

From an interview with Mr. J. Milton Dickey of 325 College, Grand Prairie, Texas on June 27, 1970. Mr. Dickey was the son of David Hendrix Dickey and Theresa Parilee Cunningham. He was 89 years old at the time of the interview. ---by Karen McCann Hett

My original home was near Grapeland, Houston County, in East Texas. The county seat was Crockett. My father and his brothers and sisters came there before the Civil War.

My grandfather was Houston Dickey. [Note: this is incorrect. His grandfather was James Madison Dickey.] I never saw him, and I don't know much about him except that he was one of eight brothers, two of whom were doctors, two of whom were teachers, and two of whom were ministers.

My grandfather was a sheriff. And I believe he was more than just a sheriff. He was a leader in the community, a very influential man. I have his billfold, which must be way over a hundred years old. Once he was chasing cattle thieves and he had to ride through a river. The billfold got wet, and you can still see the print of his revolver in the leather. I guess he must have died in Tennessee. I'm sure he never came to Texas. [This is also incorrect, as his grandfather, James Madison Dickey, immigrated from Tennessee to Houston County, Texas. He received a 3rd Class Headright Certificate in Houston County, indicating that he arrived in Texas between October 1, 1837, and Jan. 1, 1840.]

Grandmother, Polly Dickey, lived with us as far back as I can remember. Father had a widowed sister, Aunt Mary Ann Cutler, and Grandmother and Aunt Mary Ann lived in a little house on Father's farm. Father looked after them. I remember, Grandmother smoked a little pipe, and I used to bring it to her. She died when I was about four or five years old. And I recall she was 88 years, 11 months, and so many days. She was buried near Grapeland at San Pedro Church Cemetery. The community was called San Pedro after the church. We were about five miles south of Evergreen. Mary Ann and Grandmother were buried side by side. In those days, graves were marked only with rocks. Several years ago when I went back, I was hardly able to find the graves. [Note: other family members say that Polly Douglas Dickey and Mary Ann Dickey Cutler were

buried at Evergreen Cemetery near Grapeland.]

I believe my father was born in Georgia and was about thirteen when he moved to Tennessee. He was born in about 1843, the 26th of October. He was eighteen when he fought in the War.

Father married my mother, his second wife, in about 1873, I suppose, because Arthur was born August 26, 1874. At first, my folks didn't have much. My father drove an ox team to New Orleans to pick up food supplies for a commissary in Grapeland. No one had any food. No one had anything. It all had to be hauled in. Later, my grandfather Cunningham, who was very wealthy, gave Father 50 or 75 acres of land. Father had increased it to about 200 acres by the time we moved to Tehuacana in Limestone County in 1897 or 1898. But of course, he let it go when we moved.

When I was a boy, the only way we had to travel was by ox team. It took all day to get to Crockett and back, twelve miles away. We left at four in the morning, and if we got back by seven or eight in the evening, that was doing good. Grapeland didn't have a railroad in those days. I can remember when the railroad was laid. When the first train came through, everyone came with their ox teams from miles around to see it.

I believe when my father came to Texas, he and his brothers and sisters came as a family. William settled at Percilla. We lived in the San Pedro community. Emily, who married Tom Lively, settled in the Refuge Community. One brother settled between us and Crockett. I believe Aunt Phoebe was the one who lived with Uncle Will. My father was the second youngest child. The youngest one was Tate, and he died young.

I remember hearing of a James, and I guess I was named after him.

Father had a very carefully-kept family record that went way back, but he was living with Arthur, my brother, before he died and the record was with Arthur's papers. The house burned, and they lost everything, including the family record. Arthur, by the way, was a Presbyterian minister.

When I was about sixteen or seventeen, my parents moved from Houston

County to Tehuacana. Trinity College and Academy, Presbyterian schools, were located there at the time. My brother was in college then, and I finished high school at the academy.

Then I went to a piano conservatory in the East and graduated from the conservatory when I was nineteen. I was on the concert stage for ten years. At that time, my wife and I both decided to go into the ministry. That wasn't my idea. The Lord laid that on me.

We went to the Congregational seminary, because it was the only one which would accept my wife. And we were both in the ministry until we retired, several years ago.

My wife and I wrote a book together, called ***One Man's Destiny***. We also contributed to ***Destiny*** magazine for twenty-five years. Now, as you can see, my wife's mind is slipping. One of the finest minds that ever was. But I'm right here to watch her and care for her. That is my job, now.

After I moved to Grand Prairie, I moved my parents here from Tehuacana. They died here, Father in about 1925. They are buried at Southland Cemetery, a little ways south of town.

[Note that J. Milton Dickey's wife was Christina Robinson Dickey. Google will turn up several hits on her name, as she wrote at least two short theology books that apparently were well known in the 'forties and 'fifties.]