

History of John S. and Martha (Cannon) Barnes in Cass County, Texas

John and Martha Barnes (also spelled **Barns**) came to Texas about 1841 from Yalobusha Co., MS, where they married on 28 Feb 1835. **Martha** was born about 1817 in Greenville District, SC (now Pickens Co.), the daughter of **Carter and Sarah Cannon**, who also came to Cass Co. [See separate story about this family.] The 1850 Cass Co., TX, census shows **John** as having been born about 1813 in Alabama Territory, some six years before it became a state. It is possible, however, that the census informant was wrong, and he was born in the Mississippi or Louisiana territories. His parents have not been established, but he may have been the son of either **Loftin Barnes** (born about 1775-1785) or **William Barnes** (born about 1780-1790), who were also in Yalobusha Co., MS, in the 1830s. **William** might have been the **William Barnes** in the 1846 Cass Co. tax records, or else his possible son **William**, who married **Rebecca Waits** in Yalobusha Co., MS, was this William. Otherwise, the history of the elder William is unknown. Loftin Barnes was in the 1850 Titus Co. census with his wife, Mary "Polly." Either he or his son, Loftin Grant Barnes, might have been the L. Barns in the 1850 Cass Co. tax records. By 1860 both Loftin Barneses were in Sevier Co., AR, and Loftin Jr. died in Marion Co., TX, in 1891. The original site of John and Martha Barnes's land in Cass Co. was actually near present-day Jefferson, Marion Co.

The known children of John and Martha were: **Sarah J.**, born about 1836; **Rhoda A.**, born about 1838; **Mary E.**, born about 1841 (all of these in MS); **Emeline L.**, about 1842; **Berry Henderson**, about 1846; **Martha P.**, about 1848; **Elmira Tennessee "Tinnie,"** 9 Aug 1851; and **Seaborn**, about 1852/1854 (the last five were born in the Cass Co. area). The histories of **Mary E.** and **Emeline L.** are not known. **Sarah J.** married **James Skinner, Jr.**, on 15 Dec 1852 in Cass Co. but must have died within a short time because **Rhoda A.** married him on 23 Dec 1854 in Cass Co. **Rhoda** appears to have died before the 1860 census because this census showed James Skinner as single again, living in the Marion Co. home of **Lewis A. and Virginia Hill**, whose daughter he later married (**Emily Hill**, divorced from a man named **Stewart**). [See separate story about James Skinner, Jr. and Sr.] **Berry Henderson Barnes**, who went by "Henderson," married **Theodocia Fidelia (Phidelia) Leatherman** on 7 Sep 1865, reportedly in Bell Co., TX. **Martha P. Barnes** married **James Whitten Beall**, perhaps in Tarrant Co., TX, around 1865. **Tennessee** married **Martin Van Buren Digby** (who was divorced from **Susan Virginia Burton** (her first husband was surnamed **Hendrick** and her third husband was surnamed **Ledbetter**) on 28 Jan 1869, reportedly in Donahoe, Bell Co. **Tennessee** was apparently the longest lived of the Barnes children, dying 19 Aug 1931 in Austin (but was a resident of Temple, Bell Co. -- she is buried in Hillcrest Cemetery there). **Henderson** died of tuberculosis, according to granddaughter, Pauline Barnes Price (deceased), and other information places his date of death as 25 Oct 1883 in Handley, Tarrant Co. **Martha** died about 1872/1874, probably in Austin Co., TX, and her husband married **Mary Elizabeth Williams** in Burnet Co., TX.

The first record of **John S. Barnes** in Texas was 3 Jul 1841, when he witnessed **James Skinner's** (undoubtedly **James Skinner, Sr.**) conditional certificate for 640 acres in Red River Co. On 20 Sep 1841 **John Barnes** witnessed **Calvin Cunningham's** conditional certificate for 320 acres in Red River Co. **John** himself received a conditional certificate and an unconditional certificate for 640 acres of land on 4 May 1844. On 3 Feb 1845 he filed for 294 acres of land,

which was sold to **Asa Johnson** on 14 May 1849. His remaining 346 acres were on Black Cypress Stream. Barnes Lake in this area is named for **John S. Barnes's** family. About ten years after **John** arrived, brothers **Wiley Jackson Barnes** and **Warren Riley Barnes** arrived and also lived near this lake. They may be relatives of John. The last Cass Co. record showing John Barnes's name was a document in which John sold land that he had bought from the **James Skinner, Sr.**, estate, to **James Skinner, Jr.**, on 5 Mar 1853.

By 1854 only **Martha Barnes** was in the Cass Co. tax records, and it believed that John had died by then. Further evidence for his death at about this time is the fact that he never completed his land patents and that corroborating information was published in a book that mentioned the youngest Barnes child, **Seaborn**, who became an outlaw in the well-known Sam Bass gang. Wayne Gard, author of the book, *Sam Bass* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1936, p. 108), stated that Seaborn's father had died when "Seab" was a baby and his mother then moved with five children to Handley in Tarrant Co. Another book stated: "Seaborn Barnes . . . was a native of Tarrant county and of respectable parentage." From: *Life and Adventures of Sam Bass: The Notorious Union Pacific and Texas Train Robber* (Dallas, Texas: Dallas Commercial Steam Print, 1878, reprinted by The Frontier Press of Texas, Houston, TX, p. 39). Seaborn Barnes and Sam Bass were killed in Round Rock, Williamson Co., Texas, in July 1878 and are buried together there. Seaborn's and Tennessee's graves are the only graves of members of this family for which locations are known.

The children of Martha F. Barnes and J. W. Beall were: **Judson Tatum "Jack,"** b. 1866; **James Edward "Ed,"** b. 1867; **Laura Josephine,** b. 1870; and **Lilly E.,** b. 1872. Jack married **Emma Artelia Rogers** on 25 Nov 1890 in Tarrant Co. Ed apparently married, but his wife's name is unknown (perhaps **Ella C. Lile,** in Napa, Canyon Co., Idaho). Laura married **Louis David Smith** on 11 Mar 1893 in Tarrant Co., and Lilly married **Caleb Henry Tyler** on 7 Jan 1886 in Cauthron, Scott Co., AR.

Elmira Tennessee Barnes and **Martin Van Buren Digby** had the following children: **James H.,** b. 1870; **William Seaborn,** b. 1872; **Claude,** b. 1877; a son, name unknown, b. 1880; **Alta Mae,** b. 1882; another child about whom nothing is known, and **L. Guy,** b. 1889. William Seaborn Digby married **Mattie Minerva Wallace;** Claud married **Pearl** (unknown last name) and second, **Lilly Haire.** Alta Mae married **Daniel Albert "Dee" McKay;** and L. Guy married **Nina** (last name unknown).

The children of **Henderson Barnes** and **Theodocia Leatherman** were: **John F., Robert E., Philip N., Emma Ophelia, Charles Henry Joseph, Ida May/Maud, Clementinius Claude, and Ozella "Ozee."**