

# The Rainwater Family Research of Oscar S. Brooks

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## THE RAINWATER FAMILY

[Compiler's note: I am not an original researcher, i.e. I do not search the archives of census lists, cemetery registries, family Bibles, or other documents. I depend on what others have done and are willing to share. Kay Ohana has supplied invaluable material from her "in the field" research through e-mail and telephone communication. She traveled to numerous locations in the southeast collecting data about the Rainwater, Parris, Fuller, and related families. An important website for Rainwater information is 'www.chronography.com/rainwater' recording the research of R. Steven Rainwater and his wife Susan Chance-Rainwater. I have communicated with Glidie Mobley, Dennis Rainwater, and others through e-mail as I have discovered their interest in Rainwater research through the internet. So I am indebted to these and others for what I have compiled here.]



The Rainwater Family  
probably at the funeral of James T. Rainwater, March 7, 1905 (Source Mike Wisener)  
Standing, left to right: John Miles Rainwater, William James Rainwater  
(John and Will are sons of JTR and Millie), Amanda Tolonia (Loney) Rainwater Daniel,  
Martha Caldonia (Donie) Rainwater Dodson, John Monroe Wilson, Oliver Bud Wilson  
(John and Oliver are from Susannah's 1st marriage)  
Seated, left to right: Henry D. Rainwater, Susannah "Susie" Elizabeth Parris Rainwater,  
Olive D. Lulu Rainwater Daniel. All the children of James T. Rainwater are in this  
picture except Sarah Revelou Rainwater Brooks who was living with her husband and  
children in Chattanooga County, GA.

Steven and Susan Rainwater trace the family ancestry to England as early as 1644 when the spelling was Raynewater. They relate the origin of the name to Dutch protestant immigrants from Holland bearing the name "Van Regenmorter." In Dutch "regen" means "water", so some researchers suggest that through a series of English adaptations of spelling and sound the resultant spelling became Rainwater.

The ancestors of **Sarah Revelou Rainwater Brooks** (1864-1950) can be traced to **Robert Rainwater**, born about 1669 in England, and died in Virginia or North

Carolina about 1706 [As traced by Steven and Susan Rainwater]. His son **John (Sr.)** Was born in Virginia or North Carolina about 1700, and died in Surry County after May 1777. He married Mary Fussel and they had eight children. He was a farmer. Their son **John (Jr.)**, about 1735-1800, was born in the Edgecombe precinct of North Carolina and died in Granville County. He was listed as a tobacco planter. His wife is not listed, and only one son is recorded, **John (III)**. He was born in North Carolina about 1760 and died in Spartanburg District of South Carolina in 1832. He married Susannah about 1776. Her family name is not known. They had five children.

Their second child, **Burrell**, was born in the Spartanburg District of South Carolina in 1782. His wife, Elizabeth, was born in 1792. These birth dates are calculated from later census records. **Burrell Rainwater** appears as head of household in census lists from 1810-1850: [The census records and children of Burrell are from the research of Kay Ohana]

1810-Spartanburg, South Carolina

1820-Spartanburg. South Carolina

1830-Hall County, Georgia

1840-Cherokee County, Alabama

1850-California District Cobb County, Georgia (annexed to Paulding County in 1853). In this census in the column for "married within the year" there is a check mark for **Burrell** and Elizabeth. Kay Ohana points out that, if one looks at the census carefully on this same page as well as other pages of the census record, one will see that numerous entries have a check in the column marked "married within the year," even when the person listed is a very young child. The enumerator was probably using this space to check off a count. Thus **Burrell** and Elizabeth didn't marry recently. The last known record of **Burrell** and his wife Elizabeth was in Marshall County, Alabama in 1852. Since they have not been located on an 1860 census list, it is assumed they died between 1852 and 1859. Unfortunately, there is no record of death or burial site of **Burrell Rainwater** or his wife Elizabeth.

From the census and other records the children of Burrell and Elizabeth Rainwater can be listed:

1. Jane Rainwater, born 1808 in GA; died Aft. 1880 in Paulding Co GA.
2. Son Rainwater, born Abt. 1810 in GA or SC; died Unknown.
3. Susannah Rainwater, born Abt. 1812 in SC; died Aft. 1871.
4. Allen Terry Rainwater, born Abt. 1814 in Spartanburg Dist SC; died 08 September 1899 in Clay Co. AL.
5. Nancy Adeline Rainwater, born 29 January 1817 in SC; died 03 February 1882 in Hazen Prairie Co. AR.
6. Sarah (Sally) Rainwater, born 09 August 1819 in SC; died 05 March 1900 in Hazen Prairie Co AR.
7. Daughter (Five) Rainwater, born Bet. 1822 -1823 in SC; died Unknown.
8. Elizabeth (Betsy) Rainwater, born 13 December 1825 in SC; died 10 November 1901 in Hazen Prairie Co AR.
9. Daughter (Seven) Rainwater, born Abt. 1828.

At this juncture in the family tree the branches can be confusing. Some researchers list **James T. Rainwater** as a son of **Burrell** while others list him as a son of Jane Rainwater. The dates of **James T. Rainwater's** birth and death are recorded on his grave marker in the Holly Pond Cemetery in Cullman County, Alabama: b. 27 Sept 1836, d. 7 Mar 1905. At the 1840 census he would be four years old. But neither he nor Jane Rainwater, the oldest daughter of **Burrell**, is listed in **Burrell's** household in

the 1840 census. Some interpreters take this to mean that Jane and her son **James** were living in another household. While it may be possible that Jane was married, her husband died, and she and son **James** returned to her father's household, assuming the Rainwater name. Both Jane and **James** reappear in **Burrell's** household in the 1850 census. In 1860 Jane and **James** each are heads of their respective households. No record has yet been found identifying the father of **James**; however, by comparing census records, researching church records, and examining Civil War records the best conclusion is that Jane is the mother of **James**, and his father is not known. Research information establishing Jane as the mother of James and his two brothers is presented in the biographical sketches of Jane and **James**. Jane lived out her days in Paulding County and is buried in the Vernon Cemetery.

**James T. Rainwater** is the father of **Sarah Revelou Rainwater Brooks**. He and his household are listed in the Paulding County census records of 1860, 1870, and 1880. His marriage to M[illie] E. Paris is recorded in the Paulding County records on February 3, 1857.

**James T. Rainwater**, b. 27 Sept 1836, d. 7 Mar 1905.

Family 1:

m. 3 Feb 1857, **Millie Elizabeth Parris\***, b. 22 Aug 1835, d. 20 Jul 1865.

Their children:

1. Miles Rainwater\*, b. 7 Feb 1858, d. 27 Feb 1863, dates from Millie's tombstone inscription. Mortality records show a Miles Rainwater died in Paulding County of cholera at age 5.
2. John Rainwater\*, b. 5 Dec 1859, d.?, m. 7 Oct 1880, Cythia Ann Paris, b. Sept 1854.
3. William J. Rainwater\*, b. 18 May 1862, d. 5 Feb 1948, m. abt 1882, Nancy Dianne "Annie" Paris\*, b. 28 May 1865, d. 21 March 1935.
4. **Sarah Revelou Rainwater**, b. 2 Oct 1864, d. 19 Jun 1950, m. 28 Oct 1880, **Phillip Allston Brooks**, b. 10 Aug 1862, d. 17 Feb 1955, buried Alpine Cemetery, Menlo, GA.

\*Buried Mt. Vernon Cemetery, Paulding County.

Family 2:

m. date unknown, Susannah "Susie" Elizabeth Parris, b. 24 May 1840, d. 27 Jun 1913. (Susannah was the cousin of **Millie**.)

Their children:

1. Henry D[emi] Rainwater, b. 7 Oct 1867, d. 21 Apr 1932, m. 1886, Chester E. Patterson, b. 12 Sep 1868, d. 17 Jun 1927. Both are buried at West Bethlehem Baptist Church Cemetery in Cullman County Alabama
2. Harriet Rainwater, b. 1868
3. Martha Caldonia (Donie) Rainwater\*, b. 16 May, 1870, d. 7 May 1954, m. John B. Dodson, b. 1862, d. 1922.
4. Amanda Tolonia (Loney) Rainwater\*, b. 29 Oct 1874, d. 4 Jan 195 m. John William Daniel, b.1871, d. 1952.

5. Olive D. Lulu Rainwater, b. 14 Oct 1881, d.?, m. 19 Dec 1897,  
Francis Newton Daniell.

Children of Susannah by previous marriage:

1. John Monroe Wilson\*, b. 27 May 1859, d.25 April 1935.

2. Oliver Bud Wilson\*, b. 19 April 1861, d. 19 Aug 1925.

\*Buried in Holly Pond Cemetery in Cullman County Alabama.

Millie and Susannah were cousins. Millie's parents were Louis [Lewis] and Phoeby [Pheby] Calley Paris, and Susannah's parents were Nathaniel Jefferson and Nancy Horton Paris. Both Louis and Nathaniel were sons of Nathaniel Paris (1760-1858). Susannah's brother was Nimrod Wells Paris, wife Elizabeth Jane, in whose household lived **Phillip Brooks** and his mother Francis, i.e. **Phillip** was living with the uncle of **Sarah**, whether considered from Millie or Susannah, before he married her.

Millie's first son, Miles, died at an early age and was buried in the Vernon Cemetery. Millie died in child birth approximately ten months after Sarah was born. Millie is also buried in the Vernon Cemetery between her son Miles and her new born child (the child could have been premature).

Susannah's first marriage was to Oliver C. Wilson, 2 Sept 1858. He died 30 Sept 1862 at the battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia. Two children as listed above were born to that marriage.

#### The Rainwater and Paris families in Paulding County

There were Rainwater families listed in the census records of the California district of Cobb County as early as 1850. In 1853 this district was transferred to Paulding County. While the same families may appear in Paulding County in subsequent records, they have not moved. The county line changed. **Burrell Rainwater** and Allen Rainwater's households are listed in the 1850 census. Allen was **Burrell's** son. Later census records as well as cemetery records attest to the presence of other families between 1850-1900. There were numerous Par[r]is families in Paulding County. In the 1850 census Louis and Phoeby Paris are listed in dwelling # 1622. Among their children is Millie (age 14), who married **James Rainwater** in 1857. **James** was in the household of **Burrell** in the same census in nearby dwelling #1658. In household #1618 are Nathan and Nancy Paris, whose daughter Susan (age 10), is the second wife of **James Rainwater**. When Millie died in 1865, her fourth child **Sarah**, was less than a year old. It is said that her grandmother cared for her until her father remarried. The grandmother could have been Phoebe Paris, who would have been 60 years old at the time. Or Jane Rainwater, who would have been 57.

The Rainwater and Paris families of Paulding County were allied through marriage. At least ten Paris families are listed in the 1880 census, six of them in the same district as **James T. Rainwater's** household. Two of **Sarah's** brothers married wives from the Paris families: John married Cynthia Ann Paris, 7 Oct 1880, two weeks before Sarah married **Phillip**. William married Nancy Diane "Annie" Paris about 1882. She was probably the A.D. Paris, daughter, born 28 May 1865, in the 1880 census list of the N. W. Paris household to which **Phillip and Francis Brooks** belonged.

In the 1880 census **James T. Rainwater** and his wife were living in Paulding County with seven members of their house hold. In 1900 **James** and his wife are listed in the census of the Holly Pond District of Cullman County, Alabama. No other names are listed in their household. Exactly when they moved from Georgia to Alabama is not

known. One relative says **James** thought the soil was better for farming. It was also about this time that **Sarah** and **Phillip** moved to Cherokee County, Alabama, where Ida was born in 1883. **James T.** and his wife Susan E. Are buried at the Holly Pond Cemetery in Cullman County.

Their son, Henry D. Rainwater, from **James'** marriage to Susan, and his family lived in a nearby district. Henry later became pastor of the West Bethlehem Baptist Church, near West Point, Cullman County, Alabama. He and his wife are buried in the church cemetery.

About the time Sarah was born in October of 1864, battles of the Civil War were being fought in Paulding County. In May 1864 General Sherman chose the small town of Dallas as a good place for battle because of the well-developed network of roads that spread out from its center. The battle at Dallas was fought on 28 May along with other engagements at New Hope Church, Pumpkinvine Creek, and Pickett's Mill. These names are also associated with the location of the Paris and Rainwater families. Sherman later moved on to Atlanta from where he began his march to the sea in November 1864. In March and April of 1865, a large number of Union soldiers moved into the County. There is no way to know the effect of the war on the Rainwater families. Besides Susannah's first husband, Jane's son, Joseph Rainwater, born 1843 in AL, died 1863 in the Civil War, Co D 1<sup>st</sup> Reg GA Vol-CSA. **James T. Rainwater** served in the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, GA Artillery.

## Burrell Rainwater

Burrell Rainwater is in the direct ancestry line of Charles Alston Brooks (1903-1989) through his mother Sarah Revelou Rainwater Brooks (1864-1950). Because others have recorded their research on him, I have been able to find out more about him than some ancestors.

When reading about the family of Burrell Rainwater (1782 - abt 1855) and Elizabeth Rainwater (1792 - abt 1855) a list of their children will be helpful. Sorting census and marriage records, seven daughters and two sons can be identified. Unfortunately, three of the children cannot be found beyond the census records.

Jane, b. 1809, m. 1840?, m. 1860's, Rash  
Son name unknown, b. 1810  
Susannah, b. 1812, m. abt 1837, William Lewis  
Allen, b 1814, m. 1840, Nancy Lambert  
Nancy, b. 1817, m. 1836, John Minton  
Sarah, b. 1819, m. 1840, Charles Fuller  
Mary, b. 1823, m. abt 1850, Sam Reynolds?  
Elizabeth, b. 1825, m. 1850, James Calley  
Margaret, b. 1828, m. abt 1845, William Powell?

Burrell's parents were John Rainwater (III), who was born in North Carolina about 1760 and died in Spartanburg District, SC, in 1832. John married Susannah about 1776. Her family name is not known. They had five children. Burrell was their second child.

There are not enough records for a full biography of Burrell's life; but data from census, church, and land records provide a sketch from his birth in 1782 till the last known record in 1852.

He married Elizabeth, born 1792, in the Spartanburg District, SC. The exact date of their marriage is not known, but about 1808.

The Spartanburg, SC, district of 1810 lists the household of Burrell Rainwater. As the manner of early census records, only age categories for male and female members of a house are given. Exact ages, names, and relationship are not given and are supplied as the researcher calculates from later family records such as family Bibles, wedding or death records. Burrell's household of 1810 included:

1 male under 10 (unknown, probably newborn. This male child does not show up again on census records. Several stories circulated about this child: May have been kidnaped by Indians, or Elizabeth gave child to her parents to raise, or he died before the next census.):

1 male 16-25 (Burrell 25);

1 female under 10 (Jane 2<sup>nd</sup> child, b. abt 1809);

1 female 16-25 (Elizabeth 18).

In 1810 Burrell's family included wife Elizabeth, an unnamed son and Jane.

During this period the Rainwater family was associated with the Cedar Springs Baptist Church of Spartanburg County, organized in 1787. The minutes between December 1794 and April 1831 listed as members: Robert Rainwater, John Rainwater (Is this Burrell'

father?), Burrell Rainwater and Elizabeth Rainwater. Robert Rainwater (probably Burrell's brother) was received by letter from Newhope Church, April 1805. John, Burrell, and Elizabeth received by letter from Unity Church, July 1819, 14 years after Robert. At one time Robert had been excommunicated from this church for being drunk and disorderly but was restored to full fellowship July 21, 1810.

According to his own statement in later documents, Burrell was drafted in Spartanburg, SC, on October 5, 1814, for the War with Great Britain (usually called the war of 1812). He served as a private in Captain Clement's Company of the South Carolina Militia, commanded by Colonel Hugh Means. He was discharged in Charleston for disability on February 5, 1815, and he hired Ezekiel Fuller to complete his six months term. Both names are listed in official military records.

In 1820 Burrell is back from military service with his family in the Spartanburg District. According to the census record his family has increased:

1 male under 10 (Allen, 6 b. 1814);

1 male 26-45 (Burrell);

3 females under 10 (Susannah, 8 b. 1812, Nancy, 3 b. 1817, Sarah, 1 b. 1819);

1 female 10-16 (Jane, 12 b. 1808);

1 female 16-26 (Elizabeth).

He and Elizabeth now have one son and four daughters. Burrell, born in the Spartanburg District in 1782, lived there until about 1823 when he and his family appear in the records in Hall County, GA.

The next records of the Burrell Rainwater family are in the minutes of the Yellow Creek Baptist Church, Hall County, GA (present county seat, Gainesville). The minutes of the Yellow Creek Baptist Church are on microfilm in Georgia State Archives, Atlanta. The church was constituted in January 1823, and Burrell and Elizabeth appear to be charter members. The minutes have the following record of the Rainwater family:

October 16, 1824, a letter of dismissal was granted to Burwell and Elizabeth.

December 17, 1825, they returned to membership and were received by letter.

Reasons for their departure/return are not given.

July 15, 1826, Burwell Rainwaters overcome by drunkenness.

August 19, 1826, Rainwaters gave satisfaction and was restored.

August 18, 1827, excluded Barwell Rainwater for drunkenness and fighting.

December 15, 1827, received by letter, Joshua Rainwater.

July 19, 1828, received by experience, Polly Rainwaters.

September 20, 1828, received by recantation, Burwell Rainwater.

February 20, 1830, excluded Burwell Rainwater for drunkenness and profane language.

Church membership seems to be important in the Rainwater family since their names are always on the church rolls. Burrell's fun loving behavior provoked a response by the congregation.

The 1830 Hall County, GA, census makes it known that Burrell's family continues to grow. The list:

1 male 15-20 (Allen 16);

1 male 40-50 (Burrell 48);

1 female under 5 (Margaret, 2?);

2 females 5-9 (Mary 7, Elizabeth 5);  
2 females 10-15 (Sarah 11, Nancy 13);  
2 females 16-20 (Susannah 18, Jane 22);  
1 female 40-50 (Elizabeth 38).

His children have increased to eight: one son and seven daughters. This is the only census where all eight children appear. (One son from the 1820 list apparently died or was with another family.)

To what extent the Rainwater family was schooled we do not know; however, Families of Hall County Georgia, 1817-1849 has a section on "Poor School Students." In that era more affluent families paid tuition for their children's education at all levels. Provisions were made for other children. Rainwater children are listed: in 1830, Burrell Rainwater (This could be one of the children identified by the father's name, or more probable a child of another Rainwater family.); 1831, Nancy Rainwater (age 12), Sarah Rainwater (age 11); 1832, none of Burrell's children appear but there are other Rainwater children; 1833, Allen, Nancy, Sarah, Mary, and Elizabeth Rainwater appear on the roll. Their ages are not given this year. Since Mary, whose name is not otherwise known, is listed between Sarah and Elizabeth, she fits the earlier census records of a daughter born in born in 1823. This list indicates that the family was concerned for the education of the children, it verifies that they were still in Hall County in 1833, and identifies Mary in the census list of 1830. Several Calley (Coley, Coly) children appear on this list. The Calley family is closely associated with the Rainwater family as will be seen later.

The next information about the Rainwater family comes from the Creek Indian Territory in Alabama. The first record is in the minutes of The New Hopewell Baptist Church. Today the Church is located a few miles west of present day Piedmont, AL, on the Old Piedmont Gadsden Highway. The Church was organized August 14, 1832, in Creek Indian territory. What is now Piedmont was not organized until 1871. Calhoun County, first known as Benton County, was created from Creek Indian territory December 18, 1832. The Church did not meet at the present location until 1875. The exact location of its original site on Terrapin Creek has not been verified. The uncertainty of county boundaries makes it impossible to know whether it was originally in Calhoun (first named Benton) or in Cherokee County. As typical, the records begin with Rules of Decorum dated August 14, 1832. Then follows a list of the members for 1832. Elizabeth Rainwater, Burrell's wife, is listed in the 1833 membership roll at #22. Other material from the church says there were six charter members. Elizabeth was not one of those but one of the earliest members. Jane Rainwater is listed at #38. Although Jane appears in both the 1834 and 1835 roll column, her membership was actually taken on 1835. There are a total of 43 members in this list. The membership roll is repeated in 1835, and Sarah Rainwater is listed at #48. Jane and Sarah are Elizabeth's daughters. The periodic records of the church conference (business meetings) do not indicate the date and manner of Elizabeth's membership; however, the minutes of June 26, 1835, record "open a door for the reception of new members and received by experience Sister Jane Rainwater." Jane was 27 years old. A similar statement regarding Sarah, age 16, is in the records of September 20, 1835. Jane was removed from membership on September the 23, 1836 (More about Jane later.), and the records of February 24, 1838, indicates that "Sister Elizabeth Rainwater and Sarah Rainwater have applied for letters of dismissal which was granted." Neither Burrell nor other members of the household appear in the records of this church; it is possible, however, that some were associated with the nearby Salem Church. Elizabeth's and Sarah's letters of dismissal in 1838 may have been to

Salem Church. Nancy Rainwater married the son of the preacher there about this time.

Salem Baptist Church and New Hopewell are about 15 miles apart; however, when first organized in 1832, New Hopewell was located on Terrapin Creek which was nearer to Salem. Nineteenth century minutes for Salem are not available, so until recently the officials of Salem Church traced its origins to 1854 when it had records of deeds to their property. On the other hand the New Hopewell Church has complete records beginning with their organization in 1832. Their minutes of January 22, 1842, and February 26, 1842, mention the Salem Church. Recently, descendants of Sylvanus Minton have informed the Salem Church of his connection with its organization at a date before 1842. Calhoun (Benton) County was instituted December 18, 1842, and Cherokee County on January 9, 1836. In those early days the county boundaries were fluid. Different locations for census, church, and marriage records do not require the relocation of the family.

These New Hopewell Church records verify that the family moved from Hall County, GA, to Indian territory in Alabama as early as 1833.

The 1840 Cherokee County, AL, census confirms the church records:

2 males 20-30 (Allen 26, and un-named male - since a male of this age does not appear in prior lists, it is assumed he is not a child, but a worker, or some other relation to the family. He could be Charles Fuller, Sarah's future husband, who is 24 years old.);

1 male 50-60 (Burrell 58);

1 female 10-15 (name is unknown 12);

1 female 15-20 (Betsy 15);

1 female 20-30 (Sarah 21);

1 female 50-60 (Elizabeth 48).

While living in Alabama, the Rainwater children reached adulthood; and by the time Burrell and Elizabeth returned to Georgia in the mid 1840's all of their children were married and no longer in the household except Jane and her sons. Between 1836-1843 Jane had three sons in Alabama and was not in her father's household in 1840. Marriages in Alabama were:

Susannah, born abt. 1812 in SC, married William Lewis, abt. 1837.

Nancy Adeline, born January 29, 1817 in SC, married John Morris Minton, abt. 1837. He was the son of Sylvanus Minton and Mary Morris. Sylvanus Minton was the organizing Pastor of Salem Baptist Church in Bluffton, AL. He was also associated with the New Hopewell Baptist Church. Both Churches are in the vicinity of the Rainwater family.

There was a double wedding ceremony in the Rainwater family December 27, 1840. Allen Terry, born abt. 1814 in SC, married Nancy T. Lambert; and Sarah (Sally), born August 9, 1819 in SC, married Charles Fuller, II. Both marriages were performed by James Flannigan, Justice of the Peace, Benton County.

The area was probably sparsely populated during the time the Rainwater family were living there. Burrell was listed as a farmer in the census. He and family may also have harvested timber since these counties were and continue to be rich in this natural resource. Soon after they returned to Georgia, the city of Piedmont was established in 1871 and Bluffton mushroomed to a population of about 3,000 at the turn of the century as a result

of the iron ore mining. Today only Salem Baptist Church is left as a reminder of a productive past.

When the family was back in Georgia (In what became part of Paulding County in 1853.), Elizabeth (Betsy), born December 13, 1825 in SC, married James B. Calley, abt. 1846. James was in the the school children list in Hall county in the 1830's. It was the custom for groups of families to move together from place to place, and the children would be acquainted as they grew up together. Living next to Sarah (Burrell's daughter) and Charles Fuller in th 1850 census in the California District, are Mary and Sam Reynolds. It is highly probable that she is Mary Rainwater, who was identified in the 1833 school list in Hall County. Burrell and his married children continue to live in the same area.

From the early 1830's to the mid 1840's the Rainwater family lived in Cherokee and Calhoun Counties, probably in the area around what is now Piedmont and Bluffton. The family members were associated with the New Hopewell Baptist Church in the vicinity and perhaps also the Salem Baptist Church. Sylvanus Minton, who also had a connection with New Hopewell Church as reported in their minutes, established the Salem Church in 1834.

In the mid 1840's the family was back in Georgia where Burrell bought land in Cobb County. A land transaction in that county records a purchase of 40 acres by Burrell from James Branon for the amount of \$50 on November 10, 1845. The next year, February 20, 1846, Burrell sold the same land to Moses H. Denman for \$50: Deed Book I, p 292, Paulding County, GA. This was probably in the California District of Cobb County which was annexed to Paulding County in 1853. The 1850 census records locate the Burrell and Elizabeth in the California District. Their married children are also in Georgia as attested by census records.

Beginning in 1850 the census records list the occupants of a household by name and age. Family #1658:

Burrell, age 68, white, farmer, born SC;  
Elizabeth, age 58, born GA;  
Jane, age 42, born GA;  
John James, age 15, born AL;  
John, age 12, born AL;  
Joseph, age 7, born AL.

This census record has been variously interpreted. Some assign all the persons listed as children of Burrell and Elizabeth. This would mean that Elizabeth had Joseph at age 51 - possible, but not probable. A plausible suggestion is that the three boys are sons of Jane, first daughter of Burrell and Elizabeth. Neither Jane nor the three boys fit the data listed in the household in the 1840 census. Jane seems to have rejoined the family after being away for a period of time before and after the 1840 census in Alabama. There will be more about Jane later.

Twice in the early 1850's Burrell appears before a Justice of the Peace to qualify for land made available to veterans under an act of Congress passed September 28, 1850: "Act Granting Bounty Land to Officers and Soldiers Who Have Been Engaged in Military Service of the United States." His first application was on August 1, 1851. The land he received from this application was probably what he sold to Oliver Paris. The transaction is recorded in Arab, AL, on November 9, 1852: 39.85.f acres in NE 1/4 of SE 1/4 T8Sr4E, Marshall County.

The second application was made on April 9, 1856. The first application was recorded in Cobb County, the second in Paulding County. Burrell has not moved, the California district was transferred from Cobb to Paulding County in 1853. Both applications were based on his military service in 1814-1815 as mentioned above. Burrell signed both applications with an "X". On the second application Burrell's sons-in-law, Charles Fuller and William Powell attest to Burrell's identity. The record of the land he received at the second application has not been discovered.

This 1856 information is the last datum we have of Burrell Rainwater. Neither Burrell nor Elizabeth have been found in the 1860 census nor burial records of them have been located. It is assumed they died before 1860, probably still living in Paulding County. A descendant from the Holly Pond family says that Burrell was buried at Vernon Cemetery; however, this has not been confirmed. As best determined all of Burrell and Elizabeth's children were living in the area in the 1850's and 1860's. It was after the Civil War that some of the families migrated to Praire County, AR. One can only wonder why some of the Rainwater family living close by did not note their death.

From the Spartanburg District of South Carolina Burrell and his family moved several times and as far away as Cherokee County, AL. From Spartanburg, SC, to Piedmont, AL, via modern highways is 277 miles as measured by Mapquest and requires less than five hours driving time. In the 1800's, days and weeks of travel would be required to reach each new residence. We descendants can only guess what motivated the family to relocate four or five times in 50 years. Was it the search for better farm land as new territory opened, restlessness, adventure, or what? The family/clan seems to have stayed together even after the children married. They were not always traveling into unknown areas. Numerous Rainwater families are found through the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, as well as Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas. Geographically, Burrell's travels skirted the southeastern rim of the Appalachian Mountains through South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. This territory was gradually being resettled by new Americans as the native Americans were relocated westward.

## Jane Rainwater

“RAINWATER, OLD LADY” was scribbled in an 8x30 inch slab of wet concrete in the mid twentieth century to mark the grave site of this person buried in the Vernon Cemetery located just a mile or two north of Hiram, GA, on state highway 92. These are the only two words on the marker - no other identity. Neither dates of birth and death nor relationships - wife, mother, daughter - are noted. Only two data are given: her family name is Rainwater, and she is known “Old Lady.” In some circles the title “Old Lady” may be derogatory, but in her generation a title of respect. While the marker is crude in appearance, it represents the sensitive concern of the scribe who, acting on his or her best information from family and community, desired to re-identify the deceased. Perhaps an original wooden marker had rotted away. There are two other similar markers for members of her family, a daughter and grandson.



Jane Ranewater  
1809 - 1880's

Who is this “Old Lady” whose dates and relationships have alluded us at the moment we expected some details? In

the middle of the twentieth century, those steeped in the history of the families of the Vernon community were certain that this Lady was Jane Rainwater. The first year that names other than the head of the house appear in census lists is 1850. In that year Jane is in the household of Burrell Rainwater, age 42, born in GA. Unfortunately, census data at that time did not designate the relationship of the persons listed. Assuming she is Burrell Rainwater’s daughter she fits the tabulations in his census records from 1810-1830, but she is not in his household in 1840.

The first place her name actually appears in any record is in the membership of the New Hopewell Baptist Church in Calhoun (at first called Benton) County, AL. Today the Church is located a few miles west of present day Piedmont, AL, on the Old Piedmont Gadsden Highway. The Church was organized August 14, 1832, in Creek Indian territory. What is now Piedmont was not organized until 1871. Calhoun County, first known as Benton County, was created from Creek Indian territory December 18, 1832. The Church is located just a few miles within Calhoun County and could very well have drawn members from Cherokee County. As typical, the records begin with Rules of Decorum dated August 14, 1832. Then follows several lists of the members. The minutes of June 26, 1835, record “open a door for the reception of new members and received by experience Sister Jane Rainwater..” A similar statement regarding Sarah Rainwater is in the records of September 20, 1835. Even before these two sisters united with the church, Elizabeth is listed on the membership roll in 1833. These two daughters, Jane and Elizabeth, and their mother, Elizabeth, are from the Burrell Rainwater household which is listed in the 1840 census in Cherokee County. By that listing several of the children have married and are assumed to be in their own households since they are not listed in Burrell’s. Jane is not listed in Burrell’s household of 1840, nor has her record for 1840 been found to date. This

is perplexing to the genealogist in connection with what is recorded in the church records.

The records of August the 27, 1836, include at item 5: "Whereas some unfavorable report has reached the church concerning Sister Jane Rainwater, the church thought fit to appoint a committee to see her by the next conference. Committee Sisters Calloway and Grayham and report the same to Brothers Calloway and Graham." This is followed by the entry on September the 23, 1836, item 4: "The Committee appointed to see Sister Jane Rainwater reports that the charges lodged against her in regard to fornication is correct and excluded her from among us for the same." Two years later Jane's mother and sister voluntarily withdraw from the church. February 24, 1838, item 4: "Sister Elizabeth Rainwater and Sarah Rainwater have applied for letters of dismission which was granted." The reason was probably to unite with another church.

Since Jane, her sister, and mother are together in this church it is assumed that they are either in the same household or living near one another. The census records for Burrell's household in Georgia of 1850 must be examined here. These are from the California District of Cobb County, which was annexed to Paulding County in 1853 and was known by the same name. Vernon cemetery is in this district. Here is the household in 1850:

Burrell, age 68, white, farmer, born SC

Elizabeth, age 58, born GA

Jane, age 42, born GA

John James, age 15, born AL

John, age 12, born AL

Joseph, age 7, born AL

While Elizabeth could possibly be the mother of John James, it seem highly improbable that she could be the mother of John and Joseph. Since the three young males do not appear in the 1840 census tabulation of Burrell's household, they cannot be accounted as his children. It makes reasonable sense to conclude that Jane is the mother of the three boys, and they have joined Burrell's household.

September 23, 1836, Jane was expelled from the New Hopewell Baptist for fornication. John James, according to the 1850 census was born in 1835. James T. Rainwater's tombstone dates his birth September 27, 1836. James appears as either J.T. Rainwater, James Rainwater, and James T. Rainwater in the census records from 1860 through 1900. The age given in each census calculates to a birth date in 1836, granting imprecise calculation when considering the month the census was taken and human memory. Here and in all records of James, Alabama is his state of birth. Unfortunately, birth records are not available. The best birth date for James is 1836. John was born next about 1839, and Joseph, about 1844. All three were born in Alabama while the Rainwater family was living in Cherokee County between 1833 and 1845.

The father of Jane's children and her residence while in Alabama remain a mystery. Some suggestions may come from further examination of other church records. Members of the church used its conferences to address problems between members. On one occasion the church settled a quarrel between the Smith and Cook families when the Smiths claimed that the Cooks had infringed on their property. In more than one situation the church acted when moral misbehavior was known. In the minutes of May 22, 1840, Sister Sarah White "has been immoral... and guilty of cohabbitating with a man and is

married and she has a husband yet living.” She was excluded. This seems to be a case in which Sister White had taken up residence with an unnamed man while they both are still in a legal marriage. Jane’s offence in the eyes of the church was “fornication” - a term used to identify that one has had sexual relations before marriage. The only way to verify such a “sin”, other than observation of the act or confession, would be an obvious pregnancy or childbirth. The committee visiting Jane saw the obvious and James’ birth a few days later confirmed the matter. In Jane’s case her partner is not mentioned. This was probably because Jane was still living in the household of family kin, and her suitor was not widely known. The fact that she is listed as a church member along with Sarah and Elizabeth would further suggest she was still dwelling with the Rainwater family. In the 1850 census she is 42 years old. At the time of her first child she was 27 or 28. In this generation most young ladies were married with children in their late teens or early 20’s.

If she was in the family dwelling in 1836, she is not there at the 1840 census. By then she has had a second son, John in 1839, and later Joseph in 1844. Where was she living? Were the three sons by the same father? We can only guess. Perhaps the father of James has taken his mate and son into his own house, and they have become a “common law” family, bearing a family name unknown to us. Or did Jane take residence with one of her married siblings? Between 1837 and 1840 three sisters and her brother married and were out of the Burrell’s house by the 1840 census. So far no one has locate Jane, James, and John in another household in the 1840 census. All of the census records have not yet been surveyed so Jane and her children might yet be found in Alabama census records. From the present perspective there is no possible way to assess the emotional feelings of Jane and her family. Does her absence from the family household in 1840 but return in 1850 represent an estrangement and reconciliation within the family? The answer to these questions are forever lost form our purview.

Jane probably traveled back to Georgia with the larger Rainwater family. Sifting through the census records confirms that Burrell’s married children relocated with him to Cobb County (later part of Paulding County) about 1845. There Jane and her three sons are in Burrell’s household. By 1860 James has established his own house hold, having married Millie Paris in 1857. Jane Rainwater is the head of her own house as the 1860 shows:

- Jane Rainwaters, 50, WF, GA
- John Rainwaters, 19, WM, Day laborer, AL
- Joseph Rainwaters, 15, WM, AL
- Margaret Rainwaters, 8, WF, GA, attended school
- Amanda Rainwaters, 5, WF, GA

Since the 1850 census, two new daughters are added to the household: Margaret and Amanda. In the 1870 census Jane is still the head of a household but with the last name Rash. Her age and that of Amanda’s matches the 1860 census.

- Rash, Jane, 60, WF, GA
- Amanda, 15, WF, GA

The perplexing question is the origin of the name Rash. Was it the last name of the father of Margaret and Amanda ‘Rash’? Did he live in the household off and on and was simply absent at census time? Where was this father in the 1860 when Jane still uses the name Rainwater?

The period from 1860-1870 brought unusual grief to Jane's family. It was the time of the devastation of the Civil War. All three of her sons served in the military. Kay Ohanah, researching the Archives in Washington, DC, has confirmed that James and his brother John served in the same company of the Ninth Battalion, Georgia Artillery. The records of John show that he enlisted July 6, 1861 and died June 15, 1862 in Atlanta, GA. Their mother, Jane, received death pay and other allowances on behalf of her son John. (This record is additional evidence that these three brothers are all sons of Jane.) Although the records do not indicate the exact date of James's enlistment, it must have been about the same time as his brother's. It is noted that James received a furlough on January 9, 1863. Joseph Rainwater, the third brother, died while in military service in 1863. Thus James was one of three children who survived the Civil War. John and Joseph died as the result of a measles epidemic both within and outside the military. John was hardly 21 at the time of his death. He was buried at Vernon. Since Margaret does not appear in the 1870 census list and since there is a grave marker "Margaret Rash", styled after her mother's "Old Lady" marker, in the Vernon Cemetery we assume Margaret died as a young lady. Margaret was still in the teens. James survived his military service, but suffered the loss of wife Millie and two young sons, all buried at the Vernon Cemetery. In 1870 Jane is in her house with only Amanda. James and his family are nearby.

Likewise, in the 1880 census only Jane Rash, now 71, and her daughter, M.J., age 25 are listed. M.J. may be the same as Amanda who is later called Manda Jane. 1880 is the first census that relationships are noted. Jane is a widow and M.J. is daughter. More data on the family changes and Jane's name would be helpful. Between 1850 and 1860 two daughters are born but her name continues to be Rainwater, but in 1870 her name has become Rash even though a husband is not in the records. In 1880 she is a widow. Is Rash the father of Margaret and Amanda? Margaret is buried as Margaret Rash and Amanda later marries as Amanda Rash. Or was Jane married to Rash for a short time in the 1860's? He lived with the family long enough to bequeath them a name then died or left before 1870. In that census Jane's widow status would not have been listed.

In the period before and after 1880 there was a migration of several related families from Paulding County to Arkansas. Nancy, Jane's sister, and her husband John Minton, who were married while the Rainwater family was in Alabama, relocated to Prairie County, AR, in the early 1870's. Two other sisters and their families followed in early 1880's: Sarah and Charles Fuller and their family; Elizabeth Calley, who had married in Paulding County, but now widowed, and her children. By the mid 1880's, Allen Rainwater, Burrell's son, had moved to Clay County, AL; and James T. Rainwater, Jane's son, moved to Holly Pond, AL. The relocation of these families prompted Amanda, and probably her mother Jane, to travel to Arkansas where we have the next record of Jane's family from a descendant now living in Texas.

Robbie Sutlive, born about 1930, is a granddaughter of Amanda Jane Rash and in 2004 provided additional information about her grandmother. Amanda Jane, and probably her mother, Jane, went to Prairie County, AR, in the early 1880's and lived with Jane's sister, Elizabeth Rainwater Calley (Burrell's daughter). Amanda Rash married John Fort on March 1, 1885, as duly recorded in the Prairie County Courthouse. She was 28 years old. Elizabeth and other members of the Rainwater family witnessed the ceremony. Amanda and John eventually had five children. They later moved to Texas where they are listed in

the 1900, 1910, and 1920 census. In 1920 Amanda is simply listed as 'Mandy'. Robbie remembers that some of the family said that Amanda was "born on the wrong side of the blanket." This may be the description of all Jane's children. Robbie says that Amanda was not always treated kindly by her Arkansas cousins.

How long Jane stayed in Arkansas, if she were there, is not known and the date of her death will never be known, but she was back in Paulding County when she died. There are no 1890 census records to research. Amanda's wedding in 1885 is the last date we have. Her son, James T. Rainwater and his second family, moved to Holly pond in the mid 1880's. We can only speculate that he moved after the death of his mother. If that were the case, she lived to be about 85 years old.

The Vernon Cemetery was first called the Calley Cemetery because it was established in 1880 by Elizabeth Calley before she departed for Arkansas. She sold 196 acres of land but retained one acre "for use of a grave yard and school house". The school was built and called the "Vernon School", perhaps after some member of the family. The school building stood for many years. The children of Will Rainwater (1862-1948) attended this school in the early part of 1900's. It was not located on present site of the church near the cemetery.

The "Old Lady Rainwater" is fittingly buried in the Cemetery established by her sister. There seems to be no question that the "Old Lady" is indeed Jane Rainwater, mother of three sons and two daughters. Based on Cemetery records dating to 1900 and familiar with the Vernon community, Hammett Paris wrote to a family member in 1991 that "Old Lady Rainwater" was James Rainwater's mother. She was married to Rash. Her daughter, Margaret, was (or is) buried at Vernon." Hammett graduated from Hiram High School in 1927, was a lifelong resident of the Vernon Community, and the unofficial caretaker of the Cemetery. He was knowledgeable the people buried there.

Jane Rainwater was a strong women who survived a tumultuous life in a harsh environment. She had a long life, survived unusual circumstances, and deserved the honorable title "Old Lady".

#### Jane Rainwater's Children:

James T. Rainwater, b. 27 Sept 1836, d. 7 Mar 1905.

m. 3 Feb 1857, Millie Elizabeth Parris, b. 22 Aug 1835, d. 20 Jul 1865.

m. abt 1866, Susannah "Susie" Elizabeth Parris, b. 24 May 1840, d. 27 Jun 1913.

(Susannah was the cousin of Millie.)

Civil War record: Ga. Artillery, 9th Batt. Co. A & E, Prvt

John Rainwater, b. 1839, d. before 1870, buried in Vernon Cemetery

Civil War record: Ga. Artillery, 9th Batt. Co. A & E, Prvt.

Joseph Rainwaters, b. 1844, d. 1863 while in military service in Bainbridge, GA,

m. 27 Oct 1860 Sarah Ann Hedgepath

Civil War record: William J(oseph). Rainwater, Ga. 1st Calvary, Co. D., Prvt.

Margaret Rainwater Rash, b. 1852, d. before 1870

Amanda Jane Rainwater Rash, b. 16 July 1854, d. 26 Aug 1926,

m. 1 March 1885, John Fort, b. 10 March 1853, d. 1 July 1899

## James T. Rainwater

James T. Rainwater, 1836-1905, was my great grandfather. Over 30 years ago I was given his portrait by my father. Born in 1903, my father never knew his grandfather, only heard his mother speak of him. Although my generation knew that he lived the last period of his life in Cullman County, AL, we knew very little about him and had no visual image of his environment. I am sure that some of his descendants alive today have a trove of memories better than mine, but so far I have not found such a person so I can only write about what I have been able to put together from genealogical records, hints that researchers in other families have passed on, church records, and cemetery visits. The most satisfying effort to get acquainted with my ancestor was a visit on December 2, 2003, to Holly Pond, Pullman County, AL, where James lived the last two decades of his life.

Cullman, the County seat, is located on I-65 48 miles north of Birmingham. Holly pond is 15 miles east of Cullman on US 278. Our visit to ancestral roots had begun in Paulding County, GA, near Hiram, where the Rainwater family lived before coming back to Alabama. From Hiram to Holly pond is a distance of 120 miles on US 278. It was a sunny December day in Holly Pond when Dan Scott and Mike Wiener graciously guided us to the farmland homesteaded by the Rainwater family. Traveling about three miles after turning south off US 278 onto state 91, bearing left at the Pine Grove church, we came to the 160 acre tract deeded to James T. Rainwater by the General Land Office November 2, 1891. To my city eyes it was beautiful pasture and farm land. It was one-fourth mile wide and one mile long. Of course, it has been tended for over a century, and none of the original buildings remain. Certainly James saw the potential when he signed on to homestead the property.

A homesteader was required to be on the land at least five years before a deed would be issued, give evidence that the land had been improved, and construct suitable living quarters. Assuming that the men folk came to the site in advance of the women, James probably brought his son Henry and his two step sons, John and Oliver Wilson, about 1886. These four would have made a reasonable work crew to establish their new residence. If the women of the family came along later, James extended family would have included his second wife, Susannah, and their children:



James T. Rainwater  
1836 - 1905

Henry, 23, recently married in 1886.

Martha Caldonia 'Donie', 20

Amanda Tolonia 'Loney', 16

Olive D. Lulu, 9

Step sons:

John Monroe Wilson, 31, married?

Oliver Bud Wilson, 29, married?

Besides the homestead acreage, Dan and Mike pointed out an equal size tract of land just east of Holly Pond along US 278 which was remembered as the Rainwater place; however, the land records have not been researched. Relocating when he was about 50 years old, it is obvious that James was successful in his venture. The farmland owned would attest to that fact. In addition a visit to the Holly Pond Cemetery confirmed that the Rainwaters were a family of some means. (The Cemetery is located on county road 1669 about four tenths mile off Us 278.) The monuments in memory of James and Susannah are at least five feet high and attractively decorated. Besides the basic data they have poetic verse inscribed on the tall shaft. The top of the shaft is decorated as if a table scarf were draped over it on which a Bible is placed. It reminded me of the simple table I had often seen in the home of my grandmother (daughter of James T. by his first wife and raised from one year old by Susannah). It usually had an embroidered tablecloth, an oil lamp, and a Bible. It reminded all who visited that the Bible symbolized the Christian commitment of the home and family. The Cemetery contains the graves and markers of Martha and Amanda and their husbands as well as John and Oliver Wilson and their wives. All are marked by attractive tombstones. Regrettably, I did not have time to explore the families of these four, their property locations, and their welfare; however, I ran across a comment by a descendant of Martha who wrote that Martha remembered moving from Georgia to Alabama in a wagon. Later in life Martha ran the Dodson family farm after her husband died. Also she remembered that Miss Susan carried the mail on horseback to the people in the country. The families of the Rainwaters and Wilsons were five energetic, related families. They were a stable, religious family, and nurtured the moral values shared by America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The continued story of the children of James T. Rainwater attest to this. They added much to the early days of the Holly pond community.

The oldest child of James and Susannah was Henry D. Rainwater, who established his family in the community near West Bethlehem Baptist Church located eight miles northeast of Cullman on state highway 157. Besides farming, Henry D. was a licensed (1886) and ordained (1897) Baptist minister. He was pastor of West Bethlehem church 1896-1899, 1902-1903, and 1907. He was also pastor at Mt. Hope, Emeus, Missionary Grove, Pleasant Valley, and Ebenezer churches. He, his wife, and several members of his family are buried at the cemetery at the West Bethlehem Church. Henry's youngest sister, Olive, tells of her own conversion experience and baptism at the Pine Grove Baptist Church, near the homplace, when she was 10 years old. She wrote the story in her own family Bible which also records the details of her wedding in the home of her father, James T. Rainwater. (The Bible is in the possession of her granddaughter, Tony Parks.) If the youngest child had such a story, perhaps the two older daughters also had similar stories.

The children of James T.'s first marriage, who did not move to Alabama, were well trained in moral values and skills of the day. Will Rainwater, living near the Vernon Cemetery, was an engineer, businessman, and farm 200 acres of his own land. My grandmother's, Sarah Revelou Rainwater, who married Philip Brooks in 1880 and moved to Chattooga County, GA, was well trained in all domestic skills. She raised seven children and taught each one of them Christian moral values as well as social graces. These were the characteristics that she had inherited and learned from her father and her stepmother. All of this attests to the worthiness and stability of the James T. Rainwater family.

Leaving the Vernon community in Paulding County near Hiram, GA, about age 50, James is leaving the area where he had spent at least 40 years of his life. It was from this location that he and his two brothers enlisted in the Confederate forces in Atlanta. Kay Ohanah, researching the Archives in Washington, DC, has confirmed that James and his brother John served in the same company of the Ninth Battalion, Georgia Artillery. The records of John show that he enlisted July 6, 1861 and died June 15, 1862 in Atlanta, GA. Their mother, Jane, received death pay and other allowances on behalf of her son John. Although the records do not indicate the exact date of James's enlistment, it must have been about the same time as his brother's. It is noted that James received a furlough on January 9, 1863. Joseph Rainwater, the



**Rainwater Homstead near Holly Pond**

third brother, died while in military service in 1863. Thus James was one of three children who survived the Civil War.. The Ninth Battalion of the Georgia Artillery was formed during the summer of 1862 with five companies. Some of the men were from Augusta, Richmond, and Gwinnette County. After serving in Georgia, the battalion moved to Tennessee and reported to General H. Marshall. It was active in Southwest Virginia and later the Knoxville Campaign. Ordered back to Virginia during the spring of 1864, it was assigned to Department of Richmond and for a time stationed at Chaffin's Bluff. The unit participated in the Petersburg siege north of the James River, then served as infantry under C.A. Evans in the Appomattox Campaign. On April 9, 1865, it surrendered with 1 officer and 19 men. Major A. Leyden was in command. William Joseph served in the Georgia First Calvary. We who live so far removed from that conflict cannot assess the total effect it had on families and individuals.

One can only surmise why James and family relocate to Holly Pond beginning about 1885. Toni Parks, a grand daughter of Olive, said that James thought the land was better in Alabama. James had lived in Georgia since he was about ten years old. In 1857 he married Millie Paris, his first wife. Of their five children two sons had died at early age. Miles, the first child died at age five of cholera. James suffered the loss of a new born son and wife Millie in 1865. The three adult children were now married. Sarah and her husband Phillip Brooks had moved to northern Cherokee County, AL. John moved farther

south, probably to Fayette County, and Will(iam) remained at the home place. Although we do not know the exact date of his mother Jane's death, I think it might have been about the time he made the move. When she died, the only remaining tie to the area would be Will, who apparently took over the family farm. Millie, the two infant sons, a brother (John), a sister (Margaret), and his mother are all buried at Vernon Cemetery. There is no way of knowing the dynamics of a family from times past: their dependency on one another, the order of dominance, the tensions or mutual support that prevails. Whatever the situation, James certainly displayed a courageous spirit making such a move. Perhaps he had inherited an adventurous spirit from his grandfather, Burrell, who was not shy about moving from place to place. From his mother, Jane, he inherited a determination to overcome any adversity and to care for his family. In his life time he provided for seven children who grew to adulthood as well as two steps sons brought to his second marriage to Susannah Paris Wilson.

The extent of his property holdings in Paulding County has not been assessed; however, I have several pages of property transactions of James T. Rainwater recorded in the court house records at Dallas, Ga, that I have not worked through. My grandmother, Sarah Revelou Rainwater Brooks, always remembered that her brother, Will, lived on Rainwater homeplace where she grew up. I assumed James owned the property at one time.

In returning to Alabama, James is returning to the state where he was born and lived for approximately ten years before the Rainwater family moved from the area near what is today Piedmont back to Paulding County GA. Traveling from the Vernon community to Holly Pond, a distance of about 120 miles, the road would have followed what is today US 278 passed through Cherokee and Calhoun Counties where Burrell Rainwater and family lived from mid 1830's to mid 1840's. There several of his children married. Based on the records of the New Hopewell Baptist Church in that vicinity, Jane was the mother of James, born September 27, 1836. The church records give only one side of the story: what they were required to report given their assumptions, the culture of the time and place, and their sense of obligation. Jane's feelings, her grief, the attitude of the family - we do not know. We do know, however, that Jane cared for her children, raised them to adulthood, and was able to survive herself to a ripe old age.

Likewise, James, regardless of what he knew about his past, demonstrated that he was a worthy human being who proved to be a good citizen through out his life. Marrying in 1857 at age 21, he continuously provided for his family until the end of his days. When he died March 7, 1905, he left a worthy heritage in Holly pond as well as with his descendants in Paulding County. The inscription placed on his tombstone by his family may well represent the life of many of those who lived through the difficulties of the last half of the nineteenth century: "Dear father, in earth's paths, how long thy feet hath trod to find at last a peaceful rest safe in the arms of God." Anyone seriously surveying the life of James T. Rainwater will come away with genuine appreciation for the man and his family. As for me, I would not trade my family heritage with anyone.

A research note:

James' tombstone in Holly Pond Cemetery in Cullman County, AL, gives the precise data of his birth and death: September 27, 1836 - March 7, 1905. Other data come from marriage records, military service, census lists, and land transactions.

Researching my Rainwater roots was very simple at first. The Rainwater website hosted by Susan Chance-Rainwater confirmed and expanded the data I had from my grandmother's generation, her parents, brothers, and sisters; however, the family line behind Sarah Revelou Rainwater Brooks (1864-1950) became complicated. Assessing the records and being exposed to questions from other researchers was clouded by the exact relation between James, Jane, and Burrell Rainwater. Fifteen year old James first appeared on a census list in the 1850 household of Burrell Rainwater, along with two other boys younger than he. At that time Elizabeth was 58 years old. While she might well be his mother, the younger children were probably not. In the same list is Jane, age 42.

As I inquired about the Rainwater via e-mail, letters, and websites, I received hushed messages that James' father was unknown and his mother Jane had retained the Rainwater family name as she lived in her father's household. If that were correct then James would be Burrell Rainwater's grandson rather than son, as supposed by some genealogists. A rumor surfaced that while living in Cherokee County, AL, some of the Rainwater family were members of the New Hopwell Baptist Church. I was able to locate the church while being in Alabama in December 2003, and visited with Mrs. Lois Hinkle, the church clerk, a delightful person who summarized the history of the church beginning in 1832. Back home I was able to obtain the microfilm records of the church and locate the information that I have given in detail in the material on Jane.

The church records confirmed that Jane was expelled from the church on September 23, 1836, because she was 'with child'. Since James T. Rainwater's birth date is September 27, it is assumed that Jane's pregnancy with him was the reason for the church action. For me this was not 'happy research'. When all is said and done why not leave some stories untold. If such information is uncomfortable for me, then maybe for others. Yet more than once in reading genealogy records, a child is born without a known father. Subsequent generations accept that their family history is subject to the same vicissitudes of life that are common to the human family. We are encouraged when individuals do not permit potentially disruptive circumstances to determine the eventual outcome of their lives. Thus James' story is a positive example for all his descendants!

## Millie Elizabeth Paris Rainwater, 1835 - 1865

The Paris family was established in Paulding County between 1840 and 1850 when Nathaniel Paris came to Paulding County from the Spartanburg District of South Carolina, the same district of origin for Burrell Rainwater and his descendants. There are no records that the families knew each other in South Carolina. Nathaniel lived 90 years from about 1760 to February 1858 and is buried in the Antioch Cemetery in Paulding County. He was a land owner both in South Carolina and Georgia according to transaction records. It is difficult to determine the full list of his children, probably eight or more. Four of his sons - Lewis, Nathaniel Jefferson, Elias, and Dickerson - and their descendants are well documented. Nimrod, in whose home lived Phillip Brooks and his mother, was a child of Nathaniel Jefferson; and so was Susannah, the second wife of James T. Rainwater. Millie was the daughter of Lewis Paris and Phoebe Calley. (Elizabeth, Burrell Rainwater's daughter, married James Calley in 1850.)

The Paulding County documents record that J.T. Rainwater married Miss M.E. Paris on February 3, 1857. The 1860 census lists James and Millie with two children, Miles, born February 7, 1858, and John, born December 5, 1859. Miles, who was only five years old, died of cholera February 27, 1862. Their third child, Will(iam), was born April 18, 1862. Exactly when James left for the war is uncertain, but his unit was formed during the summer of 1862 and was active until it surrendered on April 9, 1865. It was during this time that James was home long enough to begat Sarah, who was born October 2, 1864. Whether James was present for the birth of his daughter one will never know. Vicious battles were fought in Paulding in the spring and summer of 1864 when Sherman was on his way from Chattanooga to Atlanta.

The gravestones in the Vernon Cemetery give specific data about Millie, require interpretation, and evokes our pathos. The back side of Millie's marker has the family name "Rainwaters." At the top of the front panel is the word "Mother," no doubt determined by an affectionate child honoring Millie's memory. Below "Mother" are the simple statistics:

Millie E.  
born  
Apr. 22, 1835  
died  
July 20, 1865



Millie Rainwater  
1835 - 1865

When the marker was erected and by whom is not recorded. Pathos is added to the memory of Millie by the inscription on the left hand edge of her marker. There one finds:

M.E.B.

Born

Feb 7, 1858

Died

Feb 27, 1862



Miles Rainwater  
1858 - 1863

This is a reference to Miles E. Rainwater who was 2 years old on the 1860 census. On

observation the “B” is probably a mis-stroke by the stone mason when he made an “R”.

The Vernon Cemetery does not have an official registry that has been kept year by year from its first use. There is, however, a map of the cemetery that has been handed down since 1900 - first in the possession of Will Rainwater, then his daughter Inez, Hammett Paris, and others - that shows rows and grave numbers. Since there is a standing tombstone for Millie’s grave, it becomes a fixed point for other graves. Her grave is #17 in row 4. Next to her at #16 is a flat marker inscribed “Miles Rainwater,” her child who died of cholera three years before “Mother.” In this older map grave #18 is “J.T. Rainwaters child.” Unfortunately, there is no marker at this place. (However, on December 1, 2003, I observed a depression at this grave site.)

Who is this child identified only by its father’s name? Since the other three children born to Mille grew to adulthood, it is difficult to account for this grave. All children born to James and his second wife, Susannah, are well documented. The other possibility that has been set forth and seems plausible is that Millie died July 20, 1865, in childbirth, possibly a late term miscarriage or premature birth. The family chose to bury the child separately, rather than with its mother. The fact that Millie died in child birth so soon after Sarah’s birth would explain why descendants of Sarah sometimes remembered that Millie died at Sarah’s birth.

Millie, like many wives with husbands fighting for their cause, struggled to provide for her children in their sickness and health. Millie was married eight and one-half years. In that time she had five children, suffered the loss of a five year old son, and died giving birth to her last. Sadly, she lived only ten months after Sarah was born. She left behind three small children and a husband who had spent much of their married life fighting a losing war. Given the conditions of a war environment, limited food provisions, lack of adequate medical attention, one wonders whether Millie ever regained her health after Sarah was born and simply was not physically strong enough to give birth within a year. Now her memory is honored between her two young children in Vernon Cemetery near her family home. Her marker is among other kindred as well as her son Will, 1862-1948.

## Sarah Revelou Rainwater Brooks

My grandmother, Sarah Revelou Rainwater, was born October 2, 1864, in Paulding County, GA. At that time campaigns of the Civil War were being fought close by. In May of that year General Sherman chose the small town of Dallas, the county seat, as a good place for battle because of the well-developed network of roads that spread out from its center. The battle at Dallas was fought on May 28, along with other engagements at New Hope Church, Pumpkinvine Creek, and Pickett's Mill. These names are also associated with the location of the Paris (Sarah's mother's family name) and Rainwater families. Sherman later moved on to Atlanta from where he began his infamous march to the sea in November 1864. In March and April of 1865, a large number of Union soldiers moved into the County. There is no way to know the effect of the war on the Rainwaters and other families. Although the war ended at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, it did not end the post war hardships suffered by many families.

Sarah's father, James T. Rainwater served in the 9th Battalion, Georgia Artillery. We do not know the exact date of his service, but records give the activity of the unit. It was formed during the summer of 1862 and was active through out the war. It was part of General Lee's surrender at Appomattox. If James were involved in the unit from its formation, he left behind a wife, Millie Elizabeth Paris Rainwaters, whom he married February 3, 1857, and three sons: Miles, b. February 7, 1858; John, b. December 5, 1859; and Will(iam)



Sarah Revelou Rainwater Brooks  
1903

b. April 18, 1862. During his absence, Miles, died from cholera February 27, 1863. Being home on leave from time to time was occasion to increase the family and Sarah Revelou was born October 2, 1864. There is no way of knowing whether James was at home for the event. The gathering of Union troops in the county suggests he was not. The details of her birth and the subsequent health of her mother, Millie, are not known. Unfortunately, Millie died July 20, 1865, when little Sarah was not even a year old, and was buried next to her son Miles. On the other side Millie's space is a grave that is designate as the grave of the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. J.T. Rainwater. Although there are no records of the cause of Millie's death, the grave sites indicate that Millie died in complications of child birth. The tombstone at Millie's grave not only has her dates on the main panel, it also has the dates of Miles birth and death on the side panel. Millie lacked one month being 30 years old when she died. She and James were married nine years before her untimely death.

The three children left behind were cared for by relatives or grandparents until James chose another wife, an expected practice in that generation. Millie's widowed

cousin, living in the community, was James's choice. Susannah Paris had married Oliver C. Wilson September 2, 1858. He died September 30, 1862 at the battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia. They had two sons: John Monroe Wilson, b. May 27, 1859, and Oliver Bud Wilson, b. April 19, 1861. James and Susannah's marriage records are not available, but their first child was born October 7, 1867. The total number of children in the household gradually grew to eleven. Some were his, some were hers, and some were theirs:

- John Monroe Wilson, b. May 27, 1859, from Susannah's first marriage
- John Rainwater, b. December 5, 1859, born to James and Millie
- Oliver Bud Wilson, b. April, 19 1861, from Susannah's first marriage
- Will(iam) J. Rainwater, b. April 18, 1862, born to James and Millie
- Sarah R. Rainwater, b. October 2, 1864, born to James and Millie
- Henry Demi Rainwater, b. October 7, 1867, born to James and Susannah
- Harriet Rainwater, b. 1868, born to James and Susannah appears on the 1870 census but not on the 1880, so assumed she died before 1880
- Martha Caldonia (Donie) Rainwater, b. May 16, 1870, born to James and Susannah
- Amanda Tolonia (Loney) Rainwater, b. October 29, 1874, born to James and Susannah
- Olive D. Lulu Rainwater, b. October 14, 1881, born to James and Susannah

Sarah was the fifth in age in this conglomerate family. By the time she was old enough to be aware of her place in the family there were four older siblings and younger ones on the way. She and her next older brother, Will, seemed to be close as his name is remembered more among her children. I do not know the location of the house her parents were occupying at the time of her birth. After she married and away from home, she referred to the place where Will lived as the homeplace. I took that to mean she grew up in the place where he lived. Will Rainwater died in 1948, and the house and some acreage of his is owned by a descendant, Mrs. Lynn Turner. The property is located at 41 Poplar Road, Dallas, GA 30132. This is near the [Mt.] Vernon Cemetery.

I do not know specifics about Sarah's life in the Rainwater household, but my father told the story more than once of how she knew her husband to be. Apparently as a little girl she had heard that if you would shine a light in the well you would see the image of your husband to be. How old she was when she followed to rule, I don't know. She shined a light, she saw an image, the first time she saw Phillip Allston Brooks, she knew he was the one. When my father returned from Uncle Will's funeral in 1948, the first thing Sarah (my grandmother) asked was: "Did you see the well?"

According to those who have researched the 1870 census, James T. Rainwater and his family were living on the farm next to Nimrod Wells Paris. Whether this was what became the Will Rainwater place, I am not sure. Nimrod was the grandson of Nathaniel Paris who had come to Paulding County from the Spartanburg District of South Carolina between 1840 and 1850. Nathaniel lived to be about 90 years, and his family was well established in the area. Nimrod, born May 24, 1835, married Jane Land, January 6, 1859. Like many young Georgians of his day, he enlisted in the 60th Regiment, Georgia Infantry, May 10, 1862, leaving behind a wife and infant son. He was severely wounded at the battle of Wilderness, VA, May 6, 1864. When his wife heard he was in the hospital, she traveled by horseback to Virginia, only to find that Nimrod had been transferred to Atlanta.

Returning to the family farm, he had lost normal use of his right arm and could not lift cotton bales as others did.

From the 1880 census, it appears that all of Nimrod and Jane Paris' children are still in their household - five sons and two daughters. There are two additional persons in Nimrod's house - Phillip Brooks, age 18, "Working on farm", and Frances Brooks, age 47, "Servant". Phillip Brooks is my grandfather, Frances is his mother. Our family has known for some time these census records, but have not always understood the family connections.

Phillip Allston [Jr], was born in Gwinette County, GA near Lawrenceville, on August 10, 1862, to Phillip and Francis (sic). His father had already enlisted in the Confederate Army on May 3, 1862. Phillip Allston Brooks enlisted as a Private in Co. F., 35th GA. Inf. Regt. He was wounded by gunshot at Fredericksburg, VA, December 13, 1862, had pneumonia July 14, 1862, at General Hospital, Camp Winder, Richmond, Virginia. He received \$37 for a furlough from March 15 to August 7, 1863, to go home for recovery. That was the only time he saw his only son who was a year old. There were five older sisters. He was killed May 23, 1864, in the Battle of Jericho Ford, near Hanover Junction, VA, place of burial unknown. The descendants of Phillip, Jr. have never known how he and his mother came to be in the household of Nimrod Paris. Their relocation from Gwinette to Paulding remains a puzzle to family researchers. Nimrod Paris must have been a compassionate person. Having suffered long term disability in the military, he would understand the plight of a soldier's widow and her son.

We do not know how long 18 year old Phillip Brooks had been living in the Paris household in 1880, but he was living close to his future bride in circumstances that made it easy for them to become acquainted. Nimrod was an uncle to Millie Rainwater, Sarah's mother. He was a brother of Susannah Rainwater, Sarah's step mother. So Sarah, my grandmother would have been well acquainted with the Paris family on the next farm. Nothing of their courtship has been handed down in family oral history. How long they knew each other before they married October 20, 1880, is not known. When they married Sarah was a few weeks past her sixteenth birthday, and Phillip a few months past his eighteenth.

Young married couples often lived with one of their families for a while after the wedding, but we have no way of knowing the story of Phillip and Sarah for the next period of time. Did mother Francis stay in the Paris household? We know that Phillip and Sarah, along with Francis, and two of her daughters who had married Willingham brothers, were living in Cherokee County, Al, just across the state line from Menlo, GA. Phillip and Sarah's first child was born there in 1883. Sarah died in Menlo June 19, 1950. She and Phillip had lived together for 69 years and eight months. He passed away February 17, 1955. They are buried at the Alpine Cemetery near Menlo, GA. (I have told the story of their life together in other places.)

## Notes about my Grandmother:

### 1. Choosing a husband

On May 7-8, 1987, Alyce Brooks Cobleigh recorded and transcribed a conversation with her father, Charles Alston Brooks, 1903-1992. Here's an interesting story about how Sarah 'chose' Phillip for a husband. It comes from Alyce's conversation with her Dad.

Alyce: How old do you think she was when she had the experience you were telling me about -- about looking in the well?

Dad: I don't remember just how old she was; I don't know how long that was before they got married. But I've heard her tell that several times.

Alyce: Well, tell it!

Dad: I heard her say that they said if you take a light and shine it down in the well, you would see your future husband or wife. And she did and she saw Papa (before she had actually ever seen him). She said that the first time she saw him she knew that was the boy she saw in the well. And, as far as I know, she never went with anybody else.

Alyce: Somewhere in these notes; I tried to write them when they talked to me, I wrote that they met about three years before they got married. They were married when she was sixteen and he was nineteen.

Dad: Yeah. The only time I was ever down there (Paulding County) was when Uncle Will (Uddiemama's brother) died. We stopped on the road at one of Will's boys and I never did go down to the house (Uddiemama's homeplace). And the first thing she asked me when I got back was, "Did you see the Well?"

[Ruby Willingham tells the same story of how her grandfather, Charles Shamblin, chose his wife.]

### 2. Healing a burn

Some of us remember that our grandmother Sarah Rainwater Brooks could "talk the fire out of a burn". Here is a story about her from Alyce's conversation with her father, Charles Alston Brooks, 1903-1992, as above.

Alyce: Do you remember that Uddiemama [Sarah Brooks] could talk the burn out of your hand or whatever-

Dad: Yeah.

Alyce: How did she do that?

Dad: I don't know.

Alyce: What else could she do?

Dad: About anything that she wanted to. They said that a woman couldn't tell it [the secret of talking out a burn] to a woman she had to tell it to a man.

Alyce: The secret?

Dad: The secret of talking the burn out. Then a man had to tell it to a woman. One time I tried to get her to tell me what she said, but she never did. She said she would tell me sometime, but she never did. If I burned myself, I'd run to her and she would talk to it.

Alyce: I remember that.

In the Heritage of Paulding County Georgia, 1832-1990, in the entry "Brooks Family in Paulding County" (no relation to our immediate family) Mary Elizabeth Brooks, 1865-1941, was a licensed midwife and doctor. "She could conjure thrush in babies, and talk fire out of a burn." So others were following this practice about the time and place that Sarah learned it.

Recently I received a copy of a letter dated April 10, 1993, written by a great-great granddaughter of Burrell Rainwater. She tells this story:

"My mother practiced Indian medicine. People came to her from miles around our farm on the Louisiana/Arkansas border to be treated by her. She could "talk the fire" out of a burn. She told me she had Indian blood. Unfortunately, neither I nor my brothers queried her any further on her Indian heritage. We believe that her Native American background was Cherokee. One of my mother's brothers told his daughter that he had heard of an Indian woman ancestor whose name was "Icieola" (spelling uncertain). We know that many times a person's Indian identity was hidden and names were Americanized. Have you heard of any Indian ancestors?" In this letter "My mother" is not blood kin to the Rainwater family. She married into the family. "My mother" would be, however, in the same generation as Sarah Revelou Rainwater Brooks, but in a different family branch. This does give oral verification that women in the Rainwater family knew what was called Indian medicine.

### 3. Cherokee Connection?

In Rainwater genealogy research one always finds the discussion of the relation to native Americans, so I share a few notes on what I have found.

According to Steven and Susan Rainwater on their web site, [www.chronography.com/rainwater](http://www.chronography.com/rainwater), since the name is found in England before the name appears in records in the colonies, its origin as a native American name is neither possible nor reasonable. Early settlers did not take husbands and family names from the indigenous people, rather they took wives. Occasionally native people took the settlers names.

On the other hand there are contemporary researchers who are convinced that the Rainwater ancestry is related to native Americans. Dennis Rainwater of Fayetteville, Georgia, has found the Rainwater family name in numerous census lists of native Americans. He claims that the name originated with native Americans and gradually became a family name as native Americans integrated into colonial settlements.

Today there is an ongoing debate among family researchers concerning the inter-relation between Rainwater ancestry and native Americans. Both sides are very certain their point is the only right one. Here are a few things I have discovered.

(1). The web site [www.familysearch.org/](http://www.familysearch.org/) dates the marriage of Burrell Rainwater to Elizabeth in 1807 in Georgia but also lists a marriage in 1822 to a "Cherokee woman" in the Spartanburg District of South Carolina. I contacted two people who were responsible for posting this data and ask on what documents, meaning census, marriage, or Bible records, did they base this information. In both cases they simply replied: "That's all I know." One wonders how these references to Cherokee wives, although not documented, got into the records. Burrell's wife's name is given as "Elizabeth". No maiden name has been verified. I suppose that some might imply that she was Cherokee. In another genealogy I found the statement that Wilkes Berrywine Rainwater, a nephew of Burrell,

had “married (1) INDIAN MAIDEN Aft. 1830. She died Abt. 1838 in Trail of Tears”. When I wrote Neal Rainwater, a gentleman about my age, about this data, he responded with more explanation than others:

“.....I have also heard just about all my life that the Rainwaters have Indian blood but I have never locked on to any hard evidence to that effect. My grandmother [the same generation as Sarah Rainwater Brooks] told me when I was very young that we did but she would not elaborate. She had some old fashioned ideas about speaking about "the dead". I was only 10 years old when she died but I had a curiosity about her ancestors.....The commentary about Wilkes Berrywine Rainwater having married an Indian maiden came from one of my contacts with some of my father's cousins. This is just a rumor and not accepted genealogy.”

Do all of these stories confirm a Cherokee connection with the Rainwater family? If so the data is circumstantial, rather than direct. Apparently there was a time when Indian maidens living with local husbands could be required to join the Trail of Tears, so there would be an effort to hide one's native American identity. For many years it was “politically” incorrect to affirm native American connections. Times have changed, and today we celebrate our diversity and inclusiveness. There is enough circumstantial evidence that those who wish to claim a Cherokee connection may do so. For those who don't want the connection, the evidence does not require it. Regardless, of the conclusiveness/inconclusiveness in the matter, I would not trade my heritage with anyone!