

Houston, Texas

Feb 16, 1916

Mr. T Henry Apple, Meadville, Pa

Dear Cousin,

On our arrival at Crockett, the 10th, we went to the Recorder's office to ascertain from the records the location of the Stanton farms in 1876. The Recorder informed us that the records had all been burned, and as William Stanton owned considerable land, it would be difficult unless some of the older people could be found to ascertain the exact plantation, that this man owned at the time of William's death.

The recorder states that Judge E Winifree was in the Court House and would probably be able to give us information. About this time in stepped the Judge to whom I was introduced, and he gave me the following account of William's death and burial.

This plantation is located seven miles East of Crockett, and formerly covered with heavy pine timber; William Stanton had cleared considerable land and was raising cotton and besides doing other farming. This man died about 18 years ago and was buried on the same ground where William's remains were placed. The land is now owned by Joseph Brown Stanton, who resides at Crockett, and who was present at the time of the accident. Judge Winifree at this time, owned the adjoining plantation and was a great deer hunter. By an agreement a deer hunt was arranged for to take place the morning the accident occurred. Before going further I will state that William was teaching school in a neighborhood about 2 1/2 to three miles from the William Stanton home where he boarded. Dave Marshall was engaged in either teaching or some other work at Grapeland about eight miles from the Stanton home. The day before this accident occurred Marshall walked up to the Stanton homestead to take a part in the deer hunt, as the boys were very anxious to shoot a deer, and Judge Winifree being familiar with the deer runs, it was arranged that he and Wm Stanton would go out in the woods horse-back and with the dogs and start the deer. The boys to be located near the run way and to shoot them as they paused.

Page 2

And about the time they were ready to start, William Stanton objected to going, stating he was afraid on account of the boys being unfamiliar with deer hunting that something might happen. Finally they arranged for Mr. Tom Matlock, another neighbor, to assist Winifree in the drive, which was shortly started after they had located William, Dave Marshall and Joseph Brown at the run ways. In the course of about an hour the deer were

started and the boys hearing the dogs were afraid the deer would not come their way, and being inexperienced, shifted their position, and the deer finally passed where the boys were located. After calling in the hounds and waiting for Winifree and Matlock to catch up to them, they started back to the plantation, stopping at a draw, or spring to get a drink of water. The three of them leaned their guns against a pine tree and proceeded to drink from the stream or spring. They all had shot guns loaded with buck shot and the gun Marshall had was an old one and the main spring did not hold the hammer close or against the cap, but had probably a quarter or one half inch play. As William picked up his gun, Marshall stepped up and took his gun by one hand and threw it over the other arm, that was probably at a right angle to his body. The supposition is that the momentum of the gun, when it struck his arm caused the hammer to explode the cap and the gun was discharged probably not over two or three feet from William's face; the entire charge went in at the side of the nostril, but did not disturb his teeth or cut the lip at the lower edge. The load went upward and lodged in the back of his head, and the hole in the nostril was about the same size as the gun bore. The face was badly powder marked and the concussion was so great it split his hat and threw it off his head ten feet. The entire skull was fractured and badly broken, but no part of the scalp showed that any shot passed through. Judge Winifree at this time hitched up his team and hauled the remains to the Stanton homestead and they were buried the next evening on the family burying ground, where probably thirty or forty other bodies now rest.

Later this burial ground was allowed to grow up as second growth timber, mostly pine and brush, in which shape it remained until last fall when Joseph Brown Stanton had the timber and brush cleared off the grounds, a wire fence built around same, and filled in and banked up the different grades so that their locations could be seen. Probably ten or fifteen years after William's burial a maiden lady, Miss Kate Layman, was buried beside William. We found these two graves, but neither Mr. Stanton nor his cousin were sure which one was William's. They are taking the matter up with other parties including two old niggers that were present at both burials and are positive they would be able to locate the graves sure. This burial ground as it now stands, is surrounded by second growth pine, probably 3/8 of a mile to the road, the trees being 50 feet high or over. Mr. Stanton will advise me later regarding the exact location of this grave. I took some snap shots of the cemetery with two men standing at what is supposed to be the graves on my arrival home will have them developed and give you one of them.

Page 3.

At the time of the accident a negro who was considerably attached to William marked the pine tree with a hatchet showing his initials and the date, we hunted for this pine tree for some time -- finally found the man who owned the land, and he informed us that the tree had been cut and showed us the spot that is now covered with a water pond from the same water where the boys stopped to get their drink.

A Mrs. Worthington at Crockett, besides several other people, attended the funeral. Judge Winifree informed me that this accident had caused a profound sorrow over the entire community and was the last of his deer hunting and in fact, the end of deer tracking

in that section. I made inquiries from an undertaker regarding the removal of the remains; he informed me that there would be scarcely anything left; from experience in removing other remains, he thought but few bones would be found.

Should there be any further information you wish to secure, you can write Joseph Brown Stanton at Crockett, who agreed later on to have an iron pipe or post put in at the head of the grave for the present. This I told him I would write him later about and arrange to pay any expense attached to same.

Am leaving tonight for Tulsa, Okla., from there to Bartlesville, and later Cleveland.

With kindest regards to all the family,

Your cousin,

(no signature)