

9. The children and grandchildren of Elijah Franklin Smith and Fanny Elam Morris

9. Elijah Franklin Smith 24 MAR 1862 • Pleasanton, TX - 9 OCT 1928 • Bryson, Jack, TX
 Fanny Elam Morris 29 SEP 1866 • Atlanta, GA - 7 MAR 1953 • Graham, Young, TX
 Marriage: 14 Nov 1886 • Content, Runnels, TX



Elijah and Fannie around 1890 from my personal family photos. They were my great grandparents.

Elijah arrived early in the Civil War days, so he was technically born in the Confederate States of America. He came a couple of years after Sophronia and a couple of years before the twins Jesse Robert and Benjamin Benton in 1867. With the five-year gap between Elijah and the twins, I speculate that Elizabeth may have had another child

that did not survive as she had been on a pretty regular two-year cycle and a birth in 1865 would have been in keeping with the standard. Who knows? Since Elizabeth died before 1900, we do not have a way to confirm.

60. Elijah Franklin Smith 2 OCT 1896 • Bryson, TX - 11 FEB 1974 • Wichita Falls, TX
 Frances Alma Griggers 18 MAY 1898 • Throckmorton, TX - 17 AUG 1977 • Odessa, TX
 Marriage: 15 May 1926 • Young, TX



Frank, Della, Arthur, Jesse, and Sam Smith. All the kids except Ora and Arthur.

Personal family photo – Richard Bills

Elijah Franklin who went by Frank, was the 5th child of Elijah and Fannie, likely arriving after the death of another sibling. After appearing in the 1910 Census, Frank next shows up in the WW1 Draft Registration. He was 21 and was working in Burkburnett, TX for B.A. Freeman. The portion with his physical characteristics were not filled out. Burkburnett is just north of Wichita Falls which is north of the family home in Bryson. He ended up getting drafted and

served with the 165th Dep Brig from 4 Sep 1918 to 22 Dec 1918. Having been drafted as the war was ending, he never deployed. I have not found him in 1920 so he may have been celebrating.

Children of Frank and Alma Griggs Smith

222	Mary Frances Smith	1927	2011	Eliza and France's Child#1
223	Patsy Ruth Smith	1928	2018	Eliza and France's Child#2
224	Bettie Ann Smith	1932	1951	Eliza and France's Child#3
225	Barbara Smith	1938	1988	Eliza and France's Child#4

222. Mary Frances Smith 12 JUN 1927 • Olney, TX - 11 FEB 2011 • Pecos, TX
 Bobby Ray Ponder 4 JAN 1924 • Electra, TX - 3 JUL 2001 • Graham, TX
 Marriage: 26 Feb 1948 • Wichita Falls, TX



Mary Frances and Bobby from Findagrave.

Mary was the first child born to Frank and Alma arriving in Jun 1927 while they lived on the family farm near Bryson in Jack County. She arrived about a year after her grandfather's death in 1926 and was joined the following year with a little sister, Patty Ruth. In looking at yearbooks, I was surprised to see that Mary and Patty ended up in the same high school graduation class. By the time of the 1940 Census, she had two more sisters, Betty Ann arriving in 1933 and Barbara in 1936. The oil boom had hit Jack County during this period, and Elijah had gone to work in the oilfield, but they were still living on the family farm on Rock Creek Road. Her father was too old to have been drafted and had done his time in WW1, but the effects of the war were felt in the community with many of the young men and women enlisting in the service. The 4 girls were working their way through school and in 1947, Mary and Patty graduated from Bryson HS. In the Class Will, she willed her ability to smile at everyone to Mary Thurman. Judging from the credits, Mary was a little more subdued than her little sister who seems to have been a fireball. Mary participated in Future Homemakers and Girl's Reserve, while Patty was a multi-sport athlete and on the Yearbook Staff. In the class prophecy, *Mary Frances Smith is a social secretary to Mrs. Augustus Selvester Vanderbilt III of Dallas. She always sees to it that Mrs. Vanderbilt serves Coca-Cola at her parties.*



Meanwhile, while all of this was going on in Bryson, Mary's future husband, Bobby Ponder was growing up in nearby Wichita Falls. Bobby appears to have been the youngest son of Arthur and Claudie Garner Ponder. His father had been the oldest sibling in his family while Bobby was the youngest, although he did have a brother born after him that died at birth. A funny aside about his birth certificate is that the original was so poorly written, that his parents had to file an amendment at a later day to clarify names and dates. He had 4 older sisters and 1 older brother. I cannot find him in 1940 Census or any high school records, but in 1942, he did the WW2 Draft Registration while hanging out in Oklahoma with his middle sister, Bessie who had married George Molloy, a young man from Arkansas who was working in the Oklahoma oilfields. Bobby was unemployed and in 1943, He was selected to join the ranks of young men heading off to war. He served from 9 Feb 1943 to 16 Dec 1945. I have been unable to find any military records or news articles about Bobby's service, but based on his future career, my suspicion is that he was probably a truck driver in some capacity. What I did find was that his brother in 1940 was in St Elmo, Fayette, Illinois and his draft registration indicated that his father was there also. George Molloy's records indicate that he had also been there in 1940, so I suspect that is where Bobby had been but the census remains elusive.

Upon his return from the service, Mary and Bobby got married in Wichita Falls, TX on 26 Feb 1948 which was less than a month after my parents married in Graham. The 1950 Census found Bobby and Mary living in Graham with Mary's grandmother, Fannie Smith, Elijah's widow. They must have just moved there in 1950 as their first son, Franklin had been born in 1949 in Wichita Falls in 1949. Their 2nd son, David was born in Graham about 3 months after I was born in Andrews. By 1954, they had moved to Midland where son Charles was born. This was about the same time that the Ellis's moved to Midland from Alaska. Mary Ponder and Mary Butler were cousins. James Harold Ponder arrived in Midland in 1957 about the same time as Vicki Ellis arrived. Finally, daughter Leshya was born in Midland in 1961. I noticed that Charles was a sophomore at Midland High when Cindy Ellis was a Senior. I wonder if these cousins knew each other?

As usual, my records on Mary and Bobby get a little scarce after the 1960's and I'm forced to rely on obituaries and their children's records. Bobby and Mary moved back to Bryson in their later years and then Graham. Bobby died in 2001 and his obituary reads:

Bobby Ray Ponder GRAHAM

Bobby Ray Ponder, 77, a retired oil field truck driver, died Tuesday, July 3, 2001, at a local care center." Funeral: 2 p.m. Friday at Eastside Church of Christ with Dick Stovall, officiating. Burial: Rock Creek Cemetery in Jack County. Bobby Ray Ponder was born Jan. 4, 1924, in Electra to the late Arthur Homer and Claudia Bell Garner Ponder.

He was an Army veteran of World War II. He married Mary Frances Smith on Feb. 26, 1948, in Wichita Falls and moved to Graham from Bryson in 1990. He was a member of the Eastside Church of Christ.

He was preceded in death by a son, granddaughter and four sisters. Survivors: Wife, Mary F. Ponder of Graham; sons, David R. Ponder of Midland, Charles E. Ponder of Wichita Falls, James A. Ponder of Fort Stockton; daughter, Leshya Anne Lockridge of Graham; brother, Bud Ponder of Graham; nine grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Morrison Funeral Home Graham, (940) 549-2121.

From this we note that one of their children died before 2001 which will be discussed later and that their daughter was married and living in Graham. He still gives no clues as to his WW2 Service.

Mary followed Bobby in death about 10 years later in 2011. Her obituary reads:

Mary F. Ponder, 83

Mary F. Ponder, 83, passed away Friday, February 11, 2011 in Pecos, Texas. Funeral services will be held Tuesday, February 15, 2011 at 11:00 a.m. in Eastside Church of Christ with Dick Stovall of Graham officiating. Burial will follow in Rock Creek Cemetery in Jack County, Texas. Arrangements are under the direction of Morrison Funeral Home.

Mary was born June 12, 1927 in Olney, Texas to the late Elijah Franklin and Alma Francis (Griggers) Smith. She married Bobby Ray Ponder, February 26, 1948 in Wichita Falls. He preceded her in death July 3, 2001. Mary moved to Graham in 1990 from Bryson. She was a homemaker and a member of Eastside Church of Christ.

Survivors include; three sons, David R. Ponder and wife Valerie of Midland, Charles E. Ponder and wife Vicki of Wichita Falls, and James H. Ponder and wife Paula of Fort Stockton; daughter, Leshya Anne Foster and husband Rodger of Graham; ten grandchildren, Kristy Halverson, Tessa Freeman and Marty, Tara Bratcher and Casey all of Lubbock, David R. Ponder, Jr. of Midland, Charis L. Ponder and Frank Stevens of Oklahoma, Jerry R. Lockridge of Graham, Terry A. Lockridge and Kay of Graham, Amanda N. Turner and Lonnie of McKinney, Jacque Y. Hazzard and David of Graham, Paul Foster and Sherry of Bryson; twenty great grandchildren, five great great grandchildren; sister, Patsy Wolfe and husband Walter of Wichita Falls; numerous nieces and nephews also survive.

Mary was preceded in death by a son, Franklin Arthur Smith, two sisters, Barbara Smith and Betty Blanchett, and a granddaughter, Jessica Sue Ponder. The family will be at Morrison Funeral Home Monday from 6 to 8 p.m. to greet visitors.

From this obituary we can determine that she had 3 living sons in 2011 and we know their wives first names. We see that her daughter has remarried as she was previously Leshya Lockridge and is now married to Rodger Foster. Sorting through the grandchildren will be attempted. She also has a sister Patsy married to Walter Wolfe. It looks like she may have been living with her son in Fort Stockton when she died in Pecos.

Beginning with Frank, it was noted that he died before his father. I found his obituary and it reads:

Frank A. Ponder

GRAHAM, Texas - Frank A. Ponder, 48, died Monday, Nov. 10, 1997, in Amarillo, Texas. Graveside services will be at 2 p.m. Thursday in Rock Creek Cemetery in Jack County, Texas, with Glen Walton of Amarillo officiating. Arrangements are under the direction of Morrison Funeral Home in Graham.

Mr. Ponder was born Jan. 16, 1949, in Wichita Falls. He was raised in Midland, Texas, and was a veteran of the Navy, serving in Vietnam. He was a former resident of Lubbock, Texas, where he worked as a computer repairman. He was a member of the Church of Christ.

Survivors include three daughters, Kristy Halverson, Tessa Freeman and Tara Baker, all of Lubbock; his parents, Bobby Ray and Mary Ponder of Graham; three brothers, David Ray of Midland, Charles Edward of Wichita Falls and James Harold of Fort Stockton, Texas; a sister, Leshya Anne Lockridge of Graham; and six grandchildren.

Looking at his record, I note that he should have been in the class of 1968 in Midland High School, but he does not appear in it. He enlisted in the Navy in Nov 1968 at the height of the Vietnam War. Probably while in training in 1970, he married Connie Riggs of Midland and they later divorced in Oregon in 1976 about the time that he left the Navy. She later married Ronnie Halverson and I suspect that Kristy, Tessa, and Tara were his children with Connie, but later adopted by Ronnie. With him in the Navy, it is not known where they were born. Bobby and Mary were in Graham as was his little sister while his brothers were in Midland, Wichita Falls, and Midland. He had a brief marriage with Janice Tull in Odessa in 1982 to 1983.

David Ponder Shows to have been a graduate of Midland High School in 1971 where he played football and ran track and was involved in FFA. In 1974, he married Valerie Moron from Uvalde who was quite a bit older than him and had been briefly married before. They had a son David Jr in 1976 which accounts for one of the grandchildren. He is probably still in Midland.

Charles should have been in the Class of 1973 at Midland HS, but does not appear in that yearbook. He was in the 1971 yearbook as a sophomore. He died in 2020 in Wichita Falls. His obituary reads:

Obituary for Charles Edward Ponder

Charles Edward Ponder, 66, passed away Thursday, September 17, 2020 in Wichita Falls. Graveside services will be held Monday, September 21, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. in Rock Creek Cemetery in Jack County, Texas under the direction of Morrison Funeral Home. Charles was born June 10, 1954 in Midland to the late Bobby Ray and Mary Francis (Smith) Ponder. He married Victoria Lynn Fox November 14, 2015 in Laughlin, Nevada. Survivors include: wife, Victoria Ponder of Wichita Falls; daughters, Charis Stevens and husband, Frank of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, LaDonna Gentry and husband, Ricky of Knox, Indiana, and Dora Odom of Wichita Falls; sons, Billy Jack Henry of Hawaii and Johnathon Henry and wife, Brook of Lubbock; sister, Leshya Foster and husband, Roger of Gainesville; brothers, David Ray Ponder and wife, Valerie of Midland, Jimmy Harold Ponder and wife, Paula of Fort Stockton; 14 grandchildren, three great grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by brother, Franklin Arther Ponder and niece, Jessica Sue Ponder. Memorials may be made to American Cancer Society or Alzheimer's Association.

His is a rather convoluted obituary. From what I have been able to determine, he married someone named Cecelia in 1978 and divorced in 1981 with no children. He then married Rhonda Hughes in 1982 and had two children, Frank Jr and La Donna and maybe Charis. He had a marriage in 1991 to 2004 with Karen Haswell. They had no children. She had been married previously with not children. Finally, in 2015 he married Victoria Fox. She had been previously married to Joah Henry and had at least two children, Billy Jack and Johnathan. I haven't figured out who Dora Odom is, but perhaps another of Victoria's children. It is confusing.

James Harold should have been in the Class of 1975 at Midland HS but like his brothers, does not appear in the yearbook. I wonder if his name had anything to do with my mother's brother James Harold who died as an infant. He married in 1982 to Paula Diane Brockman of Fort Stockton. He had graduated from Midland HS and completed his BS at Tarleton State. They moved to Fort Stockton. I have not identified any children that they had out of the 10 grandchildren mentioned, but I suspect that one or two of them belong to James and Paula. I also suspect that Mary was living with them in her final years.

Leshya looks like she would have been in the class of 1977 at Midland HS and in 1980 in Odessa, she married Jerry Bruce Lockridge and they had 4 children between 1981 and 1986 before divorcing in 1999. These children appear to be Jerry, Terry, Jacque, and Amanda which account for 4 of the 10 grandchildren. Per her brother's obituary she married someone named Roger Foster. In breaking news, she died in Sep 2024 in Collins County at the age of 63. Her obituary reads:

Leshya Anne Foster

Leshya Anne Foster (Ponder), affectionately known as Mema, passed away on September 2, 2024, at the age of 63 in Blue Ridge, Texas. Born on August 23, 1961, in Midland, Texas, Leshya was a vibrant and outgoing individual known for her bubbly spirit and readiness to support others. Her warmth, humor, and non-judgmental nature made her a beloved figure among all who knew her.

Leshya is survived by a loving family: her children, Christina Dunaway of Dayton, Ohio; Chris and Gina Foster of North Richland Hills, Texas, Paul Foster of Bryson, Texas; Jerry Ray Lockridge and Ginnie Maldonado of Little Rock, Arkansas, Terry Lockridge of Stephenville, Texas, Lonnie and Amanda Turner of Blue Ridge, Texas, Billy and Jacque Villa of Black Hawk, Colorado, and brothers David and Valarie Ponder of Midland, Texas, James and Paula Ponder of Fort Stockton, Texas. She also leaves behind 13 grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. Leshya was preceded in death by her husband, Rodger Foster; her parents, Bobby and Mary Ponder; brothers, Frank and Charles Ponder; niece, Jessica Sue Ponder; and nephew, Nathan Bryan Freeman.

A memorial service to celebrate Leshya's life will be 2:00 PM Saturday, September 21, 2024 at the First Baptist Church of Bryson, Texas. Morrison Funeral Home of Graham, Texas is assisting the family with the arrangements.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that contributions be made to a local cancer society in memory of Leshya. Her generous spirit and loving nature will be deeply missed but forever cherished in the memories of those she touched. To send flowers to the family in memory of Leshya Anne Foster, please visit our flower store.

Unraveling all of her children will take some effort. I suspect some were children that Rodger brought to the marriage, but I have not sorted all of that out. I found Rodger's obituary. It reads:

Rodger Foster

Rodger Lavour Foster, 68, passed away Friday, March 3, 2023 in Denton. Memorial services will be held Saturday, March 25, 2023 at 2 p.m. in the First Baptist Church in Bryson.

Rodger was born October 7, 1954 in Gainesville to the late Lloyd Leon and Helen Ruth (Berry) Foster. He married Leshya Anne Ponder February 14, 2002 in Graham.

Survivors include: wife, Leshya Foster of Gainesville; daughters, Christina Dunaway of Dayton, Ohio, Amanda Turner and husband, Lonnie of Blue Ridge, and Jacque Villa and husband, Billy of Blackhawk, Colorado; sons, Chris Foster and wife, Gina of North Richland Hills, Paul Foster of Bryson, Brian Peles and wife, Crystal of Gainesville, Jerry R. Lockridge and wife, Ginnie of Arkansas, and Terry Lockridge of Stephenville; sister, Movita Harris of Gainesville; 14 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by sister, Bettie Segars and brother, Lloyd Duke Foster.

I don't know a whole lot about Rodger apart from the fact that Leshya was his 5th wife and he had at least one child from his previous marriages.

Children of Bobby and Mary Smith Ponder

555	Franklin Arthur Ponder	1949	1997	Mary and Bobby's Child#1
556	David Ray Ponder	1951		Mary and Bobby's Child#2
557	Charles Edward Ponder	1954	2020	Mary and Bobby's Child#3
558	James Harold Ponder	1957		Mary and Bobby's Child#4
559	Leshya Anne Ponder	1961	2024	Mary and Bobby's Child#5

223. Patsy Ruth Smith 24 MAY 1928 • Throckmorton TX - 27 JAN 2018 • Lewisville, TX
 Walter Belton Wolfe 12 NOV 1924 • Joy, TX - 5 APR 2013 • Wichita Falls, TX
 Marriage: 1 Jul 1949 • Wichita Falls, TX



Patsy and Walter's Findagrave Photos.

Patsy was the 2nd child born to Elijah and Alma and she arrived just in the Spring of 1928 to join her older sister Mary. Her early history is detailed above but I will add that she graduated from Bryson HS in 1947 along with her big sister and her credits read:



PATSY SMITH

Basketball, '46-'47; Baseball, '45-'46; Volleyball, '45, '46, '47; Future Homemaker, '45; Annual Staff, '47.

Patsy Ruth Smith wills her ability to have fun in the Study Hall and usually get by with it.

As with her sister, her future husband was growing up in nearby Clay County, which is right next to Wichita County and north of Jack County where Patsy lived. He was the oldest son of William Beryl and Dona McBride Wolfe and he had a younger sister and two younger brothers, Francis, Billy, and Franklin. I got excited when I saw that his mother was a McBride and was hoping for a connection to my great great grandfather, Joseph Butler whose mother married a Giles McBride in Mississippi after the death of his father in the Civil War, but I could not establish any connection.

I haven't found Walter or his family in 1940, but on the last day of 1942 when he was 18, he registered for the WW2 Draft while a student at Midway HS in Joy, TX. He was 5' -5 1/2"-brown eyes and hair-ruddy complexion. Six months later on 24 Jun 1943 he headed to Dallas and enlisted in the Army. His Service Number was 38530931. I have been unable to discover where and for how long he served, but by 1949, he was back in Wichita Falls where on 28 June 1949 he and "Bettye" Smith got a marriage license and per their obituary, they married 1 July 1949. Must have been a typo. For some reason, marriage records have not been found. The 1950 Census found 25-year-old Walter working as a bookkeeper at a retail auto store while Patsy was keeping books at a trucking company. They held up on starting their family until 1961 when daughter Tamera Janiece arrived in 1961 followed by Theresa Gayle in 1963 both in Wichita Falls.

After the 1950 Census as usual, information becomes sketchy. Newspaper searches for Walter Smith get overwhelmed with stories about General Walter Bedell Smith and the Korean War. As such, I will need to resort to obituaries to help fill in the gaps. Walter died in Wichita Falls in 2013 and his obituary reads:

Walter Belton Wolfe, 88, of Wichita Falls, passed away Friday, April 5, 2013

Funeral services will be held at 2:00 p.m. Monday, April 8, 2013 in the chapel of Owens & Brumley Funeral Home with Rev. Glenn Dotson, officiating. Interment will follow at Rock Creek Cemetery in Bryson under the direction of Owens & Brumley Funeral Home of Wichita Falls.

Walter was born in Clay County, Texas on November 12, 1924 to William Beryl and Dona Vesta (McBride) Wolfe. He grew up in the Joy, Texas area and graduated from Midway School in 1943. He served in the United States Army Air Corp during WWII. He later attended Droughan's Business College where he met his future wife, Patsy "Pat" Ruth Smith. Walter and Pat married on July 1, 1949 in Wichita Falls. They were married for over 63 years. Walter worked as Manager of Accounts Receivable for White's Auto Store for 34 years. After retirement, he worked for Smith's Gardentown. He enjoyed teaching Sunday School, fishing, and traveling with his wife and grandchildren. He was actively involved in church activities.

Walter was preceded in death by his parents, Beyrl and Dona Wolfe; his brother, Franklin D. Wolfe; and his brother-in-law, Bill R. Graham.

He is survived by his wife, Patsy Smith Wolfe; his daughter, Tamera Wolfe, and Theresa Gayle Daniels and husband Joe; his grandchildren, Angelica McCormick and husband Patrick, Aaron Jones, and Ashley Jones; numerous step-grandchildren; his brother, Billy Keith Wolfe and wife Dorothy; his sister, LaVern Graham; sister-in-law, Mary Wolfe; his aunt, Ester McBride; and numerous nieces and nephews.

From his obituary we can deduce that they only had two daughters and that Tamera is either not married or divorced, while Theresa is married to Joe Daniels. My suspicion is that Tamera may have been married to someone named Jones, hence the grandchildren, Aaron and Ashley. They could also be children of a first marriage of Theresa. I did look for some clues from his family which didn't yield anything except for the sad fact that his brother Billy Keith lost a grandson in Iraq in 2016. Let me look at Patsy's obituary from 2018 to see if any more clues develop. It reads:

Patsy Ruth (Smith) Wolfe, 89, of Lewisville, Texas passed away at her daughter's home on Saturday, January 27, 2018 with her family by her side. The family will receive friends between 6 and 8 P.M. on Thursday, February 1, 2018 at Owens and Brumley Funeral Home in Wichita Falls. Funeral services will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, February 2, 2018 at Owens and Brumley Funeral Home in Wichita Falls with Rev. Ruben Saucedo, officiating. Interment will follow at Rock Creek Cemetery in Bryson under the direction of Owens and Brumley Funeral Home of Wichita Falls.

Patsy was born on May 24, 1928 in Throckmorton County, Texas to the late Frank and Alma (Griggers) Smith. She grew up in the Bryson area and graduated from Bryson High School. She met Walter B. Wolfe while attending Draughon's Business College. The love of her life proposed to her at the Casa Mana restaurant and they married on July 1, 1949 in Wichita Falls and spent the next 63 years together. Patsy worked for the Wichita Falls School district in the cafeteria, and also wanted to help serve the Lord working at the Western Christian foundation as a typist. She enjoyed fishing, being an active member of her church, and traveling with the grandchildren. Patsy will truly be missed by her family and friends.

Along with her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Walter Wolfe and her three sisters Mary Ponder, Barbara Smith, and Betty Ann Blanchett.

Patsy is survived by her two children, Tamera Wolfe and Therese Davila and husband Joe; grandchildren Angelica McCormick and husband Patrick, their son, Liam, Aaron and wife Vickie, their daughter, Ashley Ray; and numerous nieces, nephews and friends.

As of 2018, daughter Tamara is still not married while Theresa has a new husband, Joe Davila. Granddaughter Angelica and her husband Patrick are still married while they have a new son Liam and a married son Aaron who has a daughter Ashley Ray. I will explore the daughters and see what I can determine.

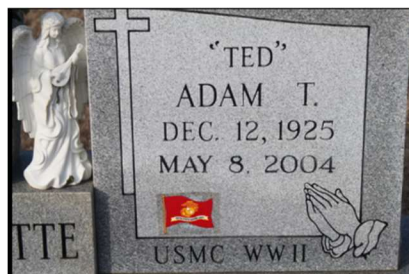
Looking initially at Tamara, I can only find various articles about her being a musician. She seems to have been a good piano player and appeared in various musical productions as well as being a piano teacher. I have not found any evidence of her being married.

I have not been able to confirm information about Theresa apart from the fact that she did marry Joe Davila in 1994. He was a bit older than her and had at least one child from an earlier marriage to Laura Oretaga.

Children of Walter Wolfe and Patsy Ruth Smith

560	Tamera Janiece Wolfe	1961	Patsy and Walter's Child#1
561	Theresa Gayle Wolfe	1963	Patsy and Walter's Child#2

224. Betty Ann Smith 25 MAR 1933 • Bryson, TX - 23 AUG 1951 • Wichita Falls, TX
 Adam Theodore Blanchette 12 DEC 1925 • Lake Charles, LA - 8 MAY 2004 • De Ridder, LA
 Married: Jan 1951 – Wichita Falls, TX – per accident report



Betty's Senior picture from 1950. Ted's grave marker.

The third daughter born to Frank and Alma arrived in March 1933 in Wichita Falls and followed in her two older sisters' footsteps growing up in Bryson. She graduated from Bryson



HS in 1950 and her yearbook her caption was "Never a dull moment" and the Senior Will alluded to her personality. *BETTY SMITH WILLS HER ABILITY TO GET INTO TROUBLE TO CLYDENE MCANEAR*. Like Patsy before her, she was on the girls' basket ball team.

It gets a little confusing at this point. In Aug 1951, Betty was killed in an automobile accident. The article mentions that she had married Adam Blanchette in Jan of that year. The article reads:

Young Wife Dies of Road Injuries.

The young wife of Sheppard AFB sergeant died in Wichita Falls hospital Thursday less than 24 hours after she was injured critically in an automobile crackup on the Sheppard Access, Road Victim was Mrs. Betty Ann Blanchette, a native of Bryson Texas.

The condition of Miss Sue Graham 20 of Rising Star Texas also injured in the mishap was reported slightly Improved at Wichita General Hospital. Both were occupants of car driven by Mrs. Blanchett's husband Sgt Ted Blanchette 25, Texas Highway Patrolman C W Spillar Jr who investigated the accident said Blanchette lost control of his 1946 model car near the intersection of U 8 Highways 281 and 277 about 11:13 pm Wednesday as he was driving toward town. The car which was demolished overturned five times Both Mrs. Blanchette and Miss Graham were thrown clear from the automobile. Mrs. Blanchette sustained head injuries and shock. She never regained consciousness and died about 1:10 pm Thursday. The sergeant and another passenger in the car Miss Janice Davis of Electra were uninjured. The Blanchetts were married January of this year. Born at Bryson, she attended the public there and was graduated high school. He is from Lake Charles, La. They made their home here at 709 Burnett, Miss and Miss Graham also reside at 709 Burnett and are employed at SAFE. Survivors include her husband; parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Smith of Bryson: three sisters. Mrs. Walter R. Wolfe Wichita Falls, Mrs. Bob Ponder of Graham and Miss Barbara Smith of Bryson. Funeral arrangements, under charge of Hampton-Vaughan Merkle Funeral Home, were incomplete.

The reason that I say it gets confusing is when I began looking into her husband. From their birthdates, you can see that he was 8 years older than Betty and digging deeper, he had been previously married to Cordelia Braden and had two sons with her in Dec 1947 and Dec 1948. I then saw that he and Cordelia were not divorced until Jul 1951, a month before the accident and 6 months after his marriage to Betty. I'm not sure how that works. In Mar 1952 he got a marriage license with a Margaret Shoppell in Wichita Falls, but I don't think that they ever married. In 1953 he married Norma Ozan in Louisiana and had a daughters Helen in 1953 in Louisiana and Barbara in 1954 in Orange. He then had Deborah in 1958 in Houston with Ina Morrison but they did not marry until 1960. Finally, he married Patricia Moody in 1971 in Las Vegas. He had been a Marine during WW2, but I did not do a detailed investigation of his service. Given his history after Betty's death, I would suspect that they would not have stayed married, but maybe I'm wrong.

225. **Barbara J Smith** 14 MAY 1935 • Bryson, TX - 4 OCT 1988 • Lakewood, CO
 David B Kurtenbach NOV 1934 • Mitchell, SD - Living
 Marriage: 22 Nov 1958 • Colorado, USA



Barbara from her 1953 Yearbook
 David from Facebook.

Frank and Alma's baby daughter arrived in Bryson in May 1935 and like her older sisters, made her way through school in Bryson. Her High School credits show that she was quite active in school. I did a bit of a scan of the yearbook and it seems that the girls' basketball team was very successful her senior year challenging for the state title. Her credits and senior will are shown below.

BARBARA SMITH

Most Independent Sr. Girl

Basketball 49-53

Baseball 50

Roundup Staff 53

FHA 49-53

Junior Play 52

Senior Play 53

Shirley Harrison receives the honor of being called "Squat," which is left to her by Barbara Smith.

I'm not sure what she did between 1953 and 1958, but in November 1954, she found herself in Colorado Springs, CO where she married David Kurtenbach at Ent AFB which I had never heard of, but you can read about here. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ent_Air_Force_Base. David was a young man from Mitchell, SD who had enlisted in the Airforce in 1954 shortly after graduating from Mitchell HS. They had the following children - Elaine Kurtenbach in 1959, Susan Kurtenbach in 1962 and Linda Kurtenbach in 1967. With David being in the Airforce, I am not sure where the girls were born.

From what I can determine, David remained in the Airforce until about 1975 and retired as a Staff SGT. In 1973, he and Barbara divorced. Barbara died in 1988 and he obituary reads:

Barabra Smith, Graham

GRAHAM, Texas (Special) - Barbara Griggers Smith 53, of Englewood, Colo., died Monday in a Lakewood, Colo., hospital. Services will be at 10 a.m. Saturday at First Baptist Church in Bryson, Texas, with the Rev. Milton Capps, pastor, officiating. Burial will be in Rock Creek Cemetery under the direction of Morrison Funeral Home. Smith was born May 14, 1935, in Texas. She was a Baptist.

Survivors include three daughters, Susan Kurtenbach and Linda Kurtenbach, both of Englewood, and Elaine Kurtenbach of Tokyo, Japan; and two sisters, Mary Ponder of Bryson and Pat Wolffe of Wichita Falls.

Lakewood, CO is a city adjacent to Denver on the west side of Denver. I have not found Barbara's death records, but based on some comments on some of her children's Facebook pages, I believe that she died of cancer. She was only 53. *My plan will allow Medicare to cover in-home health care for seniors. This is a matter of dignity, and it's born out of a personal experience, after I cared for my mother after her cancer diagnosis.*

In tracing the daughters, it seems that the oldest Elaine is a prominent reporter for the Associated Press and covers Asia. If I search Newspapers, I find multiple articles in current newspapers with her byline. Her online biography reads:

Elaine Kurtenbach is the Asia business editor for The Associated Press. She has worked in Hong Kong, Tokyo, Shanghai and Beijing and is now based in Bangkok at the AP's regional headquarters. Reporting assignments have taken her to North Korea, Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos, Mongolia and other major regional capitals.

Kurtenbach was born and raised in Colorado. She earned a BA in comparative politics at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut and a MS in agriculture and resource economics at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii. She hikes and gardens every chance she gets.

Daughter Susan who is on Facebook lives in Littleton, CO and area southeast of Denver where she married Kirk Buhre in 2009. Her sister, Linda is married to someone named Frazier and while she is on Facebook, she has not shared much information. It appears that she probably lives in Golden and likes cats. In looking at Facebook, there are a lot of people that I recognize, but do not know. There is a Roger Kurtenbach who may be a brother or step brother. They are also friends with many of their Ponder cousins on Facebook, but I did not see any connection to the Wolfe girls.

Children of Frank and Alma Griggs Smith

562	Elaine Kurtenbach	1959	Barbara and David's child#1
563	Susan Kurtenbach	1962	Barbara and David's child#2
564	Linda Kurtenbach	1967	Barbara and David's child#3

This completes my exploration of the Elijah Franklin and Alma Griggers Smith. It was completed on 30 Nov 2024. As usual, should you have any updates, corrections, or additions do not hesitate to contact me at rbills_houston@yahoo.com.