

J. T. Askew Interview 2006

Carolyn (Shanks) Huddleston: J. T. tell us about the Israelites

J. T. Askew: Them two Robinson boys had a store, Lawrence Robinson and his brother. The Israelites had a big gathering a following at Buckner, TN that was the headquarters. And they decided, I don't know when, that Lawrence Robinson had to be crucified, he was Christ. Everybody decided that he had to be crucified. Well he found out and the day they got after him he went clear to Kentucky and here they are behind him but he got over into Kentucky and he got away. The newspapers were full of this ... we had the Banner newspaper....my dad was a Republican and we got the Banner and nothing else.

Carolyn (Shanks) Huddleston: Mine did the same thing got the Banner.

J. T. Askew: Them Israelites chased Lawrence into Kentucky Luke Medley told me that he was sitting in the local store, where he married his wife... waiting for the train, he had to catch the early train to get the mail. He was locking the door of the store to catch the early train, he heard the train, "Woo Woo" and he saw the biggest crowd of people across the "Philippines" (a community section in Buffalo Valley) the moon was shining...and he thought what is going on....he heard two of the people say "We will run and hold him", so they did. It was in the paper that they were suing the Israelites in here in Buckner in federal court in Nashville, they had to go to Nashville. There was headlines in all the papers...it had to be in the early twenties...I must have been 6 years old.

There was lots of news at that time, around 1925 the monkey trial was going on and Floyd Collins was stuck in a cave. Floyd Collins got caught in a cave, he was an inspector for a cave and they came from all over the United States to help him...called Cave City. He was stuck under a big rock in the cave and he was in the cave for days...they talked to him on the radio and they couldn't get the rock off, I don't know why they just didn't cut his leg off!

Then there was the monkey trial going on...people came to our house to stay for awhile on their way back to California....Phillip Sadler was at some of those trials.

Carolyn (Shanks) Huddleston: Now back to the Israelites what ever happen to Lawrence Robinson in Kentucky did he ever come back home?

J. T. Askew: Lawrence Robinson came back home and lived a long life.

Carolyn (Shanks) Huddleston: Now was that the Lawrence Robinson that married Florence? That one that lived up on the Carr Ridge?

(Source: Putnam Co., Tennessee Cemeteries by Maurine Ensor Patton & Doris Garrison Gilbert, pg. 369: Lawrence E. Robinson, b. 26 April 1892 – d. 29 March 1979 md 12 May 1913, Florence (Maynard) Robinson, b. 10 November 1896, both buried in the Odd Fellows Cemetery, located in Baxter, Putnam Co., TN).

(Source: 1920 census, 17th Civil Dist., Putnam Co., TN: Dwl: 77 Family: 78 – Lawrence Robinson is head of household, 27 yrs. old, TN, farmer general farm, md to Florence, 23 yrs. old, TN. Children: Cleo Robinson, dau., 5 yrs. old, TN & Lilian Robinson, dau., 1 9/12 yrs. old, TN).

J. T. Askew: Yes...you knew him. I'll tell you something else my granddaddy came here in 1867....they didn't believe in religion....they belonged to the "Infidel Club". Before my granddaddy came here he lived in Temperance Hall. Him and a guy would ride their horses to Nashville and spend two weeks at a time at the Southern Turf Gambling in Nashville, they did that for years. One week they hit it big and he brought the "Doll" Maxwell farm, (Robert Lonzo "Doll" Maxwell); ? Jared farm; and Jack William farm, that was all one farm, my granddad, John T. Askew...so he wouldn't go back and gamble it away he brought the land.

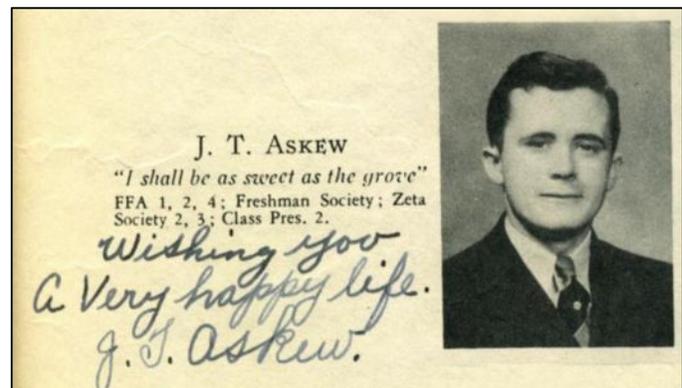
Carolyn (Shanks) Huddleston: Now tell me about the John Nichols story from the beginning.

J. T. Askew: Well the way I heard it his nephew, I believe it was....drove up one morning and John Nichols came out to see him and he said, "You know I got my wife in the back seat of the car and she is dead, my wife died and I brought her from Michigan, or wherever.... She always wanted to be cremated. So they took the body and set it a top a big brush fire and set it a fire....the body got real hot and it raised up!! BOO! I had two brothers named Bob and Sam and they went right up there and they came back with hair clasps, hair pins, teeth, bones. This story was in the paper. This occurred in Boma, TN. John Nichols lived in Boma...lived in the house on the corner that Henry Tucker lives there now. People came to see where this event occurred to get a souvenir.

(Source: The last Israelite group that I knew about were Dalton Martin, Luther Carr and our cousin, Bethel Prichard, they didn't believe that they would die, therefore they never went to cemeteries, because of the verse, "Let the dead bury the dead". But Dalton died first and their faith dwindled. Bethel kept the long hair and beard, although he put his hair up with pins under his hat. The kids would come to Mama's and say they wanted to go see where Santa Claus lived. Carolyn (Shanks) Huddleston).

(Source: Putnam Co., Tennessee Cemeteries by Maurine Ensor Patton & Doris Garrison Gilbert, pg. 485: Luther D. Carr, b. 13 March 1891 – d. 28 May 1947, s/o Russel Monroe "Roe" Carr & Sarah Angeline Whitehead; md Willie E. Austin, b. 9 April 1901 – d. 28 May 1947, d/o Bill Austin & Amanda Vaughn, both buried in the Smellage Cemetery, Boma, Putnam Co., TN. Bethel Robinson Prichard, b. 21 January 1902, Putnam Co., TN - d. 21 March 2002, Cookeville Regional Medical Center, Cookeville, TN, s/o William "Willie" Benjamine Prichard & Nancy Elizabeth "Bettie" Shanks; md Martha Elizabeth Carr - b. 4 January 1903, TN - d. 6 January 1992 - d/o Julius Franklin Carr & Virginia Frances Leftwich; both buried in the Smellage Cemetery, Boma, Putnam Co., TN).

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J. T. Askew
Highlander Yearbook - 1940 – Senior
Baxter Seminary, Baxter, Putnam Co., TN