeds, Book D-2, Page 68. Land Records, Waller County, Texas, Deed Book F, Page 294. Waller County Courthouse, Hempstead, Texas.

⁴⁵ Texas Scholastics, 1854-5. Copied from the originals in the Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas by Gifford White, 1979.

District No. 2 with one male child. On October 27, 1856, Daniel was appointed to administer the estate of his eldest son, Benjamin, who had died the previous August or September.⁴⁶ As administrator, Daniel paid the taxes on behalf of his son's estate for the years 1857 and 1858. On March 21, 1860, Daniel purchased from his son's estate a 204-acre parcel of the G. W. Seaton Headright for \$650.⁴⁷ The land was situated north of Gibbon's Creek, near Mitchell's Ferry on the Navasota River. Thus, Daniel and Mahala's land holdings continued to grow. One wonders whether they simply held the land for speculative purposes or whether they used or leased it for rangeland.

On August 3, 1860, Daniel Stuckey paid \$1,000 to D. K. Jones to purchase a 279½-acre part of the southeastern corner of the Uriah Sanders Headright.⁴⁸ On September 10, 1860, he paid \$75 to D. H. Jones for an additional 150 acres from the Timothy Jones Headright.⁴⁹ Beginning in 1861, he paid taxes on 314 acres from the Jones Headright, 206 acres from the Seaton Headright, and 279 acres from the Sanders Headright in Grimes County, and 320 acres from the Lawrence Headright in Bosque County, a total of 1,119 acres. However, no record has been found of them acquiring land in Bosque County.

By 1860, Daniel Stuckey had amassed much real estate in Grimes County. He is listed in the census as a 60-year-old farmer.⁵⁰ He valued his personal property at \$2,071 and his real estate at \$4,000. Mahala reported that she was 43 years old and born in Virginia. Living in their household were George W., Simon, Nancy, Charles W., and Lucinda. Daniel Stuckey owned three slaves: a 28-year-old male, 13-year-old female, and 70-year-old female.⁵¹ His farm consisted of 40 acres of improved land and 122 acres of unimproved land and was valued at \$250.⁵² His livestock was valued at \$200 and consisted of three horses, two mules, twenty-five cows, sixteen oxen, one hundred seventy-five cattle, and one hundred swine. His farm implements and machinery were valued at \$100. The previous year the farm produced three hundred bushels of corn, ten bushels of irish potatoes, fifty bushels of sweet potatoes, two hundred pounds of butter, and \$50 worth of slaughtered animals.

From the census, it is evident that times were flush for the Stuckey family. Their land holdings had increased substantially. The number of acres under cultivation more than

⁴⁶ Probate Records, Grimes County, Texas, Probate Book M, Pages 329 and 330. Grimes County Courthouse, Anderson, Texas.

⁴⁷ Grimes Deeds, Book D, Pages 469 and 471.

⁴⁸ Grimes Deeds, Book D, Page 663.

⁴⁹ Grimes Deeds, Book D, Page 662.

⁵⁰ 1860 Census, Population Schedules, Grimes County, Texas, Page 105.

⁵¹ 1860 Census, Slave Schedules, Grimes County, Texas, Page 67.

⁵² 1860 Census, Agricultural Schedules, Grimes County, Texas, Page 20.

trebled from twelve to forty. Annual crop production increased, but only modestly. Sweet potatoes were the only additional crop. However, during the decade, Daniel acquired significantly more and better farm implements and machinery. Moreover, the largest increase was in livestock production. Both mules and oxen were added. Sixteen oxen indicate production for sale rather than just for use on the home farm. The number of cows more than doubled, the number of cattle increased more than seven fold, and the number of swine doubled. It is evident that Daniel favored livestock production over cash crops such as cotton, wheat, or other grains. Also, it is curious that he stopped production of beeswax and honey. Perhaps, keeping bees was too much trouble, not profitable, or just not significant enough to have been included.

Daniel Stuckey purchased a 100-acre tract, part of the Joseph F. Gilbert Headright, from J. C. Thomas of Leon County for \$180.⁵³ On January 28, 1869, Daniel sold the 204 acres from the Seaton Headright for \$650 to his son Prue Stuckey.⁵⁴ Then, Daniel sold the 279 acres from the Sanders Headright, on April 12, 1869, to Christine Cramer for \$450.⁵⁵ On August 7, 1869, Daniel deeded to Nancy Jennie Tuttle, the daughter of James and Jane Tuttle, for love and affection the land that he had purchased from William G. Howard just two days previous.⁵⁶ The deed does not explain any relationship between Daniel Stuckey and Nancy Tuttle. It is clear that he bought the 215 acres of land for her because he loved his step grand daughter. The tract had been part of the William G. Howard Headright. Daniel next purchased two tracts of land from the County at the public tax sale. The first tract contained 215 acres previously owned by James Tuttle and cost \$90.⁵⁷ The second tract consisted of a 100-acre portion of the Joseph Gilbert Headright.⁵⁸ On January 1, 1872, Daniel conveyed the 100-acre tract to his step son George W. Flint.⁵⁹

Again, the couple was enumerated in the Grimes County census of 1870.⁶⁰ Daniel reported that he was 78 years old, was a farmer, and owned personal property worth \$600 and real estate worth \$400. Mahala reported that she was 53 years old and had been born in Virginia. Living with them were their children, Nancy and Benjamin. He valued his farm, which consisted of 12 acres of improved land and 194 acres of unimproved land, at \$125. He valued the farm implements and machinery at \$16. His livestock, which he valued at \$200, consisted of two horses, six cows, eight oxen, ten cattle, and six swine.

⁵³ Grimes Deeds, Book E, Page 554.

⁵⁴ Grimes Deeds, Book E, Page 694.

⁵⁵ Grimes Deeds, Book E, Page 576.

⁵⁶ Grimes Deeds, Book F, Page 81.

⁵⁷ Grimes Deeds, Book F, Page 194.

⁵⁸ Grimes Deeds, Book J, Page 578.

⁵⁹ Grimes Deeds, Book J, Page 578.

⁶⁰ 1870 Census, Population Schedules, Grimes County, Texas, Page 262.

The farm produced two hundred bushels of corn, three bales of cotton, sixty bushels of sweet potatoes, and forty pounds of butter.

The defeat of the Confederacy brought hard times to most Texans and financial ruin to many others. Many were forced to sell most of their land, much of it for depressed prices. By 1870, Daniel Stuckey had only twelve acres in agricultural production. Of course, he had lost his slaves. Most of his farm implements and machinery also were sold. Crop production consisted only of corn, cotton, sweet potatoes, and butter. No doubt, cotton was their primary cash crop, as the livestock had fallen dramatically.

On November 3, 1871, Daniel and Mahala Stuckey of Grimes County sold their tract of land in Bosque County to Green P. Williamson for \$400.⁶¹ The 320-acre tract was the separate property of Mahala, indicating that she had either purchased it in her own right or inherited it from one of her previous husbands. Both were required to sign the deed, thus demonstrating that both were literate. The tract was located on the south side of the Bosque River, 11 miles west of Meridian, and was part of the G. W. Lawrence Headright.

In the three census records, Mahala was listed successively as aged 33, 47, and 53 years of age. According to her tombstone at the Enon Cemetery near Iola, Mahala died on July 22, 1873, aged 56 years, 2 months, and 11 days. As the only record of her full date of birth, it agrees with two of the census entries. Her tombstone is unusual for that time and place in that it records her marriage to Daniel Stuckey on December 17, 1849. Women, especially on the frontier, left few records and Mahala was no exception. Other than what was recorded on three census schedules, two marriage licenses, two tax rolls, a few deeds, and a tombstone, we know very little about Mahala as an individual. Most of the records that mention her are more concerned about her husband than her. At least those records prove that she was literate. She was reared in a poor, yet beautiful, section of Appalachia, came to Texas with her parents, married, and raised a family.

She was instrumental in carving their farm and homestead out of the Texas wilderness. No doubt her life was typical of a mid Nineteenth Century farmer's wife in the American South. She was a homemaker in the literal and traditional sense, but life on the Texas frontier was both more difficult and dangerous. Her struggle was complicated by the fact that she so often became widowed. Yet, she persevered through her adversity. The decade just before the Civil War was good to Mahala and her family. Their farm grew and prospered. The acquisition of three slaves represented a certain, relative level of economic success for Daniel and his family. That success also is evident in his significant acquisition of real estate.

It can only be assumed that Mahala supported the secession of her adopted State of Texas from the Union and the formation of the new Confederacy. Her family owned slaves. Her sons, stepsons, and brothers wore Confederate gray. With no evidence to the contrary, it is presumed that, at least at first, she was an ardent Confederate as were many of her neighbors. Although the War itself remained distant, the impacts from the Civil

⁶¹ Land Records, Bosque County, Texas, Deed Book K, Page 27. Bosque County Courthouse, Meridian, Texas.

War were devastating to many Texans. Mahala's family was no exception.

The children of Daniel and Mahala (Chaney) Stuckey were:

4. i. Nancy E., born June 30, 1854 in Grimes County, Texas.
5. ii. Benjamin, born circa 1857 in Grimes County, Texas.
6. iii. Charles W., born circa 1860 in Grimes County, Texas.

In three successive census records, Daniel Stuckey was listed as 50, 60, and 78 years old. Similar confusion is evident in listing his place of birth successively as North Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi. The apparent confusion over his date and place of birth may result from the census enumerator obtaining the information from other family members, hired hands, or even neighbors. In any event, when Daniel signed the voter registration roll on August 14, 1867, he gave his place of birth as South Carolina. Soon after the death of Mahala, Daniel moved to Hill County, where he married his widowed sister-in-law Evaliza in 1873. Evaliza was Mahala's younger sister. Oral tradition handed down through the family indicates that Daniel and Evaliza hosted a large celebration one Sunday afternoon during the summer of 1873. After the celebration the two left Grimes County, rode off in their buggy, and were never seen by their Stuckey relations again. More information about Daniel and Evaliza may be found in the article titled *Evaliza Chaney, Texas Matriarch*.⁶²

Conclusion

The foregoing article summarizes all that is known about Mahala Chaney and her four husbands, James Wooster Tuttle, William Flint, Richard Nixon, and Daniel Stuckey. The author is indebted to the staff of the Texas State Land Office, Texas State Library and Archives, various county courthouses, Clayton Library in Houston, and the Dallas Public Library for their patience, knowledge, and assistance. Special thanks are due to Michael Stuckey who has kindly shared his research and offered insightful analysis and valuable suggestions.

* 5427 Mission Road, Fairway, Kansas 66205. Member, Texas State Genealogical Society.

⁶² *Evaliza Chaney, Texas Matriarch*, **STIRPES**, Quarterly Publication of Texas State Genealogical Society, Volume 43, Number 4, December 2003.