

PATSY KINNEY: THE JAMAR/OWEN FAMILY

The Owen/Jamar Family

Patsy Kinney talked with the researcher and John Rankin because she was interested in learning more about where her family lived on the land that is now RSA. It was discerned that the Jamar/Owen family owned a large amount of land in Sections 29 and 32 (Township 1 South, Range 1 West) in Pond Beat, as well as a large parcel west of RSA Gate 7. The latter may have extended into what are now RSA boundaries.

Patsy said her great grandfather “four generations back” was Richard Jamar. Thomas Owen was her great great great grandfather. She emphasized that their name, Owen, does not have an “s” (Owens) on the end. The former slaves took the name as Owens, with an “s”.

John Rankin researched the ancestry of Richard Jamar. Richard’s lineage goes back to Henri Jamar, who was born in 1745, possibly in London with the French Huguenots. He came to the colonies (America) in about 1770. He stayed in the Alexandria, Virginia area before going into the Pennsylvania militia as a lieutenant. After the Revolutionary War, he settled in Virginia with his wife Jeane; their children were: Henry, Betsy, and Richard.

Richard was born September 12, 1785 in Richmond, Virginia. In 1811 he married Elizabeth (Betsy) Adams, who was born in 1787, the daughter of William Adams, from Orange County, Virginia. The family story is that she was a cousin to John Quincy Adams. Richard and Mary went to Alabama in 1819 when Richard A. Jamar was 34 years old. With them were their two sons, Thomas and Larkin. Others came from Virginia at the same time, included a family named Bransford. Richard married three times in his lifetime, before passing away at age 88.

Richard’s daughter Mary married Thomas John Owen, joining together the Owen and Jamar families. She was born in Virginia in 1815 and died October 30, 1841. Patsy Kinney said it wasn’t the Owen family who had money (“although they had their own little bit”)—it was the Jamars. Family lore has it that the Owens “lost their money on a handshake to John Jamar.” It has been held that this was a humorous remark made by Harrison Owen referring to the handshake between him and Thomas (“John”) Jamar, blessing the marriage of John and his daughter.

Patsy said her grandparents, Charles B. Owen and Ettie McGuire Owen, lived in Pond Beat. They had a number of children: Richard, Wilbur, Gene, Wayne, Harry, Donald, Edwin, Doris, Ann, and Thelma. Richard, Donald, and Doris were born there on the land that is now RSA. Apparently, they lived on what had once been a plantation. Patsy said that her mother’s aunt told her that when her [the aunt’s] father and mother had a party, many people would come. The guests “would come and stay.” “Darkies would sit on the balconies and play music.” That was in the 1800s.