

The following letter (date unknown) was written by George Abb Bumgarner (1883 - 1957) to his half sister, Martha [Elizabeth (Bumgarner) Wallen (1897 - 1961)].

Well, Martha you know my father had three sisters and four brothers. The brothers' names were Milton, Abb, Ezra, Matt, and Dad's name was John Hubbard. He was the youngest of the family so they tell me. The girls' names were Caroline, Eliza and Rebecca.

Aunt Caroline married a man by the name of E.P. Folly. They had seven children -- five girls and two boys. The girls were Ella, Mollie, Alice, Orpha and Nettie; the boys were John and Eddie.

Eliza married a Kaiser and there were two boys -- Jim and Andrew Kaiser. He died and she married McCluskey, and two were born -- Green and Mary (May). May was the oldest. McCluskey was killed by the Comanche Indians and then she married a man by the name of Houx. Two girls were born whose names were Nellie and Odie Houx. Eliza died and they say Houx was a mean man, drank and gambled, so Jim and Andrew Kaiser left home and went to the Black Hills. That is the last that was ever heard of them. Houx was no good, but he had a brother in Missouri and he took the two girls to his brother and wanted him to keep them. His brother was a good man and he told him he would take the girls if he would get lost and never come around them -- that he would raise them right. Houx made his promise, left and he kept his bargain because he was never seen nor heard of again.

When George and I went to Kansas City in 1895 with a bunch of cattle we went out to see George's Mother. She had married a man by the name of Root. They moved from Okla. to Missouri and Big George was living with us. We saw those two girls while we were there. You see, Big George's Father was killed before George was born. George's Mother's own cousin killed Matt (George's Father). The man that killed Matt was Joe Christian. He was harelipped. One day Joe Christian came by Matt's place and Matt's dog ran out, barked at him and Christian cursed the dog so Matt mocked him. Then Christian cursed Matt, and said he would go home and get his gun and kill him. So one word led to another -- he did get his rifle, slipped up and killed Matt. Joe Christian went to the pen for a long time and when he was out was married and had a family. When I came to Texas I went with one of his girls. He worked in the mines at Rock Creek and I've been in his home a lot of times. He told me he was young and a fool and he was so sorry.

Milton Bumgarner was killed in the war. Your Aunt Rebecca Bumgarner married a man by the name of Reed. Your Uncle Ezra lived with them, but was called into the army and was gone for three years. In the meantime, your Aunt Rebecca dies. Ezra had a feather bed at Reed's so when Ezra came back from the war he went over to get his feather bed. A few days later someone went to Reed's, but they were gone and Ezra was dead. He had been killed by Reed and two other men with his own gun. Well, our Daddy was out on the frontier with the Rangers when he heard of it he came home. Our Daddy was always fond of horses and had some of the best. He offered the best horse he had to anyone that could tell him where Reed was or could be found. An Irish soldier left, then came back in two or three weeks and told Daddy he had located the Reed bunch. Daddy then went on the hunt for Reed. They found the three camped (three men and three women) in a shack just across the Red River in the Indian Territory. My Mother's Father was a Captain in the Southern Army and heard that the Irish and Daddy were on the trace of Reed and his two buddies so went to join them. Daddy wanted Captain Miller to go back but Miller wouldn't do it. Daddy made him and the Irish promise to take no hand in the fight as long as he was alive. Captain Miller told Daddy's sister that he nor the Irish never fired a shot -- our Daddy got all three of them. The women they say were no good, ran off, and Daddy pinned a note on the cabin door saying 'these men were horse thieves from Texas'. This was before my Daddy was married. Grandfather Miller told this to Aunt Caroline Folly, Daddy's oldest sister. She told me after the war was over Grandfather Miller drank, fought and killed a lot of men. I think he killed 12 men not counting those in the war. Now all of this happened before Daddy was married while the Indians were bad in the country.

Our Daddy had some cattle and some good horses. He lived near where Garner now stands. One day he had come in from a cow hunt and turned his horse loose, the horse going to roll in a sandy place. Daddy looked up just in time to see an Indian fixing to rope his horse. He stepped in the house, got his gun and killed the Indian. He never roped the horse, but the horse took him away. Daddy got a bunch of settlers together (as that time it was thinly settled) but they all got away. Several weeks later, Grandad Bumgarner, McCluskey, (May's father) and Daddy were at Grandad's. It had been raining. They just stepped out of the log house where Grandad lived, and was planning a cow hunt. That was when the Indians killed McCluskey. He was shot and Daddy and Grandpa drug him in the house, the Indians shooting at them, but no one else was hit. They drug McCluskey inside, punched out the chinking between the logs and gave him a shot gun and he helped. There were two big oat stacks west of the house and that is where the Reds were bad. They would run from one stack to the other, so Daddy got a good bead on the open and finally one crossed and Daddy got him. As he fell, Daddy ran out making as much racket as a bunch of cowboys. They got their dead and left but left his blanket and rifle. Where they had their horses tied they didn't take time to untie the ropes -- just cut them. I think Aunt Caroline said he got 18 ropes. McCluskey died.

Our Father and Uncle Abb Bumgarner (Gus's Father) are the only ones of the Bumgarner boys that died a natural death. The other three were killed. After all this happened my Daddy married my Mother and they had three children before I was born. None of them lived to be over six months old -- two girls and one boy. When I was born they all said I was the ugliest kid they ever saw and it pleased my Mother for the others were so pretty she said maybe I would live and I did. She died when I was a few months old. May and Green were being raised by Dad, so May took charge of me and was a mother to me until Daddy married your Mother. I think I was about 4 when they married. Daddy passed away when I was 14.

Well, our Grandmother Bumgarner passed away and my Granddad Miller went to the pen so our Granddad Bumgarner married my Grandmother Miller. My mother had only one sister. Her name was Nina. She married S.T. Lindsay. Granddad Miller came home from the pen on a furlough but never went back; in fact, they made a guard out of him. They never cut his beard or hair while he was there. After he got out of the pen he married again and had two boys and two girls by the last wife. Their names were Isaac and Barns Miller and the girls, Ledar and Jossie. The last time I heard Barns lived in California. Well, Grandfather Bumgarner died and Grandfather Miller was killed. My grandmother Miller (she was also my grandmother Bumgarner) went crazy and died in the insane asylum. She also had a brother that went insane so I guess you can see now why I am crazy -- ha ha.

Oh, well, you all didn't inherit any of my faults. Martha, you had better not show this to Anna. I told her of Daddy following those three men to the Indian Territory and killing them. She said she wished I hadn't told her and maybe I shouldn't have told you. There is a lot more I can tell that has been told to me and if we meet again I'll tell you more. This will do for now. Back in those days the best friend a man had was his horse and his gun or rather two of them.