

FAMILY ARTICLE OF INTEREST

FEBRUARY 1998

This article was submitted by Joseph V. Farrar, Jr. The article was published in the Northwest Arkansas Morning News, Sunday, January 19, 1986. The article describes the rediscovery of the Farrar Cemetery in Benton County Arkansas:

FARRAR FAMILY HAS STRONG ROOTS IN BENTON COUNTY HISTORY: (By Billie Jines)

Today's increased interest in family history often brings together people descending from different lines of a distant common progenitor. Some have not known or heard of each other before, yet a few generations back, they had the same ancestor. One family I've had occasion to learn about that is doing interesting things is the Farrar family with roots here in Benton County.

Two different descendants of an early-day Benton County man come from different lines, but both, by coincidence, live in the same California town. Woody Farrar and Joseph V. Farrar, Jr. are both researching their ancestry, and each has made a trip back here to our county in his search for more information.

These two are among many Farrars and Farrar descendants who belong to an expanding family organization that is doing some things of mutual interest.

When Woody came to research in Benton County several years ago, he, through help of Lillian Fagala of Cave Springs, found the grave of his great-grandfather, Albert Galiton Farrar, in an "Unknown" cemetery on private land a mile west of Cave Springs. There were 34 graves in the old graveyard. All but four were marked only with rocks.

Woody searched for the grave of Albert G. Farrar's father, John Howard Farrar, but failed to find it. He knew John H. was buried in Benton County, John H. and four of his married children in 1851 had come from Tennessee to Benton County. His wife, Elizabeth, and their other children remained in Tennessee. Some years later, John H. died here in this county before she died in Tennessee.

Last year, Joseph V. Farrar, Jr. also came to Benton County researching the family. Woody had told him about the cemetery. Joseph met Geneva Farrar of Cave Springs, whose late husband also descended from John H. Farrar. They went to the cemetery, where Albert G. and other Farrars were known to be buried and looked at the unlettered stones. Later, writing in the second issue of "The Farrar News," Joseph said:

"When I first saw this rustic, rural site and it slowly dawned on me these were all Farrars and Farrar kin, the urge to save and preserve this secluded sanctuary became overpowering. Especially so for I had been seeking the burial place of our Great-Great Grandfather John (Jack) Howard Farrar. He is here, somewhere under one of these unmarked stones."

The result was that Joseph and Geneva and her son and daughter-in-law, Vern and Vickie Farrar, and their school-aged children, Vonda and Valerie, had an old-fashioned Ozarks working at the cemetery. First they asked for and were given the enthusiastic permission of the land owners, Paul and Debra Hughes.

Then began the work: removal of 10 dead trees, the clearing and burning of “briars, brambles, underbrush and low-hanging limbs;” and installation of a good strong fence around the 70 by 50 foot area. No longer would the cemetery be designated “Unknown” Joseph wrote, for a steel sign hanging over the entrance now states, “Farrar.” The costs involved were divided between Joseph, Geneva and Woody.

Nor is this all the family has started or done. Back in 1978, they held their first reunion at Smithon, Ill. Last June, the Farrar Reunion was held at the Bob Farrar property near Wirth in the Mammoth Spring area. It was decided to join forces to build a pavilion there for future reunions. The 1986 reunion will begin on Father’s Day and some will be staying a week. During the week, still more work will be done on the pavilion, the footing of which already has been poured.

Meantime, it was discovered that down at Baton Rouge, La., the Farrar Printing Co. was owned by another of Geneva’s sons, Tony, and his wife, Joan. They volunteered to do any mass printing the reunion organization needed. Two beautifully prepared and executed issues of “The Farrar News” have now been completed and sent out. They contain updates on projects, profiles of members and their accomplishments and bits of family history.

Joseph V. Farrar, Jr. is secretary of the organization. His address is P.O. Box 27703, Escondido, CA 92027. The other officers are President Barbara L. Farrar Williams of Chatham, Ill.; Treasurer Robert L. Farrar, Rt. 2 Mammoth Springs; and Historian Jill A. Farrar Wessel of Belleville, Ill.

John H. Farrar, the Benton County patriarch of the family, was a veteran of the War of 1812. Following his death in 1866, his widow, Elizabeth, back in Tennessee, filed an application for a military widow’s pension. In it, she included affidavits of two Benton County men, Rufus G. Robbins and J.M. Truett, stating that John H. had died in this county and that they were at his burial.

Two of the children that John H. brought with him to this county were sons, Albert G. and Junius Farrar. One of the daughters was married to a Nail and the other to a Covey. So even at that first generation here, some children who were direct descendants of John H. Farrar would not have had the Farrar name. Add to that the fact that, probably about half of those in succeeding generations were girls, whose children would be born under their married names, and it’s reasonable to think that there must be many descendants of John H. by both the Farrar and other names here.

This is mentioned to bring up the point that “The Farrar News” in large subheads says, “All Farrar descendants, families and friends welcome” at the reunion scheduled to begin on Father’s Day next June. And to this, Geneva Farrar adds this message: If you go to the reunion, you will be leaving Highway 62 at Hardy and starting toward Mammoth Spring on Highway 63. Before you get to Mammoth Spring, you will be seeing signs telling you where to turn off toward Wirth and the Farrar Family Reunion campground.