

CHAPTER 1: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FAWCETT FAMILY

by Carl C. Fawcett (Wylie, Texas, Aug. 16, 1944)

with additions by W.B. Fawcett, Jr.

Introduction (by W.B. Fawcett, Jr.) The following document was prepared at the request of Willis A. Fawcett I largely from Carl's memory. A more detailed Fawcett Genealogy - copied by Carl from his Aunt Brancie Fawcett Carson's original many years before was also sent to Willis. Brancie lost the original document in about 1920. Carl only included his branch of the family in the document below and brought it up to date. The various versions of this history have been blended into one. Corrections and additions by W.B. Fawcett, Jr. are set off within [].

Statement by Erasmus Rigney Fawcett [written in the 1860s]

There is a tradition with the Fawcetts that their genealogy can be traced back to the French nation [and were Huguenots who fled religious persecution to Ireland and then some] through [London,] England but the first Fawcett that we have any authentic history of emigrated from England [and Ireland] to America before the American Revolution. He [Joseph] was the father of Benjamin and Benjamin was the father of Joseph, two brothers [Charles and Benjamin] and seven sisters [Mary, Ann, Elizabeth, Catherine, Hannah, Abigail, Drusila], and Joseph was the father of Erasmus Rigney, seven brothers and four sisters, named as follows: Abner, Lyle Branson, Virginia, Willis, Erasmus Rigney, Marcellus, Henrietta/Henretta, Curtis, Lucretia/Luceta, Niles, and Benjamin Keyes - also an infant that died [in Staunton, Virginia] when it was only eight or ten days old - named Juliet - were the children of Joseph and Lucretia Fawcett of Harris[son]burg, Rockingham Co., Va. His [Joseph's] wife was the daughter of Humprey/Humphry [Humphrey Keyes] and Phoebe Keyes of Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, Va. She was of German descent named Strider [and her family lived on the Potomac River in Virginia. Phoebe Strider Keyes died before her daughter married Joseph Fawcett, and Humphrey, his second wife and their children moved to Springfield, Illinois. One of their daughters, Margaret, married James Reed. She, her husband, her mother, and their children went to California as part of the famous Donner party].

Children of Willis Fawcett [and his first wife, an Alexandria-born Quaker named Susan Stabler were]: Virginia, Eugenia Gauss, Harriett, Henrietta, Lucy Fenna, Edward Stabler and Joseph [Willis]. [The children were raised in St. Charles MO and later lived in Alexandria VA].

Children of Lucretia [Fawcett] and Samuel McClure [actually McCluer]: Uncas, Oscar, Arthur, Curtis, Susan and Lewis [all were raised in Dardenne, St. Charles County, MO].

Children of Henrietta [Fawcett and Eugene] Gauss: Charles Henry, Robert, Theodore, Virginia [were all raised in St. Charles MO, some later lived near Columbia MO].

Children of Erasmus Rigney Fawcett: Elizabeth Robertus, Bransonia, Robert McMahan, Francis Scott, Joseph Curtis ([Note by C.C.F.:] Keyes probably born after this statement was written). [Elizabeth was born in Gainesville, Alabama, and the others in Kemper County, Mississippi. Elizabeth died there]

Additions by C.C.F. [Carl C. Fawcett] Aug. 16th, 1944.

Erasmus [Rigney] Fawcett's brother Willis was a man of good education [-- he and his siblings were educated by the best tutors their parents could hire] and at one time was a clerk in the U.S. War Department [along with his brother Lyle who worked (1827-30) before he moved to Alabama]. It is believed that he made his first trip to Texas - the year of the fall of the Alamo [1836] - while in this service [According to the letter by his brother, Niles Fawcett, written from Bonham, Texas in 1852, this statement cannot be correct, because Niles claimed to have been the first Fawcett to visit Texas, while on his way to California. During the late 1830s Willis Fawcett was living in Gainesville, Alabama with his brothers Lyle and E.R. Fawcett]. He later with some of his brothers and sisters [and parents], moved to near St. Charles Mo. It was while living here that he sold shelled corn delivered on a boat on the Mississippi for 15 cents a bushel. He married here [actually, Willis married Susan Stabler in Washington DC on April 4, 1838, and they lived in Gainesville and then St. Charles] and later [1850s he moved to Dripping Springs, Texas with his brothers Keyes and later Niles, and then after the Civil War, Willis and Keyes moved] ...

to Yorktown, Texas. He was one of the organizers of DeWitt County and its first Clerk and Treasurer [Willis married Jerusha B. Wight in Lowell MA in June 1860. Both opposed the Confederacy so they fled to Mexico during the Civil War]. He died [on Sept. 8, 1878] and was buried at Yorktown [on his farm northwest of town]. His wife and family moved back to Missouri [This is incorrect, actually Susan Stabler died in Alexandria VA in Jan. 1852, and all of their children were raised and lived there. Jerusha joined her sister in Saginaw, Michigan after Willis' death] - except that one son [Joseph Willis] settled in Grayson County, Texas where he died in recent years [Mar 1942]. These three brothers [Niles, Keyes and Willis] ranged their sheep over much of Southwest Texas [They owned land in Travis, Hays and Blanco Counties, but herded their sheep as far south as Tilden and Laredo and west to Brackettville and Del Rio from 1853-70]. A spring in Blanco County is named after them [but is no longer indicated on USGS maps]. An old settler of Williamson County [possibly at Leander] told of knowing them before the Civil War. When this war came, Keyes and Niles went back to Virginia and joined Lee's Army [Company B of the 4th Texas Regiment or Hood's Brigade]. Niles was killed in the second battle of Bull Run [Aug. 1862. Keyes returned to Texas after he was wounded at the battle of Antietam, and served in a cavalry unit near Brownsville]. After the war Keyes returned to Yorktown and the sheep business. Some time later [on Dec. 16, 1870] he was killed in his sleep for his money [He was then residing near Uvalde]. This occurred near what is now known as Tilden [where he is buried]. Keyes and Niles never married. Niles was known to have joined the gold rush of '49, riding to California on a mule [in the summer of 1852 by way of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona]. Later he went to Australia and returned by way of Central America. Another brother [actually a nephew and son of Willis] of Erasmus, Edward [Stabler Fawcett] became a well known dentist of Alexandria, Virginia. One of the Fawcetts, [Curtis,] a brother of Erasmus or an Uncle was Captain of a ship that plied the South American trade. His ship was wrecked on the coast [of Panama] by a tropical storm. Here he contracted fever from which he died [on May 5, 1849] while [actually before] voyaging home and was buried at sea.

Erasmus Rigney Fawcett, like his father [--actually like his older brother, Abner--] was a tanner by trade and left Virginia as a young man and settled in Greenville [actually Gainesville], Alabama. He left there and accepted a position as cobbler on the [Francis T.] Scott plantation near DeKalb [DeKalb] in Kemper Co. Miss. Here he married. His wife [Ann Elizabeth Pride Hill] being a daughter of a doctor by name of [James P.] Hill. Her mother [Martha Ann Scott] was of the Scott family. After the Civil War [in Jan. 1867] Erasmus Fawcett moved his family to Texas. His family at that time consisted of wife and the following children Frank [Francis Scott], Brancie [Bransonia], [Joseph] Curtis, Robert [McMahon] and [Erasmus] Keyes. Frank the oldest being about seventeen and Keyes the youngest a small child [1 ½ years old]. They settled in Gonzales Co. about twenty miles north of Yorktown in DeWitt Co. where his brothers Willis and Keyes were located operating a sheep ranch. Not long after coming to Texas Erasmus and his wife both took sick and died [Sept. & Dec. 1868]. The children stayed together [on 200 acres in the James Dillard league, northwest of the Gates Cemetery] until Frank at age of twenty-seven married Emma Elder [in 1877] and moved on to his new farm and ranch near Cheapside in Gonzales Co. Brancie also married about this time [Nov. 1872] to John Carson and settled near Cheapside [in 1889]. Robert married [Elizabeth Jane Aldridge on Dec. 16, 1885] and moved to his farm in Wrightsboro community. Curtis never married [but lived first with Frank and then with Brancie, before he entered the Abilene State Hospital 1929. Curtis died there in July 1940]. Keyes as a young lad of 18 years drove his sheep to the Devils River in Val Verde County [in 1883] and lived there until he died in recent years [Sept. 1941]..., leaving the ranch holdings and a wife [Frankie Baker] and ... children [Brancie Elizabeth Fawcett, Horace Keyes Fawcett, Elmer James Fawcett, Walter Robert Fawcett, Emma Frances Fawcett, and Lee Baker Fawcett] all them now living at the ranch or in Del Rio. Robert also in middle life [about 1902] moved to the Devils River and died there a few years ago [Nov. 1933] leaving only one son Arthur, who is reported living at Sanderson, Tex [where he later died]. A daughter [Stella Blanche Fawcett who] died [1926] while a young woman [after she married Thomas R. Ratliff in Aug. 1912 and lived in Comstock].

Brancie and John Carson raised a large family [Elizabeth Albertina, Charles Franklin, Margaret Bransonia, Hartwell Carson, Keyes Fawcett, Roger L.,

John Henry, Delbert G., and Jesse Claudhouse] only three of their children now living in or near Cheapside community. Brancie and John Carson lived on their place until they died [--John in Jan. 1928 and Brancie in 1937].

Francis Scott Fawcett's wife - Emma Luvenia Fawcett, daughter of Phillip Tignor Elder and Sarah Susan (Wilson) Elder [came] from [Etowah, now St. Clair County,] Alabama and moved to Cheapside, Texas [in 1871/75].

Frank and Emma Fawcett also had a large family, six of whom died and were buried in Cheapside [--George Alfonso, Ernest Connelly, Earl R., Claud Philip, Blanton Elder]. Frank was a farmer in Gonzales County. Frank and Emma lived [just northwest of Cheapside]... for near fifty years and then sold their place and moved to Johnson City [in Nov. 1920] where a few years later Emma died [Jan. 1923] and later Frank also [Nov. 1934]. They were buried at Cheapside [in the Bellevue Cemetery].

Frank, Brancie Carson and their brother Curtis each died in their eighty third year, and were buried at Cheapside [Actually, Frank was 85, Brancie was 84, and Curtis was 84].

The children of Francis Scott Fawcett and Emma L. Fawcett - Willis Augustus, Oscar Young, Carl Cleveland, Delta Eunice, Leslie Clarence, Ralph Branson, Sarah Elizabeth, Ethel Thelma, Pearl Elnora, Claud [Philip] and Blanton [Elder] and five [or only 3?] other boys deceased ([George Alfonso], Earl[R.], Ernest [Connelly]).

The present [in 1944] living children of Frank and Emma Fawcett with their address are as follows: Willis A. at Kerrville [where he ran the Fawcett Furniture Company. Willis helped his brothers, Leslie and Ralph start another furniture store in San Antonio in 1921 that is still in business in 1995 under the direction of their descendants]. Oscar Y. at Johnson City, Carl C. at Wylie [and after he retired from his pharmacy business also lived near Johnson City]. Delta Grisham at Johnson City. Leslie C. at San Antonio, Ralph B. at San Antonio [and later Ingram and Kerrville], Elizabeth Duderstadt at San Antonio, Ethel Duderstadt at San Antonio and Pearl Moore, Schreiner Institute at Kerrville - all in Texas [Ethel, Elizabeth, Pearl, and Leslie taught in the public schools]. The Duderstadts that Ethel and Elizabeth married were brothers [Ernest and Albert]. Pearl married Truitt Moore of the Schreiner Institute [and later, Fawcett Furniture in San Antonio].

Additions by N. Truman Fawcett, 1975.

O.Y. Fawcett, son of Francis Scott Fawcett, became a pharmacist and Drug Store owner in Johnson City, Texas starting in 1905. He was the father of [N.] Truman Fawcett, pharmacist, Drug Store owner and rancher. Truman was born in 1909 and at present [1975] is 65 years old.

Children of Oscar Young Fawcett and Melissa Johnson Fawcett - Lorine S., Nathaniel Truman, Lillian E.

Children of Nathaniel Truman Fawcett and Wilma Green Fawcett -Barry Keyes (M.D.) and Juliet Ann. Barry was born in 1937 and began practice of medicine in 1965 in Kerrville for 2 years and then moved to Hurst, Texas where he was still practicing in 1975. Juliet Ann Fawcett was born in 1942. She is now married to Frank Jelinek (an Attorney) in Arlington, Texas. They have two children: Frank Reynolds "Rennie" Jelinek (9 years old) and Alyssa Ann Jelinek (4 years old) in 1975.

Children of Barry Keyes Fawcett and Joann (Boozer) Fawcett - Michael Lee and David Alan. Michael is 11 and David G. 8 in 1975.

Hereditary diseases: This family seems to have been free of hereditary diseases except that Erasmus Rigney and his son Curtis were victims of epilepsy. [E.R. Fawcett died during a seizure, but his son Curtis may not have inherited his epilepsy because he did not begin to have attacks until he was an adult--perhaps due to a head injury experienced during one of the cattle drives to Kansas during the 1870s.]

HARRISONBURG, ROCKINGHAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA IN THE 1820s.