Doc and Mary,

This is the first draft of the narrative I have written about the two Elizabeths. Each of you have been more than helpful and I would not want to get anything wrong. Please review and let me know, pro or con, what needs to be done. After your ok I plan to send it out to the family and take copies to the family reunion for those I miss with email.

My naming of the attachments is strange, due to my typing. Page 1 is really page 1 and 2. Page 2 is page three. Then comes 4 and 5. Microsoft word still messes me up on new documents.

Thanks. love, Kay

Elizabeth Corder and Elizabeth Clanton

Wives of William Blakeney

Prepared by Kay Phurrough Blakeney

Elizabeth Corder was William Blakeney’s first wife. Very little is known about this young woman. The 1850 Federal Census of Fayette County, Al has this entry:

Blakney, William, 18,m, born Ala

Elizabeth, 18,f, born Ala

Dr. Lanthus Blakeney, Adolph’s father, made notes about family births, deaths, marriages

in the back of John Oscar Blakeney’s book. This is his notation about William and Elizabeth Corder Blakeney: “William was married, Lizzie Corder, 1849; two children Thomas 1850 and Venson 1853. His wife died about 1854 and he married Lizzie Clanton in 1856”

This is all that I could find about Elizabeth Corder Blakeney. Based on the 1850 census of age of 18 she would have been about 22 years old when she died, leaving two young children, a toddler and a baby. One wonders who took care of these children while William farmed. This is a possibility; ***it is not a fact,*** that they were cared for by one of the two slave women in Thomas Blakeney’s household until William remarried. It is also possible that her parents helped care for them.

There is no record of where she was buried but it’s likely, **not fact,** that she was buried in the First Shepherd Church Cemetery where Sarah Blakeney, William’s mother, is buried. Again, according to the 1850 census, William and Elizabeth lived in the household next to Thomas Blakeney, his father. This would have been the closest cemetery and there were family connections. Today this cemetery has only two identified graves, but numerous ones marked with stones scattered under the trees.

A further look at the 1850 census of Fayette County lists three (3) Corder families, but there is nothing to connect her with any of them.

William married Elizabeth Clanton in 1856 according to Dr. Lanthus’ notes. They appear in the 1860 census of Fayette County:

Blakney, William, 27,m, farmer, born Ala

Elizabeth, 23,f, housekeeper, born Ala

Thomas, 10, m

James Vincent, 8, m

Newton, 5, m

Ann, f, 1

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They had one other child, Martha Jane, born in 1860. William, Elizabeth and the children lived in the next household to Thomas Blakeney.

In 1861 William enlisted with the Confederate Army from Pickens County for the duration of the war. This left Elizabeth to care for herself and five (5) children.

Unfortunately William died in the late fall of 1863, at a church turned military hospital in Charleston, TN. This left Elizabeth with uncertain support for herself and the children. Family accounts of this time relate that Thomas Blakeney cared for Elizabeth and the children while William was away at war and after his death.

Elizabeth Clanton Blakeney married Thomas Ashcraft on March 23, 1866, becoming his second wife. Thomas Ashcraft was about 53 at this time, Elizabeth in her early 30’s.

According to Mary Davis Elmore Thomas Ashcraft and Thomas Blakeney were acquainted, if not friends. In her research on the Ashcrafts she reports seeing documents that were signed by both of them. Also for a short time Thomas Ashcraft lived in Fayette County.

Elizabeth and Thomas Ashcraft had one child, Thomas Sidney Ashcraft, born May 25, 1867. Elizabeth died November 21 of the same year. Their child was about 6 months old. She is buried at Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery in Pickens County, Al (Ashcraft Corners) According to the information that Mary Davis Elmore has about Thomas and Elizabeth; Elizabeth was about 35 when she died. This may or may not be correct.

Thomas Ashcraft was born May 23, 1813 in Anson County, SC. He died February 10, 1880 and is also buried at Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery in Pickens County.

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Dr. Adolph L. Blakeney remembers that his grandfather, Newton, always talked about being raised by Thomas and that there was never any mention of his mother. Dr. Rhodes Holliman, grandson of Belza Ann Blakeney Baker, also has memories of her account of living with Thomas. He also remembers that she told him that Elizabeth’s full name was Amelia Elizabeth Clanton. A few days before learning her name from Dr. Holliman Mary Davis Elmore had told me about the David Clanton family in Pickens County and we had looked at the names listed on the 1850 census record. I knew that one of the children listed was Amelia E. I had not shared this information with Dr. Holliman. Back to Mary to recheck on this new information.

Mary contacted Betty Price Allen in Bryan, Texas with this information. Betty is a descendant of John Clanton, 1850 census, who is the son of David Clanton and the brother of Amelia E. Clanton. Betty has done a lot of research on the Clanton’s in this area and feels sure this is our Elizabeth Clanton. She has found no record of another Clanton female named Amelia E.. Interestingly John Marion Clanton married Sarah Jane Ashcraft. Sarah was the daughter of Thomas Ashcraft and Rebecca Cannon Ashcraft. Same Thomas that married Elizabeth Clanton. (Mary Davis Elmore has done research on many families in West Alabama and is also related to theAshcrafts)

1850 Federal Census of Pickens County, Alabama (microfilm, Tuscaloosa Public Library) House number 1714, family number 1762

David Clanton, 46, m, farmer, born SC

Epsebeth, 40, f, born Ga

Sarah J., 20, f, “

John, 19, m, farmer “

Amelia E., 16, f, “

Richard W., 14, m, born Ala

Hepsey C. 12, f, “

David S., 10, m, “

Mary, 8, f, “

Jessie, 4, m, “

Jahu(?), 1, m, “

If one accepts that this is, in fact, our Elizabeth based on her age of 16 in 1850 she would have been about 22 when she married William and about 33 when she died.

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**Children of Elizabeth Corder and William Blakeney**

John Thomas Blakney-he was born Dec. 25, 1849 and died in 1928. He married Lydia Ann Nabors in 1868. They are buried at Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery in Pickens County, Al. (Ashcraft Corners)

James Vincent Blakney- he was born on May 1, 1850 and died on April 30, 1936. He was married to Evelyn Shepherd, 1873, and Sarah Elizabeth Thornton, 1881.Sarah and Vincent are buried at Ashcraft Memorial Cemetery, Ashcraft Corners, Fayette County, Alabama.

**Children of Elizabeth Clanton and William Blakeney**

Newton David Blakeney-he was born Feb. 8, 1857 and died Nov. 5, 1937. He married Molly Lindsey. They are both buried at Chapel Hill Cemetery on County Road 12, west of Newtonville in Fayette County, Alabama.

Belza Ann Blakeney-she was born Sept. 18, 1859 and died March 16, 1960. She was nearly 101 years old. She married George Washington Baker. They are both buried at Shepherd Baptist Church Cemetery at Newtonville in Fayette County, Alabama.

Martha Jane Blakeney-she was born in 1860 and died in 1936. She married Thomas Raymond Wright. Both are buried at Chapel Hill Cemetery, County Road 12, west of Newtonville in Fayette County, Alabama.

**Children of Elizabeth Clanton Blakeney Ashcraft and Thomas Ashcraft**

Thomas Sidney Ashcraft-he was born May 25, 1867 and died March 21, 1949.Adolph remembers that as an adult he lived in Birmingham and was a carpenter.

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**Sources:**

1.Dr. Lanthus Blakeney, Personal Notes

2. 1850 Federal Census Pickens County, Microfilm

3. 1850 Federal Census of Pickens County, Ala, compiled by Herbert and Jeanie Newell,

1st. Ed.

4. 1850 Federal Census of Fayette County, Ala, compiled by Herbert and Jeanie Newell

Photocopy, 1987

5.Mary D. Elmore, Notes and Research, e-mail and personal discussions with KPB

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6.Dr. Rhodes Holliman, Personal Knowledge and Research

7. Walt Holliman, “Blakeney Family Dates and Marriages”, Committee Report, August

10, 2000

8. Dr. Adolph L. Blakeney, Personal Knowledge

9. Betty Price Allen, e-mail correspondence

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