

Skinner Reunion a Great Treat

By: Mae D. Cox

For the last couple of years, my illustrious cousin, William Upchurch, has been telling me all about the annual Skinner Reunions. When he reported he'd received an invitation for this year's get-together and suggested I go, knowing how interested I am in family history, I jumped at the opportunity.

You see, the Skinners are related to my Upchurches. Well sort of. Back in 1873, one of the Upchurch daughters, Mary Katherine, married William Oliver Skinner, over in Arkansas. The Skinners and Upchurches migrated to Cleveland County in the 1890s, locating around the Box, Corbett, and Buckhead area. So these families have a long history as relatives, neighbors, and friends.

The Skinner reunions are held in Macomb each year, and draw Skinners from all around the country. This was my first time to attend this function, and I came away with a smile on my face.

The Reunion

On the appointed Saturday — June 25th to be exact — I loaded my car with baked beans, deviled eggs, a camera, and some old photos and memorabilia about the Skinners and Upchurches, and set out for Macomb.

It was about 11:00 when I arrived at the Macomb Community Center. William Upchurch and Marie Jeffries were already there, and the only ones I knew. However,

real quickly folks began coming over to welcome me and introduce themselves. They were one of the friendliest bunches I've ever had the opportunity to meet. Immediately I felt right at home and thoroughly enjoyed myself. I visited with many of them and learned a whole lot more about the Skinner clan.

One of the first ladies I met was Joyce Rhines who publishes the Skinner-family newsletter and is a family historian. She was busy visiting and snapping photos for her next publication. Next was Florence Abel, a delightful lady seated across the table from me.

A couple of fellows, Larry and Ronald Skinner, piqued my interest as their father, Glennis, and my father, Carl Davenport, were friends back in the 1910-1920 era. It was fun sharing stories with them. Then there were Ruth Pitzer, Gladys McDaniel, Donna Holt, Morris Davis, and Truman Harkins.

Faye Skinner Willoughby brought perky nonagenarian Bessie Upchurch Starbuck from the Moore area. Bessie is 92 now and probably the oldest of our Upchurch clan. Another neat couple, Wesley and Mary Katherine McVey, hailed from over Tecumseh way. She is the great-granddaughter of Mary Katherine Upchurch Skinner for whom she was named. A delightful lady. There were many others there and how I wish

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Leroy Skinner



William Upchurch



Frank Jones



Randy Mulleneo, Gospel Singer

Skinner

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Joe Don Skinner & Mary Catherine McVey.



Marie Jeffries & Brenda Skinner.



Bessie Starbuck & Faye Skinner.



Skinner friends and family at the Skinner Reunion.
(All photos of Skinner Reunion by Mae D. Cox.)

I could remember all the names.

Everyone visited until lunch was served. What a spread! Those Skinners sure know how to set a table, and what great cooks they are. And to make it even better, we were serenaded in the form of a country gospel singer with a most warm and melodic voice. Randy Mulleneo did the honors.

After dishes were cleared away, the auction began. Leroy Skinner, who has amazing auctioneer talents, partnered with Joe Don Skinner, from down Texas way, to do the emceeing. Now I'm here to tell you, those two are really characters and quite entertaining with their repertoire of one-liners. For the next couple hours, they bantered all the while auctioning off a bounty of arts, crafts, and other goodies folks donated. This is part of each reunion and the proceeds pay reunion expenses with the balance going for the upkeep of Mt. Zion Cemetery. The Skinners maintain this lovely family cemetery where many Skinners, Millsaps, Lowders, and Upchurches are buried.

It was a great reunion and I found it hard to break away from these fine folks as they are quite an interesting lot. Sure hope I get an invitation next year!

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