

Amonett Family Newsletter
Volume #1 Chapter #8
May 1989 - by Glen Amonett

Several years have elapsed since I wrote my last family newsletter in 1983. I was less active during the critical illness and loss of my wife Edith in August of 1986.

Secretaries over the past 20 years have been Faye, then Laudane, and Marjorie has had the job a couple of years. The president is Red (Thayne) Amonett, and this year I'll resume the job as editor of the Family Newsletter.

Laudane wrote a newsletter in '87 so lets number it chapter #7 and I'll call this one chapter #8. The reunion this year only will be June 25, 1989, at the club house 5012-50th St. in Lubbock, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

After this year we expect to return to the old date of the second Sunday in June, at the same place.

Truman and Wanda Irwin celebrated their 50th anniversary.

Mary's mother, Mrs. Tommie Findley, passed away in Feb. '89

Odessa's husband, Fred McPherson, passed away in 1988.

Kay and Johnny Rodriguez have a new baby (Eldon's Granddaughter).

Sharon and Carl Amonett have a new baby (my granddaughter).

Kay and Jim Shaw have a new Grand Child. It's Joey's son.

John Thomas and Audrey have moved to Ruidoso. John couldn't resist that house beside the golf course.

The rugged life of earlier generations leads me to admire their activities and accomplishments. Therefore let us go back to the earliest ancestors of which we have any record.*

You already know something about Jacob Amonett from previous family history, who immigrated to Virginia colony in 1700 with his wife Judith and four children. These immigrants were on the move because of religious warfare in France. Churches of the Huguenots (Protestants) were being burned, their property confiscated and often their children forcibly converted to Catholicism.

The religious warfare had flared anew in 1685 when King Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, which had kept some degree of religious peace for more than 80 years. (See your encyclopedia).

When the religious war was at its peak, huge numbers of refugees came on foot from southern France, where they had lost all their possessions except what

they could carry. This stream of refugees passed through Loudun in western France where the Protestants were strong.

Loudun was the home of Jacob Amonett, our relative that immigrated to Virginia. The given name of Jacob was popular in the family. The records show that as early as 1634, there were three strong Protestant families in Loudun, headed by Jacob, Pierre and Matthew Amonett. This Jacob Amonett of 1634 was the right age to be the Grandfather of our relative Jacob Amonett who came to Virginia colony in 1700. Records indicate that a French army officer Jacob Amonett under Captain Delmont of Paris was active in both France and Holland in helping the Huguenots escape. Jacob Amonett was knighted and his coat of arms indicates that he was an officer in both armies. He followed William III into England. William III was known as William of Orange. Jacob's military service could account for his arriving ten years later at the Virginia colony than his wife's parents.

The destination of the Huguenot refugees was Holland, which had religious liberty after a century of turmoil. Jacob and Judith joined the migration to Holland and on to England but they didn't leave England until 1700 aboard the sailing ship "Nassau".

The migration from France to Holland and other points involved about 50,000 Frenchmen over a period of years, and going from Loudun to Holland were two brothers, Pierre and Dr. Estienne Chastain and their families. Pierre and wife Magdaleine were parents of Judith Chastain, born about 1665 and married to Jacob Amonett in Loudun about 1681.

France and England were at war at this time. A nobleman of Holland (William III) was gaining influence in directing the English military campaign. William III was a military success and married an heiress to the English throne, and became the King of England. (See your encyclopedia for additional details).

Many of the Huguenot refugees had followed William III across the channel and helped him secure the English throne. After he became King of England, William III arranged for 300 Huguenots to go to the colony in Virginia in 1690. There were three ship loads, and Pierre and Dr. Estienne Chastain and their families were among those immigrants, and were among the founders of the settlement at Manakintown, near Richmond Virginia. Manakintown was named for an extinct local Indian tribe.

King William III in 1700 made arrangements for four more ship loads of Huguenots to come to Virginia Colony, and many of them settled at Manakintown. Among those immigrants were Jacob and Judith Amonett and their four children. The records of King William Parish in 1714 show that a fifth child had been born to Jacob and Judith after their arrival in Virginia and that at that time (1714) Judith was deceased.

Intense religious feelings continued to be a part of the Huguenot heritage, and a religious division shortly caused a large part of the settlement to re-locate to South Carolina, another Huguenot stronghold.

With the organization of King William Parish in 1707, Jacob Amonett was a vestryman from that date (12/20/1707) until July 30, 1722 and church warden in 1710, 1711, and 1725. He died Oct. 5, 1725, in King William Parish. Henrico County was originally a large county and as the settlements grew Chesterfield County and Gooch land became divisions of Henrico County.

Richmond would become famous one hundred and sixty years later as the capital of the Confederacy in the War Between the States, but at the time Jacob Amonett was there it was only a village, and not incorporated. I was in Richmond Virginia in October 1988, and I found myself wondering which of those broad concrete highways would have been only Indian trails back in the days of Grandpa Jacob Amonett, nearly 300 years ago.

The old farmstead could be located by checking the court records. Two land grants were issued to Jacob Amonett in 1716 in Henrico County, one for 88 acres and the other for 186 acres. In the days when plowing was done with oxen, those were large farms.

A third generation American, Reuben Amonett, moved south to farm in the hills of Tennessee. Reuben died of wounds in the war of 1812, leaving a widow with six children at home. From those six children came the descendents that moved to Texas, and here we are.

Glen Amonett
Petersburg, Texas
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*Credit for family records is due to Mrs. R. Tate Bowen of Laurel, Mississippi.