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June 22, 2019

Your correspondence to the Barren County Historical Society made its way to me, so I will attempt to respond in writing what my research and DNA testing of multiple William Fletcher Centers descendants have proven.

Some things to consider and comments on items mentioned in your letter:

1) Willis Center probably did not change the spelling. If he could not read or write, he could not spell and therefore the person recording his information spelled it as they thought it should be spelled.

2) Bio of William Brown indicates Elizabeth Childress was the wife of Willis Center/Senter.

#### WILLIAM ALLEN BROWN

Biographical Sketch written by E. Scott Brown dated 14 Nov. 1897

Transcribed and Submitted by Anna Brown Hunt bethtx50@iwon.com

William Allen Brown was born in Allen Co. Ky. on 22nd day of April 1820 at the Old Orchard on part of a 400 acre survey.....

ALLSEY BROWN, father of the subject of this sketch, was married on day of 18 to **Miss NANCY TERRELL CHILDRESS** who was born in South Carolina on the day of 17 and who was living with old Harry Collins in Allen Co. Ky. then Warren Co Ky. until near the time when she and Allsey married. **She was a sister to WILLIS CENTER's wife, ELIZABETH & came to Ky. on foot, leading a horse**, which carried such goods as they brought. She had a brother BARTHOLOMEW CHILDRESS who lived in Mobile Ala & was at our time Sheriff (sic)\* of his County. **Said Nancy came from Georgia here.**

3) There is no indication from primary documents that Willis' name was Stephen. Many researchers confuse Willis Center of Allen Co., KY, with Willis S. Senter of Roane Co., TN.

4) There is no paper trail or evidence to connect the parents given on the death certificates of Robert Welsey Center, Virginia Center Ashford Stipes, William Fletcher Center, and Willis Marion Senter. These people are either full or half-siblings b. 1846-1855 in Allen County, KY. The fact that each of these death certificates have no continuity in parental names is a huge clue to the fact that the informant either did not know, or wanted to hide the parental information.

I will not reiterate the information you already have. The mystery of the parents of William Fletcher Center therefore, after over 60 years of search by various descendants, is best resolved via DNA.

Prior to the 1920s when legal adoption became the mode of childcare, orphaned or children not able to be cared for by a parent(s), were sent to live with relatives or neighbors. This is the case of the Allen County Center children.

In the Allen County, KY, 1860 census, the following are found as follows:

Child	Household	Parents as stated on D.C.	
William Fletcher Center b. 1846	Anderson McReynolds	f. William Center	m. unknown
James Mc. Center b. 1848	Thomas Ashford		
Robert Wesley Center b. 1849	R.M. Spillman	f. Gilford Center	m. Elizabeth McReynolds
Virginia Center Stipes b. 1852	Thomas Ashford	f. Thomas Ashford	m. Mary Richey
Willis Marion Center b. 1855	A.C. Alexander		

5) Guilford Center was never married to Elizabeth McReynolds, as stated on the death certificate of Robert Wesley Center. Guilford married Sarah Hatler, September 1839 in Allen County, KY, and is shown as his wife in the 1850 and 1860 census of Sumner Co., TN and Washington Co, AR. Gilford/Guilford Center was in Sumner Co TN by 1846, making it a long trek back to Allen County to have an affair while having children with Sarah prior to Robert's birth, and therefore improbable that could have occurred.

6) Willis M. Center:

MICROFILM of ALLEN CO KY VITAL STATISTICS

1855, Nov 29, CENTERS, Frances M., male, illegitimate, M. Elizabeth SENTERs, Pleasant Hill

\* The name Frances was changed either to Willis or an error occurred in recording the information\*

The location of Willis' birth at Pleasant Hill supports the land plat of Willis Center's land near Alsy Brown. The Browns are buried at Pleasant Hill Methodist Church cemetery between Scottsville and Holland. I believe the Centers' are also buried there in unmarked graves or with unreadable headstones.

A family bible of Willis M. Senter of Carter County, OK, formerly in the possession of his son Perry D. Senter, provides a note that Dick Alexander of Allen County, KY. raised him. Dick may be a nickname for Amazie C. Alexander shown as a neighbor of Willis Center in various county court road documents. I have been unable to locate the current owner of Willis M. Senter's bible as Perry Senter died in 1975. (Note: Bible found in 2020 and images on file at the WKU Library)

ALLEN CO KY DAY BOOK 1826-1837 (Jackson) pg. 35, 126 & 144

Jan 1827 Willis CENTER appointed overseer for the road leading from Scottville to Carthage (TN)

June 1828 Whereas John Gatewood of Allen Co KY has this day represented to the county court of the county

aforsaid that there is a large neighborhood in the eastern part of said county have no carriage way

and no convenient bridle way either to their meeting house or courthouse, where upon it is order by

the court that Hugh Brown., Also Brown, Amsy C. ALEXANDER, Willis CENTER and William Holder or

any three of whom being first sworn be appointed viewers to view and mark a road beginning at

Sulsers (the rest omitted due to length of document, but included to show Alexander and Center as neighbors)

Mar 1830 Willis CENTER and Amsy Alexander sworn as jurors

Mar/Apr Term 1830. Willis CENTER resigns as overseer of public road, and James Alexander is sworn in his place.

Jan Term 1832 On the application of Burtin Brown ordered that Amzie C. ALEXANDER and W. ALEXANDER, Willis

CENTER, and Alsy Brown ...do view an alteration in the Carthage road.

8) I have known for many years that Thomas and Mary Richey Ashford married in 1844 Sumner Co, TN, therefore eliminating them as parents of any Center children. I had conveyed that to Jeanetta several times, but it probably did not connect.

7) Ancestry DNA evidence of Jeanetta provides the following that is also supported by your DNA and DNA of other descendants of William Fletcher Centers including Judy Dies, Sharon Tabor, Marion

Napier, Damon Tabor, Marcella Ralston, Wanda Centers Grabnor, Angela Gibbs Martin, Jimmy Watkins, descendants of James Mc Center Ashford, and other's.

Jeanetta and your DNA results

06/19/2018 Ancestry DNA Matches

8.1cms match to Greg Campbell, descendant of Jonathan Sentell son Samuel:

10.6cms to L.P. descendant of Jonathan Sentell son William;

10cms to Julie Gonzales descendant of William and Richard Sentell sons of Jonathan

Sentell;

9.1cms to Yvonne Wyche descendant of John Edward Sentell, grandson of Jonathan

Sentell

05/23/2019 Ancestry DNA match to

Nina Mills 17.1cms a descendant of William & Nancy Stephens Sentell, son of Jonathan

Sentell

11/2/2015 Ancestry DNA

Sharon Tabor matches TO and Ann44, both direct descendants of Johnathan Sentell via his

son

William Sentell

05/17/2019 Sharon Tabor shares 13cm across 2 segments with Ancestry member LisaJo a descendant of Jonathan

Sentell via son William Sentell

6/21/2019 Jeanetta's Ancestry DNA matches to

David Wick 28cms 2 segments descendant of James & Mary Phipps McReynolds via John

McReynolds, brother to William McReynolds of Allen County, KY

Martha Larkin 66cms 4 segments descendant of William and Lavina Brackin Hatler

McReynolds

Lisa Morgan 106cms 6 segments descendant of William and Lavina Brackin Hatler

McReynolds

T.H. 47cms 3segments to descendant of James and Susannah Anderson McReynolds'

daughter Rachel

McReynolds

4 Matches between 29-40cms to numerous Phipps descendants, but not sure of the

connections at

this time ( 7/24/2020 Note: Mary Phipps 1802-1894 was the wife of James J. McReynolds,

father of

William McReynolds and grandfather of William Fletcher Centers)

There would be zero DNA connection to descendants of any McReynolds, and especially that of William and Lavina Brackin Hatler McReynolds, unless William McReynolds was the father of William Fletcher Centers. The DNA matches of Jeanetta shows relationships between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cousins with McReynolds and Phipps descendants which would be shared great and 2great-grandparents – William and James McReynolds and Mary Phipps McReynolds. William McReynolds was a nephew to Anderson McReynolds who was named in the 1851 court apprenticeship of William Centers. Apparently, William McReynolds and his former sister-in-law Elizabeth Center had children while he was also having children with his wife, Lavina. The mystery will remain as to why he married Lavina rather than Elizabeth.

DNA evidence supports:

- 1) William Fletcher Center was a McReynolds
- 2) Willis Center as a descendant of Jonathan Sentell/Senter who died in Edgefield Co, SC in 1799. Jonathan's oldest son was named Sterling/Starling, and his grandson was named Guilford/Gilford. Gilford was the son of William Senter/Sentell who served in the Revolutionary War and fought at the Battle of Guilford, Greensboro, NC. I have found only two Center/Senter/Sentell families in the U.S. that used the given names of Startling/Sterling and Guilford/Gilford – the SC branch and the descendants of Willis Center of Kentucky.
- 3) The presumed father/uncle of Willis Center b. 1786 is Buckner Center/Certain/Centell of Warren Co NC., and that his parents were Jonathan Sentell b. VA d. SC and an unknown first wife. There is no paper trail to support that theory other than DNA. Freeman Senter of Sumner Co., TN, is connected to Buckner via records in Warren Co, NC. Willis does not fit into the ages as a child or grandchild of Jonathan Sentell by his wife Ann. (7/24/2020 Note: Further study has indicated no DNA connection to descendants of Freeman Senter of Sumner Co TN. Willis Center is most probably the son of Rev. War soldier William Sentell/Senter of Edgefield Co SC/Henderson Co NC and therefore more likely to use the surnames of Guilford and Sterling)

I know you and Jeanetta are looking for tangible paper documents to prove William Fletcher Center's parents. Unfortunately, it does not exist. Scientific evidence is the only means of answering that question.

Your Cousin (Lois' granddaughter),

Sharon Tabor  
Bowling Green, KY 42101

One of the family mysteries was my paternal grandmother's grandfather: who was the father of William Fletcher Center? After 15 years of research and 5 years digging through DNA, I found the answer, although my grandmother's 1<sup>st</sup> cousins (in their 90s) are still looking for the paper trail.

Willis Marion Senter was born in Allen County KY. He was the illegitimate son of Elizabeth Center/Senter, daughter of Willis Senter/Center b. 1786 NC, d. abut May 1858 Allen County, KY. According to the bio of Willis Center's great-nephew, Willis and his wife walked from SC to KY sometime between 1800-1810. My great-great-grandfather was William Fletcher Center 1846-1925 Allen County, KY. William "Bill" was the illegitimate son of Elizabeth Center and William McReynolds, proven via DNA. Elizabeth Center had 7 children. Whether they were full or half siblings, I do not know. What I do know is that Willis Marion Center, b. 1855 KY – d. 1920 OK was one of those children.

Elizabeth's children:

- 1) William b. 1846 was raised by Anderson McReynolds (his father's uncle) and remained in Allen Co., Ky.
- 2) James b. 1848 and Virginia b. 1852 were reared by Thomas and Mary Ashford, and James' descendants use that surname in Barren Co, KY. James was killed by revenueurs in 1879.
- 3) Virginia Center/Ashford Stipes remained in Allen Co KY and had no children.
- 4) Robert Wesley Center b. 1849 was raised by R.M. Spillman family and moved to Logan County, KY.

5) Jesse b. 1864 d. before 1910 – I do not know what happened to his daughter.

6) Anthony Center b. 1859. I do not know what happened to him.

Willis b. 1855 was raised by Amazie & his son Beverly (Dick?) Alexander and left KY traveling to Montague Co., TX, then to Carter Co., OK. The following is what I have on Willis Marion: MICROFILM of ALLEN CO KY VITAL STATISTICS

1855, Nov 29, CENTERS, Frances M., male, illegitimate, M. Elizabeth SENTERS, Pleasant Hill

\* his name was either changed to Willis or an error occurred in recording the information\*

1860 ALLEN CO KY CENSUS

26 1403 1383 Alexander A C 64 M . Farmer 2,500 2,500 NC . . . . .

27 1403 1383 Alexander Elizabet 62 F . Housewife . . Va . . . . .

28 1403 1383 Alexander B W 22 M . Farming . 250 Ky . . . . .

29 1403 1383 Alexander Almina 20 F . Student . . Ky . . X . .

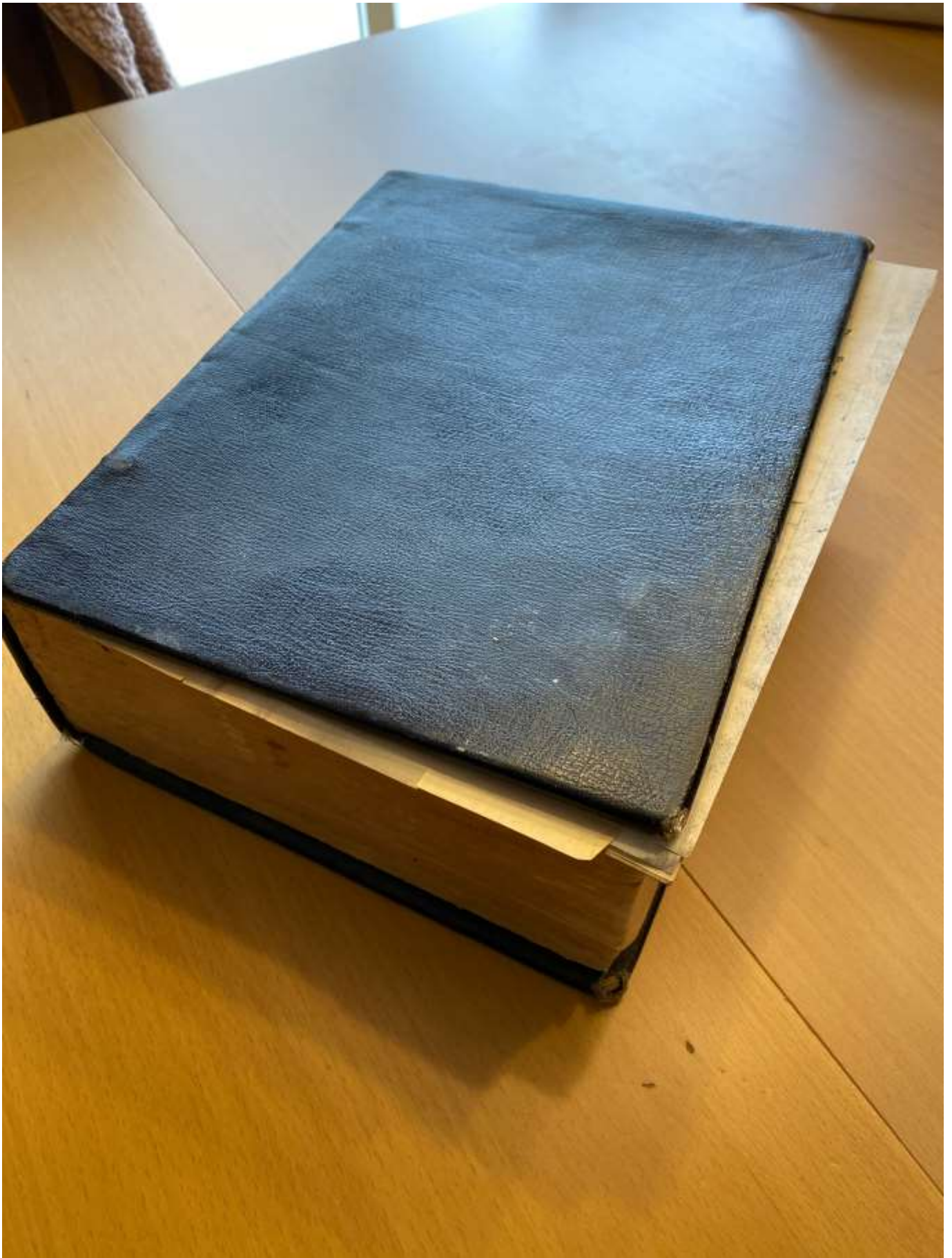
30 1403 1383 Center Willis 4 F . . . . Ky

1870 ALLEN CO KY CENSUS

CENTER, Willis M. 14 M (worker in woolen mill), living with ALEXANDER, Beverly 34 M, Louza W. 27, Rather C. 4, Janes E. 6 Ida M. 2, Elizabeth 70 VA, WHITNEY, Jerry W. 23

\*Amzie Alexander was a neighbor to Willis Center,Sr for many years (see notes for Willis). Neighbors or relatives were more likely to take in children than strangers.\*

In order to find my William's father, I had to trace as many of his siblings/half-siblings as possible. Of Elizabeth's 7 children and her sister Martha's 3 children (all illegitimate), none who had death certificates had the same information for their parents. My father was very irritated when he received a copy of his ggrandfather's death certificate; he knew his grandfather had falsified the document.



Small fine printing

Manned

John Cook  
Ivan

to be in program  
manus master



These are the only relations that  
Avery knows about of his Father's  
People.

Willis Marion Senter was Avery's  
Father, and Dick Alexander raised him.  
Jimmie was a sister of Mr Senter  
and she married a man named Sykes.

Less Senter was a nephew, one of his  
Brother's sons, he used to stay  
with Mr & Mrs Senter when they live  
at Montague, Texas.

Joe Sater Ardmore Okla

Perry D Ardmore

Sarah Ellen ~~Perrigan~~ <sup>Perrigan</sup> Wagonwaka Okla

→ Avery Lund Sater Southern Farm Okla Territory

→ Sarah Elizabeth Hignight Farm South Georgia

Bird McKinley Perrigan ~~Okla~~ Ft. Smith Ark.

Theresa Emily Chester Ft. Smith Ark.

Sarah Ellen Hengen

And M. Skiddy Hengen

1894-1967

Thomas Emily Chute

1897-1973

Henry Clay Hengen

Sarah Evangeline Taylor

1870-1951

W. A. Chute

1865-1951

Flora E. Bonner

1888-1957

<sup>1807-1853</sup>  
Joel Blood and Rachel Lund married Nov 16 1834  
Parents of Joel Freeman Blood born May 3 1837

<sup>1815-?</sup> <sup>1807 to 1837</sup>  
William Bracken and Harriet Bealmeier married 1840  
Parents of Mary Elizabeth Bracken Nov 20 1843  
3 sons + 3 daughters

<sup>1837-1872</sup> <sup>1822-?</sup>  
Joel Freeman Blood and Mary Elizabeth Bracken married 1843  
Parents of Elizabeth Estella Blood March 17 1861  
2 sons + 4 girls oct 21 1861

Willis Marion Senter born Dec 29 1855  
had 4 brothers and 1 sister  
no information on parents

<sup>1855-1920</sup> <sup>1861-1950</sup>  
Willis Marion Senter and Elizabeth Estella Blood married Aug 27 1882  
5 boys and 1 girl  
Parents of Avery Lund Senter - born Sept 3 1893

<sup>1858-1932</sup> <sup>1861-1949</sup>  
James Washington Hignight + Annie Rebecca Ingiam  
Parents of Sarah Elizabeth Hignight Jan 7 1894  
3 boys + 4 girls

<sup>1893-1973</sup> <sup>1894-1967</sup>  
Avery L Senter + Sarah E Hignight married 1915  
Parents of Perry D Senter and 3 girls born July 28 1916

Perry D Senter and Sarah Ellen Peauger married July 18 1938  
3 boys 2 girls Joseph Stephen Senter born Feb 22 1946

Joseph S. Senter and Donna Marie Mountjoy married Feb 1 1969  
Perry Duke Senter born Feb 10 1973



Tim INGRAM

This Bible was given to Rachel Lund  
as a bridal present, by her father, on  
Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> 1834.

It was then given to her son Joel Ticeem  
Blood (After his death, Aug. 12<sup>th</sup> 1872).

It was given to his oldest child  
Elizabeth Estella Blood.

It is supposed to be handed down  
to the descendants of Rachel Lund and  
her husband Joel Blood.

# FAMILY RECORD.

## MARRIAGES.

Joel Blood and  
Rachel Lund were  
Married Nov 16<sup>th</sup> 1834

William Bracken and  
Harriet Realmear were  
Married Nov 29<sup>th</sup> 1840.

Joel Freeman Blood  
Mary Elizabeth Bracken  
were Married March 17<sup>th</sup> 1861

Stella C. Blood to  
Willis M. Senter 27<sup>th</sup>  
of August 1882.

Willis Vard Senter  
Martha Ellen Oxford  
Married October 31 1936

Abbie Senter and Viola  
Jackson were married  
August 16, 1903

## MARRIAGES.

Avery L. Senter  
and Sarah Hignight  
were married Dec. 12  
1915

Lois Senter and  
Will Speed were  
Married on April 30  
1911

Alvin Brooks Senter  
and Bessie Frances Staples  
were married Jan. 25 1923

# FAMILY RECORD.

BIRTHS.

BIRTHS.

Joel Blood born  
1807.

Rachel Lund born  
Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> 1807.

Joel Freeman Blood  
Born May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1837.

Elizabeth Estella Blood  
Born Oct. 21<sup>st</sup> 1861.

Lyman Peabody Blood  
Born August 30<sup>th</sup> 1863.

Marg Lillian Blood  
Born Oct 12<sup>th</sup> 1864

William Freeman Blood  
Born August 11<sup>th</sup> 1867

Emma Irene Blood  
Born November 10<sup>th</sup> 1869.

Little Sissie Blood  
Born February 6<sup>th</sup> 1872



# FAMILY RECORD.

BIRTHS.

William Cracken  
Born Apr. 2<sup>nd</sup> 1815.

Harriet Salzman  
Born Sept. 10<sup>th</sup> 1822.

Sarah Ann Cracken  
Born Dec. 30<sup>th</sup> 1841.

Mary Elizabeth Cracken  
Born Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> 1843.

William Henry Cracken  
Born June 21<sup>st</sup> 1849.

Susan Levina Cracken  
Born Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> 1852.

Luella (a Thomas) Cracken  
Born Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> 1854.

John Samuel Cracken  
Born Oct 11<sup>th</sup> 1856.

BIRTHS.

Walter M. Senter Born  
Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> 1855.

Willis Vard Senter.  
Born June 14<sup>th</sup> 1883.

Abbey Wayne Senter.  
Born Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> 1885.

Mary Lois Senter.  
Born July 6<sup>th</sup> 1891.

Avery Lurid Senter  
Born Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup> 1893.

Alton Blood Senter  
Born Aug 29<sup>th</sup> 1898.

Alvin Brook Senter,  
Born June 19<sup>th</sup> 1909.

## FAMILY RECORD.

DEATHS.

Rachel R. Blood  
Died July 5<sup>th</sup> 1857.

Joel Blood aged 46 1/2  
Died Sept 7<sup>th</sup> 1853.

Lyman Peabody Blood  
Died November 4<sup>th</sup> 1863.

William Freeman Blood  
Died Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> 1869.

Joel Freeman Blood  
Aug 12<sup>th</sup> 1872

Little Sissie Blood  
Oct 20<sup>th</sup> 1872

Mary E. Blood Schiff  
died June 21 1938.

DEATHS.

W. M. Senter.  
Died Nov 23. 1920

Alton Blood Senter  
Died Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> 1879

Estella Elizabeth Senter  
Died Jan. 7<sup>th</sup> 1960

Abbie Wayne Senter  
Died May 30<sup>th</sup>  
1958

Sarah Senter  
died 20 April 1947  
Avery Lund Senter  
August 26 1973

Alvin Brooks Senter  
died June 19 1987

Henry D. Benton

Henry D. Benton  
father

Joseph Elizabeth Hyatt  
mother

Willie Maria Benton

Stella Elizabeth Wood

James H. Hyatt

Emmie Rebecca Hyatt

Paul Freeman Wood

Mary Elizabeth D. Mackin

Wm. Harrison Hyatt

Elizabeth Emma

John Hyatt

Joseph Lee Hyatt

Patricia Flora

David E. King, M.D., Ph.D.

David E. King, M.D., Ph.D.  
Here FATHER

William Harrison King, M.D.  
FATHER

FATHER  
MOTHER

Erica King  
MOTHER

Patricia King  
MOTHER

Patricia King  
MOTHER

John King  
FATHER

FATHER  
MOTHER

Ann King  
Here MOTHER

David King  
MOTHER

FATHER  
MOTHER

## Mrs. Sarah E. Senter

Funeral services for Mrs. Sarah E. Senter, 73, a lifelong resident of Ardmore, will be at 2 p.m. Saturday at First Orthodox Baptist Church. The Rev. Edgar Carlisle, Yukon, will officiate. Burial will be in Hillcrest cemetery.

Mrs. Senter, who resided at 316 H NE, was born Jan. 7, 1894, at Ardmore. She died Thursday at her home. She was married here to Avery L. Senter Dec. 12, 1915. She was a member of First Orthodox Church, the Gay 'Nineties Club, of which she was president, Navy Mothers, and Golden Hour Sunday School Class, which she also served as president.

Survivors include the widower, a son, Perry D., Anchorage, Alaska; three daughters, Mrs. Ruth Whitten, Dallas, Mrs. Marie Pittman, Ardmore, and Mrs. Norma Pittman, Grand Prairie, Tex.; three sisters, Mrs. Lillie Watson, Oklahoma City, Mrs. Lottie Bell, Dallas, and Mrs. Lavada Conger, Bridgeport, Tex.; a brother, Bryant Hignight, Ardmore; 12 grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Bettes Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.



Perry Duke Senter with family bible