


*Romance and Marriage of*  
*Polly Coffey*  
*&*  
*Jeremiah Vardaman*



*In Casey Co., Kentucky*  
*132 Years Ago 1829-1961*

By **PETER B. RIFFE**

added

**Coffey, Vardaman, Portman, Riffe Families**

# A Chapter From Real Life

In Casey County, 132 Years Ago 1829-1961

As Related by Peter B. Riffe.

I have read but few novels in my life, but from the few I have had a chance to read I am satisfied that the best romance that was ever written is that which comes the nearest being a true picture of what we have all seen at some time or other in real life. The fact is, human nature is a curious thing; and I have sometimes thought that human life, with all its joys and sorrows, its loves and rivalries, its hopes and disappointments, is but little else than a tale that is told. In illustration of this I will endeavor to beguile a few hours of pain and suffering which I incurred from a recent and somewhat dangerous accident, by relating, in my own rude way, an accident which came under my observation in my early manhood.

One of the most estimable men I ever knew in my life was Colonel Jesse Coffey, who lived and died in Casey county, near the Lincoln line. He was not only an intelligent, affable, dignified gentleman, of far more than average talents, but brave and honorable to the last degree. When about twenty-five years of age, he bade adieu to his young and beautiful wife, with four lovely children, and followed the gallant Shelby in the war of 1812. In the memorable battle of the Thames, which occurred on the 5th day of October, 1813, he was wounded at the head of his company, but not so badly as to compel him to quit the fight in which his bravery continued to distinguish him till its close, nor to prevent him, after the smoke of the conflict had cleared away, from helping to bear from the field the bleeding forms of Colonel R. M. Johnson and Colonel James Davison, while old Colonel Whitley, of Stanford, and the renowned Tecumseh, lay within a few feet of each other dead upon the ground.

The war closed, as everybody knows, with the wonderful victory at New Orleans, on the 8th of January, 1815, which made the name of Jackson immortal, and sent the remains of Pakenham back to England in a hogshead of rum; and on the return of Colonel Coffey to his family he received from the Governor, as an acknowledgement of his patriotism and gallantry, a commission as Colonel, which he honored by accepting it, and wore with dignity the title it conferred until the day of his death.

The return of peace brought with it the blessings of prosperity, but to none more generously than to Colonel Coffey. By close attention to business, and a course of strictly honorable dealing with all his fellow-men, his wealth continued to increase, while he continued to grow in public esteem until the year 1827 found him one of the most popular men that ever lived in any community, in possession of an ample fortune, blest with the love of a most affectionate wife, and surrounded by a family of healthy, handsome, intelligent children, besides a large number of valuable and contented slaves. His homestead in fact presented one of those pleasing examples of a perfectly regulated domestic economy which at that day were so often to be met with in our State, but which at this time it would perhaps be very difficult to find. His house was the home of hospitality, and his table was always loaded with the fruits of rural thrift. His barns and his stock always indicated the oversight of the careful husbandman, while his family was comfortably clothed in the products of home industry. His children were provided with all the educational advantages the community afforded, and such of their reasonable wants as could not be met by the immediate produce of the farm, were amply supplied by the abundant surplus which, notwithstanding the want of railroads and turnpikes, was always sure to find a market. Taken all in all, Colonel Coffey's might well have been considered the model home of its day and time.

But the jewel of his household was his daughter, Polly, at the time which I write, a beautiful, blooming girl about nineteen years of age, sprightly, industrious and accomplished far beyond the majority of her sex in the neighborhood, and withal amiable almost to a fault.

The Colonel, finding it necessary to build a larger house for

the comfort of his family, as well as a mill for the accommodation of himself and the neighborhood generally, employed a young man named Vardiman to lay the foundations and build the chimneys for the one, and a young man named Pleasants to take charge of the work on the other. These young men, who lived about twenty five miles off, were near neighbors, and had been warm friends from their earliest infancy, and two handsomer or higher-toned young fellows than they were you never saw in your life. They had both seen a good deal of the world; and were as well qualified, both by nature and culture, to make themselves agreeable in society as any two young men I ever met with. Besides, they were both remarkably steady, industrious, hardworking young fellows; for although their parents were in fine fix, so far as property was concerned, they lived at a time when it was not considered a disgrace to a gentleman to make his living by the sweat of his brow, as God Almighty ordained that he should do. They had not been in the neighborhood long until they became the general favorites of all classes, male and female, old and young. They were always together, and at meeting, or at a party, or around the fire-side, or wherever they might be, they were always so remarkably polite and courteous and gentlemanly in their manners, it was impossible for the neighbors to decide which of them was better entitled to their respect. With the young people, especially with the girls of the neighborhood, they stood very high; they were so kind, and considerate, and so smooth and polished in their address; but what probably made the young ladies show them more attention than they would otherwise have done was the singular fact that no amount of management could ever entice either of them to say a single word in the way of courtship to any of them. But with nobody did they stand higher than with the Colonel. He was a powerful pushing business man himself and he liked their prompt, industrious business habits, so when they wished to go anywhere the negroes were ordered to bring out the best horses and saddles on the place for them to ride, and every kindness and attention that any gentleman could desire was shown them by the whole family.

Some time in the fall Vardiman finished his work and the Colonel paid him off, expressing many regrets at having to part

with him and extending a most cordial invitation for him to make his house his home at any and all times he might see proper. I happened to be there on the morning he started for home and a more remarkable leave-taking I never witnessed. Every living soul on the plantation, niggers and all, down to the smallest child that could walk, came out to bid him good-bye. After shaking hands all round he mounted his horse and rode off, and I sat on the porch with Polly and my sister Leannah, who was her own cousin, and almost the exact image of her, and watched him until he got out of sight. Twice as he rode down the avenue he paused as if he had forgotten something for which he wished to turn back, but finally he spurred his horse into a gallop and in a few moments was beyond our view.

After he was gone there seemed to be a sort of cloud over the household, but Pleasants was the loneliest looking man I ever saw. He seemed for several days to have nothing to say to anybody, but when not engaged at his work on the mill, he wandered about like he was looking for something he could not find, he knew not. At length, however, he seemed to cheer up, and before a great while it began to be whispered about that he was setting to Polly, and the neighbors and kindfolks with one accord set about encouraging the match.

After Vardiman left, Pleasants and myself became much more intimate than we had previously been, so when he had finished his job, about the first of March, he took me into his confidence and imparted to me as a secret, what I had some time suspected, that he and my cousin Polly were engaged and would soon be married. He moreover gave me a pressing invitation to attend the "in-fair," and a general commission to take as many of the boys and girls of the neighborhood as I could get to go with me, for he had understood that the Colonel intended to give a big wedding, and as his father was rich and able to stand it, he did not intend to be outdone. He went home to prepare for the wedding, and shortly afterwards returned to see his intended bride, and get the Colonel's consent for the issue of the license. I met him on his visit and I am confident I never saw a man more completely transported with his prospects of happiness, either before or since. He was full of it. He was delighted with everything, and dwelt with special pleasure upon the fact that his friend Vardiman approved his choice and would "wait on" him at the wedding. When we

parted he again urged me to be sure and get as many as possible to go to the in-fair.

Time wore on until it brought the day before the one which had been fixed for the marriage. I was young and enthusiastic, and my whole soul was alive with the prospect of the fine time which I was soon to have with the other young folks at the wedding and in-fair, and I had been for weeks saving up my eagle halves and quarters for the emergency. (By the way, what has become of all those old familiar coins that used to jingle in the pockets of almost every boy and nigger in the country? Have they too, with so many other things, gone down into the tomb of a generation that is past, to be resurrected only by the final trump of the last angelic herald?) Well, on the day before the wedding, I went over to the Colonel's where Polly and my sister, who was to wait on her, were busy making up their finery for the grand occasion. I say grand occasion, for it was really such. The Colonel had sent out his invitations through all the country round, bidding those who helped him raise his barn and mill, together with their wives and children, to the feast which he had prepared with almost princely bounty. I found the girls diligently engaged with their sewing, and neither saying a word.

My sister had a sort of troubled look, though I could see she was trying her best to let on like nothing was the matter, but Polly's countenance wore an expression of deep unearthly sadness, such as no human being can describe. Thoughtless and rattle-brained as I was, it threw a damper over my feelings such as I had never felt before. I thought it my duty, however, to cheer her up, so I took up one of the frills, or something of the sort, which they had been making, and flinging it over her head and around her neck and made some complimentary remark about her beauty, and Pleasants' extraordinary good luck in getting such a prize, but that he was worthy of it, for he was one the very best fellows in the world, and any girl ought to be glad to get him, but my words only seemed to deepen the shadow that rested upon her brow. She got up and left the room without saying a word, and in a few minutes my sister followed her, so I struck out for home oppressed with the presentiment that something was going to happen. Could not tell what, but struggling all the time to hope that everything would turn out all right.

The same morning Vardiman left word with Pleasants to say to the large party of friends who were to go with them to the wedding, that he had some pressing business down on Green River, which he would go on and attend to, and meet them all at the Colonel's next day. Pleasants was loth to lose his company on the road, but finding nothing else would do, at last consented, but urged him to allow no business or accident to prevent his being on hand to wait on him, for he wouldn't miss it for anything in the world. Vardiman promised him he would do so if life lasted and rode away. He went on to attend to his business, whatever it was, and just after night-fall, reached the Colonel's, where he knew he would be more than welcome for the night. He was most cordially received by the two old folks, and kindly greeted by every member of the family he met, both white and black; for as I have already said he was a general favorite with all classes.

In a few minutes supper was announced, and as neither of the girls had yet made their appearance, he said he supposed they were quite busy preparing for the wedding, and after supper was over asked if he could see them. Mrs. Coffey replied, certainly, and told him just to walk into the room where they were at work. He stepped in and shook hands with my sister and then with Polly, who sat pale as a corpse, unable to move or speak a word.

"Why, Polly, what on earth can be the matter with you" exclaimed Vardiman, himself now pale as ashes and trembling like a leaf.

She made no reply, but sunk her head forward in her work and burst into a flood of tears.

"For God's sake," said he, turning to my sister, "tell me, tell me what it is that troubles your cousin so deeply," and without waiting for a reply, started for the door,

"Stop," said my sister, and pointing to the convulsed form of her cousin, she continued, "would you try to relieve her of her trouble if you knew it?"

"I would," said he. "Tell me what I can do to relieve her and I will attempt it at the risk of my life."

"First answer me another question," said my sister calmly—"I know it is a delicate one, but upon your honor answer me—what was it you intended to say to Polly that you now regret so bitterly?"

"As God is my judge, Lennah," said he, "I will tell you the truth. I intended to tell her that I loved her! Oh God, if I could only have done so! I intended to offer her my hand, my energies, my life, everything, and ask her to be my wife! I stopped twice to turn back, and then rode on like a fool, and my life has been a miserable burden to me ever since."

"Would you take her now if you could get her; would you fling away all the claims of a life-long friendship, and step over the bounds of honor, which you have always held so sacred, to call her yours; would you snatch her from the first embrace of your dearest friend if you could do so? Would you? Answer me," demanded my sister, taking her cousin by the hand.

"To secure happiness I would," said Vardiman, "but on no other consideration, not even to save my own heart's blood."

"Then take her," said my sister; "she is yours. She has long loved you with all the devotion of her ardent soul; without you she is doomed to a life of misery; with you alone she can be happy. Take her, and what God hath joined together let no man put asunder." With that she placed the hand of her cousin in Vardiman's and hurriedly left the room.

After giving themselves time for their strongly excited emotions to subside to some extent, Vardiman, and Polly, arm in arm, walked into the family room, where the Colonel was reading to his wife. The old people looked up in some surprise when Vardiman said: "Colonel Coffey, I came to your house to-night a miserable, almost broken-hearted man, to partake of your hospitality, and look for the last time upon the features of one whom I have long loved better than life. I have found, as much to my surprise as to my joy, that my passion has from the first been fully, though secretly, reciprocated. She has promised to be mine, and mine only forever, and I have pledged my soul to your daughter that I will love, cherish and protect her through life. I am satisfied she can never be happy with another, and we come to ask your consent to our marriage, and your benediction upon our love."

If a thunderbolt had suddenly burst in the presence of the Colonel and his wife, neither of them could have been more surprised. They both sprang to their feet in amazement, utterly unable to speak a word. At length, after walking the floor for a few minutes, in an agony of feeling that could find no expression, the Colonel turned to Vardiman, who stood calmly holding the hand of his affianced, and said: "Oh Vardiman, how can this be? How can I consent to this when the troth has been plighted to your friend Pleasants! I have no objection to you. You have always proven yourself a man after my own heart, but my honor! my honor! Is not my honor plighted to Pleasants that my daughter shall be his bride? Oh, do not ask me to give her to you."

And the strong man who had faced death more than once upon the battle-field without a tremor, shuddered with the intensity of his emotions as he buried his face in his hands and wept.

The silence which followed for a few moments was horrible. At length it was broken by Vardiman, who said, "Colonel, I have sworn to your daughter that she shall be my wife before the setting of tomorrow's sun, if it should cost me life. If we cannot have your consent we must be gone at once. Good-bye mother," extending his hand to the Colonel's wife, who had stood all the while with the air of one who walks in his sleep. The simple touching words, "Good-bye, mother," although uttered by the voice of Vardiman, seemed to open all the deep fountains of material affection which welled up in her heart, and with a single scream she threw her arms around her daughter's neck and sobbed piteously, "Oh, do not leave us my child, do not leave us."

This restored the Colonel's self possession in a moment, and with that promptness of decision which characterized him through life, he turned to one of the house servants and said, "tell Ben to come here instantly."

In a few moments, Ben, who was the most intelligent and trusted slave on the plantation, made his appearance with an expression of countenance that showed he was conscious his master had some important business to entrust to his hands.

"Ben," said the Colonel, "do you know where the Stanford and Crab Orchard road crosses Cedar Creek?" "Yes sir," said Ben, and hurried off to execute his master's orders.

While Ben was preparing for his journey, the Colonel wrote a sad but friendly letter to young Pleasants, informing him of the remarkable turn that affairs had taken, and advising him not to come.

It was one of those nights of inky darkness peculiar to the month of March. The sky was filled with piles of clouds through which not a single star could be seen. The wind blew in fitful gusts, now sighing amid the dry and withered grass that strewed the ground, and in a moment wailing like a legion of lost spirits among the leafless branches of the trees. The high met-tled Gladdon stood at the styleblocks, pawing the earth and champing the bit, impatient for the start, and as the faithful negro threw himself into the saddle. "Here," said the Colonel, handing him the letter and a few dollars in money, "now spare neither horse nor rider; this letter must reach Mr. Pleasants by daylight in the morning. Mind! He lives about two miles above the crossing of Cedar Creek, and if you get bothered you must hire some one to show you the way."

"Yes sir," said Ben, as he wheeled his splendid horse into the road and in a moment was lost in the blackness of the night.

The morning rose bright and beautiful, the night wind had died away, the clouds had disappeared and the sun never shone upon a prouder or happier man than Pleasants, or a merrier group than rode with him that day to fetch away his affianced bride; for although Ben rode his good horse faithfully and well, he unluckily struck into a path that led him miles and miles out of the way, and the expectant bridegroom and his company were far on their way to Colonel Coffey's before he reached his destination.

When the hour arrived at which the guests were to assemble, they poured in from every direction until the house and yard were both pretty well filled. Vardiman and his attendants were in their room, and could be seen by none except their special friends, which was also the case with cousin Polly and my sister, Lennah, who was to act as her bridesmaid.

The crowd arranged itself in groups, in which the extraordinary turn which affairs had taken was discussed in that sort of undertone in which people speak when they talk of their own shrouds and coffins. In fact, I suppose it was about the strangest

looking wedding party that ever assembled upon the earth. There was not a loud word spoken, not a smiling face present. All wore the serious, painful aspect of apprehension. No one that I know of, except myself, took sides with, or cast any reflection upon their party. Everybody liked both of them, and felt sad to think that either should be disappointed, and especially that the friendship which had been so noted between them should be interrupted; and besides, all seemed to have a sort of vague, gloomy foreboding that if Pleasants should come something unpleasant might take place, and as Ben had not returned no one knew what moment he might arrive.

As for myself, I felt vexed at the idea of being deprived of the fun I had been long anticipating; for I had looked forward to the wedding, and especially my trip to Lincoln, as one of the great things worth living for, and to save my life I could not help laying my disappointment on Vardiman. It relieved the matter a bit to think that the sentimental whim of cousin Polly had helped to dash the cup of happiness from my lips; consequently I ventured more than once to express my mind pretty freely in favor of Pleasants, and to intimate what I would do with Vardiman if I were in his place. But whether it was because they did not wish to take sides themselves, or considered me as a sort of vaporeing youngster, whom it was not worth while to notice anyway, I do not know. At any rate nobody seemed to pay much attention to what I said, so I went off by myself and walked about the yard lamenting my own disappointment fully as much, no doubt, as poor Pleasant's misfortune.

I had just about made up my mind to go home and unpack my saddle-bags and take a solemn vow that I would never attend another wedding while I lived, when I observed a large crowd coming down the Stanford road, which proved to be Pleasants and his friend from Lincoln. As they rode up to the stile everybody in the yard, with one accord, stopped talking, and looked for all the world like the whole family was dead, or that the entire community had been suddenly smitten with a pestilence. Not a soul moved, or said a word except myself. I called about a dozen niggers that were standing around looking like they were scared half to death, to come and take care of the horses and wait upon the guests who had just arrived, and as I stepped forward to meet Pleasants, who was at the head of the company, he saw in a moment that something was wrong, and called out:

"Why, Riffe, what is the matter? What's the news?"

"Desperate bad," I replied, "desperate bad."

"What?" he exclaimed, "is Polly dead?"

"So far as you are concerned," said I, "it would be a great deal better if she was dead; but get down, the Colonel will explain it all to you."

"For God's sake," he cried, as he sprang off his horse, totally forgetting the young lady at his side, "tell me, what happened?"

Said I, "Vardiman and Polly Coffey will be man and wife in less than half an hour."

With that he hurried past me to where the Colonel and his wife—the saddest looking couple you ever saw—sat waiting to receive him. They each took one of his hands in both of theirs while the Colonel gave him a hurried explanation of the situation.

In the meantime I helped the young lady down, and the strange guests passed silently into the house while the crowd in the yard stood pale and motionless, as though they were expecting every moment that something terrible was going to happen.

As soon as the brief interview between him and the Colonel had ended, Pleasants came to where I was standing, locked his arm in mine and asked me to walk with him. After we had gone some distance, without either of us speaking a word, he suddenly stopped and asked me what I thought I had better do. I was young and hot headed, and had a great idea of settling everything according to the requirements of the "code," so I advised him to challenge Vardiman on the spot, and volunteered to bear his note. It was lucky, however, that he happened to have a good deal more sense than I had at that time, and probably knew a great deal more about the code in the bargain; for he gave me to understand in very short order that such a thing was not to be thought of under the circumstances, but after reflecting a moment he said he would like to have a talk with Polly. I saw in a second that I had been too brash in advising a resort to arms, for I could not say that Vardiman had either said or done anything involving the honor of Pleasants; so I told him I could arrange the interview, and went at once to my

mother and my aunt and informed them of his request. They made no sort of objection to it, but conducted him immediately to her room, where she gave him a candid explanation of the state of her feelings toward him, which were really those of the very highest respect, and also of the circumstances which led to the engagement between herself and Vardiman. He returned to me in a short time, and within a few minutes we were standing arm in arm in front of his former friend and affianced bride, while the Rev. Ben Polston solemnized the rites of marriage between them. At the conclusion of the prayer which closed the ceremony, we turned to the table where there were several bottles of wine, drank to the health of the newly married pair and went over to my brother's, about a half mile off, to stay all night—I, in a pretty unpleasant mood on account of missing the fun I had expected, and he, in a frame of mind which I hardly think would have been envied by one doomed to the gallows.

I slept but little myself, and as for him, I don't think he slept a wink during the whole night, though I tried my best to console him several times by telling him that there were as good fish in the sea as had ever been caught out of it—a well known fact which I suppose some kind friend has brought to the mind of every man that was ever jilted in the world.

We were up next morning bright and early, and as Pleasants insisted that I should get as many as I could to accompany him home, I went over to the Colonel's, where most of the young folks had remained over night. I found that a good many who had made their arrangements to go had about made up their minds to back out; but I rallied around among them, told them it would never do in the world to desert Pleasants under the circumstances, and offered to pay all expenses should any be incurred. I soon raised a pretty lively crowd, and in a little time we were all on the road to Lincoln, some going with Vardiman and his bride, and about an equal number with Pleasants. We traveled together to the forks of the road, where Pleasants and his party took the Hall's Gap route, and Vardiman and his friends the one leading to Stanford.

We got to old man Pleasants' that evening just as the sun was going down, and the scene that presented itself as we rode up I shall never forget to my dying day. The whole neighborhood, both old and young, had gathered in, and were all stand-

ing in the yard silently and anxiously waiting our arrival. From their midst the aged couple came out, hand in hand, to meet their only son, their darling and their pride, who but the day before had left them so bright, so happy, so full of joy, to return the weary dejected victim of the bitterest disappointment that ever fell to the lot of man. Not a word was spoken, they placed their arms around his neck and kissed him, and mingled their tears in silence. Nor were they alone. Not a dry eye looked upon their misery. Had their boy been brought to them a corpse the scene could not have been more sad.

Some kind neighbor invited us in, and after we had all warmed ourselves around the bright and comfortable fire that was blazing in the wide old fashioned fire-place, and the girls had changed their dresses, and arranged their hair and fixed their ribbons and breast-pins, supper was announced, and we sat down to one of the most sumptuous meals that ever gladdened the eyes of a hungry mortal. The old man was rich, and the old lady was ambitious to spread a feast worthy of the bride of her only son; so the table was literally loaded with everything the country afforded that could either gratify the palate or please the eye, and that too prepared only as the thrifty housewife of the good old time knew how.

Those of us who had been traveling all day were too much occupied with the business before us to talk a great deal and those who had not were too sad; so that conversation made very little headway during the supper, notwithstanding the abundance of excellent wine which had been provided for the occasion.

After supper the young folk all repaired to the parlor, as I suppose it would be called at this day, though at that time among the country people it would have been known as the "big room." And in fact it was a large room, plainly but neatly furnished, and warmed from a wide fire-place with a broad stone hearth, set off with a stately pair of dog-irons with large brass heads, which had been scoured until you could see your face in them almost as well as in a looking glass.

The young folks from Casey seated themselves on one side of the room and those of the neighborhood on the other, and all looked as solemn as if they had just come from their grandmother's funeral.



It is generally admitted, I believe, among those who have known me all my life, that although I may have been many a time sadly in need of more precious metals, I always had plenty of brass, and I shall always think that on this occasion I put what I had on hand to a pretty good use. Seeing that the party would prove a dead failure so far as enjoyment was concerned unless something was done to break the ice, I took my stand in front of the fire-place and looked first to one side and then the other until the gaze of the whole crowd was fixed on me, and then said: "Ladies and gentlemen, one and all, please rise to your feet."

They all rose immediately, and I continued: "Ladies and gentlemen of Lincoln," making them a profound bow, "permit me to introduce the ladies and gentlemen of Casey," bowing to them in turn. Both parties bowed and took their seats, and I went on, "I take it for granted that we all belong to the most respectable class of society; or we would not be here; and as this is not exactly a funeral, I don't see any use in our sitting around looking as melancholy as a parcel of last year's scare-crows. I therefore propose that any gentleman may introduce himself to any lady present without being offensive." With that I stepped up to a very handsome, intelligent looking young lady, and making her the most graceful bow I could, said: Miss, my name is P. B. Riffe, I was born in Casey county, and raised in the swamps of Green River. May I have the honor of your acquaintance? There had been no books of etiquette printed that day to teach young people how to be disagreeable under the name of politeness; so instead of taking umbrage at what I am afraid most young ladies of the present generation would consider as little better than downright affrontery, she arose with about the air I had put on myself, and dropping me a low courtesy, replied, "Certainly, sir, with pleasure. My name is Clementia White I was born in Lincoln county and raised among the pinks and roses of Cedar Creek."

I saw I was beaten at my own game and acknowledged the corn while the company enjoyed a big laugh at my expense, the first symptom of merriment I had seen for the last two days.

Determined not to be outdone, I offered her my arm for a promenade, and as we started, I asked Miss Clementia if she sang. She replied: "But very little, but would be delighted to have a song from me." I told her I knew but few songs, but if she would assist me, I would try my hand on "Sister Phoebe."

"Sister Phoebe," said she, "I don't think I ever heard of it before."

"No difference," said I, "but there is a little acting that has to be gone through with as it is sung to make it go off right, and I only want you to assist me in that."

"Very well," said she, I will try," and I struck up:

"Oh! Sister Phoebe, how merry were we,

"The time we sat under the juniper tree,

"Put this hat on your head, 'twil keep your head warm.

"And take a sweet kiss, 'twill do you no harm."

As I sung the next to the last line, I placed my hands as if I was putting a hat on her head, and just as I finished the last I caught her around the neck and kissed her quicker than a frog would catch a fly.

The whole room roared with laughter, and an old black woman who was standing with the other darkies, who had gathered about the windows, burst out:

"Da, now, Miss Clementia done got her match dat time."

Neither of us cracked a smile, but Miss Clementia drew back a little and said:

"Why, I was not expecting that."

"Oh, no," said I. "I suppose not, but you agreed to help me go through the motions if I would sing you that song, and that was simply one of the motions."

This set the crowd to laughing again and the uproar brought Pleasants and his friends from the old folks' room, and no sooner had they got in than I proposed a play in which all hands could join. I wanted to ring Pleasants into something that would make him forget his troubles, and nothing suited my purpose better than "Killy Cranky." For the information of the younger people of the present generation who have perhaps never heard of it

before, I will here explain that in this old time play the ladies and gentlemen would pair off with each other according to choice, form double file arm in arm, and as they sung a song to the tune of "Killy Cranky" they marched to the music and performed various evolutions, which wound up with every fellow kissing his partner, which was sometimes slightly resisted, it is true, but still I never knew a man to make a total failure in it in my life. Very often indeed, it was gone through with considerable vigor on both sides.

So I proposed "Killy Cranky," and we all selected our partners and struck out. Pleasants and one of the prettiest girls in the room, who had taken him for a partner, at my suggestion, in the lead, Miss Clementia and I next, and the rest following, us, two and two. After we got through with "Killy Cranky," we had "fishing for love" and one or two other plays of the same sort, all of which wound up in the same way. Pleasants took a part in all of them, and as all the prettiest girls in the house vied with each other in showing him every attention, it is more than likely that before he got through he had begun to suspect that I was correct in the remark I had made to him the night before, that "there were as good fish in the sea as had ever been caught out of it."

Finally some one proposed that we should have a dance, when in came four likely negro fellows with two fiddles, a tamborine and a triangle, and in a very few minutes an old fashioned eight-handed reel was going to the tune of "Natchez under the hill," which put new life into the heels of the hearty young dancers, who were troubled with neither tight boots nor corsets. This was followed by the "Forked Deer," "Kiss Me Sweetly," "Money Musk," "Fisher's Hornpipe," and other old tunes, which I suppose have long since gone out of date, until way late in the night or rather, I should have said soon in the mornin'; for the chickens were crowing for day when we parted, shaking hands all round and bidding each other good-bye as though we had been well acquainted all our lives.

And where now are all who composed that party, which although it assembled in sorrow, quaffed ere it separated the sweetest cup of innocent pleasure? Some of them I never saw again, and nearly all have gone to their last long rest. Pleasants finally married and by adding to the fine patrimony he inherited from his father the rewards of his own industry and economy,

grew wealthy and removed to Illinois, where for aught I know he may be living yet.

But to Vardiman and his bride, who can say the fruition equaled their impassioned hopes? Who can say it did not far exceed them? They lived for ten years prosperously and happy, when Polly passed away, and in a few years her husband followed her.

Colonel Coffey, mourned in death as he had been honored in life, sleeps by the side of his loving wife Tabitha (Riffe) Coffey. Thus have they all gone, while I am here to be called perhaps a garrulous old man for this imperfect sketch of a single drama of their lives.

#### COFFEYS

Jesse Coffey of Lincoln county, Kentucky, born 1781, died 1850, son of Asborn and Molly Nightengale Coffey, grandson of William Coffey, married Tabitha Riffe. Of their 10 children only five of which we have any contact of descendents.

Polly Coffey, the oldest, was married to Jeremiah Vardaman. This family history will be found in Vardaman families.

Nathan Coffey, brother to Polly, lived and died in Kentucky, his granddaughter, Bessie Judd, who lives on part of the old Jessee Coffey plantation at Middleburg, Ky., as of 1961.

R. N. Coffey, married to Sallie Portman, came to Texas 1853, lived in the Stony Point community. Deceased children and grandchildren are as follow: William Coffey, married Saphronia Williamson, deceased children Clarence, Lora Rodgers, Minnie Rodgers, Burl married Leina Gaines, children Dan, Helen Hankins and Garland; Worth Coffey married Jennie Griffin, deceased children Vorilla Fagala, Mallie, Jim married Minnie Johnson, children Effie Lane, Lindsey, Loleita Ransom, Agnes King, Inez Alexander, Wilma Rauritzen, Margaret Tarvin, and Jessie moon. After the death of Minnie Jim married Appilieona Hansard. Cam Coffey married Willie Johnson, Willie Coffey married Fred John, children Mildred Lancon, Ina Holcomb and Charles John. Patsy Coffey married Dink Flemming, Anna Coffey married Sim Hightower. Emma Coffey married Riley Moore. George Coffey single deceased. Jesse Coffey died young. John C. Coffey

(RICHARD NIGHTENGALE)

married Lizzie Lindsey. Bettie and Malcom Coffey died young.

Jesse P. Coffey married Tabitha Slaughter, came to Texas 1853, buried Highland cemetery, Anna, Texas, had the following children and grandchildren: Matt Coffey married Virginia Butridge, deceased children Grabella Coffey, Mary Jones, Pearl Miller deceased son Joe. Greer Coffey married Birdie Strickland, children Billie Ruth and Marjorie Ann. Dick Coffey married Mattie Reecer deceased children Virginia Sloan, Dixie Lou Sims, Jack, Loy L. and Charles. George Coffey, single, deceased. Mary Coffey, single, deceased. Belle Coffey married Lucky Coffey, deceased. Cynthia, single. James Perry Coffey married Sallie Griffin, deceased, children Blanche Jernigan, Ella Johnsey, Mrs. J. R. Williams, George, and Jesse, deceased. William Coffey married Sallie Moore, son Wendle.

Minerva Coffey married J. H. Slaughter, came to Texas 1853, settled near Anna, Texas, buried at Highland cemetery, had the following children and grandchildren: Mary Slaughter married Jim Strother, deceased, children Dixie Strother Rattan, children Lillian Powell, Dow, and Lee McAnally, deceased. Lonnie Strother married Lena White, children Jim, Oneita Porter, Lucille Armstrong, deceased, Cecil and Winnie Copeland. George Strother married had children Aline McKinney, Verna Aikins, Inez Wilson, and Lena Chapman. Jesse Slaughter married Sallie Portman, children Jo Etta Slaughter Roper deceased, children Douglas deceased, Jesse, Joe, W. R. and Laverne Stratton. James P. Slaughter deceased no family. Clarence Slaughter married, children Lorine and Roy. Claud Slaughter married, children Leland, Jesse, Bernon, Roy, Jack. Elizabeth Slaughter married C. H. Wysong, deceased, children Hampton, Dr. W. S. married, three sons Scott, Dudley and Charlie Wysong, Allie Wysong Griffin, deceased. Bub Wysong, deceased, married, children Tillie, Helen and Jim. Anna Wysong Graves, children Mary Lou, Ruth and Bessie Moore. Osborn N. Slaughter married Maria Lair, deceased, children Mabel Slaughter Powell, children Earl, Lotie, Anna Lou Turner, Rene, deceased, Jesse, deceased, M. C. and Bill. Helen Slaughter married Neely, no family. Everett O. Slaughter married Annie Louise Wilson, children Doris White, Harold, Bettie Kennenberge, John, Emily Borden, Kincaid Morgan, and Sara Woods. Mittie Slaughter married George Coffman, deceased, children Quincy Coffman Sherley, deceased, children George, deceased, Lorraine and Wayne. Bonnie Coffman Cobb three sons. William P. Slaughter married Ziela Coffman, deceased, children

Mona Slaughter Sherley, children Bill, Lena Brown. John Slaughter married Helen Strother, son Earl married Ruby Lindsey. Virgil Slaughter married Faye Delameter, children Faye Hutt, Virginia Graves and Zelie. Matthew Slaughter married Mary Graves, deceased, children J. M. and Iva Slaughter Sherley. Eliza Slaughter married DeSoto Collins, deceased, no family.

## VARDAMANS

Vardaman families furnished partly by T. M. Pennington, a relative of Stanford, Kentucky, and other descendents.

John Vardaman Sr. came to America from Sweden around 1720-1725. A son, John II, married Elizabeth Morgan, native of Wales and migrated to Kentucky. He and Elizabeth had 12 children, only two mentioned. Jeremiah made a Baptist preacher and went to Missouri, was founder of Jewell College, Liberty, Mo. The other son, Morgan, born 1766 married Polly Trousdale, lived in Lincoln count Kentucky near Middleburg, had eight children as follows: Annie married Lindsey Stephenson, Betsy married Ephriam Pennington, T. M. Pennington above a descendent, Jennie married Watson Stephenson, Patsy married John Welch, John Trousdale never married. Eliza married Sam Holmes, son John. So far as we know all these families lived and died in Kentucky. Another sister, Mary Vardaman, married Garland Smith, so far as we know they died in Kentucky but had a son Morgan Smith who married Bettie Fisher and moved to Texas. Jeremiah Vardaman, a brother, married Polly Coffey of Kentucky of whom the previous story was written. Five generations of these last two beginning with Mary and Garland Smith, and Jeremiah and Polly Vardaman. Descendents and families follow:

Morgan Smith, son of Mary and Garland Smith, married Bettie Fisher moved to Texas settled first in Collin county, near Mantua, later to east of Van Alstyne. Both buried in Van Alstyne cemetery, five children and families as follow:

Garland Smith married Jimmie Parish, both deceased, children and grandchildren as follow: Joe married Katie Pickard, Chloe married Lynn Bradford. Bill married Laura Keeling, children Loraine Smith, Billie Wayne and Garland died as a baby. Edna Smith married Valda Mann, daughter Lauretta, Catherine Smith Married Tom Cooke, sons John and Jack. Lewis and Harden Smith, no data.

Sabra Smith married Jim Headrick, both deceased. Children Beatrice Huddleston, children Ruth Spurgin, Betty Gipson, Charles and Leroy. Bety Headrick, single, Morgan Headrick, deceased, married Doris Allen, son James. Ann Mary Headrick married John Shelton, children Waldine, deceased, James, Johnny, Morgan, Anita Millican, Weilie Kirby, Bob and Donald, deceased.

Betsy Morgan Smith married Charlie Adams, both deceased, children Bessie Beasley, Callie Smith, Corine Cox, Ed, Talmadge and Charlie.

Susan Smith married Alfred Clayton, both deceased, children Rena, deceased, Bettie Luper, daughter Maurine Gant. Miles Clayton, deceased. Morgan Clayton married Allie Benton, children Shirley Langford, Alfred, Marsha Wall, Stanley. Victoria Clayton married Tom Odom, deceased, son Clayton.

Kate Smith married Asa Hudson, both deceased, children Ann Mary married Si Burks, children Kattie Logue, deceased. Willie Caddell, Bulah Roberts, Mary Dodd, Lewis, Charlie, Wanda Hall, Florence Morgan and Alice Carroll.

Jeremiah Vardaman of whom the previous story was written, born May 10, 1797 in Kentucky married Polly Coffey March 12, 1829, born April 25, 1808, died May 29, 1842, were parents of seven children. After Polly's death Jeremiah moved to Texas, 1853, settled in Collin county, between Melissa and Anna, died March 28, 1854, buried in Throckmorton cemetery. Five of the seven children moved to Texas as follows:

Jess Morgan Vardaman, first child of Polly and Jeremiah, married Hannah Portman, both deceased, buried Bridges cemetery, Denton county, Texas. Children as follow: Janie Vardaman married Jim Hays, both deceased, four children George Vardaman, single, deceased, Pattie Vardaman married Tom Fouts, both deceased, children Nora Fouts aged 2, deceased, Charlie Fouts married Marcia Miller, both deceased, girl Dorthy Batte. Julia Fouts married Jim Golladay. deceased, no child, Hannah Fouts married J. O. McDonald, deceased, twin girls De Nyce Hackler. De Loyce Griffin Mays. Cecil Fouts married Eugenia Chitwood, girl De Nece Rochelle. Sidney Fouts, deceased, married Charlie Hussey, children James, killed in war 1937, Bettie Atcherson, John and Lula Simpson. Wardo Fouts married Annie Richardson, no family, deceased. Isabelle Fouts married Arthur Bennett, children A. C., Billie Joe, Roland and Ladena Penner. Alma

Fouts married Fred Rufner, children Patsy Part, Wanda Page. Christine Fouts married O. H. McDonald, two sons O. H. Jr. and David. Thomas Fouts married Mary Harriss, son Thomas. Bettie Vardaman, twin to Pattie, married Oliver Buster, both deceased, children Francis Buster, deceased, Leah Buster married Robert Merrell, children Winifred Rollins, Leona Garrett. Pattie Buster died at birth, Clinton Buster married Ruby Tidwell, children Betty Capers, Francis Willingham, Patsy Cole. Nannie Buster, deceased, married Barney Mays., son, deceased. Vardaman Buster, deceased, married Pauline Martin, children Marie Taylor, Lavon Fulwiler. William Buster married Loretta Putty, no children. Enioch and Vi Buster, deceased. Jeff Vardaman, deceased, married Hattie Cobb, children Audrey Bryan, children Lula, deceased, Glendon, and Virginia. Valera Wright, daughter Linda. Nannie Vardaman, single, deceased. Welch Vardaman, deceased, married Minnie Trigg, no family. Ephriam Vardaman first married Annie Hill, both deceased, children Jesse married Naomi Booth, children Billy and Larry. Bettie Vardaman married Roy Sullivan, children Bettie Basham, Kayanna and Tommy. After the death of Annie, Ephriam married Daisy McCollough, children George Vardaman married Ruby McGown, children Pamela, George. Calvin Vardaman married Ruth Busch, children Sandra, Deborah. Annie Laurie Vardaman married Bob Miller, children Robert, Laurie. Jerry Vardaman married Alfalene Jolly, children Carolyn, Celeste. James Vardaman married Mina Robinson, children Bridget, Kirsten, Page.

Mary Vardaman, second child of Polly and Jeremiah married Sam Hays, both deceased, moved to Texas. Children as follows: Tom Hays married Kittura Farrington, deceased, one girl. Jim Hays married Janie Vardaman, deceased, 4 children. Jerry Hays married Price Johnson, deceased, eight children. Patsy Hays married Dave Truman, deceased, four boys. Catherine Hays married George Hays, deceased, 10 children. three living Leila Miller, Jim, and Vina Ruben. Christopher Hays married Luella Bayly, deceased, sons Marvin and Charles. Elizabeth Hays married John Leonard, deceased, children Raydo, Susie. Odelle. Genevive, and Naomi Culpepper. Emma Hays married, four children.

John Vardaman, third child of Polly and Jeremiah, died young in Kentucky, 1846.

Lucy Ann Vardaman, fourth child of Polly and Jeremiah, moved to Texas, died 1901, buried at Whitesboro, married John Lucas, children as follows: Mary Judith Lucas married Peter

Wall, 11 children all deceased. Martha Lucas married Billie Stephenson, four sons Ephriam Stephenson married Alberta Burton, no family, deceased. William Stephenson died age 20. Edgar Stephenson married first Ethel Parsons, children E. L., deceased, and Eliouse Boswell, after the death of Ethel, Edgar married Viola Ross, children, Martha Creed, Margaret Daniels, Virginia Morriss, and Jo El Bonser. Luther Stephenson married first Lula Fox, children Margie Stamps, Billy and Bobby, after Lula died Luther married Elsie McKeon. Ephriam H. Lucas married first Dollie McAninch, children Grace and Mattie died in infancy. Luna Lucas married Jim Wilson, children Nora, deceased, and Cecil. Nora Lucas married R. A. George, deceased, children R. A., deceased and Ruth Welch. After the death of Dollie, Ephriam married Bessie McElhannon, children Murray, deceased, Robert Lucas married Thelma Johnson, children Roberta, Thelma and Robert Jr. Eunice Lucas single.

Ephriam P. Vardaman, fifth child of Polly and Jeremiah moved to Texas, married Elizabeth Riffe, both deceased. Buried Lair cemetery, Anna, Texas. Children as follows: Johnny died in infancy. Ella Vardaman married Jim Cockerham, deceased, children Cecil died age 4, Nora Cockerham married Earl Lawrence, two sons Lonnie Ray and Ernest Loy. Ernest Cockerham, adopted name Ernest Vardaman married Margaret Haney, a son Richard. Etta Vardaman married Willie Patterson, deceased, children Virgil, Rosevelt, Gillie, Etta, Hampton, Claud, Howard and Joe.

Patsy Jane Vardaman, sixth child of Polly and Jeremiah, married Richard Nightengale Portman, both buried Highland cemetery, Anna, Texas. Children and grand children as follows:

Anna Portman married Andrew Barker, both buried at Stoney Point cemetery, children Portman Barker married Lillie Johnson, children Pauline Smith, Ernest, Travis, Lovetta Smith, Reba Southerland, Virgil and J. R. After Lillie's death Portman married Etta Lofton. Bulah Barker married Oscar Stapp, children Francis Byers and Evelyn. Cressa Barker married Ross Johnson, two girls Elouise and Lois Wright. May Barker married Raymond Sellars, children R. B., twins Weldon, Eldon, and Eusallis. May married second Roy Speck. Lee Barker, deceased married Irene Dooley, two children, baby deceased and Retta Belle McCoy. Elsie Barker, deceased, married Olyn Hendricks, children Cecil Lee and Hazel West.

Mary Ella Portman married George A. Flesher, both buried

Van Alstyne cemetery, children Mabel Flesher married first Allen Bryant, son Odell. After Bryant's death Mabel married Leslie Baker, both deceased, girl Laverne Dawson, Virgil Flesher, deceased, married Vera Spearman, two girls Geraldine Billups, Lyla Klinge. Roy Flesher married Margaret Baker, children Bernice Caldwell. Irene Harsh, Harold, Kenneth. Mamie Flesher married Lemond Gregory, children Ruth Newman, Leo, and Wanda Accardi. Montrose Flesher married Viola Shell, children Don, Evelyn McGuffee, Doyle and Joyce Allen. Ralph Flesher married Linnie Cribbs, no children. Pearl Flesher married Otho Murphy, no children. Clyde Flesher married Ruby George, no children.

Jerry Portman married Lizzie Sweeney, both buried Durant, Okla., children Annie Portman first married Charlie Marks, after his death Annie married Troy Harris, no family. Carl Portman married Inez Gilliam, no children. Bill Portman married May Huddleston, three sons Bill, Don and Dean. Leland Portman married Ollie Felmet, no family. Mary and Susie Portman, single. George Portman married Lennel Gillispi, children Sammie and Vickie Lee. Joe Portman married Johnny Whitefield, children Dolores White, Sylvia, Jerry and Joe. Alma Portman married John Filan, no children. Edwin Portman married Florene Walker, three sons Michael, David and Philip. Jesse Portman, deceased, married Mildred Blair, girl Reta Jo.

George Portman, born 1864, died 1883.

Eliza Portman married Stephen Latham, both buried Pecan Grove cemetery, McKinney, Texas, children Clara Belle, single, Hugh, single, Samuel married Tulon Murray, son Ernie. Jesse and James Latham, single.

Jesse Portman, born 1867, died 1926, single.

Thomas Portman, born dead 1869.

Maggie Portman, the only surviving child of Patsy and Richard N. Portman married Oscar Sweeney, deceased, Maggie, now almost 91 years old, had the following children: Naomi Sweeney married Chester Parker, both deceased, three children ODee., Odell, and baby deceased. Jim Sweeney married Minnie House, children J. K., Louise Swearingen, Jack and Patricia Simas, Willie Sweeney died at birth. Jesse Sweeney married Geneva Pyle, children Anthony, Jerry and La Juita. Ethel Sweeney married Doad Harris, deceased, no family. Fielding

Sweeney married Blanche Pearce, children Francis, Judy and Joe. Paul Sweeney first married Gussie McGinnis, twin girls Effie DeJuan Gagnon, Maggie LeVonne Cannon. Paul married second Jesse Thomas. Richard Sweeney died young. Zackery Sweeney married Gwinn Bell, children Talamadge, Carolyn. Charles Sweeney died at birth. Onita Sweeney married Ernest Hodges, five sons Eldon, Ozon, Johny, Jim and Rickey. Jewel Sweeney first married Dorthy Cotner, son. Jewel married second Bernice Mead, son Oscar. Clara Belle Sweeney born dead.

Clara Portman married Alfred Clayton, both buried Cannon cemetery, children Geneva Clayton married Jewell Marshall, no family. Lillian Clayton married Jess Brinkley, children Kenneth and Mary Jane McCrary. Earl Clayton married Winnie Smith, girl Earline. Jewell Clayton, single. Evelyn Clayton married Ira Bruce, children Charlotte, Estylen Tappans and Patrica Allen. Reuben Clayton married Betty Thompson, children Rachel Tillett and Calvin. Zelma Clayton married Elton Watson, no family. Gynith and baby Clayton died young.

Ephriam Portman died age 9.

Charlie Portman died age 34, single.

Katie Portman married Charlie Beaver, both buried Van Alstyne, children Weldon Beaver married Dorthy Hunnicutt, children Jack, Kenneth and Anna Watts. Charlie Marie Beaver married Leonard Hodges, no family.

John Richard Portman married Grace Olds, both buried Van Alstyne, children Patsy Portman married Otis Neathery, two girls Melba Johnson and Grace, deceased. Aline Portman married Joe Hoyle children Joe, Mary Beth and John. Mildred Portman married Ernest Smith, children Burdell and La Dora. Richard Portman married Opal Nevins, children Hazel Duncan and Don. Glen Portman married Jessie Polson, children Jerri, Bobby, Patsy and Jackie. Billie Portman married Margaret Edmonson, children Jack and Hilda.

Jeremiah Vardaman, seventh child of Polly and Jeremiah, killed in war 1863, Tennessee.

## PORTMANS

Early Portman Families, copied from History of Kentucky Baptist by J. H. Spencer and additional information from descendants.

John Portman from London, England, migrated to Pennsylvania, to South Carolina, later to Christian county, Kentucky, where he died, 1799. A son John Portman II married a Miss McWhorter, lived on Green river, raised two sons, John who went to Mississippi, died 1855. The other son, George McWhorter Portman married 1803 Patsy Coffey, sister of Col. Jesse. George M. and Patsy Portman had 12 children as follows:

Jesse C. Portman, first child of G. M. and Patsy Portman, married Leannah Riffe who is mentioned in the story written by her brother Peter B. Riffe, came to Texas, was Baptist preacher, buried at Bridges cemetery. Had following children: Billie Portman married Adaline Harrington, deceased, children Earl and Jimmie Prince. Christopher Portman married Alice Hall, deceased, children Jesse, Anna, deceased. Matthew Portman married Sallie Walton, deceased. James Portman, single, deceased. Hannah Portman married Jess M. Vardaman for this family record see Vardaman families. Molly Portman married Pryor, deceased, children Florence Stinson, deceased, Anna Carter, deceased, girl Catherine Hampton. Patsy Portman married Tom Threadgill, deceased, no family. Maggie Portman married George McWhorter, deceased, no family. Elizabeth Portman married John Trout, children Charlie Calvin, Jesse, Johnie, Chrit, Hannah Talley, Anna Griffin, Maggie Morney, all deceased. Julia Portman married Dave Thurman, one son.

John Portman, second child of G. M. and Patsy Portman married Cynthia Watkins, deceased, no data.

Clayton, Dr. Baily, Patsy, and Matthew Portman, third, fourth, fifth, sixth children of G. M. and Patsy Portman, all deceased, no data.

George Portman, seventh child of G. M. and Patsy Portman was school teacher, died single.

Betsy Portman, eighth child of G. M. and Patsy Portman married J. S. Pattie, deceased, children Sam Pattie married Ena Henderson, deceased, children Dale, Don, Jack and Howard. Emma Pattie Cunningham, deceased, children Fannie, Fred and Albert.

Osborn Portman, ninth child of G. M. and Patsy Portman married Francis Fitzpatrick, deceased, children Amanda Portman Bowman, deceased. Napolan Portman, deceased unmarried. James Portman killed. Katherine Portman married Asa Belden, children Matilda Belden married Hugh Barker, deceased, children Lonnie, Will, Eula, Kate, John died age 4, Jim Belden, deceased, married Esther Lindsey, children Aurel, Charlie, Jim, Dora, Vera and Annie. Willie Belden married Bill Montgomery, one son all deceased. Nannie Belden married John Airhart, deceased, no family. George, Belle, Ann and Patsy Portman deceased no data. Duff Portman, deceased, married Ellen Moore, children Francis Portman Rhorer, children Melvin, Huber. Chester and Wash Portman, deceased, Ruth Portman Gibbins, deceased, Napolan Portman deceased. Homer Portman, Elizabeth Portman Tingley, deceased girl Sherley Dean.

W. A. Portman, tenth child of G. M. and Patsy Portman married Martha Barger, deceased, children Florence Portman married Hiram Merrell, children Lee Merrill, deceased, married Mae Trout, children Hiram, Bonnie, Louise, Jesse, Robert, Dick, Dexter, Edgar. Lizzie Merrill married John Strother, deceased children Mildred West, Merrell, John, Virginia, Beth. Maude Merrell Michalke, children Wilma, Ruth, Walter. Jesse and Willie Merrell deceased no data. After the death of Merrell Florence married George Nipp, deceased, children Velma Harkins, one son Arthur L. Sallie Portman married Jesse Slaughter, for this record see Coffey families. Mary Clay Portman married Will Lair, deceased, children Minnie Lair married Tom Shelton, deceased, children Roy, Lloyd, deceased, John, Paul, deceased, Ninis Knox, Bernice Wright, Willie Harle, Gladys Nickerson and May Cullum. Bryan Lair married Juanita Huffines, children Nora Placko, deceased, Ted, deceased, Douglas. Alice Portman married E. A. Gladden deceased, children Baily Gladden, Cora Bowlin, John Gladden married, no data. Cora Bessie and Jo Etta Portman died young. Richard Nightengale Portman, eleventh children of G. M. and Patsy Portman, see Vardaman record for family. Sallie Portman, 12th child of G. M. and Patsy Portman, see R. N. Coffey family record.

## RIFFES

Gen. Christopher Riffe first white settler in Casey Co., Kentucky 1793, was born 1764, died 1850, was married first to

Agnes Spears 10 children, after the death of Agnes, was married to Elizabeth Coffey, sister of Col. Jesse, who married Riffes sister Tabitha, from this marriage was born Peter B. writer of the previous story who married Julia Watkins. Leannah, sister to Peter B., married Jesse Portman the great Baptist preacher of Casey Co., but moved to Texas. Both died in Denton county. Christopher, a brother to Peter B. and Leannah, married Margaret Coulter and moved to Collin county, Texas. Two children from this marriage were Elizabeth married Ephriam Vardaman for this record see Vardaman families. Welch Riffe married Nye Agnes Hill all deceased. Their children are Annie Lee, Zella, Jim C., Lilbon, G. D. Ray Shurley all deceased. M. A. Brown, Mary L. Shurley many decedents live near Anna, Texas.

The added names of Coffey, Vardaman, Portman, and Riffe families compiled and brought to date as of June 1961 by Ruby Flesher, Howe, Texas.