

Camey Spur

(From The Lost Towns of Frisco by, Rita Crowder)

The following contain excerpts taken from the “Elm Fork Echoes”, Volume XII, April 1984, Peters Colony Historical Society of Dallas County, Texas in a published interview with George McKamy by Doris McKamy Ramsay.

Camey is about 7 miles south of Frisco near where Hwy 121 (Sam Rayburn Tollway), West Spring Creek Pkwy and the railroad cross. It was settled in 1852 by Captain William McKamy, emigrated from Tennessee. According to George McKamy, in 1896 his grandfather, William Albert McKamy and other farmers gave land to the Frisco Railroad for the right-of-way through their land to get the railroad on their farms. It was to their advantage to have a railhead when it came time to ship cattle to the market. A railroad switch or spur was put in on the McKamy/McCamey property. It was named McCamey Switch. A boxcar office was established for the convenience of the local families. A railroad loading and shipping dock was built. Pioneer families, Morgans, Jacksons, Furneauxs, and the McKamys used the switch to ship cattle to places such as Dodge City and Kansas City.

In the beginning the community had one store, which was operated by R. K. Thomas. When the application was made for a post office, it was found that there was already a town named McCamey in West Texas, so the name was changed to Camey Spur. Later the Bradley General Store was added to the town. There was a cotton gin, a grain elevator and a church. The nondenominational church was built on land donated by William Albert McKamy and donations from the people in the surrounding area paid for the building, which was used for community functions and the first school.

The following is the Post Office Postmaster Records for Denton, County:

Denton County.		TEXAS
Dis. Doctor	Geo. L. Harrison 15 Mar '95 Dis. Mar 31 1899 Mt. Lewisville	
N.O. Keweenaw	William Keweenaw 7 Apr '98 Sda L. Gerson 14 Apr 1910	
Asst. J. J. Taylor	Howell Z. Suggs 11 Dec '99 Reappointed (P.S.) April 2, 1901	John J. Sobor (P.S.) 20 May 13 Reappointed (P.S.) 21 July 19 Reappointed (P.S.) 20 Feb 2
N.O. Thibod	Joseph P. Thibod 7 Feb '97 Dis. 22 Lewisville 7 Dec 1907	Reappointed (P.S.) 28 May 27
N.O. Honey	William F. Honey 15 Mar '98 Dis. 17 Feb 1907	Paul G. Whitford - 5 Apr 1907 Chas. H. Gray 12 Feb 13 Mark A. Spudis 1908.
Dis. Thibod	Mark G. Lewisville 14 Apr '98	
Dis. Camey Spur	Ronald H. Thomas 12 July 11 Claude R. Howard 12 Jan 22	Dis. 5-28-25 M. to Lewis
Asst. Large Lake Dallas	Frank W. Taylor 27 Nov 28 Maria L. Harrison 7 Nov 29	Claude Sargent 15 Mar 20 Claude Sargent 12 Apr 20
Asst. Keweenaw	Nicholas C. Nail 29 July 28 Nicholas C. Nail 19 Dec 28	Reappointed (P.S.) 17 Dec 27

Camey Spur Postmasters:

CAMEY SPUR (Denton)

Thomas, Ernest H., 10 Jly 1913

Howard, Claud R., 12 Jan 1922

Discontinued 28 Feb 1925; mail to Frisco

In 1926 a brick school was built to house grades one through nine. There were enough students to merit four teachers. For high school, students living on the west side of the railroad went to Lewisville and those on the east side went to Frisco.

The Denton County 7th Grade Graduation held at North Texas State Teachers College Auditorium, May 25, 1940 at 10 a.m. listed the following graduates from Camey Spur School: Marguerite Durhan, Walter Eugene Farmer, Evelyn Louise Jennings, Lettie Lucille Knox, Katherine Pannell, Pearl Eva Pannell, Winnie May Shafer, Wylie Ray Shafer and Mary Alice White.

School activities were a major part of the community's entertainment.

The Frisco Journal reported on Friday, January 25, 1929 that the Camey High School "Bull Frogs" went to Lake Dallas to play basketball. They were defeated 14 to 24. The game was fought with much interest.

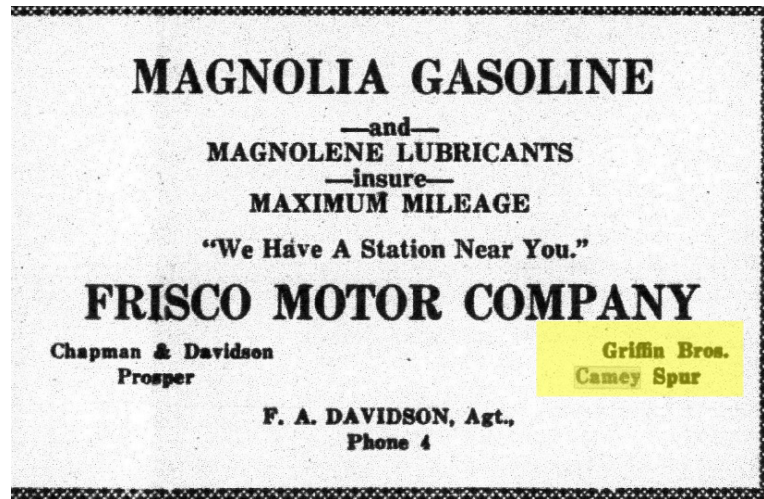
The Frisco Journal reported on Friday, March 15, 1929 that the Camey High School enjoyed a most delightful party in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Dunafan Friday night, March 1. Games were played. Those present were: Misses Oleta McKamy, Minnie Mae Griffin, Edyth McDaniel, Ruth Howard, Mary Mays, Frances Carpenter and Hallie Dunafan.

Messrs. M. T. Griffin, Nelson Griffin, George McKamy, John Griffin, Emmett Howard, and Eugene Wright.

The guest departed expressing their thanks for such a wonderful time.

A post office was established in July 1913 and R. K Thomas ran the post office in the general store. His son Earnest Thomas took his father's place until February 1925, when it closed and was moved to Frisco.

In 1914, a cotton gin was built and burned in 1925. In 1925 there were two general stores, and a population of 30. The population in 1947 was 47 and listed two businesses. The local Home Demonstration Club or Homemaking Club met at the school in a little shed by the school where there were big canners. The women of the community would meet there to can the fruits and vegetables they had grown in their gardens.



This business was operated by Bill and Joe Griffin. Joe operated an Oldsmobile dealership in Plano for many years.

The Camey Spur continued to be used by local families for many years. In the early 1930's, John A. Griffin bought a combine. It was shipped on a railroad flat car and off sided at Camey Spur. Mr. Griffin and others came to off load and assemble the combine, when they finished it weighted 9000 lbs. He didn't own anything that would pull it, so he went to Dallas and bought a Case tractor that could pull it. No one knows if it was brought to Camey by rail, but the tractor is displayed as decoration in the parking lot of the Prairie House Restaurant on Hwy 380, as shown in the picture below.



The cotton gin, school, grain elevator and general stores disappeared. The town began to fade away in the late 1940's and today is part of The Colony, although it was originally intended to be in the 100 square miles charted by Frisco leaders in the 1890's. It became part of The Colony at the request of that town.

* * * * *

Notable Camey Families:

Chester Mays: Chester lived in Camey with his family, who leased a farm and later moved to downtown Frisco. The Walter and Thelma Mays home on Oak Street received a Heritage Association of Frisco marker in April, 2023. They purchased the home in 1932. At that time, Chester was a pitcher for a semi-professional team here in Frisco after spending the 1931 season with the Omaha Packers, a farm team for the Detroit Tigers. He passed away in 1948 at the age of 40 due to complications from a brain tumor. Two of his siblings were still living in “Camey” at the time of his death.

Chester Mays, 40, of Dallas, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Mays of Frisco, died in a Dallas hospital Sunday afternoon following a lingering illness from a brain tumor. He is survived by his wife and small daughter of Dallas; his parents and the following brothers and sisters: Buford and Jesse Mays, Camey; W. D. and Elkin, Frisco; Mrs. Mary Gary, Denton; Mrs. Aline Fuqua, Justin; Avery, W. E. and Mrs. Evelyn Woods of Dallas. Funeral service was held Tuesday afternoon at 2 p. m. at University Park, Dallas.

Northcutt: The Northcutt family settled in Texas following the Civil War as everything they had in Tennessee had been destroyed. William Roy “Roy” Northcutt was born here in 1890 and later went on to own the Northcutt Garage (SE corner of 5th and Main, still standing) and was the first Frisco Fire Chief. Bio from the 1976 Frisco history follows. The family moved to Lebanon and then Frisco.



The Northcutt Home — South of Frisco, near Camey.

Sunday mornings the family attended the Methodist church in Frisco; their older children were workers in the young peoples organization known then as the Epworth League. Quite often the preacher and his family were dinner guests in the home. The afternoon was often spent taking pictures, playing ball, followed by homemade ice cream and cake.

Mr. and Mrs. Nixon were the parents of twelve children, six boys and six girls. Two expired in infancy. The youngest son, Clinton, was killed in a freak accident December 24, 1955. The oldest son, Wilson, passed away October 1958. Mr. Nixon passed away July 27, 1965. Mrs. Nixon passed away April 28, 1968. Their living children are: Lillie Alexander of Mesquite, Lonnie Nixon of McKinney, Allie McCormick of Frisco, Eula Wrye of Dallas, Clarence Nixon of Big Spring, Opal Blacketer of Allen, Farris Nixon of Fort Worth, and Fern Coulter of Frisco. There are 74 descendants from the union of Mr. and Mrs. Nixon.

— Mrs. Roy Colter

WILLIAM ROY NORTHCUTT FAMILY

William Roy Northcutt was born February 3, 1890, five miles south of Frisco on a farm, to Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Northcutt.

Nona Ogle was born February 5, 1897, in Fort Worth, the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. J. M. Ogle.

Roy went to Lebanon, for his first three years of school, and then Roy and Nona both went to the Old Howard School that was located on what is now the corner of North County Road and Maple Streets in Frisco.

Roy was fire chief of the Frisco Fire Department from the very beginning. Frisco's first fire truck was a Model T Ford chemical truck. Later a Stutz fire truck was added which had a hose that

would hook up to the newly installed fire plugs.

Roy and Nona were married October 31, 1915, in Frisco, in the Ogle home. They lived in a house that Roy had moved to Frisco from Lebanon. After the death of Roy's parents, they moved to the Northcutt home place which is located at the corner of Maple and Sixth Streets.

Roy constructed a building that was a service station and automobile repair shop in 1914. This is still in use at what is now the corner of Fifth and Main Streets. He was also a wholesale agent for The Cities Service Oil Company at this same time. This meant that he delivered gasoline and oil to the farmers, as well as selling gasoline through the pumps at the station. When he first went into business, his mode of transportation was Model T trucks which carried gasoline in ten gallon cans. In 1917, he added a storage room onto his station. The purpose for adding the storage room was to store cars for other people because cars came to Frisco before the streets were paved and the people walked to their homes. The only all weather street was Main Street, and the streets that were good black land stayed muddy much of the time. Roy charged \$2.50 a month for storing each car. Later he changed to Gulf gasoline and oil products. Nona worked as Roy's bookkeeper for thirty years until his retirement.

Roy played the bass horn. He was a member of the Lebanon band, the Frisco band, and the Collin County band. These bands played for numerous activities and parades each year.

Roy was Worshipful Master of Lebanon Lodge No. 837.

One Christmas Eve Roy played Santa Claus to the largest Christmas tree ever placed in downtown Frisco. It was interrupted by a fire and he had to change clothes and be fire chief. There

was no doubt about who was Santa Claus that year.

Roy and Nona were members of the Central Christian Church. Nona was very active in all phases of church activities and was a Sunday School teacher all of her adult life. In 1952, the Nona Northcutt Auxiliary was organized by the women of the church in her honor.

Nona was president of the Frisco P.T.A. for one term.

To this union two children were born, a daughter Mary Ogle and a son Jack Maynard Northcutt.

Mary Ogle married W. E. (Gene) Yarbrough of Yellville, Arkansas, January 29, 1944. To this union were born two children: Mary Sue and Roy Gene.

Mary Sue married David Allen Watson, of Stephenville, August 19, 1966. Their two children are Mary D'Ann and Allen Gene Watson.

Roy Gene married Deborah Hughes of Frisco, October 10, 1970.

Jack married DeLoyis Hill of Frisco, August 9, 1941. To this union was born one son Michael Ogle Northcutt.

Michael Ogle married Cheryl Tesmer of Richardson, October 9, 1971.

Roy Northcutt died January 29, 1946, and Nona Northcutt died March 26, 1954.

Mary and Gene Yarbrough
Jack and D. Northcutt



Although Camey Spur was the official name, locals also called it Camey Switch or simply Camey. The following article is from the 1976 Frisco history book and is one of the many biographies that mentions Camey. (Begins at the second half of column 2)

(weather permitting). Tuesday was ironing day. Oh, those starched shirts and linen suits that had to be ironed! The old cedar tree, though almost gone, is the only reminder of the Malone hill and its many activities.

I want to mention one more thing which stands out in my memory as a child. It was the cooperation of neighbors when there was tragedy or illness in the area. All farmers would take tractors to the neighbor's farm to prepare, to plant, or to do what was needed at the time. Often there were as many as six or nine tractors working the same field.

These were routine things. They really weren't so bad. Those days working together were happy days.

— Mrs. Louise Malone Henley

LOCAL BANKER SAYS CONDITIONS ARE GOOD

Joe Self, genial cashier of the State bank, reports a most healthy condition prevailing in this territory, if he can read the signs of the times correctly. Mr. Self has come in direct contact with numbers of men, during the short while he has been with us, who have done what seemed to them to be utterly impossible heretofore, and that was to make a crop without the usual large overhead expense, which many of us had permitted to gain the upper hand of us. The farmers are now in better condition in every respect than they have been in many years, because they know there is a tremendously brighter future for them individually than they had been able to foresee. They know that it is possible to make a good crop on very little cash outlay, and that the returns are mostly their own. Mr. Self notes another feature which is a highly prosperous indication. Most people are either paying

their debts, or are making good payments, thereby reducing their indebtedness very much. In past years, crop conditions here had been such that very few, if any, were in a position to make a payment on any debt. There was not sufficient capital to buy household necessities, gather the crops and have anything left, but this year it is slightly better in that the grain crop was better than usual, corn did very well, and nearly everybody had a little cotton, such as it is. It is the exception now to find the man who has not been able to do something with his old accounts. Next year should see a return to the normal conditions which prevailed here when everyone had a few dollars to spare all the time and were making fairly good progress, buying a small farm, or a home, and gradually paying it out as the crops came in. The local territory has passed its worst, and a little study will prove to anyone that each year we are making just a little bit more than the year preceding. Therefore, 1930 will be a good year for our people.

Taken from *The Frisco Journal* dated Friday, September 13, 1929.

A LITTLE PLACE CALLED CAMEY

Located in an area far from the traffic on Preston Road is a place called Camey. I remember living there as a child. The peace and quiet was a far cry from that of most areas today.

My grandfather and grandmother, Joel and Maranda Howard, with their eldest son, Fred, my father, came to Texas from Monticella, Kentucky, in 1887 and settled in this community. I remember well my father talking about the long trip from Kentucky in a covered wagon. He said when they finally got here, he thought he never wanted to see the inside of a wagon again.

I recall the house my grandparents lived in, the big orchard, the barns, lilac bushes and yellow roses in the yard, the smoke house filled with hams, sausage, lard, and the old wood cook stove in the kitchen with a warming closet where you could always find a treat.

Other families I remember well. To mention a few are the Haggards, Ashlocks, Bridges, Duncans, Cooks, Bishops, Clarks, Chapmans, Pannells, Griffins, Mays, McKamys, McDaniels.

I remember well Tan Haggard who used to ride his horse by our place. He would always stop and chat with Papa. They had been friends since childhood. They went to school at old High Point School together.

I went to school in the first school in Camey which was a little two room frame building. Miss Ruth Haggard was my teacher. About 1918 or 1920 the brick school building was built. It was the pride of the community. The old building was then used for a church, known as Camey Baptist Church. A new church house has been built, but the school house has long since been torn down.

There was a grocery store, a gin, and the little depot where I used to catch the Frisco train to go visit my mother's parents who lived in Carrollton. That was a big deal. The only transportation in my earlier years was by wagon or buggy. I well remember the first Model "T" I ever saw. It was a most powerful thing.

Frisco was the shopping center for all small communities around. I recall what a big time it was to go to Frisco on Saturday evenings to see a movie, to buy an ice cream cone at Curtsinger's Drug Store, and to shop at Martin's Dry Goods Store.

Our doctors lived there too. Dr. J. M. Ogle was our family doctor. We thought he could do anything from delivering babies to curing a sore toe. Other doctors I remem-

ber were Doctors Mallow, Saye and Rogers. They all made house calls then. I can still see Dr. Ogle coming to our house in his buggy.

Our mail was delivered out of Frisco, too. We were on Route # 3. One of our postmen was Carroll Montgomery.

If my father were living today, I think, the two of us could write a book. He lived to be 93 years old and was so alert. During the last few years of his life, he relived all the good years, the lean years, and he remembered all the people we knew — beautiful people who were the salt of the earth. They toiled and earned their living by the sweat of their brow. They had none of the modern conveniences we have today, yet, they had time to visit and to help a neighbor who was in trouble.

I was next to the oldest of the ten children in our family. Eight of us are still living. I've been away from Camey for forty-eight years, and times have changed a lot. I have four children, twelve grandchildren and one great grandchild; but regardless of all the changes, and the many things that have happened through the years, I shall never forget that quiet, peaceful little neighborhood where I grew up — a little place called Camey just south of Frisco. The good Lord smiled on us, prospered us, watched over us and made the people there some of the greatest and friendliest people in the world.

— Mrs. Katie Howard Simmons

BATS IN THE BELFRY

One of the colorful people who had a long serviceable life in Frisco was Dr. W. L. Saye. Not only was he a doctor who went night or day on calls to those in need, but he was an inspiration to his friends with whom he talked and visited. Many, especially men, will ever remember sitting

around the serving tables and drinking cokes and coffee in the Curtsinger Drug Store as they listened to Dr. Saye tell stories of his adventures and from his readings. Stories from "Tales of the Yukon" were favorites and he could quote from the poems written about the Yukon Territory. In fact, my brother, Jimmie, had heard and enjoyed these so often that he, too, could quote some himself.

The story that meant most to me, however, and one which I told many times to my children in my teaching experience, was about the "Bats in the Belfry." It had to do with how words changed their meanings down through the years of usage. The word "batty" is the subject of this story. For a person to be "batty," he was once considered to be very smart and brilliant, but in our time a "batty" person is one who is referred to as being confused and crazy.

I do not remember the name of the Greek philosopher who wrote the story of the "Bats in the Belfry," neither have I read the story, but I do remember how Dr. Saye told it.

The great Greek philosophers tried to explain difficult concepts, such as how do people think? or how do people remember? This philosopher explained his theory as to how people remembered facts they had learned. He said that an infant is born without any knowledge. His head or cranium was referred to as his belfry, the highest part of his body, and it was like a vacuum. As he learned things he put these facts in his belfry. For facts to stay there he described them as wads or "bats," which must have been terminology of that day, and these "bats" were attached to something like hooks in the belfry so that they could not be lost. As a person learned facts, he put each on a hook in his belfry; thus, a person who had a lot of "bats"

in his "belfry" had a lot of knowledge and information he could recall, and he was known to be "batty." Some "bats" were not hooked, therefore could not be retained in the "belfry;" thus they could not be recalled or remembered. It was a real compliment in those days to be "batty." Is it today?

An interesting experience once in my teaching, after telling this story to a class, was the finding of a cartoon one of my students had drawn as I told the story. The cartoon had a big head drawn with all the features of a person. Through the head was a big hole and little bats, animals, were shown flying in and out of the holes. The caption of the cartoon was "Bats won't stay in my belfry."

I suppose the point of the story was understood by at least, some of the students.

— Izetta Sparks

