

## **BRAZOS COUNTY DIVORCE RECORDS, 1856-1880**

compiled by Bill Page

The first divorce in Brazos Co. took place in 1856, fifteen years after the creation of the county. During this period, divorce was a highly emotional issue. Readers should be cautious about accepting the stated reasons for the divorce as the complete truth.

The following records are taken from the microfilmed **Civil Minutes (Brazos County District Court)** (reels # 1020039-1020040). The person listed first initiated the divorce. In a few cases, the records have been supplemented with information from other sources. Researchers should check the original records to insure complete accuracy.

SHEPARD, L. Nancy; Alfred SHEPARD. Book B, pp. 279, 301, 302, Sept. 1856. C.C. SEALS and William C. BOILS were witnesses. Alfred SHEPARD abandoned his wife and children in Sept. 1852. The couple were divorced, and Nancy SHEPARD was given custody of their two minor children: John A. SHEPARD and Stephen SHEPARD.

McLEASTER, Sarah; Hiram B. McLEASTER. Book B, pp. 281, 287, 310-311, 329, Sept. 1856. This couple had been married about 2 years when the divorce was filed. They lived together for about 18 months, during which time "he sold and squandered nearly all of her personal property." The case mentions "her child" (but not the child's name). (According to Washington Co. marriage records, Sarah J. MILLICAN and Hiram B. McLEASTER were married in January 1851).

CURD, Ezekial; Martha J. CURD. Book B, pp. 281, 309- 310. Sept. 1856. They were divorced. (According to Brazos Co. marriage records, Martha Jane VESS married Ezekiel CURD on 21 Apr. 1853).

Ezekiel CURD accused his wife of adultery with Mark WEAVER. Martha CURD denied that charge, and said that not only did her husband cruelly beat her, but that he had once watched as another man (Eason C. THOMAS) beat her. **Brazos Co. Record Book District Court**, reel 1020043, pp. 75-78.

RANDLE, Ann C.; William RANDLE. Book C, p.20, Mar. 1857. They were divorced.

MILHANKS, John; Sarah A. MILHANKS. Book C, pp. 40, 60, Nov. 1858. They were divorced.

To the Sheriff of Brazos County, You are hereby commanded to summon ... Sarah Ann MILLHANKS, to be and appear before the honorable District Court of Brazos County ... to answer the petition of John MILLHANKS ... wherein said John alleges: that he was married to said Sarah Ann, and lived with her in the discharge of his duties on till about the 23rd of April 1855; that said Sarah Ann, in disregard of the kind and genial conduct on the part of the petitioner, eloped from his bed and board along with a mix-blooded or colored man, together with two of petitioners little daughters, and escaped to parts unknown; that previous to said elopement said Sarah Ann had on divers occasions been guilty of adultery with said colored man; that said Sarah Ann has abandoned petitioner

forever ... **Texas Baptist**, 22 July 1857, p.3, col.6.

ELLINGTON, Sophrona; Wm. ELLINGTON. Book C, pp. 56, 89. May 1869. They were divorced. (According to Brazos Co. marriage records, William A. ELLINGTON married Sophronia Ann COOPER on 15 Jan. 1857).

GRAVES, Mary E.; Samuel GRAVES. Book C, pp.57, 87, May 1859. They were divorced.

LEMMAN, Sarah Ann; William LEMMAN. Book C, pp. 59, 88, 108, 1859? Final divorce decree not found.

To the Sheriff of Brazos County, Greetings: You are hereby commanded to summon by publication William LEMON to be and appear before the Hon. District Court of Brazos County ... to answer the petition of Sarah Ann LEMON ... wherein said Sarah Ann alleges that hse was lawfully married to said William LEMON, on the 17th day of July 1855, and lived with him for two or three months in the discharge of her duties as wife, when she separated from him on account of his bad and unaffectionate conduct; that she again joined her fortunes to him, hoping some change had taken place, and that she would be treated with the love and respect due a wife, but to no purpose. She still received the same ill-treatment in a worse degree from her husband, and was again forced to quit his bed and board; that her said ill treatment continued to grow worse until their final separation in September 1857 ... Petitioner was in habitual fear for the safety of herself and child ... M.F. GUEST, attorney for the petitioner, has made oath that the residence of said Wm. LEMON is unknown .... **Texas Baptist**, 15 Sept. 1859, p.3, col.5

MERCHANT, Jennie (or Jannia); Alfred MERCHANT. Book C, pp. 147, 171, Oct. 1860? They were divorced. Jennie was given custody of their child "Glin" (sp. ?).

BOWMAN, Sarah E.; W.W. BOWMAN. Book C, p.350, 1 Nov. 1866. They were divorced. Sarah was given custody of "the two children, the fruits of the marriage" (the children were not named).

RICHARDS, Carrie S.; George RICHARDS. Book C, p.398; Book D, p.130, 13 Oct. 1869. They were divorced.

CHILDERS, Martha A.; Samuel CHILDERS. Book C, p. 507, 10 Apr. 1868. They were divorced.

HALL, Nancy E.; H.R. HALL. Book D, p.17, 1 Apr. 1869. They were divorced.

REDDING, Sarah L.; Thompson P. REDDING. Book D, p.63, Apr. 1869. They were divorced. Sarah claimed "cruel and outrageous" treatment by her husband. She got custody of their son LaFayette REDDING. The court awarded Sarah many possessions, including: 9 chairs, 4 besteds with their mattresses and furniture, 5 tables, 1 sofa, 1 clock, 5 trunks, 1 looking glass, 1 set of andirons, 1 kitchen safe, 1 stove and vessels, 3 lamps, 20 volumes of books, etc.

ALLEN, Elizabeth; David N. ALLEN. Book D, p.160-161, 8 Apr. 1870. They were divorced. Elizabeth got custody of "her infant child" (not named).

FITCHETT, Harriet E.; Daniel F. FITCHETT. Book D, p.161, 8 Apr. 1870. They were divorced.

GORDY, Addie E.; Michael GORDY. Book D, p.165, 8 Apr. 1870. They were divorced.

MILHANKS, Lucinda; John MILHANKS. Book D, p. 233-234, 15 Nov. 1870. They were divorced.

TUCKER, Neely; John TUCKER. Book D, p.250, 18 Nov. 1870. They were divorced. Neely got custody of their infant child (not named).

PIPKIN, Mollie; L.D. PIPKIN. Book D, p.286, Dec. 1870. They were divorced.

MENARD, Edith R.; Sam W. MENARD. Book D, pp. 348, 394, 1 Apr. 1871. They were divorced. Edith got custody of "her child, the issue of said marriage" (not named).

GUEST, Martha A.; James N. GUEST. Book D, p.381; Book E, p.19, Nov. 1871. They were divorced. Martha got custody of "the two children, the issue of the marriage" (not named).

SMITH, Uraulla; Gip SMITH. Book D, p.394, 1 Apr. 1871. They were divorced. Uraulla was "restored" to her maiden name, Uraulla PITTILLO.

HAILE, L.B.; Amanda HAILE. Book E, pp. 11, 64, 167, 18 July 1874. They were divorced.

NEELEY, Sally; John B. NEELEY. Book E, p.38, 25 Nov. 1871. They were divorced.

PEARCE, Noah; Mary Ann PEARCE. Book E, pp.51, 67, Mar. 1872. They were divorced.

TALLEY, Mary Ann; Robert TALLEY. Book E, p.61, 15 Mar. 1872. They were divorced.

HARRINGTON, Dinah; Louis HARRINGTON. Book E, pp. 65, 67, 27 Mar. 1872. They were divorced.

MITCHELL, C.W., Mrs.; Mr. M.A. MITCHELL. Book E, p. 82, 105, 17 Mar. 1873. These people "were recognized by the community as husband and wife and lived together as such in Brazos County, Texas, from about the year 1857 till 1861." The husband abandoned his wife in 1861 and returned to Alabama to live with "relations." They were divorced.

HARRIS, Rebecca; E.S. HARRIS. Book E, p.122, 12 July 1873. They were divorced. Rebecca was given custody of their 6 children (not named).

BLATHERWICK, S.N.; Mary F. BLATHERWICK. Book E, p.125- 126, 19 Nov. 1873. They were divorced. The record includes a very long list of property which was divided.

RHODE, Henry; Pine Lee RHODE. Book E, pp.162, 196, 30 July 1874. They were divorced.

DeHART, J.J.; Caroline DeHART. Book E, p.165, 17 July 1874. They were divorced.

LOTT, Malissa; Wm. Madison LOTT. Book E, p.206, 3 Aug. 1874. They were divorced. Malissa was given custody of Blanch LOTT, their infant child.

BEALL, Laura; Albert BEALL. Book E, p.250, 27 Mar. 1875. They were divorced.

BERRY, Susan M.; David C. BERRY. Book E, pp.16, 105, 106, 18 March 1873. They had lived together as husband and wife for "several years" in Arkansas. In about Oct. 1868 he became addicted to "opiates." He abandoned her and her child (not named). They were divorced, and she was given custody of the child.

DAWSON, Mary M.; John M. DAWSON. Book F, pp. 307, 320. 7 Sept. 1876. They were divorced.

BOWEN, L.J., Mrs.; Mr. J.R. BOWEN. Book F, p.327, 7 Sept. 1876. They had been married "several years ago." Her husband abandoned her "more than three years ago." She stated, "he has since in the state of Missouri lived in open & notorious adultery with another woman." They were divorced.

SHORT, George; Sarah F. SHORT. Book F, pp.328-329, 9 Sept. 1876. They were divorced.

BROOKS, Andy; Malvina BROOKS. Book F, p.373, 11 Sept. 1877. They were divorced.

JOHNSON, Randle; Sarah JOHNSON. Book F, p.373, 11 Sept. 1877. They were divorced.

LEE, Edward; Harriett Lee. Book F, p.374, 11 Sept. 1877. They were divorced.

BALDRIDGE, Frank; Julia BALDRIDGE. Book F, p.377, 13 Sept. 1877. They were divorced.

SEALE, Jordan; Texana SEALE. Book F, p.379, 19 Sept. 1877. They were divorced.

BARNETT, Thornton; Eastie (or Esther) BARNETT. Book F, p.391, 23 Feb. 1878. They were divorced.

BEARD, Martha; Wm. BEARD. Book F, p.399, 10 Sept. 1878. They were divorced.

TERRELL, Nancy; Wade TERRELL. Book F, p. 401, 20 Sept. 1878. They were divorced.

SHARPE, Eliza; Ebenezar SHARPE. Book F, p.405, 24 Sept. 1878. They were divorced.

DAVIS, Charles; Fanny DAVIS. Book F, p.406, 27 Sept. 1878. They were divorced.

MARSHALL, Texanna; Edward MARSHALL. Book F, p.419- 420, 1 Mar. 1879. Final divorce decree not found. While the case was awaiting completion, Texanna was given custody of their two children, the older of whom was about 2 years old; Edward MARSHALL was ordered to pay \$3 a month to support the children.

EVANS, Jonas; Fannie EVANS. Book F, p.425, 6 Sept. 1879. They were divorced.

HARRISON, George; Martha HARRISON. Book F, p.425, 6 Sept. 1879. They were divorced.

TYNDAL, Paralee; Lewis TYNDAL. Book F, p. 443, 4 Mar. 1880. They were divorced.

HARDY, Wm. H.; Lula S. HARDY. Book F, p. 445, 5 Mar. 1880. They were divorced. Wm. was given custody of their 2 children: Wm. Horace HARDY and Alpheus HARDY.

CHASE, Minne A.; Henry B. CHASE. Book F, pp. 465-466, 11 Sept. 1880. They were divorced.

GRIFFIN, Fred; Laura GRIFFIN. Book F, p.466-467, 15 Sept. 1880. They were divorced.

NEAL, Levy; Margaret NEAL. Book F, p.467, 15 Sept. 1880. Margaret "voluntarily left the bed & board" of her husband for 3 years. They were divorced.

DAVIS, Bennett Hillsman; Ruth Davidson DAVIS. Book F, p.469, 22 Sept. 1880. Ruth was guilty of "excesses, cruel treatment and outrages toward" her husband. B.H. DAVIS was given custody of their 2 children: William H. DAVIS, 13 years old, and Lucille DAVIS, 9 years old. Ruth DAVIS waived her right to any portion of the community property, so that it could be used to help care for the children. On 22 Oct. 1879, Ruth DAVIS faked her own drowning at Galveston. She had gone there with her sister Mary DAVIS (wife of Napoleon DAVIS, brother of B.H. DAVIS) and M.W. McCRAW, a Bryan lawyer. Ruth and Mary were daughters of Col. T.D. WILSON. In May 1880, McCRAW revealed the deception at Ruth DAVIS' request. They said that he alone had helped her with the plot, and that her sister had not been involved. McCRAW helped Ruth DAVIS move to New York city. McCRAW visited N.Y. often, as he had a business office there. Ruth DAVIS lived in a boarding house in which he also had a room. They stated that their conduct had been "proper" and offered to produce witnesses who could testify to that. Ruth "never uttered a word against Maj. DAVIS. She wanted to get rid of Bryan, its talk, not him." She said that her motive was "not for any wicked purpose." (For more details, see: **Galveston Daily News**, 28 May 1880, p.1, col.4; 29 May 1880, p.1, col.3; 30 May 1880, p.1, col.5; 13 June 1880, p.1, col.5; 23 Sept. 1880, p.1, col.5).

BLUNT, Peter; Lydia BLUNT. Book F, pp. 471-472, 22 Sept. 1880. They were divorced.

ANDREWS, Green; Cora ANDREWS. Book F, pp. 473-474, 2 Oct. 1880. They were divorced.

DAVIS, Martha; John DAVIS. Book F, p.474, 6 Oct. 1880. They were divorced.

BURTON, Viola; Frank BURTON. Book F, p.474, 9 Oct. 1880. They were divorced.

FORBES, A.C.; M.C. FORBES. Book F, p.474, 16 Sept. 1880. They were divorced.

ROBERTSON, Hanna; James. ROBERTSON. Book F, p.475, 1 Sept. 1880. James "was guilty of cruel treatment" to Hanna. They were divorced.