

## **Willis Family Cemetery Farris and Austell Families**

My name is Shirley Farris Jones and I am a descendant of Dr. John Kennerly Farris, Sr. who is buried in the Willis Family Cemetery, located at the top of the hill on the Coffee County/Grundy County line. Although the following family graves sadly seem to be lost to time and history, I have family records and a couple of very old newspaper obits which confirm their existence. Also, as a child, I recall very well visiting this cemetery along with my father, Malcolm Farris, and my aunt, Ruth Farris, both of whom are now deceased. I presented a program last Tuesday evening to SCV Camp 155 in Tullahoma and it is my hope that they will undertake the clean-up of the cemetery in the spring. Mr. Tommy Allen, a teacher in the Coffee County School System, did this back in the 1990's but his wife was involved in a very serious automobile accident and regrettably the project was never completed. There was intermarriage between the Bostick, Austell, and Farris families, along with the conjoining land between the families, which explains the location of these family graves. I know for certain the following family members are buried there:

(my great-grandfather) Dr. John Kennerly Farris, Sr. born April 18, 1836 in Franklin County - died August 7, 1910 at his farm in Prairie Plains

(my great-grandmother) Mary Elizabeth Austell Farris born May 7, 1836 - died March 21, 1885

She was the daughter of William Austell, who came to Tennessee from South Carolina in 1829 and I am fairly certain that both William and his wife (who died pre 1850) are also buried there.

John K. Farris, Sr. and Mary Austell were the parents of eight children, 6 of whom are also buried in the Willis Cemetery:

- Ella K. Farris - b. September 20, 1859 d. November 20, 1859 in Montgomery County, Arkansas Was disinterred October 15, 1860 and reinterred on November 17, 1860 Coffee County, TN at the Willis Cem.
- Amos Austell Farris - b. February 14, 1868 - d. February 20, 1878
- William Rice Farris - b. August 13, 1870 - d. December 10, 1895

- Sue Jennie Farris - b. June 21, 1873 - d. June 26, 1897
- Mary Elizabeth Farris, Jr. (Maymie) b. December 13, 1875 - d. June 17, 1898 (Obit available)
- Sophia Cordelia Farris - b. July 21, 1878 - d. March 8, 1879

Note: Tuberculosis (or consumption) was the cause of death of Mary Austell Farris and all of these children.

Two older sons, Samuel Jackson Farris - b. December 7, 1860 d. January 10, 1909 (buried in Oakwood Cemetery at Tullahoma) and my grandfather, Dr. John Kennerly Farris, Jr., b. December 10, 1865 d. April 1, 1937 and is buried at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Hillsboro.

FYI -- Here is some information on the Bostick/Willis families also buried in that cemetery. And, I am attaching an article which was first published in the UDC Magazine May 2007 issue and then was a feature story for The Murfreesboro Post, a local paper, for which I wrote a monthly column entitled "The Un-Civil War in Middle Tennessee." (I am a Civil War historian, born in Manchester, but have lived all of my life in Murfreesboro. I am retired from MTSU.) Charles Sherrill, who furnished the information for this cemetery, is also a descendant of the Austell family.

#### BOSTICK FAMILY INFORMATION

Amos Austell (b. ca 1775 in South Carolina, died 1857-1862 in Grundy/Coffee County, Tn.)

Married

Elizabeth (Lucy) Bostick (b. ca 1788-90 in South Carolina, died 1835-36)

Her parents: William Bostick and Nancy Ann (Rice?)

Amos Austell purchased 2 tracks of land on Bradley's Creek. The first track was purchased from Henry M. Rutledge on 11 Aug. 1834 and the second from James Stamps on 16 Aug. 1834.

According to information my Aunt Ruth Farris received from Bee Wileman in 1939, the Bostick family came to Tennessee in 1820 from South Carolina. The Austell family followed them in 1829, although there is no record of land purchases until 1834.

A transaction for land is shown: Deed Book H, Franklin County, TN  
James Lockhart, executor of John Strother, now in Franklin County, Tn., but a citizen of Virginia, to William Bostick of Spartanburg, South Carolina, 300 acres, 13 Sept. 1820. (pp. 495-495)

Additional land was purchased on 28 Dec. 1826: Ellis H. Hale to William Bostick, 175 acres.

Amos Austell and Lucy Bostick Austell were the parents of 3 sons; William, Samuel and Littleberry and 4 daughters; Cynthia, Amelia, Eliza (Elizabeth Ann) and Sarah Rice.

Lucy Bostick Austell, had two sisters, Betsy and Sally, who married Willis brothers.

William Bostick's Will 16 Jan. 1823

Heirs: Wife, Ann; sons, John G. and Littleberry Bostick; daughters, Lucy Austell, Betsy Ann Willis, and Sally Willis.

Note: A very old Willis/Bostick/Austell cemetery is located on Hwy. 41 going to Hillsboro from Manchester. On the right, exactly at the Grundy County line marker, stop, walk up the slight rise, and there it is. Although in very bad condition, many gravestones and markers are still intact. Unfortunately, many grave markers have also been lost, the Farris family stones among them.

Dr. John Kennerly Farris Sr., Mary Elizabeth Austell Farris, and several of their children are included among the missing.

William Austell was the father of Mary Elizabeth Austell (b. May 7, 1836, d. March 21, 1885). Mary Elizabeth Austell married John Kennerly Farris, Sr. (b. April 18, 1836, d. Aug. 7, 1910) on August 27, 1857

Amelia, daughter of Amos Austell, married Samuel J. Crockett, the brother of David Crockett. They are buried at Hillsboro Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

If you wish further information on my family please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Shirley Farris Jones

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