

A Box Full of Family

by Tony Hanson

Several years ago, I was cleaning out my attic and came across a small box that contained pictures, several pairs of old eyeglasses, letters written in the 1940s and a few other tidbits obviously left by a previous resident.

As a genealogist I knew how much something like this would be appreciated by any living descendant, and I made a pledge to myself to do everything I could to find someone in the family that would like to have the box.

There was just enough information in the letters allowing me to begin assembling a family tree, so whenever I hit a brick wall on my own family I came back to this little mystery.

The two main people of interest were:

- Sarah E. Miles (born Sarah Elizabeth Slutts on 11 October 1862 in Lee, Iowa, died 01 January 1956 in Polk County, Iowa, married to Phineas Young Miles born 15 January 1850 in Lee, Iowa, died 24 Oct 1929, buried in the Corydon Cemetery, Wayne County, Iowa), and
- Her sister Mary Bell Hunt (born Mary Bell Slutts abt. 1867 in Van Buren County, Iowa, died after 1943 in Keosauqua, Van Buren County, Iowa, married to John C. Hunt b. abt. 1861).

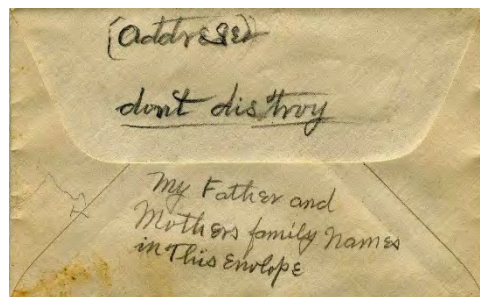
Over time I made a lot of progress, but I never could make the leap to someone in the family who was still alive.

I subscribe to the RootsWeb NORWAY mailing list and have always been impressed by the level of knowledge exhibited by the people who are active there. One day I decided to ask them for some help. I posted what I knew and hoped for the best.

Four hours and twenty-seven minutes later I received a reply from "Ron." He had already traced the ownership of my house using online records and started comparing names to the family tree I had assembled. He had also found some possible connections in the Social Security Death Index; those names led him to an online family tree that included many of the same names. He also contacted the owner of that tree and let her know that I was looking for someone to contact.

I received several more updates over the next couple of hours from several others but mainly from Ron as he happily went about filling in more blanks in my adopted family's history. I think my post back to the list the next day says it all:

*Dear Jerry, Joan, Hank, Dennis but especially Ron:
I watch the postings on this list on a regular basis and so I should be used to the skill, talent and generosity that is demonstrated here every day, but still I am overwhelmed ... thank you all so very much for all the suggestions and the help!*



My wife and I had a wonderful Christmas holiday but the best gift of all arrived on 10 January when I received this email from Lisa:

Hi, I got an email from a Ron about the box you found in your attic. I think it may have been left there by my husband's uncle Elton McClanahan, listed on your tree, and I would dearly like to have it. Elton was my father-in-law Richard's brother (both now deceased), and lived in Texas around the time you mention.

My husband is Richard's son. Elton was Scott's uncle. You have Elton, John and Kathryn listed on your tree, but there were also Richard and Robert born to John Newton McClanahan and Maude Miles (5 children total). Maude was Sarah Slutts and Phineas Miles' daughter.

Richard, my father-in-law, now deceased, did a lot of genealogy and I am now working on it extensively. Elton was called Mick by the family.

We may have the Texas address where Elton lived, and I am going to look for it tomorrow. I don't think it would've been left by any other member of the family, as none of them ever lived in Texas. This includes everyone back to Sarah and Phineas, whose residences I have researched with census records and family history. I believe that Maude got the letters and things from her mother Sarah, and then they were passed onto Elton. The family paid a lot of attention to family records and saved letters, photos, mementos ... and these were split up and shared by Maude and John Newton's 5 children, including Elton and my father-in-law Richard. Richard received many photos, letters, etc. ...

Thank you so much for posting about the box. My father-in-law cared deeply about his family heritage and I am trying to finish what he so arduously began, before sites like Ancestry.com were around.

More email messages ensued as we confirmed that I had the correct family. I heard from her again while she was waiting for the package I had shipped to arrive.

*These are Reas Blais
to see give them to him
Box belong to The Silver ware in drawer*



I can hardly wait to read the letters and see the 'tidbits', and to read what you have found out. I am really grateful to you for your efforts to get the box to our family. I am sharing what I find with all our family members.

My father-in-law's middle name was Phineas, after Phineas Miles. I wish he (dad) were still around to see all this. He'd be so thrilled ... somewhere he is smiling! Our family has so much rich history. A few years ago we found a hand written 'deposition' that was done by J. N. McClanahan I (born 1833). He became a lawyer in Corydon, Iowa, after serving as a Lt. in the Civil War. I transcribed it and found that it was a deposition of CLEL MILLER, infamous member of the Jesse James gang!

Anyway, thanks you so much!

I heard from her again after the package was delivered:

Thank you SO MUCH! The package arrived today and my husband and I are so excited, as are our sons.

*May 20th
Jan. 18-19-1910*

How Mrs Nelson I am getting so anxious to hear from my old friends and neighbors once more I will do my very self enough to try to write to you My memory is not long enough to know who wrote last or when but I know I want to hear from you I will send this to Corydon for I think you will be home by this time anyway I was wondering how you had been this winter when there has been so much sickness Tuesday was my 77th birthday and it was an awful day raining and snowing then about all day Jerry's sister sent me a nice pot of plants we blame and it cheered us up a little The children got me a bear and Jerry's sister a pair of handkerchiefs

I would get tired of that so I guess it is best to be contented the way things are. Are you able to walk to church I saw the Frank Anderson at church last Sunday and he said Mrs Nelson was very sick. I saw all the papers and then on Thursday wrote me that he was about to pass on. I was sorry to hear it and hope he gets better I thought he was such a good man. I got to thinking of the good times we used to have when there were four of us would go to the teacher and wait apples or potatoes I don't remember which it seems sad we can't have such times any more. Then I think we must look forward and prepare to meet in that home above where

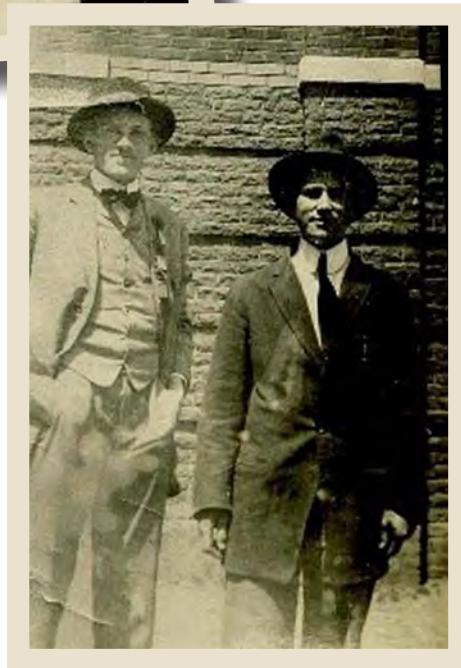
It is in fact photos, letters and items from my husband's family on his father's mother's side ... and we are ECSTATIC. His grandfather was John Newton McClanahan, and his grandmother was Maud Miles, who is mentioned often in the letters. There are photos of the family, including my father-in-law as a baby with his dad and mother Maud, brothers and sisters. There are also other pictures of family I have identified, including a very old tintype of Ephraim Slutts, Sarah Elizabeth Miles (Slutt's) father.

Forgive my sloppiness or grammar I'm so excited. I am positive now that Elton, my husband's uncle, had these items and that's how they wound up in Texas. As I mentioned before, he was the only family member to move there. Elton was called Uncle Mick by family. He had a twin named Eldon who died shortly after his birth, and there are two pictures of the poor baby dressed in his christening gown before burial.

Nobody in the family has ever seen any of these pictures or knew about the items. My father-in-law Richard did a lot of genealogical research on his family, and I can hardly believe that his brother Eldon wouldn't have shared this treasure trove with him, and must've misplaced it or forgotten it. It contains a wealth of information and family names which will confirm so much I have found. Dick would have been so thrilled, and somewhere he is smiling that all his hard work is being carried on and built upon ... and so this little box which means SO MUCH to us found and cared for by you.

How can I ever thank you? Many others would not have taken the time and care you did to preserve it and look for the family it belonged to. You are a very special person and you have made us all very happy.

Thank you, Tony. I will send you a link to the tree as I add pictures and all this additional information. It will take me a little while, because there is so much of it, including what I found at home, but it will now surely be one of the most beautiful and complete family trees there ever was ... thanks to you.



There are currently more than 32,000 RootsWeb* mailing lists. They cover specific surnames as well as locations, so likely there is one that will be helpful to you and your research. For general information see <http://lists.rootsweb.ancestry.com/index/index.html>. ★

About Tony Hanson: Tony is genealogically bipolar – his father was the son of Norwegian emigrants, and his mother's grandparents all emigrated from Germany. He began to research his family in 1999 and is currently serving on the Board of Directors of the Dallas Genealogical Society as the Past President. Now retired from a 32-year career with AT&T, he enjoys traveling and is an avid amateur photographer.

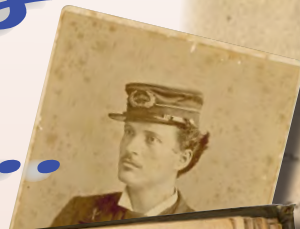


* RootsWeb has been down for maintenance and repair; go to any RootsWeb page to see the current status for this popular genealogy resource.

THE JOURNAL OF THE TEXAS STATE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY INC.

Stirpes

Photographs,
Postcards
& More...



*Mrs. Milna: I am getting
to hear from my old
neighbors once more. I
hope to
hear from
you soon by the
wording
to the*





Contents

Features

Columns

- 7** Taking Photos That Tell A Story
by Pat Gordon
- 12** A Box Full of Family
by Tony Hanson
- 15** Real Photo Postcards from Texas
by James R. Miller
- 22** Chromosome Mapping: What It Is, Tools for Mapping, Why We Do It
by Debbie Parker Wayne, CGSM, CGLSM
- 30** A Consignment Store Treasure Chest
by Lisa Reed
- 32** Bible Records of the Mercer and Hoopes Family
of Chester County, Pennsylvania
by Russell A. Rahn
- 37** 2018 Virtual Conference: Great Presentations Wow Attendees
- 38** Virtual Conference and DNA featured in Membership Drive Awards
- 39** Reading their Faces: Photographs in UNT Libraries
Special Collections and the Portal to Texas History
by Dreanna Belden
- 44** Can I Use That Picture?
- 46** Digital Scrapbooking by Sandra J. Crowley
- 51** TxSGS 2018 Family History Conference
- 52** Things to Do in San Antonio by Sandra J. Crowley
- 54** Mobile Photo Printing with HP Sprocket by Sandra J. Crowley
- 55** Got the Picture? Readers Respond with Photos and Stories
by Susan E. Ball
- 61** Student Assignment Launches Ancestral Adventure
by Bill Matthews
- 74** Index to "A Catalog of the World Famous N. H. Rose Collection
of Old Time Photographs
Submitted by Dr. Jeanne Sellers and Scott Fitzgerald

- Editorial Policies **2**
- From the Editors' Pen **3**
- New Members & More **5**
- Volunteer Spotlight **5**
- Book Review **21, 29**
by William D. "Bill" Buckner
- Texas Heritage Certificates **63**
- Partner Society Roundup **64**
- Who's Behind the Camera? **70**
by Scott Fitzgerald
- TxSGS Society Leadership **86**
- TxSGS Policies **87**



Why Name our Journal Stirpes? Pronounced "STÛR'PEZ," it perfectly describes the core understanding of our passion in researching ancestry and family history: The phrase "... to my heirs, per stirpes" means that the legal heirs share their inheritance based on their relationship to the deceased." (See full story in *Stirpes*, 2016, Volume 55, Number 3-4)