

Subj: **Abraham Brittain**
Date: 4/30/02 8:39:05 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Wjhiatt
To: DorisH30

Doris,

I didn't really find much on Abraham Brittain. We did not have a file on the Brittain family. I just picked up bits and pieces from the Elijah Gillespie file. There has always been a lot of interest in this family. There are articles in "Simple Pleasures," our journal and our heritage book. You have probably seen most of them. The heritage book stated that Abraham Brittain was from Surry County. He and Patsy came for a visit to Surry when her father's estate was settled and she received the family Bible. I did not find a marriage record for Abraham and Patsy in Surry Co. I didn't find the Brittain children listed as descendants of the Gillespie family. James and John Brittain were in Surry County in 1800 and James and William Brittain in Surry in 1810. William Brittain married in 1802 in Surry Co. Abraham Britton was born 26 April 1800 in Surry Co., NC, 18 years younger than Patsy. Patsy and Abraham are in the 1860 Hawkins Co., TN census. I made about four pages of this material from the file. If you want me to send it to you, send me your address. I don't do too well sending by email. It takes me too long. I don't know how to put it all in a folder and send it. Have you been touch with these two people. They seem to have a lot of family info: Gurney E. Tucker of TN (GTucker@united.net) and Evelyn Elaine Rowland (erowla@terranova.net). Hope this helps some.

Wilma Hiatt

Subj: **Abraham Brittain**
Date: 4/27/02 4:12:10 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: DorisH30
To: Wjhiatt

Doris Hall
7490 Simmons Rd.
Rural Hall, NC 27045

Hi Wilma,

I spoke with you earlier today at the Genealogy Swap Meet about an Abraham Brittain. I have been told Elijah Gillespie, who lived on Little Fisher River, Surry County, (wife - Mary Rayburn), had a daughter Martha (Patsy), born May 17, 1782. She married Archibald Tucker in 1799 in Surry County, and moved to Hawkins County, Tennessee (near New Hope). Archibald was killed December 28, 1814 in Mississippi Territory as a soldier in the Militia. They had 6 sons when he died. He was killed before his Hawkins County land grant was filed, but Patsy and her sons received the deed to the property in 1815. Patsy then married Abraham Brittain in 1825 and they had 2 or 3 children.

My questions: Did Patsy come back to Surry Co. and marry Abraham here? Where was Abraham from - Surry Co. or Hawkins Co.? Did they live in Surry Co. or Hawkins Co.? What happened to the Brittain children - are they listed in the descendents of the Gillespie family?

Patsy would have been 43 years old when she married Abraham. I do not know Abraham's birth date.

I had a great time at the Swap Meet and gathered some valuable material. I look forward to getting Simple Pleasures each time I go to Mt. Airy and enjoy it very much. You ladies have so much knowledge and are always willing to share. Thank you for all you do.

I would appreciate any information you can share on the Brittains in Surry County and look forward to hearing from you.

Doris Hall

Dorish30@aol.com

*A. Brittain & wife to Elijah Gillespie #3038 (3 pages)
Elijah Gillespie came from Culpepper Co., VA per Juanita Carpenter
Per Britage book, Abraham Brittain was from Surry. They came
for a visit to Surry when her father's estate was settled & she rec'd
the family Bible.*

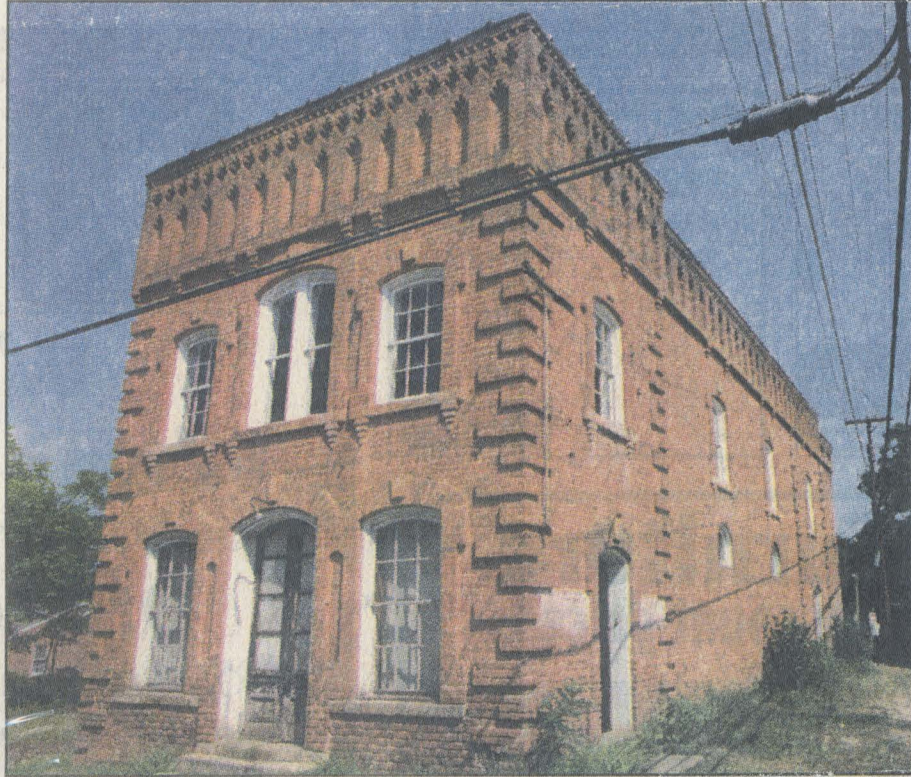
email Evelyn Elaine Rowland on Archibald Tucker erowla@terraviva.net

*Winter 2000 journal
Fall 1999 "*

*Jurney Tucker, 111 Cloverdale Rd., Shelbyville, TN 37160
Archibald Tucker*

*James & John Brittain in Surry 1800
James & Wm Brittain in Surry 1810 - Wm M. in 1802 Surry*

Building From Past To Play Big Part In Future



HISTORIC STRUCTURE: The Brittain Building, dating to 1863 and shown on July 30, is located near the center of Summerfield, a town north of Greensboro. The structure is being renovated by volunteers and town leaders for use as a new town hall, a restoration project that could cost up to \$200,000.

Jayson Singe/The Associated Press

By The Associated Press

SUMMERFIELD — It's been a general store. A barber shop. A furniture warehouse.

Now the two-story, red brick Brittain Building is about to take on a new role: Summerfield Town Hall.

"It's a great building, and we're hoping we can fix it up with as few tax dollars as possible," Summerfield Mayor Bill Peterson said.

Volunteers and town leaders are renovating the building, an 1863 structure near the center of Summerfield that was built by merchant H.C. Brittain. Summerfield is located near Greensboro.

The building, donated to Summerfield in April, will allow town operations to be moved out of a one-room office over an advertising company. The renovation will also preserve what Summerfield residents say is a building of historical importance.

The project could cost up to \$200,000. The town will fund the restoration, but donations are expected to reduce the cost. The community has rallied around the project. Nearly 40 people showed up this spring to clean up the building. Many people have offered to donate money or services, such as electrical and surveying work.

Talk of renovating the Brittain Building started in 1996 when Summerfield native William Clay Parrish offered to donate it to the town.

Its rich history made it an ideal town hall, Parrish said. The Brittain Building was once a community hub. About 60 years ago, this was the place where the people of Summerfield gathered around a pot-bellied stove and caught up on the news of the day. This was where they bought their clothes and groceries.

"Even as a child, I loved this building," said Parrish, who now lives in Virginia. "I passed by it every day either walking or riding the school bus. I grew up appreciating the architecture. It's just different."

The building's 19th century architecture suits a town hall, Parrish said. And its central location is an asset. Located at the intersection of N.C. 150 and Summerfield Road, the Brittain Building is in an area that was once the nucleus of the town and was called Bruce's Crossroads.

The town officially accepted the building in April. In all, about \$4,500 of town money has been spent on the project.

"I'm delighted to see this building come back to life," Parrish said. "The town hall makes a statement about the locale. I think this one will make a good statement."

No completion date has been set for the renovation. But Summerfield resident Billy Tesh says community involvement has put the project on the fast track.

"There's a lot of community spirit out there," he said. "People are really taking responsibility for this."

NC "The Mount Airy News" 7-6-1998



Ms. Margaret Jagmin
13822 Methuen Green St.
Dallas, TX 75240-5829

June 13, 1998

Huntsville Public Library
Box 443
103 Fountain
Huntsville, Alabama 35804

Little Rock Public Library
700 Louisiana St.
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Pulaski County Historical Society
P. O. Box 653
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203

7 Surry County Genealogical Society
Box 997
Dobson, North Carolina 27017

Dear Sirs or Madam:

I am writing with regard to genealogy to see if you have any information on the family background or mother and father, etc. of Elder William Brittain b. in 1774 and died 9/16/1850 and on March 15, 1802 he married Rosanna (Rosy) Wright, the daughter of John Wright III born in 1728 in Prince William County, Va. and later moved to Surry Cty., N.C. where Rosanna was born in 1784. He was charter member and ordained deacon of the Flat Rock Baptist Church in N.C. and later served as pastor. In 1824 they left Surry County and went to Madison County, Alabama and then in September of 1827 they moved on to Pulaski County, Arkansas and stayed there ten years before going on to Shelby County, Texas. There is a lot on the Wright family and on Elder Brittain's family of nine children, but we need the family of Elder William Brittain himself.

*not Surry
Co. - Flat
Rock B.C.
in Surry
orig. 1899
try yodkin*

Have enclosed a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your use in replying and would so much appreciate any help you can give me or suggestions for writing further to other sources.

Thanks so much!

Sincerely,

Margaret Farrington Jagmin
(Mrs. Walter J. Jagmin)

cc: Mr. George J. Brittain, Jr.
6631 Gentle Wind Lane
Dallas, Texas 75248

Will Book

Will of John Wright 2:160a 80 at 1789

112- Christian Brittain & father James Brittain exrs. of will of ^{Christian Weatherman} 51.7-16-11

100- Wm Brittain - witness will of Richard Persons 2 Nov 1817

Land Entry Book -

John Wright - 463 - 464 - 703 - 961 -

Brittain - none

Suzanne Sawell - Email - Surry, Dec 1996 says possible father of Wm Brittain is James Brittain & had a church in Yadkin Co.

White Rowan Co.

~~John~~ James Wright in Surry 1790 census - 1 M over 16

John Brittain Will in Surry 3-18-1850

Samuel Maish who m. Peggy Wright in 1792

John Brittain family history in Yadkin Heritage Bk.
nothing on William

SURRY COUNTY GENEALOGICAL ASSOCIATION
P. O. BOX 997
DOBSON, NC 27017

July 27, 1998

Ms. Margaret Jagmin
13822 Methuen Green St.
Dallas, TX 75340-5829

Thank you for your letter dated June 13, 1998 regarding Elder William Brittain. It was good to hear from you again.

We are very sorry that we were unable to find information in our files and other available resources as to parents of William Brittain.

We did see an E-mail message from Suzanne Sorrell during 1997 that James Brittain could possibly be the father of William Brittain. We are sorry that we do not have her address or her E-mail address. We do not have other researchers of the Brittain family listed.

You might try writing The Yadkin County Historical & Genealogical Society, P. O. Box 1250, Yadkinville, NC 27055. The Flat Rock Baptist Church in NC could be in what is now Yadkin Co. The Flat Rock Baptist Church in Surry County did not organize until 1899.

If you haven't sent a query for our journal you might wish to do so.

We would like to have information on this family for our file. If you could send us some family group sheets or pedigree charts and anything else that you might have on families with connections to Surry County we would appreciate it very much.

We are very sorry that we could not provide you with the information you were looking for. We are sending some info on the Brittain surname that was found in books that we had available. You may already have the info and may not be of any help to you but since we do not know exactly what you have we decided to send it along.

Good luck with your research. If you think of anything else that we might look up for you, please write us again.

W/H
Research Committee

Enclosures

August 1, 1998

Ms. Wilma Hiatt
Research Committee
Surry County Genealogical Asso.
P. O. Box 997
Dobson, NC 27017

Dear Wilma:

I thank you so much for your prompt reply on the Brittain (Britton) family.

Besides the nice article which just appeared in the June 1998 The Journal of The Yadkin County Historical Society, Inc. on Elder William Brittain submitted by George J. Brittain, Jr. here in Dallas which I spurred him on to do, I am enclosing a nineteen page writing that I got earlier on the Brittain Family so you will have a good file now!

I am going to write to the original church at Booneville, N.C. to see what they may have. Also have decided to write the church here in Texas direct. Will let you know if I find anything more. I do have an computer with internet so can find the E-Mail address of Suzanne Sorrell and I think she is ^{she} probably right with all I have seen, but she doesn't sound as if ~~you~~ ^{she} knows for sure, but did think that was very interesting.

A lot of your material I am sending on to George Brittain and it is very helpful....some I had seen...some I had not!

Again thank you for your interest and will help your file continue to grow!

Sincerely,

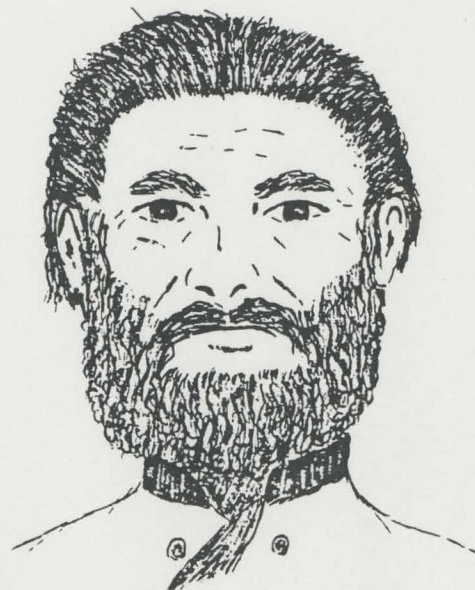
Margaret

Submitted by
 George J. Brittain, Jr.
 6631 Gentle Wind Lane
 Dallas, Texas 75248
 (972) 991-5365

Descendants of Elder William BRITTAIN

- 1 Elder William BRITTAIN b: 1774 in Surry Co, North Carolina d: 16 Sep 1850 in Patroon, Shelby, TX
 Number of children: 10 Sex: Male Age at birth of first child: 30 est. Age at birth of last child: 49 est. Age
 at first Marriage: 28 est.
- .. +Rosanna "Rosa" WRIGHT b: 1782 in Surry Co, North Carolina d: 29 Oct 1856 in Patroon, Shelby, Texas
 Number of children: 10 Sex: Female m: 15 Mar 1802 in North Carolina Age at birth of first child: 22 est.
 Age at birth of last child: 41 est. Age at first Marriage: 20 est.
- 2 // BRITTAIN b: 1804 in North Carolina d: 1847 Sex: Female Age at first Marriage: 22 est.
- +Thomas J McKEE b: 1801 in North Carolina Sex: Male m: 1826 in North Carolina Age at first
 Marriage: 25 est.
- 2 James S BRITTAIN b: 1806 in Surry Co North Carolina d: 1860 in Patroon, Shelby, TX Number of
 children: 8 Sex: Male Age at birth of first child: 30 est. Age at birth of last child: 43 est.
- +Sarah "Sary" b: 1816 in KY Number of children: 8 Sex: Female Age at birth of first child: 20 est.
 Age at birth of last child: 33 est.
- 2 Cynthia BRITTAIN b: 1809 in Surry Co North Carolina d: 1869 in Patroon, Shelby, TX Number of
 children: 8 Sex: Female Age at birth of first child: 20 est. Age at birth of last child: 39 est. Age at
 first Marriage: 18 est.
- +Lihue Tandy WILBURN b: 1808 in GA d: Unknown Number of children: 8 Sex: Male m: 13 Nov
 1827 in Madison Co, ALA (Alabama) Age at birth of first child: 21 est. Age at birth of last child: 40
 est. Age at first Marriage: 19 est.
- 2 John William BRITTAIN b: 10 May 1810 in Surry Co North Carolina d: 18 Jan 1888 in Patroon,
 Shelby, TX Number of children: 9 Sex: Male Age at birth of first child: 31 est. Age at birth of last
 child: 49 Age at first Marriage: 28 est.
- +Lourinda SMALLEYS b: 17 Sep 1818 in ARK d: 18 Oct 1885 in Patroon, Shelby, TX Number of
 children: 9 Sex: Female m: 1839 in White Co AR Age at birth of first child: 23 est. Age at birth of
 last child: 41 Age at first Marriage: 20 est.
- 2 William Martin BRITTAIN b: 1812 in Surry Co North Carolina d: 13 Mar 1889 in Patroon, Shelby, TX
 Number of children: 10 Sex: Male Age at birth of first child: 31 est. Age at birth of last child: 60 est.
 Age at first Marriage: 30 est.
- +Elizabeth Ann HALEY b: 1828 d: 02 Feb 1901 in Patroon, Shelby, TX Number of children: 10 Sex:
 Female m: 1842 in Patroon, Shelby, TX Age at birth of first child: 15 est. Age at birth of last child:
 44 est. Age at first Marriage: 14 est.
- 2 Thomas Franklin BRITTAIN b: 07 Jan 1815 in Surry Co North Carolina d: 22 Jun 1892 in Patroon,
 Shelby, TX Number of children: 15 Sex: Male Age at birth of last child: 60 Age at first Marriage: 28
- +Jane L LATHAM b: 25 Jun 1827 d: 22 Nov 1859 in Patroon, Shelby, TX Number of children: 13
 Sex: Female m: 13 Mar 1843 Age at birth of last child: 48 Age at first Marriage: 15

- *2nd Wife of Thomas Franklin BRITTAIN:
 +Nancy Thomas SCRUGGS b: 30 Sep 1833 in AL (Alamba) d: 04 Nov 1919 in PATROON, SHELBY, TEXAS Number of children: 2 Sex: Female m: 17 Jan 1861 in PATROON, SHELBY, TEXAS Age at birth of first child: 30 Age at birth of last child: 34 Age at first Marriage: 27
- 2 John M BRITTAIN b: 1816 Sex: Male
 +Mary Sex: Female
- 2 Elizabeth BRITTAIN b: 1818 in Surry Co North Carolina Number of children: 11 Sex: Female Age at birth of last child: 42 est.
 +Rayborn B HALEY b: Unknown in AR d: 29 Sep 1847 in Leon Co TX Number of children: 6 Sex: Male Age at birth of first child: ? Age at birth of last child: ?
- *2nd Husband of Elizabeth BRITTAIN:
 +John CUMMINGS b: 1799 in South Carolina Number of children: 5 Sex: Male Age at birth of last child: 61 est.
- 2 Robert T Daniel BRITTAIN b: 1822 in Surry Co North Carolina d: 10 Dec 1893 in Patroon, Shelby, TX Number of children: 1 Sex: Male
 +Narcissa Sarah A (Jordan) SCHOOLER b: 1828 in South Carolina Sex: Female
- *2nd Wife of Robert T Daniel BRITTAIN:
 +Sarah Number of children: 1 Sex: Female m: 1857 Age at first Marriage: ?
- 2 William Jim BRITTAIN b: 1823 in Surry Co North Carolina d: 09 Aug 1887 Number of children: 5 Sex: Male Age at birth of first child: 30 est. Age at birth of last child: 40 est. Age at first Marriage: 26 est.
 +Lavacie "Lavincy" WIGGINS b: 1833 in TX d: 1870 Number of children: 5 Sex: Female m: 1849 Age at birth of first child: 20 est. Age at birth of last child: 30 est. Age at first Marriage: 16 est.



A sketch of Rev. William Martin Brittain by David Mason of Rockford, NC. Reproduced from the only known sketch of him as found in an undated issue of an *East Texas Historical Journal*. (Reprinted from *Faith Flowing Freely: History of the Yadkin Baptist Association 1790-1990* by Daniel Merritt)

When both Mr. and Mrs. PURYEAR died, this cemetery was located in what was then Yadkin County.

We were unable to find the grave or grave marker for Mr. PURYEAR, but we did find his wife's gravemarker. On it were these words:

In Memory of
Mrs. E. A. Puryear
Wife of
R. C. Puryear
BORN
Feb. 21, 1816
DIED
Feb. 9, 1850
Ag'd 33y's 11 m's 18 d's

Even though the grave of Mr. PURYEAR is not marked, there appears to be enough room on the south side of her grave for the burial of her husband, which is the custom in this area. An overgrown boxwood is located on this spot, which may have been planted there intentionally, to mark the head of his grave. Other boxwoods are located in the cemetery to mark the heads of other graves.

Submitted by Andrew L. Mackie and Deborah C. Davis.

Q17.2.7. Who are the father, mother, brothers, and sisters of William BRITTAIN/BRITTON? In August 1809, he was received into membership at Flat Rock Baptist Church in Surry, now Yadkin County, NC. He became the fourth pastor to serve that assembly. He was my 3rd Great Grandfather.

[See the "Descendants of Elder William Brittain" elsewhere in this *Journal*.]

Reply to George J. BRITTAIN, JR., 6631 Gentle Wind Lane, Dallas, TX 75248, data, fax, and voice mail at (972) 991-5365, and e-mail at georgebrittain@sprintmail.com (no period).

A17.2.7. I have enclosed a copy of the minutes of Flat Rock Baptist Church, 1783-1820, since the name of William BRITTAIN and his family occur throughout them. They were printed in this *Journal* from March 1991 through December 1996 in 21 installments.

A brief biography and a sketch of his likeness can be found in *Faith Flowing Freely: History of the Yadkin Baptist Association, 1790-1990*, by the Rev. Daniel MERRITT, published in Elkin, NC, by Nu-Line Printing and Photography, 1990.

Rev. BRITTAIN also served as one of the first moderators of the Yadkin Baptist Association.

Even though I could not find any information on the ancestors of William BRITTAIN, articles by Wilmer D. MARTIN on page 295 in the *Heritage of Yadkin County* and by Margaret JAGMIN in the *Journal* of December 1990 might be helpful.

Parents also named their children after their parents and their siblings, so you might use the first names of their six children as clues to the identity of William's parents and siblings.

ELDER WILLIAM BRITTAIN

AND WIFE, ROSANNA WRIGHT BRITTAIN

By Mary Jane (Janie) Brittain Porter

Route 3, Box 57, Center, Texas 75935

Elder William Brittain, pioneer Shelby County, Texas, educator and Missionary Baptist minister of the Gospel, was born near Flat Rock, Surry County, North Carolina, in 1774.¹ His forebears were from Edinburgh, Scotland.²

On March 15, 1802, he was married to Rosanna (Rosey, Rosy) Wright,³ a great, great granddaughter of John Washington, who was the great grandfather of George Washington, first President of the United States. Rosanna Wright's pedigree boasts of direct descent from Lucius Julius Caesar through such notables as Mark Anthony, Charlemagne, William the Conqueror, and kings, including Henry I, II, and III, and Edward I of

¹Tombstone Inscription, East Hamilton Cemetery, Shelby County, Texas; Anne Reed Ritchie, Major Francis Wright and Ann Washington with Allied Families (Privately published by Author, 1973), 167. (The 1850 Census, Shelby County, Texas, compiled by J. B. Sanders, Center, Texas, 1963, page 13, gives date of birth as 1772.)

²Family tradition--personal interviews with descendants of the family.

³G. W. Pashell, History of North Carolina Baptists (Raleigh, 1955), II, 147-48; Ritchie, Major Francis Wright and Ann Washington with Allied Families, 167, (however, on page 55 of this reference, the "Membership Roll, Flat Rock Church, Surry County, North Carolina, 1820," gives the date as 15 May 1802).

England, to Colonel John Washington, founder of the Washington family in America, who emigrated to this country from Essex, England, in 1657.⁴

Rosanna's father, John Wright, III, was born in 1728 in Prince William County, Virginia, only a few miles from where his cousin, George Washington, was born in 1732. John Wright, III, later moved to Surry County, North Carolina, where Rosanna was born in 1784,⁵ and where she met and married William Brittain. John Wright, III, fought in the Revolutionary War, serving as a private in the 4th North Carolina Regiment under Captain Smith. He was a charter member and ordained deacon of the Flat Rock Baptist Church, where his son-in-law, William Brittain, was later to serve as pastor for several years.⁶ It is probable that Rosanna Wright was the eighteenth and last child of her parents; however, she was the fourteenth child named in her father's will, dated 8 October 1789, leaving her 160 acres of land.⁷

⁴C. A. Hoppin, "The Washington Number," Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine, Vol. IV, No. 3, January, 1923, pages 244-280; Ritchie, Major Francis Wright and Ann Washington with Allied Families, 1-5. (See Appendix A for "Lineage from Julius Ceasar to Rosanna Wright Brittain to the Author, Janie Brittain Porter.")

⁵Tombstone Inscription, East Hamilton Cemetery, Shelby County, Texas. (The 1850 Census, Shelby County, Texas, compiled by J. B. Sanders, Center, Texas, 1963, page 13, gives date of birth as 1782.)

⁶Ritchie, Major Francis Wright and Ann Washington with Allied Families, 49 and 54.

⁷Hoppin, "The Washington Number," Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine, 244-280; C. A. Hoppin, Washington Ancestry and Records of the McClain, Johnson and Forty Other Colonial Families, Vols. I & II; Wright W. Frost, The Frosts and Related Families of Bedford County, Tennessee, 1966; Family Records of Mrs. A. B. Marshall, Houston, Texas; Ritchie, Major Francis Wright and Ann Washington with Allied Families, 49-55. (For a complete copy of the Will of John Wright, III, see Ritchie, Major Francis Wright and Ann Washington with Allied Families, 52-53.)

William Brittain was enumerated on the 1810 and 1820 Surry County, North Carolina, Censuses thusly:⁸

1810		
William Brittain	Males:	2 - under 10 yrs. of age. 1 - 26 yrs. to 45 yrs. of age.
	Females:	2 - under 10 yrs. of age. 1 - 26 yrs. to 45 yrs. of age.
1820		
William Brittain	Males:	2 - under 10 yrs. of age. 2 - 10 yrs. to 16 yrs. of age. 1 - 26 yrs. to 45 yrs. of age.
	Females:	1 - under 10 yrs. of age. 1 - 10 yrs. to 16 yrs. of age. 1 - 16 yrs. to 26 yrs. of age. 1 - 26 yrs. to 45 yrs. of age.

William Brittain received his call to preach at age twenty five, as recorded in G. W. Pashell's History of North Carolina Baptists:

In August, 1809, the Flat Rock Church in Surry County, North Carolina, received by experience a young man of much promise. At the next meeting in September it was unanimously agreed that Brother William Brittain should be "tolerated" to go on in the exercise of his gifts as a preacher at any time and any place it may please God to call him.⁹

For many years he seemed content to preach in his native state while operating his large farm with the help of his sons. In those days it was customary for preachers to carry on additional work while tending to their ministerial duties. In 1817 at age thirty three "Brother Brittain was receiving for his services, an annual stipend of twelve dollars, a great coat, and food for himself and horse."¹⁰ His wife Rosey shared the

⁸Mrs. Arch B. Marshall, "Descendants of Elder William Brittain and His Wife, Rosanna," (Personal research paper), page 5.

⁹G. H. Pashell, History of North Carolina Baptists (Raleigh, 1955), II, 147-48; Hazel Miller Brittain, "Stories My Grandmother Told Me," East Texas Historical Journal, Vol. VIII, No. 1, pages 8-9, March, 1970.

¹⁰Brittain, "Stories My Grandmother Told Me," 9.

missionary spirit of her husband, who was to spend his life fighting what he considered the evils of the day. As stories came from the newly developing states to the west of the need of those rugged frontiersmen for someone to preach the gospel, both William and Rosey longed for the opportunity to be of service to their fellowmen in these strange new lands.

Finally in 1824 at age fifty Reverend William Brittain and his wife, Rosanna Wright Brittain, age forty, left Surry County, North Carolina, after the birth of their last child, William Jim Brittain, and migrated to Madison County, Alabama. In September of 1827 they moved on to Pulaski County, Arkansas, where they were enumerated on the 1830 Pulaski County Census thusly:¹¹ (see Appendix B for children of William and Rosanna Brittain).

1830		
William Brittain	Males:	2 - 5 yrs. to 10 yrs. old.
		2 - 10 yrs. to 15 yrs. old.
		1 - 15 yrs. to 20 yrs. old.
		3 - 20 yrs. to 30 yrs. old.
		1 - 40 yrs. to 50 yrs. old.
	Females:	1 - under 5 yrs. old.
		1 - 10 yrs. to 15 yrs. old.
		3 - 20 yrs. to 30 yrs. old.
		1 - 40 yrs. to 50 yrs. old.

They were to spend ten long years in Arkansas before moving again, but the strong desire to settle in Texas was still present in their minds, so once again they started out. Numerous slaves tended a herd of cattle and the many horses and mules pulling wagons loaded with provisions needed for the couple, their six sons, three daughters, three sons-in-law (Lihue Tandy

¹¹Pashell, History of North Carolina Baptists, 148; Brittain, "Stories My Grandmother Told Me," East Texas Historical Journal, March, 1970, 9; Marshall, "Descendants of Elder William Brittain and His Wife, Rosanna," 6; Ritchie, Major Francis Wright and Ann Washington with Allied Families, 167.

Wilburn, Thomas J. McKee, and Rayborn B. Haley), two daughters-in-law, and several grandchildren.¹²

And so to Texas they came!

When they arrived at the Sabine River across from the young port town of Hamilton, they chose to make a raft of logs on which to cross instead of going down the river some five additional miles to the ferry crossing.¹³

Settlement in the area had begun in 1817 with the arrival of Shelby County's first settler, John Latham, who came from Tennessee. The town, originally known as Hamilton, or Port Hamilton, was founded about 1830, and was possibly named for Alexander Hamilton. Located on the banks of the Sabine River, it became a prosperous little town from the thriving riverboat business.¹⁴

According to East Texas Riverboat Era and Its Decline, a book by Edna McDaniel White, the first paddlewheel steamboat puffed slowly up the river in 1837--(the same year Elder Brittain arrived with his family). By 1839, boats made regular trips up and down the Sabine from November to the last of June, stopping at all the landings. Nearly all the merchandise received in East Texas came in through this port, and out of it went the lumber, cotton, and other farm produce grown by settlers in the early Shelby County region.

¹²Brittain, "Stories My Grandmother Told Me," East Texas Historical Journal, March, 1970, 8; Marshall, "Descendants of Elder William Brittain and His Wife, Rosanna," 7; Ritchie, Major Francis Wright and Ann Washington with Allied Families, 167.

¹³Brittain, "Stories My Grandmother Told Me," East Texas Historical Journal, March, 1970, 9; Marshall, "Descendants of Elder William Brittain and His Wife, Rosanna," 1.

¹⁴Walter Prescott Webb, ed., "Shelby County," The Handbook of Texas--A Dictionary of Essential Information (Austin, 1952), Vol. II, p. 600.

The first Federal Post Office would be established here on March 8, 1847, after Texas joined the Union, with Charles H. Alexander the first Postmaster.¹⁵ And in 1874, because there was another town in the vicinity known as Hamilton, the port town would be renamed East Hamilton.¹⁶

Sixty two year old William Brittain arrived with his entourage in Shelby County, Republic of Texas, on the eighteenth day of January 1837. This date was given by William Brittain himself on his Second Class Land Certificate No. 21 granted to him in Shelbyville, Texas, on August 2, 1838.¹⁷

Conditions were not ideal, however, in 1837, as Z. N. Morrell describes in his colorful book, Flowers and Fruits:

It is a notorious fact that all that portion of the country bordering on the Sabine River was for a great number of years known as neutral ground. The boundary line between Texas and the United States had not been definitely agreed upon. A large number of refugees and desperadoes infested this neutral territory. They crossed the Sabine River to escape justice in the United States and recrossed it if pursued for violations of law by the Mexican and later the Texas authorities.¹⁸

Texas had gained her independence from Mexico just eight months before at the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836. Shelby County was created March 17, 1836, while a part of the Mexican state of Coahuila, but was not

¹⁵J. B. Sanders, "The Post Offices and Post Masters of Shelby County, Texas" (Center, Texas: J. B. Sanders, 1965), page 6.

¹⁶Sanders, "Post Offices and Post Masters of Shelby County, Texas," 5.

¹⁷Republic of Texas--Second Class Certificates--1836-37, Compiled by Benjamin F. Purl, 1904, Transcribed by Alma Nettie Barnes, 1974; Marshall, "Descendants of Elder William Brittain and His Wife, Rosanna," page 6. (See Appendix C for Photostatic Copy of Second Class Land Certificate No. 21.)

¹⁸Z. N. Morrell, Flowers and Fruits from the Wilderness (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1872; Reprinted, Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 1976), 186.

organized until 1837. Indians were still in the area and the Mexicans encouraged them to raid the white settlers' homes as late as 1839.¹⁹

It was to this area that Elder William Brittain brought his family in 1837. He set about to construct a log home for his family to live in, reserving one room for preaching and teaching school. Family tradition is that he later gave this land for a cemetery, now called East Hamilton Cemetery, and that his grave is located under the exact spot where the first pulpit stood in his home.²⁰

Part of his married children settled in this area that surrounded the thriving river port of Hamilton, Texas; and the next year, 1838, when the Texas land office was established in Shelbyville, Elder William Brittain and two of his sons made application and received second class land certificates, three sons received third class certificates, and some pre-empted land.²¹

At this time Shelbyville was the county seat of Shelby County, which included all the present area of Harrison, Panola, Marion, and Upshur counties. Second class headright certificates went to heads of families and single men who reached Texas after March 2, 1836, and prior to October 1, 1837, provided they remained in Texas three years and performed duties of citizenship. Family heads were eligible for 1,280 acres each and single men for half as much.²²

¹⁹Marshall, "Descendants of Elder William Brittain and His Wife, Rosanna," 1.

²⁰Ibid., 1.

²¹Ibid., 1.

²²Ibid., 1-2.

Elder William Brittain was granted 1,280 acres of land by the Republic of Texas, Class 2 Land Certificate No. 21, at Shelbyville, Shelby County, Texas, August 2, 1838 (see Appendix C). Brittain's son-in-law, deputy surveyor Thomas J. McKee, surveyed 640 acres of this land which was located in what was to become Upsur County, Harrison District.²³

Record of 640 acres of land belonging to William Brittain is recorded in the 1840 Tax Assessment Rolls which were also used as a substitute census. "Since Texas was not a part of the United States until 1846, it was not covered by any early Federal census, the first being taken in 1850. In 1840, the tax rolls were made up early in the year and most were completed by July."²⁴

William Brittain and a son are listed in the 1840 Tax Assessment Rolls under Shelby County as follows:

Brittain, Wm.	1	S640	1 Wood clock
Brittain, T. F.	1	S385	

The "1" represents a "Poll" tax of \$1 which was applied to each white male resident of the county over the age of 21 years. This was a head tax in the classical sense and had nothing to do with voting privileges. "S" indicated land in acres under survey based on a grant, but without a final title confirmed by the G. L. O. Wood clocks were taxed at \$1; metal clocks at \$3.²⁵

Another son, William M. Brittain, was issued Certificate No. 34, Shelby County, Land District of Shelby, for 640 acres, File No. 61.²⁶

²³Marshall, "Descendants of Elder William Brittain and His Wife, Rosanna," 6.

²⁴The 1840 Census of the Republic of Texas Tax Rolls (Tax Assessment Rolls), Edited by Gifford White (Austin: The Pemberton Press, 1966), "Preface."

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Republic of Texas--Second Class Certificates--1836-37, Compiled by Benjamin F. Purl, 1904, Transcribed by Alma Nettie Barnes, 1974.

On the 1850 Census William Brittain is listed as follows:

Wm. Brittain	7 slaves	age 78	male	N. Carolina	Baptist Clerg.
	2800 acres land				
Rosanna Brittain		68	female	N. Carolina	²⁷

By the time William Brittain arrived in Texas in 1837, several attempts to bring the Baptist religion into the new frontier had already been made. According to J. M. Carroll in A History of Texas Baptists, the first Baptist work done in East Texas and also the first preacher who ever preached in Texas was Joseph Bays. He came as a very young man from Missouri in 1820 and stopped for a while at Camp Sabine in Louisiana, just across from what is now Sabine County. While waiting for an official permit to enter Texas, he preached in various communities in Louisiana. When his official permit to enter Texas came, Bays went across the river into Texas and preached in the home of Joseph Hinds about eighteen miles from San Augustine. In the course of time he went further west and preached in San Felipe, the headquarters of Austin's colony. The Mexicans and Roman Catholic authorities resented his missionary activities and had him arrested and put in custody. He finally managed to escape, but was forced to return to his former residence in Sabine Parish, Louisiana, until after Texas gained her independence.²⁸

Another try at Baptist work was made in 1828 by Thomas J. Pilgrim, who was engaged as a school teacher in Austin's colony. Here at San Felipe on a Sunday in 1829, Pilgrim organized the first Sunday school ever taught

²⁷1850 Census, Shelby County, Texas, Compiled by J. B. Sanders, Center, Texas, 1963, 13 and 53.

²⁸J. M. Carroll, "Baptist Beginnings in East Texas," A History of Texas Baptists. (Dallas, 1926), Chap. XIX, page 113; Baptist General Convention of Texas, Centennial Story of Texas Baptists (Dallas, 1936), 79.

in Texas. All went well, until an unfortunate controversy between a citizen and a visiting Mexican brought an end to his school.²⁹

As the months passed, at least one Baptist discovered a way to introduce non-Catholic faith into the territory, where to organize such churches and Sunday schools was forbidden by law. This person was Elder Daniel Parker from Illinois, founder of the "Two-Seed" sect of Baptists. There might be a law against organizing a non-Catholic church, he said, but not against immigrating one into the state. Accordingly, he returned to Illinois, and on July 26, 1833, there organized the "Pilgrim Predestinarian Regular Baptist Church," with seven members, who set out for Texas. Under the leadership of Pastor Parker, the Church en route acquired eleven more members, and in due time, January 20, 1834, Pilgrim Church held its first conference within the bounds of Austin's Colony in Texas.³⁰

The first Baptist church of any kind actually organized in Texas was the Providence Primitive ("Hard-Shell") Church, on the Colorado River, near Bastrop, March 29, 1834, by Abner Smith, a preacher strongly opposed to missions.³¹

Realizing that existing dangers in Texas would require the members of Pilgrim Church to scatter into different areas, the church in conference on October 4, 1834, voted to instruct the clerk "to give up the Church Book to the largest body of members, who are likely to settle convenient,

²⁹Baptist General Convention of Texas, Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 21.

³⁰"The Records of an Early Texas Baptist Church, 1833-1847," The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, XI, (October, 1907, No. 2), 89; Carroll, History of Texas Baptists, IX, 45.

³¹Baptist General Convention of Texas, Centennial Story of Texas Baptists, 22.

so as to keep up the church meetings, and so preserve the existence of the Church in this wilderness country to the glory of God."³²

Under the pressures of authorities in Austin's Colony, the members of Pilgrim Church did scatter, and Parker and his associates instituted at least eleven Predestinarian Baptist churches in East Texas within the next ten years.³³

During this time Elder William Brittain was quietly preaching his Baptist faith in the confines of the classroom in his own home in East Hamilton. Initially, however, he and Rosanna were to align themselves with Pilgrim's Predestinarian Baptist Church, whose activities are carefully preserved in the minutes of the church. From these minutes it is possible to trace the involvement of William and Rosanna Brittain.

June 30, 1838. The Pilgrim Church agreed to move temporarily to Pierpint's (Pearpoint's) Place in Shelby County at Latham's Settlement to be away from the current Indian ravages along the Trinity and Neches Rivers.³⁴

July 28, 1838. The first meeting in Shelby County was recorded.³⁵

September 8, 1838. William Brittain, Sister Rosanna Brittain, and Jeremiah White are received by letter to membership in the Pilgrim Church.³⁶

³²"Records of an Early Texas Baptist Church, 1833-1847," 98.

³³"Minutes of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Union Association of Regular Baptists, Meeting at the San Jacinto Church, Montgomery County, Texas," in San Augustine Red-Lander, November 6, 1845; William Tellis Parmer, Seventy-Five Years in Nacogdoches, A History of the First Baptist Church (Dallas, 1959), 30.

³⁴"Records of an Early Texas Baptist Church, 1833-1847," 103; Parmer, Seventy-Five Years in Nacogdoches, 41.

³⁵"Records of an Early Texas Baptist Church, 1833-1847," 104.

³⁶Ibid., 104.

February 19, 1839. Elders Daniel Parker and Brittain, and Brethren John Grigesby and Jeremiah White were named as a committee to receive members for the church eight miles East of San Augustine at the house of Doctor Thompson.³⁷

April 13, 1839. The committee reported back to the church on members received.³⁸

May 11, 1839. E. Bowen, D. Parker, and J. White were named to select a building site for a church meeting house.³⁹

June 8, 1839. The committee reported two sites for church consideration:

- Site No. 1: On the ridge between Mrs. Morgan's and Williams.
- Site No. 2: On the bluff of the Harrison Fork of Bayou Blue, Northside near Elder Parker's on a new road leading from Hamilton to Shelbyville.

Site No. 2 was selected and the church appointed Richard Eaton, William Brittain, and Daniel Parker as a committee to obtain the land and superintend the building of church meeting house.⁴⁰

July 13, 1839. The church received a Bond for Title for two and one half acres of land executed by John Haley for use as a place of public worship and a public burying ground.⁴¹

December 7, 1839. The church agreed that future meetings would be held in the new meeting house near Elder Parker's (the first of which would be on Saturday, January 11, 1840).⁴²

The name of William Brittain was one of some nine or ten Baptist preachers who were responsible for Baptist work done during the period of the Texas Republic--from 1836 to 1845. Some of these men were missionaries, some were anti-missionaries, and some were slightly mixed. But all were

³⁷"Records of an Early Texas Baptist Church, 1833-1847," 106.

³⁸Ibid., 107.

³⁹Ibid., 108.

⁴⁰Ibid., 111.

⁴¹Ibid., 112.

⁴²Ibid., 113.

wide-awake, courageous men. They necessarily had to be all that and even more in order to live and work in East Texas during those strenuous times.⁴³

Baptists in Texas, both Regular Predestinarian and Missionary, grew rapidly enough that within a very few years associations of churches were formed according to the customs of Baptists in the United States.⁴⁴

The first Baptist association in East Texas was formed by church of the predestinarian, anti-missionary persuasion. Daniel Parker, at the June 23, 1839, meeting, informed his brethren in the Pilgrim Church (while still domiciled in Shelby County) that the Mount Pleasant Predestinarian Church in Montgomery County was willing to send messengers to Hope-well in Nacogdoches County on the third Sunday in October, 1839, to form "an associated compact."⁴⁵

The resulting organization was styled "The Union Association of the Regular Predestinarian Baptist Faith and Order."⁴⁶

On September 14, 1841, Pilgrim Church, domiciled in Shelby County since 1838, "agreed to move back to Houston County, but agreed to constitute a separate church in Shelby County for members remaining there." On this date the church set apart and constituted in a Church capacity the following: John B. Roberts (Preacher), William Brittain, Thomas Starr, Jeremiah White, Thomas (a black man), and Sister Rosanna Brittain.

⁴³Carroll, History of Texas Baptists, 113.

⁴⁴Parmer, Seventy-Five Years in Nacogdoches, 42.

⁴⁵"Records of an Early Texas Baptist Church, 1833-1847," 117-119.

⁴⁶Ernest W. Winkler, Check List of Texas Imprints, 1846-1860 (Austin, 1949), 120.

Bethlehem Church was thus constituted in Shelby County, Texas, by Elders Asa Wright and Robert Turner, ordained authorities from Bethel Church, Sabine County, along with Daniel Parker.⁴⁷

When the fourth annual session of the Union Association of Regular Predestinarian Baptist Faith and Order was held at Hopewell Church in Nacogdoches County in 1843, eight churches were represented, including Bethlehem from Shelby County.⁴⁸

However, by the fifth annual meeting of the Union Predestinarian Baptist Association, held at Fort Houston Church in Houston County, October 10 to 12, 1844, signs of friction within the association were indicated in a circular letter. There were warnings against disorder in Bethel Church in Sabine County which united in forming an association called the Sabine Baptist Association; of Union Baptist Church in Nacogdoches County, and Asa Wright of Bethel Church, Sabine County, not to be admitted as visiting members.⁴⁹

The sixth annual session of the Union Predestinarian Baptist Association met at San Jacinto Church in Montgomery County on October 11, 1845, with ten churches represented. Included in the minutes is a lengthy discourse on the doctrine of Predestination. Another interesting item was a statement that Elder William Brittain of Bethlehem Church in Shelby County "had been excluded from their fellowship, and retains his credentials."⁵⁰

⁴⁷"Records of an Early Texas Baptist Church, 1833-1847," 122-125.

⁴⁸Ibid., 122-125.

⁴⁹"Minutes of the Union Predestinarian Baptist Association, 1844," San Augustine Red-Lander, October 26, 1844.

⁵⁰"Minutes of the Union Predestinarian Baptist Association, 1845," San Augustine Red-Lander, November 6, 1845.

Brittain, like Elder Asa Wright of Bethel Church in Sabine County, had defaulted from Predestinarianism to join with the missionary Baptist forces in the Sabine Baptist Association.⁵¹

While the anti-missionary forces were extending their influence over East Texas, the Separate Baptists, who represented the missionary spirit, also spread fairly rapidly. However, they seemed to avoid the centers of population, preferring rather to exert their efforts with the farmer class. Four years after the organization of Daniel Parker's Predestinarian Association in 1839, the first missionary Baptist association was organized in East Texas. On November 11, 1843, the Sabine Baptist Association was formed with Elder Lemuel Herren as the first moderator and James Davenport as the clerk.⁵²

The new Sabine Baptist Association was organized along missionary lines and bade fair to producing a considerable impact upon East Texas. In 1846, their minutes show a membership of three hundred, with Isaac Reed as moderator, and in 1847 they numbered five hundred and seventy-five, with William Brittain as moderator. Within the following two years, however, the association was so torn assunder by the forces of anti-missionism, both within and without, that it dissolved at its sixth or seventh session held with Mount Olivet Church, Cherokee County.⁵³

⁵¹Parmer, Seventy-Five Years in Nacogdoches, 44.

⁵²San Augustine Red-Lander, September 9, 1843 and December 2, 1843; Morrell, Flowers and Fruits, 189; Carroll, History of Texas Baptists, 117; Parmer, Seventy-Five Years in Nacogdoches, 46.

⁵³Morrell, Flowers and Fruits, 189.

The external forces that affected the life of the Sabine Association were the anti-missionary influence of the Daniel Parker predestinarians and the influence of the admirers of Alexander Campbell.⁵⁴

The main cause of its dissolution, however, was found in the ranks of its own preachers. Of the eleven delegates who met at Union Baptist Church in Nacogdoches County in 1843 to organize the association, three were known to have had previous connection with Daniel Parker's predestinarian and anti-missionary Pilgrim Church and its arms. One of these was Elder William Brittain, a leader in the Sabine Association, who had been excluded from the Bethlehem Predestinarian Baptist Church in Shelby County. Brittain was originally a member of the Pilgrim Predestinarian Church.⁵⁵

Two years after the dissolution of the Sabine Association, eleven churches in East Texas sent delegates to Union Baptist Church in Nacogdoches County to form the Eastern Texas Association of United Baptists.⁵⁶

In 1852, the name was changed to Central Baptist Association, and included Hamilton Church, Shelby County.⁵⁷

Elder William Brittain, after he had established his home, went about his work as a Baptist missionary, but it was not until some nine years

⁵⁴Carroll, History of Texas Baptists, 117; Parmer, Seventy-Five Years in Nacogdoches, 47.

⁵⁵Carroll, History of Texas Baptists, 117; Parmer, Seventy-Five Years in Nacogdoches, 47; Morrell, Flowers and Fruits, 185-194.

⁵⁶Carroll, History of Texas Baptists, 247; Parmer, Seventy-Five Years in Nacogdoches, 48.

⁵⁷Minutes of the Eastern Texas Association of United Baptists, 1852, Statistical Table; Parmer, Seventy-Five Years in Nacogdoches, 49.

later that the Hamilton Missionary Baptist Church was organized. The exact date is unknown. The original Minute Book of the Church seems to be lost, but a statement made by G. H. Monroe, September 15, 1906, in Minute Book II, Hamilton Missionary Baptist Church (Book II dates from May 1861 through 1915), says that the church was organized in 1846.⁵⁸

A quote from the May, 1861, Minutes says:

On motion and second the Clerk instructed to furnish a new Church Book and to transcribe the list of names of the members, Constitution, Articles of Faith, and Rules of Decorum. Signed, D. Brittain, Clerk, and John L. Mills, Moderator.⁵⁹

The Articles of Faith and Rules of Decorum were signed by A. Wright and William Brittain. Elder William Brittain was listed as the first ordained minister on the church roll. Elder Asa Wright worked with Elder Isaac Reed, another pioneer East Texas Baptist missionary, and apparently, from his signing the Articles of Faith and Rules of Decorum with Elder William Brittain, assisted in the organization of Hamilton Baptist Church. Elder Asa Wright was never listed, however, on the roll as a church member.⁶⁰

It is interesting to note how the Hamilton Missionary Baptist Church membership treasured the numbers given them in the order of their joining the church. The original membership was transcribed into Book II from Book I in 1861, but the old numbers were used until 1883, although several new membership lists were made. There was a column for old numbers and

⁵⁸Marshall, "Descendants of Elder William Brittain and His Wife, Rosanna," 3.

⁵⁹Ibid., 3.

⁶⁰Ibid., 4.

one for new numbers. The first Church Roll numbered 274, apparently being added to through the years to 1875, at which time a new roll was entered. References made in the Church Minutes indicated a church building had been built prior to 1861, but date of construction is not known. As indicated from the church rolls and minutes, Elder William Brittain's descendants continued to be active in the church.⁶¹

This Church assisted, as recorded in the minutes of Book II, in organizing a number of other Baptist Churches. Also, this Church always sent representatives and contributed to the Church Conferences held during the period of Minute Book II. Elder William Brittain spent his life trying to establish a "beachhead" of Christianity during the same times of lawless "No man's land" of East Texas!⁶²

A large creek, named for the Elder and known as Brittain Creek, flowed by the church and cemetery, and was used as the "Baptizing hole." Now, however, because of time and erosion the creek is barely discernible.

Elder William Brittain died on September 16, 1850, and was buried in a space reserved for him years before, which was directly under the pulpit where he preached his first sermons in Texas. Upon his death he freed his slaves, leaving each a small tract of land. Some of their descendants still live in that area. Rosanna Brittain died on October 29, 1856, and

⁶¹Marshall, "Descendants of Elder William Brittain and His Wife, Rosanna," 4-5.

⁶²Ibid., 5.

was buried beside her husband in the Cemetery at East Hamilton. The graves are marked by a tall monument with inscriptions for each on the sides.⁶³

When steamboats could no longer navigate the Sabine River, the prosperous town of East Hamilton ceased to exist. Long a ghost town, the remains of East Hamilton were inundated by the waters created by Toledo Bend Reservoir in 1964. All that is left of the town is the old cemetery where so many of the pioneers of East Texas are buried, along with many who were Confederate soldiers. It is a peaceful and beautiful spot. During the years from 1933 to 1945, when Franklin Roosevelt was President of the United States, he promoted a Public Works Administration, commonly called PWA, and had many historical places repaired or preserved. It was during this time that East Hamilton Cemetery received her pretty rock fence and open air pavilion. The Cemetery is located about thirty miles from the city of Center, Shelby County, Texas, south on U. S. Highway 87, then left on F. M. 2261.

Every year descendants of William and Rosanna Brittain and other pioneers gather outside the walls of the Cemetery in a grove of oak trees for memorial services in honor of their ancestors who helped build the great State of Texas. Held on the fourth Sunday in September of each year, the services are well attended by those who would gain inspiration from the memory of those gone before.

⁶³ Eld. William Brittain
Born 1774 Died Sept 16, 1850
"Mark the perfect man
and behold the upright:
for the end of that man
is peace."

Rosanna Brittain
Born 1784 Died Oct 29, 1856