

Clyburn Family News

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BUT FOR THE LOVE OF TWO SISTERS

By Shelley Antilla

Loyalty these days has a different meaning in our world, but there was a time when the term "blood is thicker than water," was used a lot and commonly it meant that "kin" stuck together; that if you insulted one brother, you had the rest of that family on your neck, no holds barred.. It was sort of "One For All, and All For One!"

Much of that determination and family strength has deteriorated over the years, loyalty is not a virtue discussed much anymore, let alone expected, and even the institution of marriage and very existence of "family" is being assaulted clear to its roots.

This is a story of your relatives, some you didn't know you had perhaps, but it is appropriate that I tell this, as this is the summer of '08, the year that I finally managed through many years of struggles on my part--to bring the families of my mother and her sister together!

Also, I found lost "lines" of the Burris relatives which now will be restored and this family will be restored to its original roots, along with many new descendants on all sides; that neither side knew existed. I am so very pleased!!

You may have never heard of

either of these women; and both are now deceased. I believe I am the only one left to tell the tale as my mother told me, of these two girls. But if I don't tell it, WHO WILL? On my mother's side, it is a strange feeling to know that most all her kin are now



L-R: Nellie, Clara (with hat driving) and Ethel Wolff

deceased down to my generation, that makes me sort of "next" in line! I still think of myself as one of the "younger ones" in the family, but of course, that is not true anymore.

When you ponder the thought of how to tell these new "younger ones" who never heard

of any of these people, how they are connected to the story you want to tell; you realize then, how old you must be!! This also is like what they call "passing the torch on" for future generations!

This summer was the first time I had much of a chance to seriously work on family history and seriously attempt to locate lost lines. When I was a kid of around age 9, and on, my mother worked very hard to bring together her family through a series of four Family reunions in the mid-1950's.

Throughout her efforts--and you have to realize there were no computers on Xerox Copiers in those days -- you went to court houses, you typed, you made carbon sets, you literally traveled, telephoned, wrote, or went to these places yourself to locate information. It was most difficult! And in all her major efforts at this, I was nominated to help. I didn't

like it much, but I learned and absorbed a lot of all I know today from intense learning as I helped her in those early days.

So now, when I go to match up the missing lines, I know the names....and when it rings right, I still am astounded at how happy it makes me to realize we are "being

restored" to a whole family of all lines together again! I didn't know I cared this much either.

Our roots go back to the 1600's + and the historians in our families are also now coming together to consolidate what we have together, so it can be shared by everyone.

Over and over I am astounded that nobody has really done this prior to now; it is very large! You may know "half your tree" but that still leaves another "half" to learn about!

There is a "Burris" side, but there also is a "Burns" side! Nancy Riggs Burris (1787-1883) is a common ancestor name (1787-1883), who married Charles Burris (1776-1865) and came across the plains in a covered wagon with two of the children she had by Burris to El Dorado, CA.

Some of her children who were grown, remained and married back East. Prior to that though, she was married to Joseph Burns (Byrnes) and had children by him before he deceased and she remarried. These children (according to my mother) had also been raised by Nancy (and my mother said there were five + her own). *Some of the five children may have been Joseph Burns' from also a prior marriage to Nancy Riggs.*

If you look at it more closely, you will find that not only do you not have all the Burris Family Tree knowing all its branches, you also need to add in all the Burns Family Tree (step-children from Nancy Riggs Burns – Burris).....which results in a whole contingent of people on the East Coast and another on the West Coast.

Basically, none of them kept in touch except a few historian types on Burns side....and the same for the Burris side including my mother!

My goal in this has been to

bring both sides to an awareness of each other, and see that all the wonderful information my mother had, is safe and shared by all sides!

On top of this, within our family--people had fallen in the cracks. We had family that went off to New York and didn't keep in touch, and Carpenter and Washburns that became "lost" to all younger generations! What to do! But there was always an underlying note of sadness for me in all this. Think of all those wasted years that nobody knew about all the rest of the family, thinking their little group "was it."

I also knew something else.....the story of two sisters.....I had heard all of this and grown up with it--you begin to take it for granted as that is "the way it is" and you don't think too much of it, especially as a child. But in looking back at all this with fresh eyes since I had not been thinking about genealogy in many years now, I saw it through "new lens" if you will.and again, what a tragedy to have so much, and not share with what could be a whole family if we got over it's "humpty dumpty complex," and could be put together again.

Was it possible? VERY! Could we do it? Why not? I began to try again....I had done efforts along these lines before, but this would take Much more on my part. Yes we CAN. No..., Yes I CAN. I had to do it!

Mother was a walking, talking "lightning rod" of history! This woman could talk about all her family of origin just as if it was yesterday and she almost lived as much for those days past as the current ones...they never left her mind for a moment. I think personally, she got her joy

in reliving, what those past days meant to her. She knew every curve in the road from riding horseback or buggies--and many is the time--she said she would walk "along side" the buggy while the rest were in it....on roads from Comptche to places like Mendocino.

I recently received a "Wolff photo" and sure enough....all would be in the buggy but her alongside. She would have been the one to ask for stories, and learn her family history as she walked/talked her way through life.

A born historian! My mother was Nellie May Wolff, born to Clara Bell Jones Wolff, who was the daughter of Olive Jane Burris Remstedt Harmon. They say things "run in the family." Well, in this family guess what--the descendants never kept track of others for whatever reasons--EXCEPT HER! She was the older sister, born in 1906 (who could forget that year!), and she also had a younger sister Ethel Bell Wolff born 1910. The rest were all boys and rowdy and it seemed (and I would bet it true), that my mother "ran the roost" for her mother. Apparently Clara, her mother, was not well often and would be busy having children. Life on homesteads was tough in those days and most of the work had to be done by hand.

Many times in the photo albums, when I would ask my mother who the people were...she would always say... "Oh, that's my mother, but that photo doesn't count, my mother was ill when it was taken, look at another." It seemed she said that every time I asked, so I gathered she wasn't well too often.

My mother had a special love for her sister Ethel, and when she told stories about her, there often were tears in her eyes, sadness,



Nellie Wolff

I have inherited Clara's "bent" for sewing, designing clothing, and so actually ended up in my lifetime, having a career in fashion, owning a vintage fashion store, and designing vintage clothing for weddings, movies. Costuming and hats were my speciality. I still have Clara's old treadle sewing machine---and when I think I am too good on my own--I take a hard

now.....and as she stood where this dirt-floor cabin would have stood, now long burned down, she was so overcome with emotion and tears, she could not speak. To the back of this cabin down an incline was the creek....and she ran off down that way, much as I guess she would have done as a child....., said she had to go stand in the creek. Apparently in her day it was full of fish and said at times she could have gone there and grabbed out salmon in her hands if lucky. The creek was nearly dry!

My mother was a packrat if I ever saw one! You name it, she probably had it....if you could find it. That tendency took over in later life to a not-so-wonderful trait. But as a child I learned bits about her sister Ethel, through the small amount of items that she had which had belonged to Ethel. There were not many, but every time I hit one....the story about it was repeated.

My goal now (amazing still to me!) for a long time has been to locate Ethel's descendants, tell the story, and pass these few items on. My mother--and now me--well, we

and always this tremendous feeling of loss. I grew up with it but never understood it. Like walking on sacred ground--but why?

One of the small pleasures for women in those days, if they had the "bent for it," which many did as a chance to express their creative talents, was sewing clothing. They did it all, many of them, without thinking about it. They used a gadget (I still have Clara's) which was called a "patternmaker" that was supposedly a combination of all possible ways to measure parts of a body, to make your own pattern.

It was made of light balsa wood, with all sorts of curves and angles with measurement marks on it. I also have the torn and worn-out instructions on tattered paper on how to use it.

Clara it seemed, was an excellent seamstress and would add funds to their family by taking in sewing for others as well as laundry at times. She also worked as a cook in the logging camps and my mother also told me stories her mother had told her.

look at that sewing machine and know it came from good genes and God.....so not to take too much credit!

It seemed Clara would be so busy she couldn't do all she had to do to manage life for her family, and needed my mother's running things at home. My mother would tell me tales of having to can peaches, learn what to do, cook and feed kids, and manage all her mother's chores while her mother was away working for others, or ill.

Later on as a married grownup, I took my mother back to visit this Comptche spot, where a modern house stands



Ethel Wolff

have been the "caretakers" of this, waiting to pass it on to Ethel's descendants and now is that time.

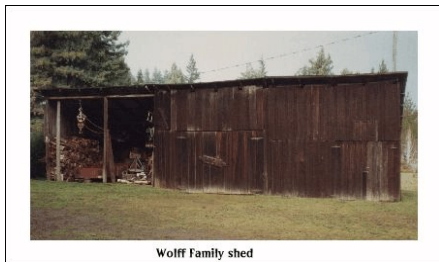
Finally this summer we have touched base with some of them!

Here is a photo of Nellie at Comptche, and I would figure sometime shortly after the 1920's as she has her hair bobbed....she also gave me a story about life in the 1920's and how girls went out and had long hair cut off and into bobs. Looks like she has five dogs, sitting on old car, and on back of photo she has written "Me and my dogs! We have another little dog but he would not stay with us. They had a fight so the little one skipped out. You can see I'm even holding them down with my feet. Love, Nellie"

All the dogs want to be in her lap! She was ever a tomboy, running around in overalls Or jeans in later years.

Although close in age, between Nellie and Ethel, it seemed Nellie was always being swept into the routine of working hard to keep things going and not playing as much, Ethel was younger and more protected.

On Flynn Creek Rd, which leads up to The Comptche ranch, here is a picture of Ethel sitting on the bridge when it still was wood timbers, before they built the metal bridge. Nobody in past history books has photos of this bridge so this is a valuable photograph and rare. Mom said as kids they always sat on this one sticking-out board and would go swimming, and play games, also this was a place to take one's shoes off!



Wolff Family shed

Here are two shots of the only buildings that were built by the Wolff family, that are still standing today. This is a wooden shed and I

took my mother to visit this spot maybe three times before she passed on, and we met and talked with the current home owners whose name is Holmes. In the second pix is left to right, Mr. Holmes (now passed on) And Mike Geniella (a cousin from Sara Burns side, works for The Press Democrat in Ukiah and is retiring).



Mr. Holmes and Mike Geniella (a distant Burns Cousin)

If you see the fence on the right-hand side of photo, that is out where the front gate entrance was, and mother said when she was a child and first moved there, the old remaining hulk of what was once the oxen wagon they had come across the plains in, sat there for many years. Bit by bit it was plucked apart and wheels gone and parts disappeared. People left the wagons by property entrances.

She said that in her family they were always told to "never forget" their roots and how they got here, and the wagon was always to be a reminder....and they gave each one of their family "some thing" that had come across the plains in that wagon. They gave my mother a wooden old pine "pie cupboard" with a punched tin door and a turn-knob at the top. Although called a "pie safe" she said they used this wooden piece to store all their foodstuffs and things like meat in, to keep flies and animals OUT.

I do not know what anyone else received, she never said, but she treasured this old Cupboard in garages, houses, wherever she went. I still have it and have had to restore it as the door was solid rust, and was all falling apart.



Nellie Wolff and Robert Antilla

This photo is one of the happiest of my mother--ever--and it was the last time that I had taken her to visit this Comptche location.

My mother had a heart murmur her whole life which caused her, in later life, to live with an enlarged heart and other problems. My mother lived and ate healthy her entire life and this is the way she looked for the most part before she was so ill in later life and due to medication got so very skinny. She had black hair, or very dark brown, and very nice skin, and her hair didn't turn gray at all for the longest time, and then did so suddenly; she is age 62 in this photo.

My son, Robert Liptow Antilla, in his cowboy boots, is sitting on the stump and he was age three at

the time, and within a month of this time he ended up with serious pneumonia. He was in the hospital and nearly died. Even in an oxygen tent, he wouldn't take those boots



Robert Liptow Antilla and Michelle Liptow Antilla

off.

He adored my brother and my brother, him, so the kids would fight over the boots my brother would buy for my son. Of all the places on this ranch, this made mother the most thrilled and happy of all of it. I

September 1968 - Disneyland



Charlotte (Trotzky) Antilla

didn't understand how a stump of a big old tree-- and it was huge--could make Anyone that happy!

She told me that when she was a little girl, she had played dolls, house there. She even had cups and saucers and would play up on that stump for hours whenever she had the chance. She



Howard Trotzky

never thought it would still be there....and she said it was always cut and just like that.....it was like this was her fondest memory ever!

Just to sum up what we looked like at that point in time, before going on to Ethel, here is a photo of my children--me--we had just come back from a trip to Disneyland And all photos were in same camera.

Robert Liptow Antilla and Michelle Anne Antilla, fighting over who would Get to wear which pair of cowboy boots.

Charlette "Shelley" Trotzky Antilla Sept 1968, Disneyland

Howard Ervin Trotzky, my brother, working hay-cutting fields-also on tractors And he did heavy equipment repair of many kinds; he also was a Seabee in the US Navy.

He was on a cover for John Deere as it happened, while working on building it before this system was going to be released for sales; also he was an auctioneer.

Ethel always wanted to be doing what my mother was doing, but apparently there wasn't time for lots of playing. Mom said

though, that Ethel apparently was artistic and she liked to sew as well as Clara did! When only like 13, she had worked on her beginning of many projects, an embroidered lavender-white pillow of an elegant lady. I have always treasured it and also I have her sewing basket, an unusual Indian woven basket. In amongst my things, I have always kept and treasured it as hers; wanting to give it to her daughters-in-laws, but never knew them!

Then, after I knew they must be deceased, I still had never found any Washburn descendants, after all this time!

Ethel's favorite color was lavender, and favorite flower was violets. My mother always said at Ethel's funeral the last thing mom did, was place a

bouquet of Violets in Ethel's hands. And....a white marble lamb purchased by my mother to represent peace and that "part of my mother" would always be with her family until she herself was buried there.

Ethel, my Aunt, married young, to Willis R. Washburn, and they proceeded to have two children, Robert Ellis Washburn in 1927, and Richard Lewis Washburn in 1932.

Suddenly Without warning one day at the ranch, mom said her sister had severe pains and fell over in agony. Her appendicitis had burst and before anyone could get her to a doctor or hospital, she had died.....very, very fast.

In 1935 when her death happened, she would have been 25 years old, and Dick, her younger son, only three years old! Not only was this a tragedy, it left these two little ones without a mother and for awhile it seemed that Willis left them with my mother and my mother raised them.

In grief, She said she just could hardly believe she had lost her sister, and that these two would now not have a mother so she doted on them. Come a time, she said that Willis remarried and took the boys

with him. After that, there was very little contact among any of them; she barely saw Dick and Bob, once grown....I don't know what happened or why..... (it was like they didn't exist anymore).

One of her favorite stories has to do with the little red schoolhouse at Camp 19 between Willits and Ft Bragg, that has been preserved and sits by side of road. She said at one



Camp 19 Little Red Schoolhouse

point in time they needed a substitute teacher for a bit, and there just wasn't anyone, so she filled in (she was not a teacher) and also that she took these boys with her there. My mother took care of children in her home as a livelihood, most of her life, so she probably enjoyed this as well.

To have such intense feelings and concern over her sister and these children, It seemed that once they were removed from her, all things about them eventually were absorbed into a new world for them....and she lost them all. It was so sad. I barely recall seeing these two (Bob and Dick) once or twice, with wives, and one time perhaps, their children came to our house when I was a kid. That was it!

In 1957 here was what the Joe and Nellie Trotzky family looked like at the time of these reunions; this one was in Santa Rosa Doyle Park. Photo's of this family were rare as my mother was the only one to take pictures. Joe Trotzky was Polish, raised in Wisconsin and a meat cutter, or butcher shop

owner, all his life; Nellie took care Of children, and moved to a ranch to "relive" those old memories somewhat, and she Also helped run the "mom and pop" store they had on the side in Santa Rosa.

I was Into arts and music, and had skipped school, so very young by the time I graduated from high school. My brother Howard, went through Viet Nam, never married, and was deceased at young age. It would seem that all these generations have fallen apart and gone many separate ways. I do not know their stories, their children, their hurts or their loves; I know NOTHING and until now could not even locate any of them.

Thanks to some of our new "cousins", we have started to encourage and share with each other and lift each other up in areas.

One such cousin from the Ellen Burris Benton Cook family was located in Maine this summer, again my efforts on the computer



Washburn Boys

came through after years of losing that line as well. Her name is Crickett Pulkinen, and she is home-schooling her two young girls there in Maine which is close to many of our "Knox" relatives who are buried one town over from where she lives.

I told her of my dream of locating at least first cousins like the Carpenters and Washburns, and she did it. She located and found Carol Washburn, up there living in Shingle Springs. Wouldn't you know that is right in same area as her ancestors came across the plains to gold country to get to! They all settled in El Dorado, CA! Amazing. And

during that same time period, I finally, through the phone book, located what was to be the beginning of the Carpenters. It doesn't stop there.....THESE A R E Y O U R R E L A T I V E S T O O ! Also, without Jerry De Rose and Frank Clyburn's help, and encouragement I doubt if this whole process would have made so much progress. THANKS TO ALL!

I hope to see any of you who can make it to the 2008 Remstedt Family Reunion Including all Burns-Burris relatives, in Ft Bragg, CA!



Trotzky Family, Oct 1957

Editors Note:

Folks as you can see most of this newsletter this time is a story written by my distant cousin Shelley Antilla. My Grandmother on my mothers side was Vera Ellen Burris. She married my Grandfather Earl Guyles Knight, Sr. (See photo right)



Frank Clyburn with mother Violet Knight, a daughter of Vera Burris - Mothers Day 1989 (above photo)



Earl Guyles Knight, Sr. with wife Vera Ellen Burris



August 1980

Patricia 43, Agnes 46, Violet 50, and Earl Knight 47

Patricia, Agnes, Violet, & Earl Knight, some of Vera Burris's children (above photo)



Mary Knight Welborn, Vera Burris Knight oldest daughter 1947, Oak Bar, CA (above photo)



Violet Douglas., 1977 - Wrangell, Alaska

George Edward Knight 50 yr., 1977

George Knight (Vera's oldest son) with sister Violet above



Earl Knight, Sr. with son George Edward Knight at Oak Bar, CA (Vera's oldest son)



Doris Knight Taylor and Earl Guyles Knight - 1962

Doris with brother Earl Knight, Jr. (Vera's kids above)

Folks, I hope that you enjoy this newsletter.

Your editor, Frank Clyburn

