



John Chastain Reese

B: Jul 1799 Wartburg, Greenville District, South Carolina

M: Abt 1820 Tennessee—19

D: Abt 1878 – Rockwall Co., Tx



This is the earliest photo of the Reese Family from a tin provided by Mr. Harris. John Chastain (center), with his wife Sarah and John Charles Galloway's family taken at Turner's Point Poetry, Texas after their arrival in about 1860 at their family home. This was taken shortly after their arrival in Texas and just before Charley joined the 20th Texas Cavalry during the Civil War.

John was born in July or August of 1799 in Greenville District, South Carolina, the son of Elijah and his wife Rebecca. He was the oldest of three sons and by the time he was 10 years old the family Elijah, Rebecca, Elisha and Sherwood, had moved to northeastern Roane County Tennessee with his father Elijah and his mother Rebecca. The Indian claims to the territory had been settled. The Reeses and Titus England were the first settlers on the Flat Fork of the Emory in 1808. They settled and had a farm in what is now Petros, Tennessee in Morgan Co.

The family tradition is that John went with Andrew Jackson's troops to fight the Indians in Alabama. I am still checking on that. About 1819 or 1820 he married Sara Steincipher, the youngest child of Joseph Steincipher and his wife Salome Rose. The

Stinciphers had come from Wilkes County, NC to settle in Roane (later Morgan) at about the same time that the Reeses did. The early marriage records of Morgan County were destroyed. When their son Isaac was born on 5 July 1825, John and Sarah were living near Athens in McMinn County, TN.

The children of John and Sarah were Daniel, born 1821; Isaac, born 1825; William, born 1826; Rebecca born 1828; John Charles Galloway born 1834; Samuel Steincipher, born 1837; George Washington born 1839. In addition there was a still born son and a little girl, Margaret Jane, who died at the age of three. Some ancestry sources say he may have an Elijah Cole, but Gary Williams does not have record of this.

On 30 September 1847, Isaac, Daniel, and William enlisted in Captain James Freeman's Co. (C), Fourth Regiment of TN Volunteers to serve during the war with Mexico as did their cousins Ezra Steincipher and John H. Reese. Both of the cousins died in the war. In Ike Reese's pension application, he said they served in Vera Cruz and Mexico City. I think they may have seen Texas. When William was discharged 1 August 1848 in Memphis, he was said to be 20 years old, 5 feet 10 inches in height with light complexion, blue eyes and light hair. He too returned home. Both he and William were each given 160 acres of land for their service in the Mexican War. One night when Daniel was riding home, he was riding home, he was shot and killed. I have not found a coroner's report that might tell more about the incident. Isaac (Ike) too, came back safely from the war. However, he did not remain long in Tennessee as he was not on the 1850 census there. On November 2, 1854, Isaac N. Reese enlisted in William Fitzhugh's Texas Militia, Mounted Volunteers. This information is from the Ranger Muster Roll on file at the Texas Archives

On April 3, 1854, personally appeared the following persons whose names appear in a commission from the Governor of the State of Tennessee dated in Nashville, 20 March 1854. Thomas H. Davis, J. C. Reese, John Williams, Wilson Summers, J. H. Kindred, Hugh Brown, J. White, J. F. Scott, J. S. Duncan, James Galloway, Richard Spurlin, W. R. Williams, Moses Cox, Z. H. Goss, and Jesse Adkins. On June 3, 1854 the court proceeded to open an election for Quorum and Chairman. John C. Reese and William Summers were elected Quorum and John Williams chairman.

Apparently the sons had brought back stories of Texas from their Mexican War Service. Land grants were issued by the Republic of Texas for service during the Mexican War. After Elijah died in the spring of 1854, they must have begun seriously to consider the move. For in November 1854, John C. Reese, Esq appeared in open court and verbally tendered his resignation of Justice of the Peace which was accepted by the court.

In original Book K, page 111 on 31 October 1854, John C. Reese sold to Daniel M. Kelly of Morgan County 150 acres...to a division line that Elijah Reese Sr., deceased made between John C. Reese and Sherwood Reese, his sons...with the following to reserve to one quarter of an acre of land containing the grave of Elijah Reese, deceased.

This was signed by John C. Reese, by Sarah Reese with her mark and the witnesses, Sherwood Reese, Martin McPeters, and W. R. Jackson.

The long Journey to Texas must have begun soon after John's resignation. Nine Reeses were part of a large wagon train. They were John C., Sarah, Francis Jefferson, Samuel, George, Charlie and his wife Martha and their small son Daniel. Martha's sister Mary Ann Tudor, also came with them. Sarah had five thousand dollars sewed in side her petticoat.

On 15 May 1855, John bought 640 acres of land from Samuel and Sarah Newell located in Kaufman County. He paid \$640 for the land on the "Newell Survey". This is now known as FM 1139. This country was wide open range and the few families living there could not cultivate the sticky, black soil with the equipment they had. In 1859, they moved to Turner's Point, some twelve miles east of Rockwall, where the soil was sandy. This would be the site for Poetry. Kaufman County was formed from Nacogdoches County in 1848 and Rockwall and Hunt Counties were formed from Kaufman. Turner's point was originally a stagecoach stop between Shreveport, Louisiana and Dallas, Texas. Later the name was changed from Turner's Point to Poetry. The town barely exists today, but is right on the border of all three counties. Poetry is now at the intersection of Farm roads 986 and 1565, six miles north of Terrell in northern Kaufman County

The information about Poetry was taken from a book written by Margaret Ann Royse, *Poetic Beginnings, A History of Poetry, Texas* and also from the *Dallas Morning News*, June 18, 1990. Kaufman County Historical Commission, *History of Kaufman County* (Dallas: Taylor, 1978). *Terrell Tribune*, October 27, 1924. *Gerald F. Kozlowski*

The name Poetry, Texas conveys "Poetic Beginnings" – what in fact, is the story behind this beautiful name? Three primary legends purport to explain the origins of the name "Poetry". Each legendary story has altered in the telling over the years. We will let the reader decide which explanation is the most likely origin of "Poetry".

In 1876 area residents met to select a new name for their new town. James Stiles attended this meeting and reported that Maston Ussery suggested the name Poetry. Ussery was strolling down a tree-shaded lane in the area during the spring of 1854. When he saw wildflowers blooming, he was reminded of a poem and quoted it. When Mr. Stiles told this story, those in attendance readily adopted the name Poetry. This meeting was held a few weeks after Maston was killed while riding his horse. The name was apparently suggested in his honor. It was said in 1890 that the Poetry area was known as the garden spot of Kaufman County.

Many early settlers traveled much of their lives to find a home with a greener pasture. Elisha Turner, the first settler of the Poetry area (formerly called Turner's Point) was no exception. Born in Georgia in 1788, Elisha Turner and his two brothers Elijah and Samuel, were left orphans at an early age. Thereafter, Elisha was raised by his South Carolina uncle, Silas Magby. He migrated to Kentucky, Tennessee and St. Landry

Parish, Louisiana as a young man before settling in San Augustine County, Texas in 1837. While here he was involved in several Indian skirmishes and served in the Mexican War. On July 22, 1845, Elisha Turner was awarded a patent to a league and a labor of land in this area by President Anson Jones^{qv} for service to the Republic of Texas.^{qv} in exchange for his service in the Texas and Mexican War. This land is located in the far north part of Kaufman County and extends into Hunt County. Although very little is known about Elisha and his wife Amelia, it is known that Elisha made his home with his youngest son Zachariah, and Zachariah's wife Martha following Amelia's death

Zachariah and Elisha sold their land in San Augustine County and moved to Kaufman County sometime between 1845 and 1847. Together, they built a log cabin on the old Shreveport and Dallas road (known to Poetry residents as FM 1565). Zachariah built his home near the present Camp Ground Cemetery (on the current FM 986, just east of the intersection of 986 and 1565).

Elisha's brother, Samuel and his wife Caroline Turner, moved from Louisiana and settled on Turner's Point with their seven children in the spring of 1849. Turner's Point was an important stopping place along the Texas and Pacific Railway. Other relatives joined them in 1854: Maston and Lucinda Ussery and John and Cynthia Fox. Mr. and Mrs. James Stiles also moved to the area. Mr. Stiles was a married daughter of Maston Ussery. About the same time the Reese family moved from Tennessee, just shortly after Elijah Reese's death in Morgan County. Maston Ussery was Jewel Reese's mother's grandfather, Elisha Turner's son-in-law. Elisha Turner was Jewel's great grandfather. Both were from her mother Lucy Parkerson and Leona Ussery, which were Jewel's maternal side of the family.

The railway drew merchants Joe Rushing and John Stevenson in 1873 to this area. Others were soon to follow. The postal service requested that the community change its name from Turner's Point, and that is the time when the name "Poetry" was chosen and officially recognized. A grocery store was built next to the Masonic Lodge and was operated by Walt and John Stevenson. A general store operated by Joe Rushing was located down from the Masonic Lodge and across the road from the Grange and Mrs. Chaney's farm. A post office and a school were established in 1858. A cotton gin was also operated in the vicinity. The first well ever dug at Turner's point was on Mrs. Chaney's farm, about one-half mile east of Dry Creek Cemetery.

Four bars or saloons were in operation at any given time. Apparently, there was much lawlessness, including a few murders. An earlier settler, D.D. Parkerson, Jewel's uncle, said he arrived when this area was "wild and woolly."

With a population of 40, Poetry continued to prosper during the 1880's. Dr. Joe Coffman built a beautiful home which is still standing today. Dr. Daniels and Dr. Frank Yates added beautiful homes to the community as well.

Poetry's location prior to the 1890's was 1.5 miles southwest of its current location (at the intersection of Farm Roads 986 and 1565, 6 miles north of Terrell in

northern Kaufman County). The relocation came after the famous tornado in the 1890's. Others gradually moved their businesses the short distance to the present community.

Poetry Baptist church is the oldest in Kaufman County. It is located in the area formerly known as Turner's point. In 1868 Elm Fork Association showed F. J. Reese involved in the church.

By 1904, the Poetry population was estimated to be 234. On Oct 27, 1924, the Poetry business district was destroyed by fire. After the fire of 1924, the Masonic Lodge was replaced by a new building which was subsequently moved to Kaufman Road 323 (now a private residence). By 1941, the Poetry population was listed at 50.

The churches escaped the fire, however, and their presence helped preserve the community. In 1941 the population was fifty. In the 1950's Poetry was the Vetch capital of the World, and there was Vetch festival in Terrell. In the 1970s new growth began after two decades of little progress. Land developers enticed many new residents to the area, which is within comfortable commuting distance from Dallas. In 1984 an attempt was made to incorporate the community. The incorporation measure passed but was later ruled invalid by the Kaufman County Commissioners Court due to technicalities. A new general store opened in 1986. Sites of historical significance include the Poetry First Baptist Church, the Poetry Methodist Church, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and adjacent Campground Cemetery, and the Dry Creek Cemetery near the Turner's Point site. The latter cemetery contains graves of many pioneers who settled in this area. In 1990 Poetry was listed as a community but without census figures; "more than 600" people were said to live there.

Back to John Chastain and his family. After the Civil War began in 1861, George and Samuel enlisted in the 3rd Texas Calvary. George enlisted June 13, 1861 at Dallas, Texas. George was captured by the enemy on the night of October 19, 1863 while on picket duty at Vicksburg. He was sent to prison at Alton, Ill. November 8, 1863. He remained there until he transferred to Fort Delaware April 4, 1864. Some time after this he was exchanged to the CSA. On March 4, 1865 he was admitted to the General Hospital, Howard Grove, Richmond VA with chronic diarrhea. He died there.

Samuel survived the war and returned home. On a trip to Indian Territory, he became ill with pneumonia and died. A friend brought his horse home. The horse was later stolen, and an old nag left in its place by the Yankees nearby.

John Charles Galloway Reese (Charlie) enlisted in the 20th Texas Calvary March 19, 1862. He was 28 years old and had a horse worth \$140 and equipment valued at \$18. He died at Fort Washita in Indian Territory in February 1864. He left a widow, Martha Tudor Reese and six children: Daniel, Eliza, John, Alfred, Sarah, and Charley (Charlie).

Ike married Mary Austin 2 Jan 1863 in Kaufman. He returned from the war. By the 1870 census, Ike and May had moved to Gainsville, in Cook County, Texas. This

shows Isaac 44 M W born in TN farmer, property \$785 and wife Mary age 27 FW keeping house, born in Alabama. Living nearby were John C. Reese, 71, farmer, retired, property \$200 born SC and Sarah, 72 F W keeping house born NC, Rhoda, 26 F B washerwoman born TN and Olley A. 8 F M at home born in Texas. The 1872 tax roll shows them living in Cook County.

Soon after this John died and Sarah returned to Kaufman County to live with Frank and his family where she was still living in 1880. John C. was the first on the Kaufman County Tax rolls in 1857. In 1857 he owned 640 acres from the Samuel Newell survey in Kaufman Co, Texas. worth \$640, on Brushy Street. John is listed on the Tax rolls in 1857 as owning on slave, Rhody, inherited from his father and valued at \$800, 2 horses valued at \$125, Cattle at \$40, and 60 oxen valued at \$1,665. He was listed in the 1860 Kaufman Co. census, Turner's Point age 61 as a stock raiser, wife age 62, and S.S. and George Washington. In 1860, the tax rolls indicate he owned no land but one slave worth \$1000 and two horses worth \$120. In 1861 he owned 75 acres from the east Turner survey worth \$340. In 1870 the family was not found in Kaufman County census. 1867 was the last year John is found on the Kaufman Co. Tax rolls. In 1870 Sarah was found living in Poetry with Francis J. I have not located the gravesite for John C. The first known burial in Dry Creek Cemetery was 1871. Sarah was buried at the Old Camp Meeting Ground near Poetry. There are many other Reeses buried there as well. As far as I can tell John and Sarah had eight children: Margaret, Daniel, Isaac, Elijah, Frances J., Samuel S., George Washington, and John Charles Galloway s "Charlie". John bought land May 1855 in Kaufman Co., Texas. It appears that the Reese family was also a part of the Mexican War in Texas and the Civil War. No connection has been made to Elisha Turner, who was granted the land to settle in the area, but soon after the land was bought and surveyed, the Reese's also moved to Texas with other families. Some of these families included the Parkersons, Ussery's and Lowries, which were on Jewel Reese's maternal side.

Many Reeses including Sarah Reese are buried in the Camp Ground cemetery in Poetry. Family history says John Chastain is also buried there, but no one has been able to locate the grave.

JOHN CHASTAIN REESE TIMETABLE

DATE	ITEM
Jul-77	Born in Greenville Co., S.C.
1808	Roane Co., Tenn. John Chastain with father Elijah and brothers Sherwood & Elijah, Jr
1818	Morgan Co., Tenn. With father and brothers - mother unknown
abt 1820	Marries Sarah Stonecipher in Morgan Co., Tenn
1821	Daniel Reese born
1823	Rebecca Reese born
5 Jul 1825	Issac Reese born in Morgan Co
12 jul 1831	Frances "Frank" Jefferson Reese born in Morgan Co and dies in Comanche Co., Texas 20 jan 1903 buried at
1834	John Charles Galloway Reese born in Morgan Co
1837	Samuel Stonecipher Reese born in Morgan Co
1839	George Washington Reese born in Morgan Co - captured at Vicksburg and killed at Richmond at end of war
1841	Margerat Jane Reese born in Morgan Co and died in 1844
1846	Daniel, Issac and William were in the army an fought in the Mexican War
11 Sep 1848	William died in Morgan Co. just one month after returning from Mexican War
1850	Daniel died in Morgan Co.
29 Aug 1850	John Chastain and wife Sarah and family living in Morgan Co., Tenn. (1850 US Census)
22 Jun 1853	John Charles Galloway Reese marries Martha Patricia Tudor in Mordan Co., Tenn (Gary Williams)
24 Oct 1854	Elijah dies in Morgan Co. - John Chastain sells property with Elijah being bured on property (Gary Williams)
abt Mar 1855	John Chastain; wife Sarah; 5 sons; Issac, Frank, John Charles, Samuel, George; John Charles' wife Martha & Martha's her sister Mary Tudor came to Kaufman Co., Texas in covered wagon - Sarah has \$5,000 sewn in pettycoat - 9 persons in all
13 May 1855	John Chastain Reese purchases 640 Acres out of Survey N109 from Samuel Newell at McLendon in Kaufman Co. for \$640 - McLendon is now in Rockwall County and is located about 5 miles southeast of the city of Rockwall (Vol D; Page 309 Kaufman Co. Deed Records)
23 Oct 1855	Frank marries Mary Tudor in Kaufman Co., Texas (Kaufman Co., Marriage Records)
6 Oct 1859	Alfred Agee Reese, Sr was born on the Newell property at McLendon, Texas
10 Dec 1859	John Chastain sold the 640 acre Newell tract and moved to Poetry area (Vol H; Page 256 Kaufman Co. Deed Records)
9 Jul 1860	John Chastain, Sarah, Samuel and George living at Turner Point in Kaufman Co. (1860 US Census)
2 Jan 1863	Issac Reese marries Mary M. Austin in Kaufman Co., Texas (Kaufman Co. Marriage Records)
Feb 1864	John Charles Galloway Reese dies while serving with the 20th Texas Calvary Regiment at Ft. Wasita, Durant, Oklahoma (Martha's Pension Application)
5 Nov 1870	John Chastain and Sarah living near Gainsville, Cooke Co., Texas and be their son Issac Reese and his wife Mary M. Austin Reese (1870 US Census)
abt 1878	John Chastain Reese dies somewhere - burial unknown - looking
9 Jun 1880	Issac and Mary living in Prec. 6, Grayson Co., Texas - No John or Sarah (1880 US Census)
22 Jun 1880	Sarah Living with Frank, Mary and their family in Kaufman County (US 1880 Census)
abt 1880	Samuel Stonecipher Reese and 2 of his sons died - might be buried at Poetry
abt 1882	Sarah dies somewhere - burial unknown - looking - could be Poetry or Dry Creek - Alfred Agee's first wife buried at Dry Creek