

R.164      BLACK LIST HILLS OF TEXAS

Few episodes in Texas are as mysterious as the chain of events that involved the Alleb C. and LaDusky Hill family and decedents.

The family had immigrated from Tennessee to Texas in the early 1850s by way of Missouri and Arkansas. They settled in northern Parker County, Springtown and Cartersville (now Carter) in 1863 possibly because of suspected Union sympathies, Allen Hill was ambushed and shot by vigilantes, who left his body where it fell for his wife to discover later.

LaDusky Hill was left with eight children, the youngest was age 3, so we might speculate that she was desperate for income. To make matters worse, in 1870, her eldest son, JACK, in a gunfight in Montague County

A Mr. Thomas, who lived nearby, said the entire family became hated by the townspeople because of their [HILL] bawdy house, harboring thieves stealing horses, infanticide and murdering people. .

On Friday, August 22, 1873, Nancy Hill, 25, the eldest daughter, characterized as a "woman of ill fame" rode into Springtown with three men, and without any known provocation severely wounded a Mr. Laod and fled.

The assailants escaped, but the next day a party of "citizens" went to the house of Mrs. Hill, took the daughters, Martha, 33 and Katherine, 20, and hung them.

On the following Monday, the "citizens" again went to the house of Mrs. Hill, burned it and carried off LaDusky (Mrs. Hill) 47, and two more daughters, Adelade 17, and Eliza, 16, took them to the swamp on Salt Creek and killed them by hanging them.

Nancy, who had twice been in the Parker County jail charged with infanticide, was pursued for weeks and hanged. The surviving daughter, Isabele (Belle), only 13 when her mother and sisters were murdered, married John Vinyard, who had left Greene County, Illinois, in 1870, at age 16, fleeing murder indictment,

Isabel and John had more run ins with the law, and when they resided in Weatherford, were visited by Frank James and possibly brother Jesse. A letter preserved in the Vinyard family, is signed "YOUR COUSIN, FRANK JAMES."

The Vinyards moved to Oregon where in 1896, John was shot and killed in a dispute. The Vinyards' son, William, killed the

sheriff of Lake County, Oregon. He was convicted and was on his way to prison when he escaped and made his way to Australia. Allen C. Hill Jr. was arrested for murder in Pinto County in 1881.

What caused the furious reaction to this family? We may never know. John Graves, in his classic Goodby to a River, can't find the reason either.

Thanks to Bette Tripp Wadole of Dallas and Mrs. Linda Nobel of Reedsport. One, a member of the International Black Sheep Society of Genealogists through her Hill connection.

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