

**Redding Sessums (1798–1877)
& Spouse
Mary Ann Brown (c1800–1887)**

RESEARCH NOTES

FAMILY SUMMARY

Redding Sessoms:

Born: 2 March 1798, North Carolina¹
Married: by bond dated 5 February 1822, Lawrence County, MS²
Died: 28 November 1879, Bowie, Montague County, TX³
Buried: Queens Park Cemetery, Montague County⁴
Parents: Jacob Sessums and Penelope “Penny” Fisher⁵

Mary Ann Brown:

Born: c1800–2, Georgia⁶
Died: 22 August 1887, Bowie, Montague County, TX⁷
Buried: Queens Park Cemetery, Montague County⁸
Parents: Unproved

¹ Tombstone photo at *Find A Grave* (https://findagrave.com/memorial/62227145/john-albert_redding-sessums : viewed 9 May 2021), “John Albert Redding” memorial page created by flgrl 27 November 2010; photo by Evalee Houtz. The site provides no documentation for the first two given names that it assigns him. The memorial also has serious misstatements, especially (1) the attribution of three given names to Redding when all his documents use only one, Redding; (2) the assertion that he died in 1882, despite the fact that the stone clearly states the year as 1879; and (3) the attribution of his 1798 birth to “Copiah County, Mississippi,” in spite of the facts that (a) Copiah Co. did not exist at the time; (b) his family did not move from Kentucky to Mississippi for another 15 or so years; and (c) census records created by and about Redding in his life time place his birth in NC; and (d) his parents’ residence in Duplin Co., NC, at the time of his birth is well documented.

The tombstone reads: “Redding Sessums BORN Mar. 2, 1799 DIED Nov. 28 1879; Mary Ann His Wife BORN [broken] DIED Aug. 22, 1887.”

² Marie Luter Upton, *Marriage Records Lawrence County, Mississippi, 1818–1838* (N.P.: P.p., 1970), 13, “Redding Sessoms and Marian Brown, William Brown bondsman, citing Marriage Book 1: 112; imaged “Marriage Records, Lawrence County, Mississippi, 1818–1838,” database with images, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/30215/images/dvm_LocHist013838-00003-0 : accessed 2 July 2021), image 14. (TO DO: Consult the imaged original when my local FHC reopens.)

³ Photograph of tombstone at *Find A Grave*’s problematic memorial 62227145, “John Albert Redding Sessums.”

⁴ *Find A Grave* memorial 6227145, “John Albert Redding Sessums.”

⁵ See the Dawes Commission claims abstracted at the end of this report. The parentage claimed there is supported by the body of evidence I’ve accumulated in the following research reports archived at Mills, *Historic Pathways* (<https://www.historicpathways.com>) under the “Research” tab:

- “Jacob Sessoms (1777–1856 & Spouse Penny Fisher (1777–1845): Research Notes,” a work-in-progress last updated 16 May 2021, 84 pp.

- “Sessums & Fishers of Sampson County (Formerly Duplin), NC: Preliminary Survey,” report to file, 29 June 2021, 146 pp.

⁶ 1850 U.S. census, Shelby Co., TX, pop. sch., p. 35 (stamped), dwelling/family 485/485. 1860 U.S. census, Ellis Co., TX, pop. sch., Div. 7, p. 53 (stamped), dwell./fam. 678/655.

⁷ Photograph of tombstone at *Find A Grave*’s problematic memorial 62227145, “John Albert Redding Sessums.”

⁸ Tombstone photo at *Find A Grave* (<https://findagrave.com/memorial/172426075/mary-ann-sessums> : viewed 9 May 2021), “Mary Ann Brown Sessums” memorial page created by Grave Finder, 7 November 2016; tombstone photo added by same, apparently copying the earlier photo posted on Redding’s memorial by Evalee Houtz.

Signature:	Reding Sessums ⁹
Spellings:	Each document will reference Redding (or others) by the exact spelling used in the document. However, my discussions of Redding will spell his name in the manner in which he signed.
Residences:	1798–c1808 Sampson County, NC (parental residence) 1810– Christian County, KY (parental residence) 1820–1821 Lawrence County, MS (tax rolls) 1822 Lawrence County, MS (marriage bond) 1823 Copiah County, MS (allegedly appointed coroner) 1828 Simpson County, MS (tax roll) 1830 Copiah County, MS (census) 1831–1833 Copiah County, MS (tax rolls) 1834–1837 Kemper County, MS (tax rolls) 1839 Shelby County, TX (land application) 1845–1849 Shelby County, TX (tax rolls) 1850– Shelby County, TX (census with father Jacob) 1851–1854 Shelby County, TX (deeds & tax rolls) 1852–1855 Navarro County, TX (tax rolls & land records) 1856–1857 Ellis County, TX (settled prior to 26 August 1856; land, tax) 1859–62 Ellis County (tax rolls, census, land) 1855–c1859 Johnson County, TX (alleged) 1860–c1877 Ellis County, TX 1870 Not found (likely in Ellis Co. where his daughter married that year)

Children (one of whom remains unidentified):

1. **ALICE “AILSEY” ANN SESSUMS**, born c1823–24, MS,¹⁰ married 9 October 1870, Ellis Co., TX, the widowed farmer and minister, Rev. Henry Shaw.¹¹ She is enumerated with him, as “Annie Shaw, on the 1880 census of Precinct 7, Johnson Co., TX.¹² After his death, over her X mark on 1 February 1888, Aleyse forfeited to his heirs all her “right title and interest” to his land “on the waters of Mountain Creek ... being a part of the Alsolem Williams Survey.¹³ The last records found for her stem from a lunacy proceeding launched in Johnson County during that estate settlement and concluded 1889 in

⁹ As signed on three occasions. Two samples appear under dates of 30 October 1855 and 6 March 1857. In this research summary, however, I am using the conventional spelling *Redding*, because that is how he is known to his offspring.

¹⁰ **1830**: aged 5-10. **1850**: “Eliely” aged 26. **1860** “H.M., female” aged 36. See this report’s transcriptions of those census households under each year. The 1850–60 censuses place her birth between 2 June 1823 and 1 June 1824.

¹¹ “Texas, U.S., Select County Marriage Records, 1837–1965,” database with images, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/9168/images/9168_b940206-00002 : accessed 30 April 2021), marriage license and return for Henry Shaw and Aleyse Ann Sessums.

¹² 1880 U.S. census, Johnson Co., TX, pop. sch., Precinct 7, Enumeration District 87, p. 24B, dwelling/family 203/205.

¹³ Johnson Co., TX, Deed Record Book 39: 171–72; *FamilySearch* digital film 008204603 > images 177–78.

Comanche County by her brother-in-law A. B. Neal as “guardian.”¹⁴

2. **WILLIAM BUCHANAN SESSUMS**, born June–July 1825,¹⁵ Mississippi; allegedly died May 1864, Red Oak, Ellis Co., TX. Married 1850, **Mary** (allegedly **Ratliff**), born 1834–35, LA; she is said to have died 1920, LA.¹⁶
3. **FEMALE CHILD**, born c1827, MS; enumerated on 1830 census as aged 0–5.¹⁷ No further information. She is not named in the “family sketch” published in 1896 by the husband of her sister Permesia, which named the five children said to have “accompanied” Redding and Mary Ann to Texas.¹⁸
4. **PERMESIA SESSUMS**, born 31 March 1829, Covich County, MS; married 20 June 1855, Navarro County, TX, **Allen B. Neal**.¹⁹
5. **WILSON RUSSELL SESSUMS**, born December 1833 according to the 1900 census;²⁰ died after 21 January 1902.²¹ He married **Eliza A. Ratlif** in Johnson Co., TX, on 28 September 1855.²² After Congress enacted legislation (10 June 1896; 29 Stats., 321) to divide the land of the Five Civilized Tribes into individual parcels for those who could prove their tribal identity, “Russ” Sessums applied for himself and children, claiming that his grandmother Penny (Fisher) Sessums was full-blood Choctaw. The Choctaw Nation rejected them; he appealed to the U.S. District Court, which ordered them admitted to the rolls. “On March 9, 1904, they were denied citizenship ... by a decree of the Choctaw and Chickasaw citizenship court in case No. 36 on the South McAlester docket of said court.” In the meanwhile, encouraged by Russ’s temporary success, several dozen of his nephews and cousins

¹⁴ Comanche Co., TX, probate file 198, “A. A. Shaw Lunatic,” guardian’s settlement, April 1889, p. 1, drafted and filed by A. B. Neal.

¹⁵ **August 1830**: aged 5–10. **1 June 1850**: aged 24. **1 June 1860**: aged 34. The 1850–60 censuses place his birth between 2 June 1825 and 1 June 1826. Together, all three censuses suggest a birth in June–July 1825.

¹⁶ 1850 U.S. census, Shelby Co., TX, pop. sch., p. 35 (stamped), dwell./fam. 484/484. 1860 U.S. census, Ellis Co., TX, pop. sch., Div. 7, dwell./fam. 679/656 Wm. B. Sessums, adj. to parents. *Find A Grave* (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/67928989/william-buchanan-sessums> : accessed 5 May 2021), “William Buchanan Sessums” memorial with added data for Mary; no evidence cited; no tombstone image.

¹⁷ 1830 U.S. census, Covich Co., MS, p. 119 (penned), line 11, Redding Sessums, 1 male 30–40, 1 female 20–30, 1 female 5–10, 2 females 0–5, 1 male 0–5; no occupation given.

¹⁸ *History of Texas Supplemented with Biographical Mention of Many Families of the State: A Concise History of the State from Its Earliest Settlement to the Present Date; Together with Biographical Sketches of Many of the Families of Central Texas*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1896), 336–38, biography of Allen B. Neal, husband of Permesia (Sessums) Neal and son-in-law of Redding and Mary Ann.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ 1900 U.S. census, Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, Township 2N R3E, Enumeration Dist. 0133, sheet 5B; dwell./fam. 20/21. This is compatible with censuses of 1850 and 1860 (extracted into this report) which place his birth between 2 June 1832–1 June 1833.

²¹ Testimony of Reuben P. Sessums, referencing “the old man W. R. Sessums,” in “Choc. MCR 184, John Sessums (See MCR 1323, 119, 183, 186, 473, 641, 5571, 5529, 475, 474)”; imaged in “Dawes Packets,” database with images, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/54726775>), 89 pages; citing *Applications for Enrollment in the Five Civilized Tribes, Compiled 1898–1914*, microfilm publication M1301, 468 rolls (Washington, DC: National Archives, n.d., roll 86).

According to carladionne1, “Carla Bacon family tree,” *Ancestry* (ancestry.com/familytree/person/tree/38694748/person/19271381714/facts : 6 Aug 2021), he died 19 October 1919. No evidence is provided. This tree also claims that Eliza’s childbearing spanned from 1857 until 1902, amid a host of other problems.

²² “Texas, U.S., Marriage Index, 1824–2014,” database, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/596478:8795> : accessed 7 May 2021).

who descended from his uncle Reuben Fisher Sessums, his uncle Thomas Sessums of Mississippi, and his aunt Mary (Sessums) Williams of Mississippi, also filed. On 27 May of that same year, the Commission to the Five Civilized Tribes (aka "Dawes Commission") issued a final ruling rejecting them all of them for lack of evidence.²³ Extracts and abstracts from these case court cases are appended to the end of this set of research notes.

6. ELIZABETH SESSUMS, born c1835, MS,²⁴ married 18 March 1863, Ellis County, TX, **William Fleming**.²⁵

RESEARCH NOTES

TRADITION

Birth of son

"ALLEN BROOKS NEAL

"Allen B. Neal was born in Alabama, November 17, 1833, and accompanied his parents on their various removals until they had settled in Navarro county, Texas. ... Mr. Neal was married June 20, 1855, in Navarro county, to Permeasa, daughter of **Redding** and **Mary Ann (Brown) Sessions**. Her father died in Montague county, Texas, in 1882, at the age of eighty-seven.

COMMENT:

The tombstone that exists for "Redding" and Mary Ann—one that appears from its photo to be contemporaneous with their deaths—states that he died 28 November 1879, not 1882.

"He [Redding Sessions] was **born on the Cumberland River in Kentucky**, removed from there to **Middle Tennessee** and subsequently to **Georgetown, Mississippi**.

COMMENT:

Redding was actually born in Sampson Co., NC. He was about nine or ten when his parents left Sampson for the Cumberland River.

He built the first house in **Jackson**, the present capital of that state and continued his residence in Mississippi until **1835**, when in the month of March he started for Texas, driving across the country to what is now **San Augustine County**.²⁶ He was accompanied by his wife and their children—Ailsey Ann, William, Mrs Neal, Wilson Russell and Elizabeth.

COMMENT:

²³ "W. R. Sessums et al., plaintiffs, v. The Choctaw Nation, defendant," *Senate Documents*, vol. 15, 62d Congress, 3d Session, December 2, 1912-March 4, 1913 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), 595–600.

²⁴ 1850 U.S. census, Shelby Co., TX, pop. sch., p. 35 (stamped), dwell./fam. 484/484. 1860 U.S. census, Ellis Co., TX, pop. sch., Div. 7, p. 53 (stamped), dwell./fam. 678/655.

²⁵ "Texas, U.S., County Marriage records, 1817–1965," database, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61383> : accessed 21 May 2021).

²⁶ See "Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021).

**Redding Sessums
Mary Ann Brown**

St. Augustine was one of the original Texas counties, created in 1836 after Texas won its independence. Records begin 1837. One St. Augustine tax roll exists for this period, 1837; it does not include any *Sessums* or variant spellings thereof.

“At the first location the father [Redding] planted a crop, but in the fall of **1835** removed to Shelby County and entered a section of land near the town of Shelbyville, upon which he made his home until **1852**.

COMMENT:

As shown by the records abstracted and transcribed into this report, Redding Sessums appeared before the Land Office at Shelbyville in December 1839 to request his headright land, saying he had “emigrated” in February 1839.

In 1836, Jacob is missing from the Kemper County, MS, tax rolls on which he appears in 1835 and 1837. That suggests he may have made an exploratory trip in 1836, seeking a location in which to settle his family. If he left in March, as this biographical sketch asserts, then he left at *planting* time and his family would not have made a crop in 1836 on his Kemper County land. Put another way, they would have had no means of supporting themselves in that year 1836.

In such circumstances, whether a husband left to locate a new site for settlement or went off to war, a wife and children were typically left with family members until the husband returned. Redding’s parents by that time had settled in Newton County. The identities and 1836 residences of Mary Ann’s family are not known).

Through the three succeeding years he [Redding] resided in **Navarro County**, and in **1855** went to **Johnson County**, where he took up land, living there until **1860**. From that time until **1877** he lived in **Ellis County**, then removed to **Montague County**, where he spent his remaining days near Bowie.

“In politics he was a Democrat and acceptably served as justice of the peace. He belonged to the Primitive Baptist Church and served as its elder, also took a most active part in its work, materially advancing its interests. His wife died in 1889, at the age of seventy-seven years. She was a native of Tennessee.

COMMENT:

The tombstone of Redding and Mary Ann states that she died 22 August 1887, not 1889.

“Mrs. Neal [Permeasa] was born in Copiah county, Mississippi, March 31, 1829, and by her marriage became the mother of three children²⁷

1818

LAWRENCE COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

Fisher: No

Sessums: NO²⁸

²⁷ *History of Texas Supplemented with Biographical Mention of Many Families of the State: A Concise History of the State from Its Earliest Settlement to the Present Date; Together with Biographical Sketches of Many of the Families of Central Texas*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1896), Neal-Sessums bio, 336–38.

²⁸ “Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951,” database with images., *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9PGL-SWX6> accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Lawrence Co.

COMMENT:

No 1819 roll appears in this collection.

1820

LAWRENCE COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

[consecutive entries]

Sessims, Redin 0 land, 1 white poll, 0 slaves, \$.75 tax

Satterfield, James B.

Sessims, Jacob 0 land, no location, 1 white poll, 1 slave, \$1.50 tax²⁹

7 AUGUST 1820

LAWRENCE COUNTY, MS

Census

(p. 64b)

Consecutive entries

Maly? White

Nathan Robertson

Samuel Crowford

D. H. Pea

Henry Cotten

Samuel Hunter

Hosea H. Runnels

Aaron Harges

John Freemon

Breuster H. Jayne?

Elijah Fisher	1 white male 26–44	1 white female 26–44	1 slave	10 total
	1 white male 10–15	1 white female 10–15		
	3 white males 0–19	2 white females 0–10		
Jacob Sessons	1 white male 26–44	1 white female 26–44	2 slave	13 total
	1 white male 16–25	3 white female 16–25		
	1 white male 10–15	1 white female 10–15		
	1 white male 0–10	2 white females 0–10		

COMMENT:

The eldest son, Redin, has not yet married and is still in the famiy home.

Harris Freeman

James G. Murdock

Joseph Scott

Benjamin Meadows

James Gideon

²⁹ "Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951," database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Lawrence > County tax rolls 1818–1830 > images 68 (Fisher), 83 (Sessims)

Reuben Smith
Baker Larkin
M. P. Kennon

1821
LAWRENCE COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

[consecutive entries]

Sessums, Reding: Not found, although he is of taxable age
Sessums, Jacob 0 land, no location, 1 white poll, 2 slaves, \$2.25 tax
Saterfield, James 0 land, no location, 1 white poll, \$.75
Certified 25 March 1822³⁰

1822
LAWRENCE COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

“Entered 30 December 1822”³¹

COMMENT:

Again, **Redding does not appear**. Aside from Jacob, who was said to reside on “S C” (Silver Creek), only one other Sessum was taxed: a Joshua, residing at “B H,” who was taxed for 0 white poll and 2 slaves.

Joshua’s identity is unknown. He would have been born before 1801 to be paying a poll tax. The only son which Jacob had during that time frame was Redding. The 1822 reference to “Joshua” is not a copying error for “Redding” because Joshua appears again on tax rolls of 1824–27, living on Bear and Fons Creeks.³²

1822
LAWRENCE COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

[consecutive entries, image 130]

Saunders, Joseph 0 land, “Situation: S C” ...
Sessom, Jacob 0 land, “Situation: S C,” 1 white poll, 2 slaves, \$2.25 + \$.37½ tax
Smith, Wilmot 0 land, “Situation: S C” ...

COMMENT:

Redding married this year in Lawrence to Mary Ann Brown, parents unproved. To lay a

³⁰ “Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951,” database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Lawrence > County tax rolls 1818–1830 > [1821] image 103.

³¹ “Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951,” database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Lawrence > County tax rolls 1818–1830 > (1822) images 129 (Joshua), 130 (Jacob).

³² “Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951,” database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Lawrence > County tax rolls 1818–1830 [1824] > images 158; [1825] > image 181; [1827] > image 226.

foundation for her identification, I have captured below all Browns being taxed in the county, along with all “B” entries that will help to define their community.

Note that

- Just one Brown cluster is on Silver Creek with Jacob Sessums: *William*, Daniel, and Timothy Brown.
- *William* was a surety for Jacob’s marriage to Mary Ann.
- Redding and Mary Ann (Brown) Sessums had only two known sons: *William Buchanan* and Wilson Russell.

[consecutive entries, images 109–12, showing all “B” entries and all Browns]

Brown: William 0 land, situation: **S.C.** [Silver Cr.], 0 polls, 3 slaves, \$2.25 state tax, \$.37½ co. tax

Boothman [sic]
Burge, Thomas W.

Brown, Daniel 0 land, situation: **S.C.**, 1 poll, \$.75 state tax, \$.12½ co. tax

Burney, David
Brinson, David

Brown, Timothy 0 land, situation **S.C.**, 1 poll, \$.75 state tax, \$.12 ½ co. tax

Butler, Luke
Bell, Henry
Beard, William
Bohannon, Wiley

Brown, Solomon 0 land, 2 town lots \$225, M.C. “HR title,” \$800 merchandise sales,
1 poll, \$1.20 state tax, \$.20 co. tax

COMMENT:

Lawrence County has three creeks that might be “M.C.”: Mallett, Marshall, and Mill Creek.

Bennet, Benjamin

Blalock, Levi
Burt, John S
Bailey, Thomas
Barret, George
Brister, Samuel
Banks, Levi

Brown, Frances Senr. 160a, 4th class, 2d qual, W.S. [White Sand Cr], U.S. title, 0 poll, 0 slave, \$.96, \$.16

Brown, Francis Junr. 0 land, 0 slave, 1 poll, \$.75, \$.12½

Brown, Henry 0 land, situation: W.S., 1 poll, \$.75, \$.12½

Bole, Isaac C.
Bishop, James R.
Bole, William H.
Bole, Francis
Baggett, James
Bull, Reubin
Burt, Isaac
Burt, John
Burt, Elison
Blunt, Grandbury
Blunt, Abner

Brown, Robert 0 land, situation: B.C., 1 poll \$.75, \$.12½

Brown, Hughes 0 land, situation: B.C., 1 poll \$.75, \$.12½

Brister, William

Brister, William Senr.
Brister, Dyer
Britt, Jephtha
Bull, Jamse H.
Bullin, William
Budwill, Ezekiah
Brister, John
Brice, Frederic
Brister, Hocketta
Blair, Frances
Blair, John
Bouie, John F.
Burney, Simon
Burney, Joseph

Brown, John R.

0 land, 1 town lot, \$500 sales, Situation: M.C., "H.R." Title, \$1, \$.16¾

Burner, John
Brewer, John W.
Brister, Benjamin
Bonner, Josiah
Bailey, James
Bridges, Nancey
Bailor, George W.
Buckley, William
Buckley, Evan
Buckley, Bartley
Buckley, James
Borren, Bennet
Ballard, Charles
Balckwell, Abel
Bullock, James
Bass, John
Bass, Jonathan
Boosman, Peter
Biggs, James

Brown, John

0 land, situation: H.C., 1 poll, \$.75, \$.12½

Bone, James
Bonds, William
Bonds, James
Bonds, James

Brown, Samuel

0 land, situation: W.S., 1 poll, \$.75, \$.12½

Buckley, Thomas H.
Buckley, James A.
Buckley, Edward
Buckley, John
Buckley, Benjamin
Bailey, William
Bair, Joseph
Bailey, Eliilsh
Binson, Rosea
Benson, Henry
Binson, Herrod
Benson, Alfred
Bracey, William
Benson, Hiram

“Entered 30 December 1822”³³

1821

HINDS COUNTY, MS

Historical context

Hinds was created 12 February 1821 from the Choctaw Cession of 1820.

COMMENT:

The Allen Brooks Neal account of Redding Sessums, extracted under “Tradition” at the start of these research notes, stated that Redding built the first house in Jackson (Hinds County). Another writer has asserted that “Reading” Sessums, in 1823, was the first coroner in Copiah.³⁴

Tax rolls support neither assertion. In my search for him, I have read the following rolls for this decade (in addition to Lawrence and Simpson):³⁵

1822–25	Hinds	[brother-in-law Neil Williams was here in 1823] ³⁶
1826	Hinds	[no roll found]
1827–28	Hinds	
1823–28	Copiah	
1829	Copiah	[no roll found]
1830	Copiah	[Redding Sessums <i>is</i> on Copiah’s census, but not the tax roll]
1831–33	Copiah	[Redding was taxed]
1828–32	Rankin	[Redding’s brother Thomas m. here in 1829]

1823

COPIAH COUNTY, MS

Historical context

“Copiah County was created on January 23, 1823. ... The New Purchase acquired from the Choctaw Indians in October 1820, had been erected into the large county of Hinds, and in January 1823, it was deemed wise to create out of its extensive area, the counties of Copiah and Yazoo. ...

“Some of the pioneer settlers of Copiah County ... will be found in the following list of county officers for the year 1823: Barnabas Allen, Judge of Probate, resigned; John Coon, Associate Justice, did not accet; Lewis Parker, John Sandifer, associate justices; Robert Middleton, William Thompson, **James B. Satterfield**, Duncan McLauren, Robert C. Blount, Wm. N. Miller, Wm. S. Byrd, Justices of the Peace; John

³³ “Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951,” database with images, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Lawrence > County tax rolls 1818–1830 > images 129 (Joshua), 130 (Jacob).

³⁴ Marie Luter Upton, Marriage Records Lawrence County, Mississippi, 1818–1838 (N.P.: P.p., 1970), foreword; downloadable at *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/428233-redirection>).

³⁵ “Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951,” database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687> : accessed May 2021) > Browse [for each specific county and year].

³⁶ “Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951,” database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Copiah > County tax rolls 1823–1860, Box 3781 > images 4 (Williams), 5 (Hornsby, Satterfield). Neal Williams had married Reding’s sister Mary “Polly” Sessums 13 January 1820; Lawrence Co. Marriage Book 1: 33, 46.

Coon, Assessor and Collector; John Coon, Sheriff; **Reading Sessums, Coroner**, Jacob Haley, Ranger, John Watts, Treasurer; John H. Wilson, Sheriff; John Rhymes, Coroner; John McLeod, Surveyor.”³⁷

23 JANUARY 1824
SIMPSON COUNTY, MS

Context

Simpson County was created 23 January 1824 from the Choctaw Cession of 1820 (Treaty of Doak’s Stand). Courthouse records were destroyed in 1840 and 1872. Land, probate, and court records begin in 1872. Adjacent counties:

- Copiah (on west)
- Covington (on southeast)
- Jefferson Davis (on south)
- Lawrence County (on southwest)
- Rankin County (on north)
- Smith County (on east)

1828
SIMPSON COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

Semi-alphabetized by first letter of surname.

Courtney, William	1 white poll, \$.50 tax [possible father of Redding’s brothers-in-law]
Fisher, George:	1 white poll, \$.50 tax
Sessoms, Jacob	NO
Sessoms, Reding	1 white poll, \$.50 tax
Saturfield, James B.	NO
Williams, Niel	1 white poll, \$.50 tax

“Transmitted” 5 June 1828³⁸

1828
SIMPSON COUNTY, MS

Petition

COMMENT:

Redding supposedly signed a Simpson County petition. The database provides no further details.³⁹ It is likely that Ancestry’s source is referencing the 1828 Simpson tax roll, above.

³⁷ Marie Luter Upton, Marriage Records Lawrence County, Mississippi, 1818–1838 (N.P.: P.p., 1970), foreword; downloadable at *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/428233-redirect>).

³⁸ “Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951,” database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Simpson > County tax rolls 1824–1845 > image 34 (Courtney), 35 (Fisher), 37 (Sessom), 38 (Williams).

1829

COPIAH COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

Certified 22 October 1827⁴⁰

COMMENT:

The biographical sketch of Redding's daughter Permesia and her husband (quoted under "Tradition" at the start of this paper) states that Permesia was born in 1829 in Copiah County. However, Redding has not been found this year on the tax rolls of Copiah, Hinds, Lawrence, Rankin, or Simpson.

If Redding was a house carpenter, as implied by his son-in-law's assertion about him building the first house in Hinds County, then it seems likely that he was transient in this decade, moving from job site to job site.

1830

COPIAH COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

No date for certification, entering, or otherwise.⁴¹

COMMENT:

Even though no Sessums appear on this "combined" tax roll for Copiah in 1830, Redding Sessums does appear on the 1830 census, below, which was taken after the first Monday in August.

1830

COPIAH COUNTY, MS

Census

Jeremiah Fortenberry

William Haynes

Henry Guoynes

Neill Smiley

Redding Sessums	1 white male	30–40	1 white female	20–30
	1 white male	0–5	1 white female	5–10
			2 white females	0–5

Josiah Ashley

Lott Smith

Isaac Parker

³⁹ "Mississippi, U.S., Compiled Census and Census Substitutes Index, 1805–1890," database without images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3556/> : 10 April 2019), search term: "Redding Sessums"; citing Ron V. Jackson, *Mississippi Census, 1805–1890* (N.p.: Accelerated Indexing System, n.d.).

⁴⁰ "Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951," database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Copiah > County tax rolls 1828–1860, Box 3781

⁴¹ "Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951," database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Copiah > County tax rolls 1828–1871, Box 3916.

Davis Barron [Brown?]
Hiram J. Randall⁴²

COMMENT:

Redding's household has an extra female child aged 0–5 who has not been identified or accounted for thereafter. Redding has not been found on the 1840 census, to determine whether that female child was still alive that year.

1831

COPIAH COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

[Semi-alphabetized by first letter of surname.]

Sessoms, Reddin 1 white poll, \$.37 ½ tax

No date.⁴³

COMMENT:

Redding's father Jacob is taxed in Simpson County with Redding's brother-in-law, Jesse Cortney—but not the brother-in-law Neal Williams.

1832

COPIAH COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

[Semialphabetized by first letter of surname.]

Stone, Levi

Sullivan, John

Smith, Dredsil

Sandifer, Johnson

Sessoms, Benjamin 1 white poll, \$.37 ½ tax

Shaunberger, Elijah, John & Peter

Sumeral, Allen

Smith, James

Certified 25 August.⁴⁴

COMMENT:

Redding is not found anywhere else this year and the above "Benjamin" has not been found in any other year—not in Copiah or elsewhere. It seems likely that when the tax commissioner compiled his master roll from the individual lists turned in by taxpayers, that he misread "Redg" (abbreviation for Redding) as "Benj" (abbreviation for Benjamin), and then wrote out the name as Benjamin. Note that Redding is taxed here during the year before and after this.

⁴² 1830 U.S. census, Copiah Co., MS, p. 119 (penned), line 11.

⁴³ "Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951," database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Copiah > County tax rolls 1831 > image 15 (Sessoms).

⁴⁴ "Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951," database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Copiah > County tax rolls 1823–1860, Box 3781 > image 156 (Sessoms).

1833

COPIAH COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

[Semialphabetized by first letter of surname.]

Smith, David & Charles J.

Spencer, Evan

Shaddock, Asa

Straam Asa

Sessoms, Reddin 1 white poll, \$.37 ½ tax

Spinks, John

Sandifer, William, John & Joseph

Simpson, James

Scott, Joseph & Zachariah

Certified ___ August 1833.⁴⁵

1834

Family changes

At this point, Redding and his birth family make another series of moves—but not within the same locale, and their appearances on tax rolls become even more spotty:⁴⁶

- **Redding** removed to **Kemper Co.** (newly created from the Choctaw Cession of 1830) where Redding would be taxed 1834–37. The land he took out there, from the federal government, was not patented to him until 1841. By that time he was already in Texas. Kemper’s deed records of the era are destroyed by fire, blocking an answer to the question: *What happened to Redding’s land?*
- **Jacob Sessions**, Redding’s father, appears on no subsequent tax roll in any of the studied counties, although he would be enumerated 1840 in **Newton Co.** Jacob apparently followed his son Thomas to Newton (at that time Neshoba) about 1834, selling his Simpson Co. land by a deed that has been destroyed by courthouse fires. Jacob was not taxable in Newton because he had passed the maximum age for poll tax and obtained no land there in his own name.
- **Thomas Sessums**, Redding’s brother, was in 1834 taxed in **Neshoba Co.** with his in-laws, the Cookseys, and their in-laws (three times over), the Odoms. In 1836, their part of Neshoba was cut off into the new county of Newton, where Thomas would continue to be taxed and enumerated by census takes.
- **Solomon Sessums**, Redding’s brother, was taxed in **Newton Co.** on the 1840 roll but was not an independent householder on the 1840 census; he and younger brother Reuben F. Sessums seem to be still in the parental household.
- **Neal Williams**, Redding’s brother-in-law, would appear on the 1840 **Newton Co.** census with Jacob and Thomas Sessums. By 1850 Neal Williams (56 b. NC), wife Mary 42 (b. NC), and children Penny N. (18), Jacob (16), Solomon D. (14), and Sarah (6) had settled in **Attalla Co., MS**, T15 R8E.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ “Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951,” database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Copiah > County tax rolls 1823–1860, Box 3781.

⁴⁶ To track these changes, see E. S. Mills, “Jacob Sessoms (1777–1856 & Spouse Penny Fisher (1777–1845): Research Notes,” a work-in-progress last updated 16 May 2021; archives at Mills, *Historic Pathways* (<https://www.historicpathways.com>) under the “Research” tab.

- **Jesse and Samuel Courtney**, who married Redding's sisters Charity and Sarah, remained in **Simpson Co.** for the time being. Jesse dropped out of surviving county records after the 1837 tax roll, and seems to have died or left for Texas before the patent to his Simpson land was issued in 1840. Samuel appears on the 1838, 1839 and 1840 tax rolls of Newton County, as well as the 1840 federal census and the 1841 state census of Newton.⁴⁸ He does not appear on Newton's 1841 tax roll or any year thereafter. His family's migration to Texas apparently occurred in 1841.

15 NOVEMBER 1834
KEMPER COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

Jacob H. Brown	1 poll, \$.37½ tax
Jacob K. Brown	1 poll, \$.37½ tax
Sessums Redding	1 poll, \$.37½ tax

Certified 15 Nov 1834⁴⁹

COMMENT:

- In 1841 a patent would be issued to Redding for Kemper Co. land. At that point, the land would be taxable; but Redding had left and was never taxed on it.
- Jacob K. and Jacob H. Brown, adjacent entries, are the only Browns taxed in the county. No other taxpayers carry the name or surname of known relatives.

7 SEPTEMBER 1835
KEMPER COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

Brown, Jacob K.	1 poll, \$.37½ tax
Sessums Redding	1 poll, \$.37½ tax

Certified 7 September 1835⁵⁰

COMMENT:

This is labelled a "combined" roll by the State Archives, although no lands are taxed. The newness of the county suggests that land titles had not progressed to be point of ownership.

1836
KEMPER COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

Brown, Morgan	\$331 money at interest, 1 poll, 1 slave, \$1.82 ¾ tax
---------------	--

⁴⁷ 1850 U.S. census, Attala Co., MS, pop. sch., p. 328 (stamped), dwell./fam. 1110/1113. *Ancestry* has indexed the household head's name as "Noal" Williams.

⁴⁸ *U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management*, database with images (<https://glorerecords.blm.gov/search/default.aspx> : accessed 5 May 2020).

⁴⁹ "Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951," database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9PGL-9Z1N> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Kemper > county tax rolls 1834, Box 3675 > images 3 (Brown), 5 (Sessums).

⁵⁰ "Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951," database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9PGL-984K> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Kemper > county tax rolls 1835, Box 3675 > images 3 (Brown), 5 (Sessums).

Brown, Jacob K. 1 poll, \$.37½ tax
Sessums Redding: NO⁵¹

1837

KEMPER COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

[Consecutive "B" entries]

Brown, Robert 1 poll, \$.37 ½ tax

Brown, Jacob K. 1 poll, \$.37 ½ tax

[skip 3 Brantleys]

Brown, William L (S?) 1 poll, \$.37 ½ tax

Brown, Morgan P. 1 poll, \$.37 ½ tax

Sessums Redding: 1 poll, \$.37 ½ ⁵²

COMMENT:

Morgan D. Brown received a patent, 27 Feb. 1841, to W½ NW¼ S6 in the same township and range as Redding. His land lay about 4 miles NNW of Redding's land that was located in S10 T10N R15E.

The 1893 Allen B. Neal biography states that Redding brought his family to Texas in 1835, making one crop in St. Augustine County, and then moving on to Shelby County. The Shelby County tax rolls from 1837 (the earliest roll created) through 1840 do not include any Sessums.⁵³ The 1841 roll is heavily damaged; whether Redding was or was not taxed then is inconclusive.⁵⁴

1838

KEMPER COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

[Consecutive "B" entries]

Brown: Frederick, Robert, J. K., William, Wm S.

Sessums Redding: NO⁵⁵

1839

KEMPER COUNTY, MS

Tax roll

⁵¹ "Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951," database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9PGL-984K> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Kemper > county tax rolls 1836, Box 3675 > images 3 (Brown), 8 (Sessions).

⁵² "Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951," database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9PGL-988P> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Kemper > county tax rolls 1837, Box 3675 > images 4 (Brown), 10 (Sessums).

⁵³ See "Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Shelby county > 1837–1840.

⁵⁴ "Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Shelby county > 1841.

⁵⁵ "Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951," database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GPGL-96JY> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Kemper > county tax rolls 1838, Box 3675 > images 4 (Brown), 9–10 (Oden, Odum).

[Consecutive "B" entries]

Brown: Robert, J. K., William, Wm S.
Sessums Redding: NO⁵⁶

FEBRUARY 1839
SHELBY COUNTY, TX
Emigration

In this month Redding Sessums arrived in Texas for settlement. See 10 December 1839 certificate below.

10 DECEMBER 1839

Land claim certificate

"Republic of Texas, County of Shelby — 2nd Class, No. 297

"This is to certify that **Redding Sessums** is entitled to a conditional Grant of six hundred & forty acres offered in conformity with an act passed Extending Donations of Land to late Emigrants, he being an Emigrant of **February 1839**. Given under our hands on this 10th day of Decr 1839. J. Lusk, Chf. J. & Ex off. P. B. L. Com. Attest: R. O. Lusk, dep clk, C.C. & Ex off. Clk B. L. Com."⁵⁷

1839–42
SHELBY COUNTY, TX
Tax rolls

COMMENT:

No Sessums or Courtneys (Redding's sisters and brother-in-law who also emigrated to Texas) appear on the surviving fragments of the 1839–42 rolls.⁵⁸

1841–45
PANOLA COUNTY, TX
Tax rolls

COMMENT:

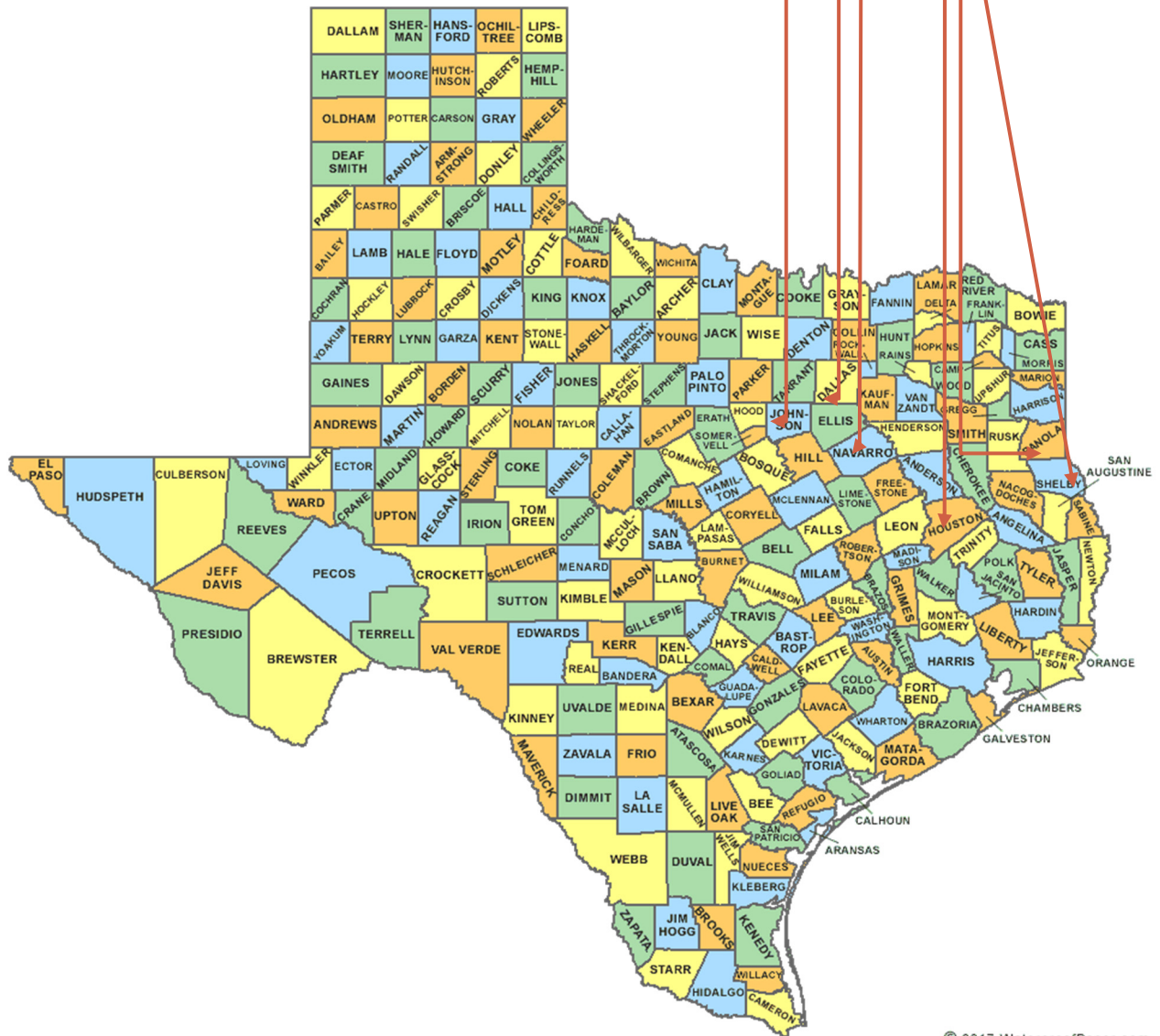
No Sessums or Courtneys appear on the 1841 roll of Panola. The next available roll for Panola is 1846. From that point on, the Panola rolls are annual.

⁵⁶ "Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951," database with images. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GPGL-96S3> : accessed 12 May 2021) > Browse > Kemper > County tax rolls 1839, Box 3675 > images 4 (Brown), 10 (Oden, Odum).

⁵⁷ Texas General Land Office Land Grant Search," database, *The Texas General Land Office* (s3.glo.texas.gov/glo/history/archives/land-grants : accessed 15 May 2021) > Search term "Sessums, Redding," Result: "County: Shelby; Abst. 657; District Class: Shelby 3rd; File No.: 000108; Grantee: Sessums, Redding; > hotlink 000108 > page 4 of 10.

⁵⁸ "Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Shelby county.

- Ellis County
- Houston County
- Johnson County
- Navarro County
- Panola County
- Shelby County



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26 NOVEMBER 1841
SHELBY COUNTY, TX

Land certificate

“The Republic of Texas, County of Shelby:

**Redding Sessums
Mary Ann Brown**

This is to certify that the claim of **Redding Sessums** for Six hundred and forty Acres of Land No. 297 dated Dec. 10th 1839 was Examined by the investigating board of Acting Commissioners and was favourably Reported. Witness my hand & seal of office Shelbyville. Nov 26th 1841. C.N.? Scott, clk, C.C.S.C. & Ex off. Clk B. L. Cond.”⁵⁹

**1 SEPTEMBER 1843
SHELBY COUNTY, TX**

Tax rolls

Sessum, Redding 132 ½ acres held by survey, valued at “.06 ¾.” 3 “Negroes under 10,” 10 cattle
0 poll, \$5.24¼ tax.

Sessum, Solomon 0 land, 1 poll, \$1.00 tax

Certified 1 September 1843.⁶⁰

**4 DECEMBER 1843
SHELBY COUNTY, TX**

Land grant approval

“No. 225, Class 2nd. This is to Certify that Redding Sessums is entitled To An unconditional Certificate for 640— Acres of Land by virtue of Land Certificate No. 297 Dated Dec 10th 1839 Granted to him by the bord [*sic*] of Land Commissioners for the County of Shelby he having proved to us that he has Resided in the Republic three years & performed all the duties Required of him as a citizen. Given under Our hands & Seal of Office at Shelbyville Decem 4th 1843. Robert Turner, Chief Justice and Ex off Pres B L C S C.

Test: G. W. Scott clk C.C. & Ex officio M. B. L Com., pr Depty.

Thos. L. Will _____

Thos. H. Lester, associate Comm⁶¹

**2 MARCH 1844
SHELBY COUNTY, TX**

Land report.

“Report of Unconditional Certificates Issued by the board of Land Commissioners of Shelby County for the Quarterly ending March the 2nd 1844.

No. of Certificate:	225
To whom Issued:	Redding Sessum
No. of Conditional Certificate:	297
Date of Conditional Certificate:	December 10 th 1839
Where Certificate Issued:	Shelbyville
Class of Conditional ertificate:	1d
Quantity of Land in Acres	640

⁵⁹ Texas General Land Office Land Grant Search,” database, *The Texas General Land Office* (s3.glo.texas.gov/glo/history/archives/land-grants : accessed 15 May 2021) > Search term “Sessums, Redding,” Result: “County: Shelby; Abst. 657; District Class: Shelby 3rd; File No.: 000108; Grantee: Sessums, Redding: > hotlink 000108 > page 2 of 10.

⁶⁰ “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Shelby county > 1843 > images 8 (Redding), 13 (Soloman).

⁶¹ Texas General Land Office Land Grant Search,” database, *The Texas General Land Office* (s3.glo.texas.gov/glo/history/archives/land-grants : accessed 15 May 2021) > Search term “Sessums, Redding,” Result: “County: Shelby; Abst. 657; District Class: Shelby 3rd; File No.: 000108; Grantee: Sessums, Redding: > hotlink 000108 > page 4 of 10.

Names of Witnesses: Mason Vann, James Bullock
Date of Unconditional Certificate: December 4th 1843⁶²

1 SEPTEMBER 1844
SHELBY COUNTY, TX

Tax rolls

Sessum, Redden 132½ acres held by survey, valued at “.06¾.” 0 “Negroes,” 0 cattle, 0 poll, \$.06¾ tax

[skip 7 ‘S’ entries]

Sessum, Solomon 0 land, 1 poll, \$1.00 tax⁶³

28 AUGUST 1845
SHELBY COUNTY, TX

Tax rolls

Consecutive entries:

Sessums, Redden 122a held by survey, value \$100, 20 neat cattle, 1 poll taxed, total tax \$.82½

Sessums, Jacob 0 land, 0 cattle, 1 poll taxed, total tax \$.50

[Skip 30 or so entries]

Sessum, Solomon 0 land, 4 neat cattle, poll tax: \$.50, total tax \$.54

Delinquent list No names of family members

Roll submitted 28 August 1845.⁶⁴

COMMENT:

- This Jacob should be Redding’s brother Jacob Jr., b. c1824 to Jacob and Penny, who has just now come of age. Jacob Sr. has passed beyond poll age.
- “Neat cattle” were oxen and heifers; it could include “beeves,” but not all beef cattle were considered neat cattle.⁶⁵

1846
SHELBY COUNTY, TX

Tax rolls

Sessums, Redden 200 acres at \$400, granted to R. Sessum, 0 Negroes, 5 horses/mules \$225, 24 cattle \$180, \$805 total value 1 poll taxed at \$1.00, state and county tax illegible

Sessums, Jacob NO

Sessum, Solomon NO

Delinquent list No names of family members

⁶² “Texas General Land Office Land Grant Search,” database, *The Texas General Land Office* (https://s3.glo.texas.gov/ncu/SCANDOCs/archives_webfiles/arcmaps/webfiles/landgrants/PDFs/1/0/6/2/1062865.pdf : accessed 15 May 2021) > Search term “Sessum, Redding,” Result: “County: Shelby; Abst. 657; District Class: Clerk returns; File No.: 0000053; Grantee: Sessum, Redding; > hotlink 000053.

⁶³ “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Shelby county > 1844 > image 9.

⁶⁴ “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Shelby county > 1845 > images 10–11.

⁶⁵ *The Law.com Dictionary* (<https://dictionary.thelaw.com/neat-cattle/>), “neat cattle.”

Out-of-county property: None held by Sessums
Roll submitted 8 February 1847.⁶⁶

1847

SHELBY COUNTY, TX

Tax rolls

Sessam, R 122 acres \$200, granted to R. Sessam, 0 Negroes, 7 horses \$250, 0 cattleHogs \$23, \$473 total value, 1 poll taxed at \$1, state and county tax 1.94½ & \$.97¼

Sessums, Jacob NO

Sessum, Solomon NO

Delinquent list No names of family members

Out-of-county property: None held by Sessums

Roll submitted 13 January 1848.⁶⁷

14 JUNE 1848

SHELBY COUNTY, TX

Survey

“Survey made for **Redding Sessums** of the Residue of his certificate, four hundred & twenty-eight acres of land lying in Shelby County on the head waters of Flat fork of Tehena Bayou, about 28 miles N 58° W from Shelbyville, and Imediately South of Holms Byfield’s Survey and East of M. Cartright’s Survey, being part of the land to which he is entitled by virtue of Certificate 2nd Class No. 297 issued by the Board of land Commissioners for the County of Shelby for six hundred and fourty acres dated 10th Dec 1839.

Begining at the SE corner of Holmes’ Byfield, Where a Post Oak 18 In [inches] Dia [diameter] S14 W3 var. [varas] Mkd. [marked] H.B. [and] Post Oak 14 In Dia S50 W 2½ vars. H.B.

Thence S 1006 vars. with **Wm. M. Dillard Line** and to his S.W. Corner (of a small survey) 1304 vrs. and Corner.

Whence Hickory 18 In Dia S19 E 5 12 vrs. Mkd R.S. [and] Red Oak 12 In Dia N 40 W14½ vrs. Mkd R.S.

Thence W 1934 vrs Intersect **M Cartright** East boundry line Whence Poast Oak 12 In Dia S80 E 3½ vars. RS

Thence N 1300 with M. Cartright line and Intersect H. Byfields S. boundry line

Whence Pine 12 In Dia S38 E 3 vars Mkd R.S. [and] Pine 18 In Dia N81 W 3½ vars RS

Thence E 1930 vars with H. Byfields S boundry line to the place of beginning.

Surveyed on the 14th June 1848. Richard Iley [and] W. M. Dillard, Chainers. [Signed] William Cravens Surv Dist of Shelby.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Shelby county > 1846 > image 19.

⁶⁷ “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Shelby county > 1847 > image 11.

⁶⁸ Texas General Land Office Land Grant Search,” database, *The Texas General Land Office* (s3.glo.texas.gov/glo/history/archives/land-grants : accessed 15 May 2021) > Search term “Sessums, Redding,” Result: “County: Shelby; Abst. 657; District Class: Shelby 3rd; File No.: 000108; Grantee: Sessums, Redding: > hotlink 000108 > image 6 of 10.

7 SEPTEMBER 1848
SHELBY COUNTY, TX

Tax rolls

Sessam, W. B. 0 land, 1 horse \$75, 12 cattle \$60, hogs \$50, \$185 total value, 1 poll, tax \$1.37 + \$.68½

Sessam, Redmond 112 acres \$336, granted to R. Sessam, 0 Negroes, 2 horses \$185, 18 cattle \$100, miscellaneous \$10, \$596 total, 1 poll tax \$2.19¼ + \$1.09¼

" " , as

agent for L. Vann 0 land, 15 cattle \$75, \$75 total, tax \$.15½ + \$.7½

Sessums, Jacob NO

Sessum, Solomon NO

Delinquent list No names of family members

Out-of-county property: None held by Sessums

Certified 7 September 1848.⁶⁹

COMMENT:

Regarding the unknown Nail man who married the widowed Charity (Sessoms) Courtney, Redding's sister, I've noticed for several years that one A. J. Nail is taxed on 177 acres from the "H. Byfield" Patent. Redding's land documents identify him as an adjacent neighbor of that Byfield Patent. A. J. Nail is still being taxed on the 1852 roll which places his Byfield land on "Brushy," the same watercourse on which Redding was taxed in 1851.

1 OCTOBER 1849
SHELBY COUNTY, TX

Tax rolls

Sessam, W. B. 0 land, 1 horse \$75, 15 cattle \$90, hogs \$25, \$190 total value, 1 poll

Sessam, R 216a \$324, granted to R. Sessam, 0 Negroes, 5 horses \$175, \$805 total, 1 poll

208a \$304, granted to R. Sessam

Sessums, Jacob NO [Jacob Jr. died 1 January 1848]

Sessum, Solomon NO

Delinquent list No names of family members

Out-of-county property: None held by Sessums

Certified 1 October 1849.⁷⁰

17 JULY 1850
SHELBY COUNTY, TX

Tax rolls

Sessam, W. B. NO

Sessam, R NO

Sessums, Jacob NO

Sessum, Solomon NO

⁶⁹ "Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Shelby county > 1848 > images 22 (W.B.) and 23 ("Redmond").

⁷⁰ "Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Shelby county > 1849 > image 21 (W.B., R).

Certified 17 July 1850.⁷¹

11 NOVEMBER 1850

ELLIS COUNTY, TX

Tax rolls

Sessam, W. B. NO

Sessam, R NO

Sessums, Jacob NO

Sessum, Solomon NO

Certified 11 November 1850.⁷²

28 OCTOBER 1850

SHELBY COUNTY, TX

Census⁷³

484/484	Wm B. Sessums	24, male, farmer, \$200 real estate, b. Miss.
	Mary “	15, female, b. Louis., can’t read or write
	James Gale	25, male, farmer, b. Louis.
485/485	Redden Sessums	50, male, farmer, \$1000, b. NC
	Mary A. “	48, female, b. Geo.
	Eliely “	26, female, b. Miss.
	Permesia “	22, female, b. Miss.
	Wilson R “	17, male, b. Miss.
	Elizabeth “	15, female, b. Miss.
	Jacop “	73, male, b. NC
	Robt. Stapler	25, male, school teacher, b. Ala.
	David “	23, male, student, b. Ala.

COMMENT:

No neighbors for ten or so households in either direction had similar origin.

1850-55

NAVARRO COUNTY, TX

Court minutes

COMMENT:

According to the 1893 family account by Allen B. Neal, Redding Sessums (and, ostensibly, the father Jacob who lived with him in 1850) were in Navarro County from some point in 1852 to some point in 1855.

Most Navarro County records that have been filmed are restricted to online use at a Family History Center. However, court minutes for 1855–59 are unrestricted online. I read, page by

⁷¹ “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Shelby county > 1850.

⁷² “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Ellis county > 1850.

⁷³ 1850 U.S. census, Shelby Co., TX, pop. sch., p. 35 (stamped).

page, the minutes for 1855 and early 1856 without finding any relevant record or mention of jury service, etc.⁷⁴

13 NOVEMBER 1850
NAVARRO COUNTY, TX

Tax roll

No reference to Sessums.⁷⁵

1 APRIL 1851
SHELBY COUNTY, TX

Land sale

“State of Texas, County of Shelby ... I **Redin Sessum** of the State and County aforesaid” for \$400 “in hand paid by **Matthew Brinson** of the same place, have sold to Brinson a ... parcel of land being Cited & lying in the County and State aforesaid, being a part of my own Headright surveyed by virtue of Certificate No. 29 of the 2nd Class .. [metes and bound cited here conform to the above survey dated 14 June 1848]. [Signed] “**Reding Sessums**” [his copied signature]. Witnesses: Geo. Samford, A. McLamore.

2 April 1851, D. M. Short, N.P.S.C. [notary public, Shelby County] certified that “Reading Sessions’ acknowledged the document before him.”⁷⁶

1 JULY 1851
SHELBY COUNTY, TX

Tax rolls

Sessam, W. B. NO

Sessums, R. 141a \$400, granted to **R. Sissum**, 2d class claim on Brushy, 0 Negroes, 6 horses \$300, oxen \$75, \$775 total, 0 poll

Sessums, Jacob NO

Sessum, Solomon NO

Certified 1 July 1851.⁷⁷

COMMENT:

Redding has been dropped from the poll. Born in 1798, according to his tombstone, he would have turned 50 in 1848 and should have been dropped in 1849. He was taxed in '49, and was not found on the '50 roll.

29 MAY 1851
ELLIS COUNTY, TX

⁷⁴ Navarro Co., Texas, “Minutes Dist. Court A,” 1855–56; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 7196238, item 4.

⁷⁵ “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Navarro county > 1850.

⁷⁶ Texas General Land Office Land Grant Search,” database, *The Texas General Land Office* (s3.glo.texas.gov/glo/history/archives/land-grants : accessed 15 May 2021) > Search term “Sessums, Redding,” Result: “County: Shelby; Abst. 657; District Class: Shelby 3rd; File No.: 000108; Grantee: Sessums, Redding > Patentee: Brimson, Matthew > hotlink 000108 > pages 8 and 9 of 10.

⁷⁷ “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Shelby county > 1851 > image 18.

Tax rolls

Received 29 May 1851⁷⁸

COMMENT:

No Sessam, Sessum, Sessums, etc.—not Jacob, Redding, nor W.B.

11 SEPTEMBER 1852

NAVARRO COUNTY, TX

Personal tax roll — *Consecutive entries*

Sessions, Isaac B. 11 Negroes \$4500, 6 horses \$400, 157 cattle \$55, wagon \$100, 1 poll

Sessums, Reding 0 Negroes, 10 horses \$500, 49 cattle \$305, 0 poll.

Certified 11 September 1852

Land tax roll

SESSUMS: No⁷⁹

11 NOVEMBER 1852

ELLIS COUNTY, TX

Tax rolls

Certified 11 November 1852.⁸⁰

Sessam, W. B. NO

Sessums, R. NO

Sessums, Jacob NO

Sessum, Solomon NO

29 MAY 1852

SHELBY COUNTY, TX

Tax rolls

Blunt, Wm. J. 194a \$300, granted to **R. Sessums**, stream: Mervall, 3 horses \$200 ...

Nail, Andrew 177a \$177, granted to H. Byfield on Brushy ...

18a \$19, granted to **R. Sessums**, 2d class, no locale

Sessam, W. B. NO

Sessums, R. NO

Sessums, Jacob NO

Sessum, Solomon NO

Certified 29 May 1852.⁸¹

COMMENT:

- On 1 April 1851, Redding Sessums sold part of his land to Matthew Brunson. However, Brunson is not taxed this year on any land granted to Sessums.

⁷⁸ "Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Ellis county > 1851.

⁷⁹ "Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Navarro county > 1852 > image 20.

⁸⁰ "Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Ellis county > 1852.

⁸¹ "Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Shelby county > 1852 > images 3 (Blount) and 12 (Nail).

- Reading the grantee column on all pages yielded only the two above references to Sessums.
- I am still finding no tax entries for Courtneys.

20 JUNE 1853

ELLIS COUNTY, TX

Tax rolls

Sessam, W. B. NO

Sessam, R NO

Sessums, Jacob NO

Sessum, Solomon NO

Certified 20 June 1853.⁸²

26 MAY 1853

NAVARRO COUNTY, TX

Personal tax roll — *Consecutive entries*

Sessums, Reding 0 land, Negroes, 6 horses \$300, 67 cattle \$250, sheep & hogs, \$150? 0 poll.

“as agent for __ Garr” 0 land, 0 Negroes, 1 horse \$25, 20 cattle \$1000, 1 poll

[*skip 12*]

Sessums Wm B. 1 poll

Sessions, J.B. [data similar to 1852; surname very clearly written as “Sessions”]

Certified 26 May 1853⁸³

13 FEBRUARY 1854

JOHNSON COUNTY, TX

Historical context

Johnson County was created 13 February 1854 from Ellis, Hill, McLennan, and Navarro Counties. County seats: Wardville (1855–56), Buchanan (1856–67), Cleburne (1867–present), originally known as Camp Henderson.

5 SEPTEMBER 1854

NAVARRO COUNTY, TX

Sessums, Reding 0 land, Negroes, 9 horses \$575, 56 cattle \$450, sheep & hogs, \$150?, **1 poll**

“as agent for O.P. Garr” 0 land, 0 Negroes, 1 horse \$25, 250 cattle \$1500

[*skip 12*]

Sessums Wm B. 1 poll

Sessions, J.B. [data similar to 1852; surname very clearly written as “Sessions”]

Certified 5 September 1854⁸⁴

12 JUNE 1854

⁸² “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Ellis county > 1853.

⁸³ “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Navarro county > 1853 > image 24.

⁸⁴ “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Navarro county > 1854 > image 21.

ELLIS COUNTY, TX

Tax rolls

Sessam, W. B. NO
Sessam, R, NO
Sessums, Jacob NO
Sessum, Solomon NO

Certified 12 June 1854.⁸⁵

20 OCTOBER 1854

FANNIN COUNTY, TX

Land patent

Grantee: **Redding Sessums**
Certificate: 225
Patentee: Matthew Brimson
Patent Date: 25 Oct 1854
Acres: 428
District: Shelby
County: Shelby
File: 108
Patent #: 577
Patent Volume: 10
Class: Shelby 3rd⁸⁶

9 NOVEMBER 1854

COOKE COUNTY, TX

Land certificate

"Redding" Sessums was issued Certificate No. 3714/2825 for 212 acres, then in Cooke County, Fannin Land District.

COMMENT:

Cooke was cut from Fannin in 1849. In 1860 the land lay in Wise County, which had been cut from Cooke in 1856. Montague, where Redding died, was cut from Cooke in 1857.

22 MAY 1855

ELLIS COUNTY, TX

Tax rolls

Sessam, W. B. NO
Sessam, R NO
Sessums, Jacob NO
Sessum, Solomon NO

⁸⁵ "Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Ellis county > 1854.

⁸⁶ "Texas, U.S., Land Title Abstracts, 1700–2008," database without images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/5112/> : accessed 8 August 2020), search term "Redding Sessums"; citing "Texas General Land Office, *Abstracts of all original Texas Land Titles comprising Grants and Locations*. Austin, TX, USA."

Certified 22 May 1855.⁸⁷

25 SEPTEMBER 1855
NAVARRO COUNTY, TX

Sessums, Reding 213a \$1065, James H. Johnson grant for 320a, W. Pecan, 0 Negroes, 5 horses \$250, 64 cattle \$520, sheep & wagon, \$70, **1 poll**

Sessums, W. R. 1 horse \$100, 1 poll.

Certified 25 September 1855⁸⁸

COMMENT:

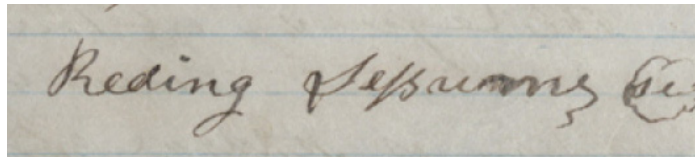
- The one poll charged to Redding should be his son William B., now of taxable age.
- “John Neal,” ostensibly John Garrett Neal, the father of Redding’s son-in-law, made his first appearance this year (image 21). No land, 5 horses, \$100 at interest.

30 OCTOBER 1855

ELLIS COUNTY, TX

Land sale

“I **Redend Sessum** of the state of Texas and County of Ellis” for \$300 in hand paid by **E. M. Duggett** of Tarrant County, Texas, sells all “write and title to the duplicate Certificut as is ___ to me on the ballance of my headwrite Cirtificut for two hundred & twelve acres of land. ...” Signed “Reding Sessums” [his apparent signature]. Witnesses: Charles Turner, Amenda L. Turner.⁸⁹

A photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Reding Sessums" followed by a circular flourish.

COMMENT:

The document’s handwriting, despite its aberrant spellings, was tidier and distinctly different from the signatures.

21 MAY 1856

ELLIS COUNTY, TX

Tax rolls

Sessam, W. B. NO

Sessam, R NO

Sessums, Jacob NO

Sessum, Solomon NO

⁸⁷ “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Ellis county > 1850.

⁸⁸ “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Navarro county > 1855 > image 25.

⁸⁹ “Texas General Land Office Land Grant Search,” database, *The Texas General Land Office* (s3.glo.texas.gov/glo/history/archives/land-grants : accessed 15 May 2021) > Search term “Sessums, Redding,” Result: “County: Wise; Abst. 799; District Class: Robertson 3rd; File Number: 003673; Grantee: Sessums, Redding; Patentee: Redding Sessums > hotlink 003673 > images 2–3, and 5 of 7.

Certified 21 May 1856.⁹⁰

10 SEPTEMBER 1856
NAVARRO COUNTY, TX

SESSUM: No
Certified 10 September 1856⁹¹

COMMENT:

John Neal is there and still is not taxed on land. His son Allen B. Neal, who married Redding's daughter in 1855, is not taxed.

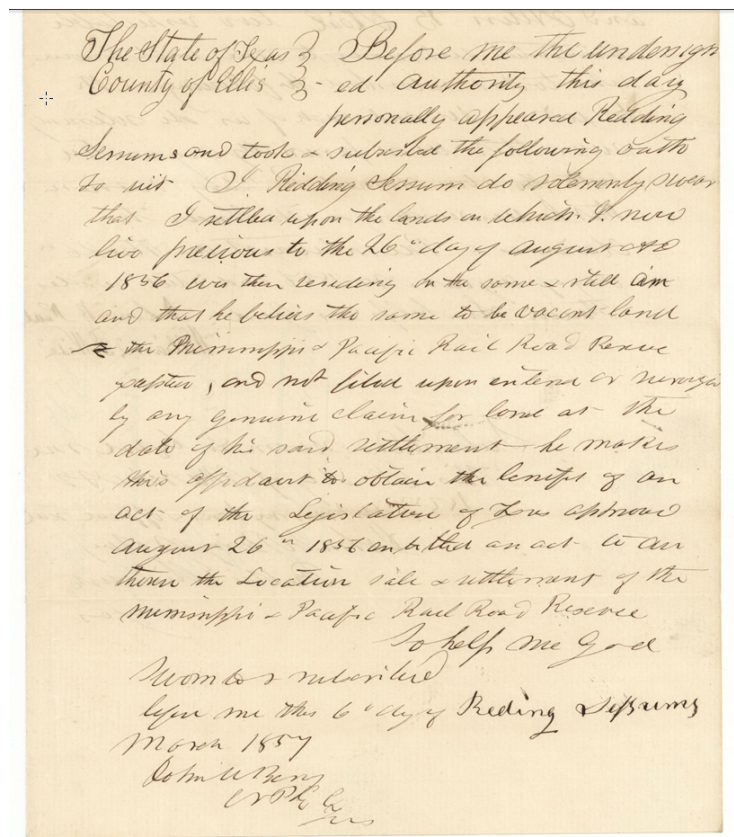
6 MARCH 1857
ELLIS COUNTY, TX

Affidavit

"Before me the undersigned authority this day personally appeared **Redding Sessums** and took & subscribed the following oath, To wit: I **Redding Sessum** do solemnly swear that I settled upon the lands on which I now live previous to the 26th day of August AD 1856, was then residing on the same & still am and that he believes the same to be vacant land [in?] the Mississippi & Pacific Rail Road Reserve [an illegible word], and not filed upon, entered, or [illegible word] by any genuine claim for land at the date of his said settlement. he makes this affidavit to obtain the benefit of an act of the Legislature of Texas approved August 26th 1856 entitled an act to authorise the Location, sale & settlement of the Mississippi & Pacific Rail road Reserve.

"So help me God. **Reding Sessums** [actual signature] Sworn to & subscribed before me this 6th day of March 1857.

"Also came this day **William T. Wise** and **Allin B. Neal**,⁹² two respectable



Affidavit of "Reding Sessums," 6 March 1857, Ellis County; imaged in "Texas General Land Office Land Grant Search," database, *The Texas General Land Office* (s3.glo.texas.gov /glo/history/archives/land-grants : accessed 15 May 2021) > Search term "Sessums, Redding," Result: "County: **Johnson**; Abst. 799; District Class: Robertson 3rd; File Number: 003673; Grantee: Sessums, Redding; Patentee: Redding Sessums > hotlink 003673 > image 2 of 7.

⁹⁰ "Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Ellis county > 1856.

⁹¹ "Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Navarro county > 1855 > image 222 (Neal).

distinterested witnesses to me well known who took & subscribed the following oath to wit, We and each of us do solemnly swear that we are personally acquainted with the above named **Redding Sessum**, that he was residing on the lands he claims as a Preemptionist on the 26th day of August AD 1856 and still resides thereon. So help us god. **Alen B. Neal. William T. Wise.**

“Subscribed & sworn to before me this 6th day of March AD 1857. Witness my hand & official Seal. John W. Berry, Notary Public Ellis County Texas.”

“Settler’s Certificate 3673. Redding Sessum. Filed December 18, 1857.”⁹³

**19 MARCH 1857
ELLIS COUNTY, TX**

Land survey

“State of Texas, District of Robertson. I have surveyed for **Redding Sessums** 160 acres of Land situated in Ellis County about **20½ miles N 64° W from the town of Waxahachie**, by virtue of his affidavit No. 11 made before John W. Berry on the 6th of March 1857.

Beginning at **Allin B. Neals’** NE corner, a stake in Prairie on the S line of the **M D Dickey** survey and 950 vrs. N60 E from the NE corner of **A. Hudson’s** 640 acre survey. Thence N60 E 950 vrs. a stake in Prairie. Thence S 30 # 980 vrs. a stake in Prairie. Thence S60 W 950 vrs. a stake in Prairie. Thence N30 W 950 vrs. to the place of beginning.

J. Ellis [and] I. Captivus, C.C.

“I Posey H. Gordan, a Deputy surveyor for Robertson District, do hereby certify that I made the survey designated by the above plat and field notes on the 7th of March 1857 and that the lines and corners are correctly set forth therein. This the 19th of March 1857. Posey H. Gordon D S R D.”⁹⁴

**10 AUGUST 1857
NAVARRO COUNTY, TX**

Tax roll

SESSUMS: NO

Certified 19 August 1855⁹⁵

COMMENT:

⁹² A. B. Neal, Redding’s son-in-law, appears on this year’s tax roll in Ellis County paying only 1 poll; see “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Ellis county > 1856 > image 15.

⁹³ “Texas General Land Office Land Grant Search,” database, *The Texas General Land Office* (s3.glo.texas.gov/glo/history/archives/land-grants : accessed 15 May 2021) > Search term “Sessums, Redding,” Result: “County: **Johnson**; Abst. 799; District Class: Robertson 3rd; File No.: 003673; Grantee: Sessums, Redding; Patentee: Redding Sessums > hotlink 003673 > images 2–3, and 5 of 7.

⁹⁴ “Texas General Land Office Land Grant Search,” database, *The Texas General Land Office* (s3.glo.texas.gov/glo/history/archives/land-grants : accessed 15 May 2021) > Search term “Sessums, Redding,” Result: “County: **Johnson**; Abst. 799; District Class: Robertson 3rd; File No.: 003673; Grantee: Sessums, Redding; Patentee: Redding Sessums > hotlink 003673 > image 6 of 7.

⁹⁵ “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Navarro county > 1857 > image 25 (Neal).

“J.G. Neal,” ostensibly John Garrett Neal, the father of Redding’s son-in-law, appears this year (image 21). No land, 7 Negroes valued at \$3500, 9 horses, 84 cattle, etc.

1857

ELLIS COUNTY, TX

Tax roll

Consecutive entries:

Sessom W. B. 0 land, 0 Negroes, 4 horses \$340, 11 cattle \$70, 1 poll

Sessums, Reding 0 land, 0 Negroes, 4 horses \$240, 225 cattle \$1720, 0 poll

Certified 25 September 1857⁹⁶

1858

ELLIS COUNTY, TX

Tax roll

SESSUMS: NO

No date of certification.⁹⁷

28 MARCH 1859

Court of Claims report

“Headright Certificates Approved”

No. 225

Class: 2

Issued: Decr. 4, 1843

Approved: Ma. 23/59

Quantity 640

To Whom Issued: **Redding Sessum**⁹⁸

18 MAY 1859

ELLIS COUNTY, TX

Tax roll

Consecutive entries:

Sessums, W. B. 0 land, 0 Negroes, 3 horses \$225, 1 poll

Sessums, Russell 0 land, 0 Negroes, 2 horses \$150, 26 cattle \$141, 1 poll

Sessums, Reding 160 acres \$400, granted to R. Sessums, “from what tract taken”: 160, Class: P, Stream: Mt. C., 0 Negroes, 2 horses \$150, 150 cattle \$900, miscellaneous: \$70, 0 poll

Certified 18 May 1859⁹⁹

⁹⁶ “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Ellis county > 1857 > image 24.

⁹⁷ “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Ellis county > 1858.

⁹⁸ Court of claims report no. 98, page 5; accessed via “Texas General Land Office Land Grant Search,” database, *The Texas General Land Office* (s3.glo.texas.gov/glo/history/archives/land-grants : accessed 15 May 2021) > Search term “Sessum, Redding,” Result: “District Class: Court of Claims Reports; File Number: 0000098; Grantee: Sessum, Redding > hotlink 000098.

3 AUGUST 1860
ELLIS COUNTY, TX
Census¹⁰⁰

678/655	Reddin Sessums	62, male, farmer, \$800/\$1750, NC
	M. A. Sessums	60, female, GA
	H. M. Sessums	36, female, Miss [should be A. A. for Allsey Ann]
	E. Sessums	25, female Miss. [should be Elizabeth]
679/656	Wm.B. Sessums	34, male, farmer, \$250/\$575, Miss.
	M. M. Sessums	25, female, b. La.
	M. E. Sessums	9, female, b. TX, attended school
	E. J. Sessums	6, female, b. TX, attended school
	J. R. Sessums	4, male, b. TX
	W. B. Sessums	2, male, b. TX
	M. J. Sessums	1/12, female, b. TX
680/657	M. Howard	54, female, ___/\$250, b. MS
	R. Howard	10, male, b. TX
681/658	J. M. Lambert	22, male, laborer, ___/\$380, b. <u>Cho</u> ? [<u>Q</u> ho?]
	Nicy Lambert	17, female, b. La.
	M. Lambert	1/12, female, b. Texas
682/659	W. R. Sessums	27, male, Laborer, \$125/\$785, b. Miss.
	E. A. Sessums	18, female, b. La.
	J. F. Sessums	3, male, b. Tex
	M. Sessums	1, female, b. Tex.

COMMENT:

Note that three young wives in this cluster (the wives of W. B. Sessums, J. M. Lambert, and W. R. Sessums) were all b. in Louisiana while other Louisiana-born individuals are not common in their community. The details suggest they might be sisters.

22 SEPTEMBER 1860
ELLIS COUNTY, TX
Land sale

Redding Sessums (s) and **Mary Ann Sessums** (x), husband and wife of Ellis County, for \$800 paid by **John O. Wheeler** also of Ellis, have sold a tract of land in Ellis County “about 10½ Miles N 64° W from the Town of Waxahachie described by field notes as follows:

Beginning at a stake the NE Corner of **Allen B. Neals** survey and 950 vs [varas] N60° E from the NE Corner of **A Hudsons** Survey

- Thence N 60° E 950 vs a Stake in Prairie
- Thence S 30° E 950 vs a Stake in Prairie

⁹⁹ “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1827575> : 7 May 2021) > Ellis county > 1857 > image 26.

¹⁰⁰ 1860 U.S. census, Ellis County, TX, pop. sch., Red Oak Creek p.o., 3 August 1860, pp. 53 and 53 verso.

- Thence S 60° E 950 vs a stake in Prairie
- Thence N 30° W 950 vs to the place of Beginning

160 acres more or less with all rights, etc. Witnesses: Benj. F Hawkins, Wm. C. Sweatt. Acknowledged 22 September 1860 before Benjamin F. Hawkins, Clerk of Court. Recorded 2 October 1860.¹⁰¹

6 NOVEMBER 1860

WISE COUNTY, TX

Land survey

“State of Texas, County of Wise — Plat and Field notes of a corrected Survey of 160 acres made for **Samuel Woody**, assignee of **Redding Sessioms**, by virtue of Duplicate Certificate No. 3724/2825 issued by S. Crosly Comm. of the Gen. Land Office on the 9th day of November 1854 for 212 acres.

“Said Survey is Situated in Wise County on the waters of the West Fork of the Trinity River, about 9 miles South 5° East from Decatur.

“Beginning at the NW Corner of a Survey of 1280 acres in the name of Philip Barton, a Post from which a PO marked + is S 87° E 143 vs. to a marker + vs. S 86° E 142 vs. Thence West with the South line of a Survey in the name of **Wm. Richie** 1000 vs. to a Post in Said line. Thence South 450 vs. to a Post in the North line of **Woodford Jackson’s** Survey of 160 acres. Thence East 636 vs. to his NE Corner. thence South 1245 vs. to a Post for the SW Corner of this Survey. Thence East 364 v. to the West line of said Barton’s Survey. Thence North 1695 vs. to the place of Begining.

“Resurveyed & Corrected November 6th 1860. James I Brooks & J. J. Hart, Chainsmen.

“I J. W. Hale, County Surveyor of Wise County Do hereby certify that the corrected Survey Designated by the foregoing Plat and Fieldnotes was made acording to law and that the lines Boundrys and Corners with the marks natural and artifical are truely Described therein and that they are Recorded in my Office in Book A at Page 249.”¹⁰²

7 MARCH 1861

JOHNSON & ELLIS COUNTIES, TX

Land purchase

John Barnes (s) of Johnson Co. sells for \$775 to **William B. Sessums** of Ellis Co., 228 acres on the North Fork of Chambers Creek lying in both Johnson and Ellis, being a part of the Thomas Harvey Forrester Survey. [Metes and bounds not extracted here.] Witnesses: None. Acknowledged by Barnes before Jonathan Burk, an acting Notary Public in Johnson Co., 12 March 1861. Filed 24 June 1861, recorded 27 June 1861.¹⁰³

24 NOVEMBER 1862

ELLIS COUNTY, TX

¹⁰¹ Ellis Co., TX, Deed Book E: 278–79; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8502315, images 363–64.

¹⁰² Texas General Land Office Land Grant Search,” database, *The Texas General Land Office* (s3.glo.texas.gov/glo/history/archives/land-grants : accessed 15 May 2021) > Search term “Sessums, Redding,” Result: “County: Wise; Abst. 965; District Class: Fannin 3rd; File No.: 003394; Grantee: Sessums, Redding; Patentee: Samuel Woody > hotlink 003394 > image 4 of 30.

¹⁰³ Ellis Co., TX, Deed Book E: 484–75 (pencilled number); imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8502315, image 468.

Land sale

William B. Sessums of Ellis Co. for \$375 paid in hand by **Redding Sessums** of same, sale of 91 acres on North fork of Chambers Creek in the counties of Johnson and Ellis, being a part of the Thomas Harvey Forester Survey and a part of the land deeded to William by John Barnes. [Metes & bounds not extracted here. No witnesses. No wife's involvement.] Acknowledged by William B. Sessums before Benj. F. Hawkins, Clerk, on 24 November 1862. Filed 24 November. Recorded 29 November.¹⁰⁴

24 NOVEMBER 1862

ELLIS COUNTY, TX

Land sale

William B. Sessums of Ellis Co. for \$300 paid by **Wilson B. Sessums** of same, sale of 65 acres on North fork of Chambers Creek in the counties of Johnson and Ellis being a part of the Thomas Harvey Foresters survey and a part of the land deeded to William by John Barnes. [Metes & bounds not extracted here. No witnesses. No wife's involvement.] Acknowledged by **William B. Sessums** before Benj. F. Hawkins, Clerk, on 24 November 1862. Filed 24 November. Recorded 29 November.¹⁰⁵

13 OCTOBER 1870

ELLIS COUNTY, TX

356

THE STATE OF TEXAS.—COUNTY OF ELLIS.

By *My* Judge of the District Court,
CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE COUNTY COURT, ORDAINED MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, OR JUSTICE OF THE PEACE
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF ELLIS,—GREETING.

You are hereby authorized, to celebrate the Rites of Matrimony, between
Henry Shaw and *Alsey Ann Sessums*
and make due return to the Clerk of the ~~County~~ Court of said County, within
sixty days thereafter, certifying your action under this License.

Seal

Witness My Official Signature and Seal of office at Office
in *Massachusetts* this *13th* day of
Sept. A. D., 1870

C. A. Gibson
Clerk of the County Court of Ellis County.

I, *J. L. Pindexter* certify that on the *9th* day of
October 1870 I united in marriage *Henry Shaw*
and *Alsey Ann Sessums* the parties above named.

Witness my hand this *9th* day of *October* 1870

J. L. Pindexter J. P.

"Texas, U.S., Select County Marriage Records, 1837-1965," database with images, Ancestry
(https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/9168/images/9168_b940206-00002 : accessed 30 April 2021),
marriage license and return for Henry Shaw and Alsey Ann Sessums.

¹⁰⁴ Ellis Co., TX, Deed Book F: 92–93; imaged FamilySearch digital film 8502315, image 596.

¹⁰⁵ Ellis Co., TX, Deed Book F: 93–94; imaged FamilySearch digital film 8502315, images 596–97.

1870

Census

COMMENT:

The Redding Sessums family has not been found this census year. However, the marriage of his daughter to Henry Shaw, in October 1870 (see below) suggests they were residents of Ellis.

Alleged Native American Ancestry

Between 1896 and 1914, about eighty-six descendants of Jacob and Penny, residing in Oklahoma, filed claims to be recognized as Choctaw—most with the Dawes Commission. All claimed to be descendants of the “full-blood Choctaw Penny Fisher, who married the white man Jacob Sessums.” **All claimed “family tradition.” None had any evidence of any type to support their claims.** As background:

“The Commission to the Five Civilized Tribes was appointed by President Grover Cleveland in 1893 to negotiate land with the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Seminole tribes. It is called the Dawes Commission, after its chairman, Henry L. Dawes, [and those who were approved appear on] the “Final Rolls of the Citizens and Freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes in Indian Territory”.

Tribe members were entitled to an allotment of land, in return for abolishing their tribal governments and recognizing Federal laws. In order to receive the land, individual tribal members first had to apply and be deemed eligible by the Commission.

The first application process for enrollment began in 1896, but was declared invalid. So the Dawes Commission started all over again in 1898. People had to re-apply in order to be considered, even if they had already applied in 1896. The Commission accepted applications from 1898 until 1907, with a few additional people accepted by an Act of Congress in 1914.

The resulting lists of those who were accepted as eligible became known as the Dawes Rolls.”¹⁰⁶

The descendants of Jacob and Penny who applied for Choctaw citizenship (and free land) descended through four of their children:

- **1. Redding Sessums**, who moved to Texas in the 1840s and died 1879 in Bowie County. The principal claimant in this line was his son
 - **Wilson Russell Sessums** (Claim No. 452)¹⁰⁷ who first applied in 1896 under the Congressional Act of 10 June 1896 (29 Stat.L., 321); but he and his offspring were rejected. They appealed their case to the U.S. Dist. Court for Indian Territory, and on 20 January 1898, the court overturned the tribal decision and admitted them. That admission was overruled in 1906 for lack of any

¹⁰⁶ “Native American Heritage: Dawes rolls,” *National Archives* (<https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/dawes/tutorial/intro.html>).

¹⁰⁷ *Senate Documents, 62d Congress : 3d Session, December 2, 1912–March 4, 1913*, vol. 15 (Washington: Government Printing Office: 1913).

evidence that Penny Fisher was a Choctaw.¹⁰⁸ A more-detailed synopsis of the case *W. R. Sessums vs. Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations*, was published amid Senate Documents in 1913.¹⁰⁹

The initial success of Wilson Russell Sessums in 1898 prompted his cousins to apply.¹¹⁰

- **2. Reuben Fisher Sessums**, who also moved to Texas in the 1840s and allegedly died 1873 in Fannin County, Texas. The principal claimants for this line were his sons:
 - **William Thomas Sessums** (Dawes Packet MCR 119, 14 pp.)
 - **Reuben P. Sessums** (Dawes Packet MCR 473, 25 pp.)
 - **John Washington Sessums** (Dawes Packet MCR 641, 18 pp.)

- **3. Mary (Sessums) Williams**, who remained in Mississippi. Her son John Williams died in the Civil War; his widow (née Jeanette Johnson) and several children moved to Texas about 1870 and then to Oklahoma before 1900, first to the Chickasaw Nation and then the Choctaw. Two lines of his descendants joined the Sessums cousins who were already filing claims:
 - **James A. J. Williams** (Dawes Packet MCR 5571; also see MCR 184)
 - **Dacey (Williams) Wren** (Dawes Packet MCR 5808; also see 5812, 5813 5814, 5815, 6153)¹¹¹

- **4. Thomas Sessums**, who remained in Mississippi. One line of his descendants joined the cousins in filing claims. The principal representative was Thomas's son and grandson:
 - **William John Sessums** (Dawes Packet MCR 183, 17 pp.)
 - **John Sessums** (Dawes Packet MCR 184, 89pp.; also see MCR 119, 132, 183, 186, 473, 474, 475, 641, 5571, 5529)

The following offers a sampling of the depositions taken and "evidence" provided. Many of the claims were consolidated into the John Sessums case and affidavits by the other claimants appear therein.

Choc. MCR 184, John Sessums

12 June 1900

Examination of claimant. Age: 64 years. Post Office: Cumberland, I.T. [Indian Territory], have lived there for 6 months. Before that, lived at Ryan, I.T. for 10 years. Before that, lived in Texas but can't say how

¹⁰⁸ As summarized in Choctaw MCR 5081 Lillie R. Sessums, ruling dated 18 February 1907; imaged, "Dawes Packets," *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/54525771> and next five images).

¹⁰⁹ *Senate Documents, 62d Congress : 3d Session, December 2, 1912–March 4, 1913*, vol. 15 (Washington: Government Printing Office: 1913).

¹¹⁰ To quote from the affidavit of John Washington Sessums, son of Reuben Fisher Sessums: "Q: Why do you believe that you are entitled to be identified by this Commission as a Mississippi Choctaw? A Why, I have people that is on the roll enrolled up there by the United States Court in 1896 ... Q Is that the only basis of your claim ... the fact that you have had relatives that have been admitted to citizenship by the United States Court of the Indian Territory? A Yes sir." See "Choctaw MCR 641," John Washington Sessums; imaged in "Dawes Packets," database with images, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/54819077>).

¹¹¹ "Choctaw MCR 5571, James A. J. Williams (See MCR 184)"; imaged in "Dawes Packets," database with images, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/56063519>), 16 pages; citing *Applications for Enrollment in the Five Civilized Tribes, Compiled 1898–1914*, microfilm publication M1301, 468 rolls (Washington, DC: National Archives, n.d.), roll 147.

long. Came to Texas from Missouri [*sic*]. **Father was Thomas Sessums, “part Choctaw.** I don’t know what [proportion of Choctaw blood] he claimed to have [but] **I claim to be ¼.”**

He is married to Luticia. “**Q** Is she a white woman? **A** No, she is a full blood Irish lady. She never was in Ireland I don’t suppose.” They married in Mississippi “a long time ago,” but he doesn’t recall when. He has no record of the marriage. The claims of his children, who live with him, have the “same foundation.” They are *Maggie L* (18), *Lilly M.* (16).

“And then I have seven grandchildren that I am keeping under my control as guardian; their father and mother is dead and I have to take charge of them.” They live with him. Two are Sessums, the children of his son. The “other bunch of five” are children of his daughter, *Eliza Maderis*. When asked who was Joseph V. Sessums, he answered that this was his dead son. *Joseph Virgil Sessums* (10) and *Sarah Ellis Sessums* (8) were his children. The children of his daughter [which he is said to have read “from a meme”] are *John O. Maderis* (10), *Thomas E. Maderis* (8), *Clarence Maderis* (6), *Mary L. Maderis* (4), and *Lilly B. Maderis* (1).

When pressed, John said that he does not claim under any specific treaty and does not know of any ancestor who were beneficiaries under the provisions of Art. 14 of the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek.

Undated list of claimants in this set of consolidated cases

(“pages” 6–11 in the imaged file)

“All of the applicants herein testify orally that they reside in the Indian Territory.

“The proof ... consists of a transcript of the court proceedings in citizenship case No. 10 [i.e., that of Wilson Russell Sessums] ... and the affidavits of W. R. Sessums and J. R. Sessums. These affidavits show the blood relationship of the applicant, John Sessums, to the affiants who are parties plaintiffs in said citizenship case No. 10; by reference to the affidavits of A. B. Sessums and **S. B. Perry** as shown by the transcript, **a conflict is found as to the residence of Pennie Sessums, nee Fisher, the common ancestor.** In the affidavit of A. B. Sessums it is averred by him that he is a descendant of Pennie Fisher a full blood Choctaw Indian woman who died in Mississippi in about 1845. S. B. Perry in his affidavit makes averment as follows: ‘knew Pennie Fisher who was a full blood Choctaw woman. She married a white man named Jacob Sessums. Didn’t know the names of their children as they were small last time I saw them. I knew Pennie Fisher below Doaksville she died down there somewhere.’”

“Doaksville is located in the Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory. ... This is the only evidence disclosed by the transcript in this case as to the residence of the common ancestor. ...

“No proof, either oral or documentary, is offered to show any act of compliance on the part of the ancestors of these applicants with any of the provisions of article fourteen of the treaty between the United States government and the Choctaw tribe of Indians, concluded September 27th, 1830.¹¹²

COMMENT:

While “Doaksville” was in Oklahoma, many Oklahoma sites carry names of earlier sites in MS. “Doaks” was also the name of a “stand” on the Pearl Rivier in Mississippi where the Choctaw

¹¹² “Choc. MCR 184, John Sessums (See MCR 1323, 119, 183, 186, 473, 641, 5571, 5529, 475, 474)”; imaged in “Dawes Packets,” database with images, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/5r726775>), 89 pages; citing *Applications for Enrollment in the Five Civilized Tribes, Compiled 1898–1914*, microfilm publication M1301, 468 rolls (Washington, DC: National Archives, n.d.), roll 86.

Treaty of 1821 was signed. It is now in southeast Madison Co., MS, near the boundary line that Madison shares with Leake County—just across the Pearl River from the Good Hope community in which Jacob and Penny’s son Thomas Sessums and their widowed daughter Mary “Polly” Williams lived in 1880.¹¹³ The land that Jacob Sessums obtained from the U.S. government in the newly created county of Simpson was land ceded by the Choctaw at the Treaty of Doaks Stand in 1821.

Good Hope, Mississippi, where Thomas Sessums and his sister Mary (Sessums) Williams were living at the time of the 1880 Leake County census, is just across Pearl River from Doaks Stand.

21 January 1902

Muscogee

(File pages 15–21)

Examination of claimant **John W. Sessums** [son of Reuben Fisher Sessums]. Age 44, Post Office: Ryan, Indian Territory. He has lived “in Ryan and near Ryan for about thirteen years. He is the “identical **John Washington Sessums** who appeared before this Commission at Muskogee, Indian Territory, August 30, 1900, and made application for the identification of [him]self and minor children as Mississippi Choctaws.”

John W. claims “**my grandmother was supposed to be or said to be a full blood ... Pennie Fisher.**” His grandfather was a white man, Jacob Sessums. He claims through his father, **Reuben Fisher Sessums, who was one-half Choctaw.**

He does not remember whether, in 1900, he claimed under the fourteenth article of the 1830 treaty. “I told them I knew nothing about the article, and I couldn’t say whether I complied with that article or not. ... No sir ... I don’t understand anything about the provisions of the fourteenth article [or] the treaty of 1830.” [Details of both were explained at length to him at this point.]

“I don’t know whether my foreparents have complied with it or not; I have never heard they [*sic*] say, and [was] never taught whether they did or not. I notice in some of the affidavits of W. R. Sessums [Wilson Russell Sessums, son of Redding], my cousin, in the courts, where **they claimed that Pennie Fisher and Jacob Sessums came to the Choctaw nation with the tribe, but they ... never**—my father died when I was small, that is, comparatively small, and he never did tell me anything about it whether they came to the territory or not. ... I suppose she [Pennie Fisher] died in Mississippi, but I don’t know where.” (pages 15–18)

“Applicant offers the joint affidavit of Wilson R. Sessums and Margaret Bailey averring that John W. Sessums et al., are ‘legal heirs and representatives’ of Reuben F. Sessums.”

Names of children: *Jacob Sessums; Mattie Pearl Sessums, William Edward, John Henry, Roy Lee*. Yes, his brothers and sisters made application also; their names are *William, Reuben P., Elizabeth* (who married J. F. Sessums, “a son of W. R. Sessums Sr., he and his wife ... are ... second cousins”), *Amanda Pettigrew, Penny Dry, and Martin Van Sessums*. Reuben P.’s wife is *Blanche*. Both Amanda and Penny have families. Penny has appeared before the commission; he doesn’t know whether “Manda J.” has.

¹¹³ “Doaks Stand (historical),” *Anyplace America.com* (<https://www.anyplaceamerica.com/directory/ms/madison-county-28089/locales/doaks-stand-historical--683236/>).

**Redding Sessums
Mary Ann Brown**

When asked whether he knows “A. B. Sessums,” he replied: “I don’t know whether I know him by his initials or not.” He knows the children of “William Sessums deceased” and could name his children “probably by studying a little bit. I haven’t been with them so long I have forgot the names of some of them—*Elizabeth Sessums* ... her husband’s name was *A. Harrison*. And there was *Janie Sessums*, she married a *Stephens*. ... Yes sir, *J. R. Sessums* is a son of William Sessums deceased. ... Yes sir, *Buchanan Sessums* ... and there was one they called *Alex* but I don’t remember his initials. He was just a lad like when I saw him last. ... *Mattie Sessums* who married *Fleming* was [also a daughter who is] party to this suit.” [William Buchanan Sessums was brother of Reuben Fisher Sessums, both sons of Redding.]

“Q Do you know any of the children of *Thomas Sessums, deceased*? A No sir, I don’t.” [Thomas, the older brother of the claimant’s father Reuben, had remained in Mississippi.]

“Q Do you know *John Sessums*? A I know a John Sessums ... he’s somewhere about sixty probably; upwards of sixty. ... [His children are] *William John* ... *Eva Goodwin, Thomas R. Sessums*, and there [is] a single girl at home—*Lillie Sessums*, and *Maggie*. ... They made application before the Commission.”

When pressed, the claimant said he knew nothing about whether his ancestors complied with provisions of the treaty, etc.

Interrogator’s note: “The applicant has light brown hair mixed with gray, grayish blue eyes, fair complexion, and doesn’t speak or understand the Choctaw language.”¹¹⁴

21 January 1902

Muscogee

(File pages 21–24)

Examination of claimant **William Thomas Sessums**. Age 42, post office: Colgate. Same man as the “William Sessums, forty-one years of age, post office Coalgate, Indian Territory, heard at Atoka, Indian Territory, on June 6, 1900.” When told that he made his earlier claim under the fourteenth article of the 1830 treaty, he responded: “Don’t know nothing about that fourteenth article.” When asked whether he heard the examination of “your brother who just preceded you” [John Washington Sessums], he said *yes*.

The long explanation of the fourteenth article was read to him, after which he said “I don’t know sir, whether they did or not.” Yes, **he claimed through Pennie Fisher, who was his grandmother**. No, he didn’t know whether she got any land as a Choctaw. Yes, he made application at Atoka in June 1900 for his children also. Those children are *Laura Estelle, Julia Evaline, Viola May, William Wesley, Hardy Clifton, Joy, Bert, Elmore, and Edna*. Yes, the last two are twins. Yes, he wants the evidence submitted in his brother’s claim to be considered in his and for their cases to be considered together.

Did he make a claim to the Choctaw Tribal council? Answer “Nothing only through McPherrin ... my attorney.” No, he doesn’t know whether McPherrin made application with the tribe on his behalf. No, he was not “a party ... in the case of *W. R. Sessums et al. vs. Choctaw Nation*.” **No, he does not know**

¹¹⁴ “Choc. MCR 184, John Sessums (See MCR 1323, 119, 183, 186, 473, 641, 5571, 5529, 475, 474)”; imaged in “Dawes Packets,” database with images, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/5r726775>), 89 pages; citing *Applications for Enrollment in the Five Civilized Tribes, Compiled 1898–1914*, microfilm publication M1301, 468 rolls (Washington, DC: National Archives, n.d.), roll 86.

where Pennie Fisher died or whether she was living and a head of family in 1830, or where she lived in 1830. "I was small when my father died." No he does not know whether Pennie Fisher made any compliance with article 14. No, he has no other proof aside from the transcript of the proceedings in the case of W. R. Sessums et al. vs. Choctaw Nation.¹¹⁵

21 January 1902

Muscogee

(File pages 24–29)

Examination of claimant **Reuben P. Sessums**. Age 36 "this coming April." Post office: "Wayne, now. It was McGee." Have lived in Indian Territory since '87, that is, permanently; nowhere else since '87 and have been in and out ever since '83." He is the same Reuben P. Sessums who appeared before the Commission on 21 June 1900 at Colbert, Indian Territory, applying for identification as Mississippi Choctaws for "self and [his] minor children and [his] brother Martin Van Sessums." Also applied for "intermarriage rights" of his wife. He made no application before this to any other Commission of the Five Civilized Tribes. "We sent once to meet you at Caddo, the year before. And by McPherrren putting us off—[saying] that he would present the papers—but still he didn't put it before you. [He was] Charles E. McPherrren ... a Lawyer," not connected with the Commission, just acting as "our attorney." "That was in August '99; I guess."

On what did he base his claim? "**Well ... I had always been taught, that my father was a Mississippi Choctaw and that if he ever derived any land or anything of the kind why that was more than I know anything about.**"

Was his father "a member of the old Choctaw tribe of Indians living in Mississippi? A Well he ought to be according to our knowledge. He was raised right there in Mississippi." Q "What right did that give your ancestor and give you as Mississippi Choctaws? A Well he was Mississippi Choctaw—Choctaw raised there."

After the explanation of the fourteenth article was read to him, he was asked if that's what he claimed under and he responded "Yes sir." **He was claiming under Pennie Fisher.** Didn't know whether she got lands under the treaty. As for whether she "was married and the head of a family at that time," he responded "Why, I guess she was."

Yes, he's a brother of William Sessums and John Washington Session who also appeared that day. The children for whom he made application at Colbert in June 1900 were *Levinia Burnice*; *Allen Sessums*, *Lettie Evaline* (yes, she's the same as "Leta" from the 1900 claim). Yes, he's a cousin to the W. R. Sessums "who was ordered admitted to citizenship by order of the United States Court." Yes, W. R. Sessums Sr. is the father of W. R. Sessums Jr. No, no other member of his family was party to that suit. Yes, Mary E. Harrison and Martha Fleming who were admitted in that suit are his cousins.

Any other evidence to present? "Well, I would like to state about W. R. Sessums there [Wilson Russell Sessums]—**the old man W. R. Sessums**—I went to get him to come up here and he said he thought it was of no use as they had his testimony. He is old and in very poor health. ... He said that as he was in

¹¹⁵ "Choc. MCR 184, John Sessums (See MCR 1323, 119, 183, 186, 473, 641, 5571, 5529, 475, 474)"; imaged in "Dawes Packets," database with images, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/5r726775>), 89 pages; citing *Applications for Enrollment in the Five Civilized Tribes, Compiled 1898–1914*, microfilm publication M1301, 468 rolls (Washington, DC: National Archives, n.d.), roll 86.

such feeble health ..." [cut off at this point by another question]. Yes, Penney A. Dry and Manda Jane Pettigrew are his sisters.

Note by interrogator: "This applicant has light brown hair, bluish gray eyes, fair complexion, features and appearance of a person of white parentage and doesn't speak or understand the Choctaw language."¹¹⁶

INDIAN TERRITORY

15 MAY 1902

Choctaw MCR 5571, James A. J. Williams:

Examination of claimant. Age: "Will be fifty-five in June," receives his mail at Morvin, Oklahoma, where he will have resided for "ten years in June." Before that, he lived in the Chickasaw Nation for four years and before that in Texas.¹¹⁷ He was "born and raised in Mississippi" and left when he was 23. His father, John Williams, "died in the Civil War." His mother is Jeannette Williams. He claims Choctaw blood through his father, saying "my grandmother was a half breed."

James stated: "I claim that **my grandmother was a daughter of Penny Fisher**; it was a name that was kept up in the Fisher family." His grandmother was Polly Sessums who married Neal Williams. When pressed, James stated that

- He does not speak the Choctaw language.
- He knows of no family member who was enrolled in the Choctaw tribe by tribal authority; but (when asked if any of his ancestors complied with the 1830 Choctaw treaty), his answer was "Any of my aunt's sisters." He did not name that aunt.
- He did not know the name of any "Choctaw ancestor who lived in Mississippi or Alabama in the old Choctaw nation in 1830 and was the head of a family there then."
- He did not know any who went to the "Choctaw Nation West of the Mississippi River with the other Indians between 1833 and 1838."
- He did not know of any ancestors who held land under the Choctaw Treaty or received scrip for land in "Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, or Arkansas as a result of treaty-claims adjudications of the 1840s."
- He has no proof of the marriage of his father and mother, does not know when they married, but they married in "Keller County" Mississippi (Atalla County).
- His wife Henrietta is a white woman. They were married in "Keller County" by a minister, under license.
- Their unmarried, minor children are *Walter* (15), *Dovie* (12), *Calvin* (10), *Mertie* (7). Their adult and married children are *Millie Boggus*, living "up in the Pott Country of Oklahoma, p.o, Morvin, who is

¹¹⁶ "Choc. MCR 184, John Sessums (See MCR 1323, 119, 183, 186, 473, 641, 5571, 5529, 475, 474)"; imaged in "Dawes Packets," database with images, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/54726775>), 89 pages; citing *Applications for Enrollment in the Five Civilized Tribes, Compiled 1898-1914*, microfilm publication M1301, 468 rolls (Washington, DC: National Archives, n.d.), roll 86.

¹¹⁷ James A. J. Williams did not say where he lived in Texas. However, his daughter Ida (Williams) Henderson applied; in her affidavit of 9 May 1902 she stated that she was thirty-five and had lived for "fifteen or sixteen years" in Oklahoma, but was born in **Johnson County, Texas**. If correct, that places the family's migration just after the Civil War, at which time they migrated to the county in which their father's first-cousin Redding Sessums resided. For Ida, see MCR 5529; imaged in "Dawes Packets," database with images, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/56062798>).

not a claimant; *Ida Henderson*, “Tom Henderson’s wife” (who has filed a claim of her own) and other “sons and daughters that are married.”

- He knows the two claimants “John Sessums. One is “a nephew of **Russ Sessums**” [Wilson Russell Sessums] and the other a son of Reuben Sessums. “One of them [one of the Johns] is a second cousin to me and the other one is a third cousin. The father of the third cousin was William Sessums.

The interrogator, G. Rosenwinkel, wrote: “*This applicant has the appearance and physical characteristics of being descended from white parentage. He has dark hair, somewhat gray and gray whiskers and mustache, the applicant says his whiskers were formerly black; he has brown eyes.*”

21 June 1902

Indian Territory, Southern District

Affidavit of **W. R. Sessums** and **J. F. Sessums** attests “This man **James Williams** claiming a right is a second cousin to me W. R. Sessums. And a third cousin to J. F. Sessums. And is a son of John Williams and John Williams is the son of Polly Williams and Polly Williams was the daughter of Penny Fisher and **Penny Fisher was a Choctaw woman** who married a white man by the name of Jacob Sessums.

6 June 1902

Muskogee, Indian Territory

(Sent by registered mail)

Letter to James A. J. Williams from “Tams Bixby, Acting chairman,” notifies the claimant that a decision has been made in the “consolidated case of

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-------|
| • John Sessums et al. | M.C.R. | 184 |
| • Eva Goodwin et al. | M.C.R. | 132 |
| • William Sessums et al. | M.C.R. | 119 |
| • Wm. J. Sessums, et al. | M.C.R. | 183 |
| • Thomas R. Sessums et al. | M.C.R. | 186 |
| • Reuben P. Sessums et al. | M.C.R. | 473 |
| • John Washington Sessums et al. | M.C.R. | 641 |
| • Many Jane <i>Pettigrew</i> et al. | M.C.R. | 474 |
| • Penny A. <i>Dry</i> et al. | M.C.R. | 475 |
| • James A. J. Williams et al. | M.C.R. | 5571 |
| • <i>Ida Henderson</i> et al. | M.C.R. | 5529” |

Also: “under the provision of law above quoted, no person is entitled to identification as a Mississippi Choctaw by marriage, and [thus] the application made by Reuben P. Sessums for the identification of his wife Blanche Sessums, as an intermarried Mississippi Choctaw, should, therefore, be refused, and it is so ordered.”

The claimants, who applied “under the provision of the act of Congress of June 28, 1898 (w) Stats. 495” **have not produced the required evidence to support their claims and are therefore denied.** The letter

provides a long list of all claimants who participated in these eleven cases.¹¹⁸

COMMENT:

The tradition of Indian ancestry through Penny Fisher may point to her ancestry, even though she clearly was not Choctaw and was not born in Mississippi. At the time of her birth in Duplin > Sampson County, NC, the region had numerous families with Indian roots.

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- James D. Sessum patented E½ SE¼ & W½ SE¼ S19 T6N R3E, 10 Dec. 1840 | contiguous sections
 - John Williams patented NW¼ SW¼ S17 T6N R3E, 25 May 1841 | about 1½ miles apart
- That location lies near center of county in NW quadrant of the county. It is not near Simpson Co.

¹¹⁸ "Choctaw MCR 5571, James A. J. Williams (See MCR 184)"; imaged in "Dawes Packets," database with images, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/56063519>), 16 pages; citing *Applications for Enrollment in the Five Civilized Tribes, Compiled 1898–1914*, microfilm publication M1301, 468 rolls (Washington, DC: National Archives, n.d.), roll 147.

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COMMENT:

The ‘S’ entries in this index end August 1866.

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