

Curnel Caywood Reece

Curnel Caywood Reece was born on 06 FEB 1870, Haywood County, NC, and died in 1953, in Clay County, NC. He married his 3rd cousin, Susan "Ellen" Reece on 23 DEC 1892. She was born on 01 MAY 1873 and died on 04 JAN 1940, in Clay County, NC. She was the daughter of John Valentine Reece and Nancy Wells. Both of them are buried in Pine Log Cemetery, Clay County, NC.

Curn's lineage is: Jessie Franklin Reece⁵, Samuel L. Reece⁴, Anthony Reece³, Johann Valentine Reece², and Johan Jacob Ries¹. His father was born in APR 1844, in Haywood County, NC; and died in about 1909, in Haywood County, NC. He had one sister (Dovey/Sally) and one brother (Thomas Jefferson). His mother's name was Mary Elizabeth Investor Howell. She was born in MAY 1840, in Haywood County, NC; and died on 26 DEC 1917, in Haywood County, NC.

Note for Curnel C. Reece:

Curn was named for Colonel Love, Frank's (Jesse Franklin) Commander in the Civil War.

The writer of the old reecemountain website (Bob Jones) says: "I remember him from the time I was a young boy of 10 years. I still have a sense of his soft wrinkled skin and his smile."

Note for (Curn's father) Jessie "Frank" Reece:

He fought for the South in the Civil War.

In my travels, I have seen lots of stories about Curn. That's why he got his own page. I apologize ahead of time for the poor quality of the scans and photos as they were printed out and given to me like this and originated on Bob Jones' now bygone website. It's all I have and I wanted to share them.

This photo was purported to have been taken in 1909 of 'Ellen' and the children:



Arthur, Elsie, Bonnie, Mother Ellen, Eula, Baby Roy
About 1909

This is a better copy of the same photo in the Heritage of Union County Article below:



1920 Photo - Location unknown
Back row - L to R - Eula Reece Miller, Arthur Reece, Bonnie Reece Sharp. Front Row - L to R - Annie Reece Scroggs, Cornel Reece, J. V. Reece, Ellen Reece, Roy Reece. Lap babies - Lois Sharp, James Sharp

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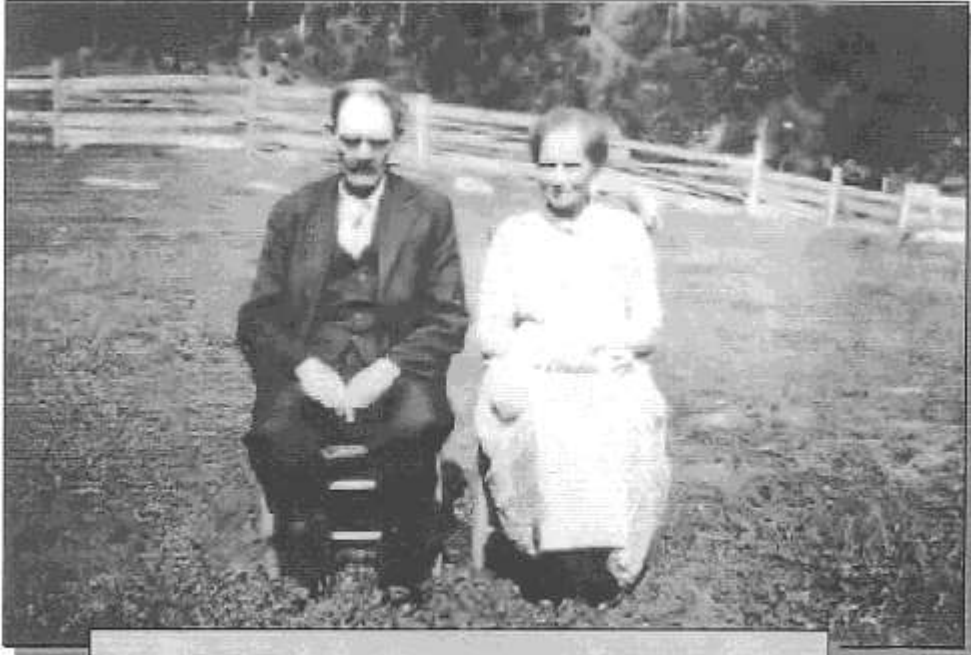
Curn and Ellen worked hard:



and had some unusual pets --



1930's



Curn & Ellen in the Thirties

1948



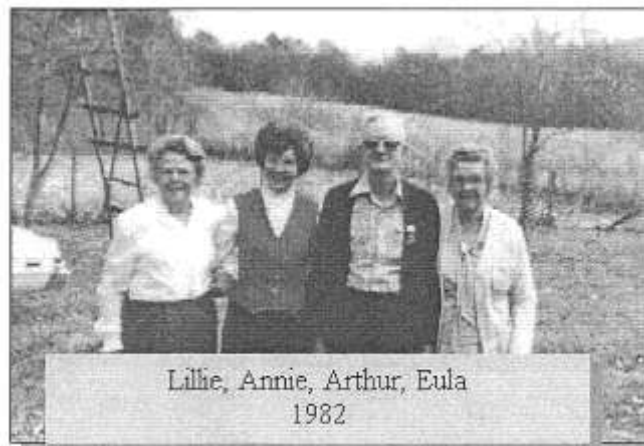
Eula, Lillie, Arthur, Bonnie, Annie, Curn
1948

1950



Curn in the Fifties

Curn and Ellen's children in 1982



And two old photos I just wanted to make sure got kept:

Betsy Investor Reece (Curn's mother) and her sisters



And Isaac Investor (Curn's grandfather)



328 CURNEL REECE - ELLEN REECE

Curnel (known to all as Curn) b. 1870 in Cruso Community - Haywood County. One of three children; 1 sister, Sally Measo and 1 brother, Tom. Curn's father was Frank Reece (l. unknown) Mother was Betsy Ivester (b. unknown).

Curn married Ellen Reece (3rd cousin) in Cruso in 1892. He fathered 12 children (see John V. Reece history).



1920 Photo - Location unknown

Back row - L to R - Ella Reece Miller, Arthur Reece, Bonnie Reece Sharp. Front row - L to R - Annie Reece Scruggs, Curnel Reece, J. V. Reece, Ellen Reece, Roy Reece. Lap babies - Los Sharp, James Sharp.

Curn and Ellen moved the family to Pine Log in 1914. Never heard Curn talk of his Mother or Father. Curn was a fox hunter and teller of tales. Ghost stories were his favorite, told as if they happened to him. A white horse which actually was a possum by Double Springs; a spirit on the rail fence at Pine Log Church which was a blowing newspaper; an invisible passenger on the wagon seat passing by his

home at certain times of the year. Also stories of where he worked; parts of life that give us our preceptions.

Curn always had a car. He was stopped for a traffic check (in the 1940s). Only license he ever had was issued by drug store (around 1910). He received no citation. The Governor of N.C. issued him a life time license. This license was revoked around age 85 due to sight failure. No longer able to drive, he went horseback. Fell from a horse, died several days later, 1963. He is buried in Pine Log Baptist Cemetery.

Arthur lived many years on his father's farm, spent most of his life (until Curn died) working with Curn so their lives were close.

Arthur tells about the family's two week wagon (several two horse wagons) trip from Cruso to Pine Log in 1914; about night camps (at sites made by other travelers) where stories were told and plans made; how two horse wagons had to be pulled up to Winding Stairs Gap by three teams of horses because of the steep and rough roads. Each trip required at least a day.

Arthur and Dons (see Peter Miller and Annie Shook histories) married Clay County 1927. Parents of seven native born Clay Countians, all graduated Hayesville High School. Daughters - Marbur, Alice, Lenoira and Opal (see Peter Miller history). Sons - Arthur (Buck), Max and Rex. (see Curn Reece history).

Arthur (called "Daddy Arthur" when grandchildren come) worked in timber and on the farm from age 14. He was a teller of tales also and always acknowledged children in his presence. Fox hunting was his hobby. He enjoyed life. He walked with his family and community.

Buck (b. 1931) gr. HHS 1951. To Korea discharged 1955. Two years Univ. Tenn. Married Mary F. Chastan (b. 1940) 1958. She gr. HHS 1958. Two daughters. Selena - UGA Computer Scientist, married; 2 sons. Lives Norwich, CT. Taunya - GS Univ - Physical Therapist, married, no children lives Calhoun, Ga. Buck & Mary retired to Pine Log 1957.

Max (b. 1935) gr. HHS 1955. Max stayed home. Works for N.C. D.O.T. Married Mary Sue McElrath (b. 1938) 1956, live children - all gr. HHS. Paul - No children - lives on Pine Log. Sherry Long Collins - married, 2 sons, lives on Pine Log. Perry - married, 1 daughter, lives Pine Log. Anita Wood - Appalachian St - Astro-Physicist, married, 2 daughters, 1 son, lives in Fredericksburg, VA. Philip - married, 2 sons. Max and Mary Sue live on family farm in Pine Log.

Rex (b. 1943) gr. HHS 1961. Purdue Univ. PH.D. Clinical Psy. not married, lives Los Angeles, CA. Suggested by Arthur (Buck) Reece. Rt. 1, Box 1174, Duxtown, NC 28932. Sources: Death, marriage and family records. Personal knowledge.

Heritage of
Union County,
GA.

A large part of
this article is
about Curn's
son, Arthur
Talmadge.

From Heritage of Union County, GA

328 CURNEL REECE – ELLEN REECE

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Curn married Ellen Reece (3rd cousin) in Cruso in 1892. He fathered 12 children (see John V. Reece history).

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Arthur and Doris (see Peter Miller and Annie Shook histories) married in Clay County in 1927. Parents of seven native-born Clay Countians, all graduated Hayesville High School. Daughters – Maebur, Alice, Lenora and Opal (see Peter Miller history). Sons – Arthur (Buck), Max and Rex (see Curn Reece history).

Arthur (called "Daddy Arthur" when grandchildren came) worked in timber and on the farm from age 14. He was a teller of tales also and always acknowledged children in his presence. Fox hunting was his hobby. He enjoyed life. He walked with his family and community.

Buck (b. 1931) graduated from HHS in 1951. He went to Korea and was discharged in 1955. He spent two years at the Univ. Tenn. He married Mary F. Chastain (b. 1940) in 1958. She graduated from HHS in 1958 and has two daughters, Selena – UGA Computer Scientist, married, 2 sons, lives Norwich, CT; and Taunya – GS Univ, Physical Therapist, married, no children, lives Calhoun GA. Buck and Mary retired to Pine Log in 1987.

Max (b. 1935) graduated from HHS in 1956. Max stayed home. Worked for NC D.O.T. He married Mary Sue McElrath (b. 1938) in 1956. They had five children – all graduated from HHS: Paul – no children, lives in Pine Log; Sherry Long Collins – married, 2 sons, lives in Pine Log; Perry – married, 1 daughter, lives in Pine Log; Anita Wood – Appalachian St., Astrophysicist, married, 2 daughters, 1 son, lives in Fredericksburg, VA; Phillip – married, 2 sons. Max and Mary Sue live on the family farm in Pine Log.

Rex (b. 1943) graduated from HHS in 1961. He went to Purdue University where he got a PHD in Clinical Psychology, not married, lives in Los Angeles, CA.

Submitted by Arthur (Buck) Reece, Brasstown, NC (now deceased) Some small corrections were made in the punctuation for readability. NS - 2

This information comes from an old website no longer valid. It is a story written by Evelyn Goforth about a cousin of Caswell Reece's named Curnel Reece. Many of those on our branch of the family tree are mentioned in the following tale. I have used parts of this story in other places but here it is in its entirety.

The Curn Reece Story

Anthony Reece (Caswell Reece's great-grandfather) came to Haywood County in the early 1800's. His wife's name was Sarah Chambers and they are the ones that lived in the hollow tree. The story is that they lived in a hollow tree until they got their house built. Another story says that one day an eagle swooped down and picked up their baby. Sarah beat it with a scrag (straw) broom until it dropped the baby.

There was a falling out within the family. There were some Reeses who lived between Cruso and Bethel who used the "s" instead of the "c" in their name. Bonnie Reece Sharp was asked if they were related. She said they had changed the spelling because they didn't want to be associated with the rest of the family.

John Valentine (J.V.) Reece (Caswell's father) was a preacher and apparently a carpenter. He could have been called a circuit rider or not, but his grandson, Mont Reece (Caswell's son) told me he rode a horse to different churches to preach. Possibly that is the reason he traveled as much as he did.

When J.V. first came to this part of the country, according to his grandson Mont, he lived over in Georgia between Ebenzer and Blairsville. He built and operated a grist mill while he lived there and possibly that is when he became acquainted with Clay County. Somewhere along the line he also spent some time in the Watauga Settlements in what is now Tennessee.

When J.V. settled in Clay County, all of his children except one son and one daughter also moved to Clay County. His son, Charlie, operated a blacksmith shop. His sons Joe, Theodore and son-in-law, Curn (*Susan Ellen's husband*), operated a saw mill and his daughter, Ann, and her husband George Sharp, operated a country store. His son, Caswell, also operated a country store and farmed on the other end of Pine Log. His daughter, Lillie, operated a grist mill he had built for her. She was a widow with five children to raise. (*Jefferson Waldroup died in 1914*) So J.V. bought an old mill from Peter Miller that didn't even have cogs to operate it. He and his son, Charlie, made cogs and other workings for it in Charlie's blacksmith shop. Ann, George and Joe eventually returned to Haywood County. Aunt Bonnie was already married and had two children when Curn and the other family members moved to Clay County, so she stayed in Haywood County.

According to Mont, his father (J.V.), Caswell, Uncle Theodore and Cousin Arthur bought a horse drawn combine in the mid-twenties. When the depression hit that part of the country, the conveyor belt on it was worn out. The cost of a new one was \$6.50. Between the three of them they didn't have the money to buy one, so they had to cut the wheat and rye they had contracted to cut with a cradle. Cas said he had no idea how many acres of wheat he cut.

Mont loaned my Uncle Cas ledgers from 1928-1929 and according to them sugar was 3 cents a pound, salt 2 cents, coffee 15 cents, and a pair of overalls or work shirt \$1.25. People worked for him for a dollar a day. Eula Reece Miller had a notebook she kept in 1939 and the prices were the same. They had not gone up at all in ten years.

People didn't buy things, they traded eggs, chickens or whatever they had for what they needed. Uncle Cas paid 8 cents for a dozen eggs, 2 cents a pound for dried apples and a hen brought about a quarter. Mont said they took any kind of staples to Murphy and traded them to wholesale houses for the things they needed. He would load up the wagon at night and leave out before daylight and after he had done his trading, it would be dark before he got back home.

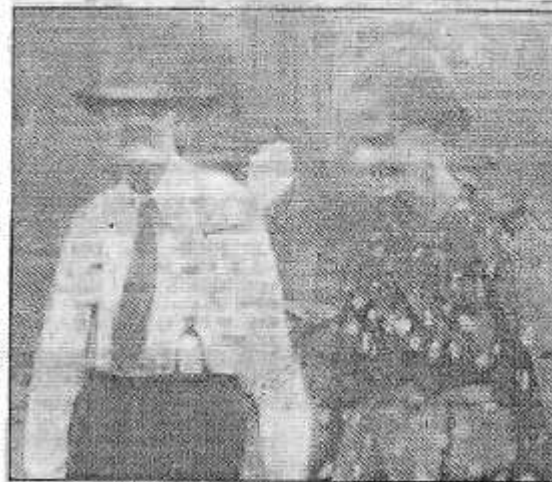
Lillie, Annie, Roy, and J.T. (Theodore) left for factory jobs. They would all come home for Christmas. Sometimes Bonnie and Dave Sharp came. They always brought a barrel of sheep nose apples and we could eat all we wanted. I thought they were the best apples I ever tasted. They must have come home earlier one year because there were still chestnuts. Blight had hit the chestnut trees. There was one in Curn's pasture. Uncle Roy and Uncle J.T. cut it down, brought the chestnuts to the house and roasted them in the fireplace. The only problem was, they forgot to punch a hole in them. When they got hot, they exploded shooting chestnuts and fire coals all over the room.

Curn Reece, was, I guess, almost what you would call dour. I don't remember ever hearing him really laugh. He was slow moving and didn't seem to ever get in a hurry and was rather quiet. He attended church but never took an active part in the worship service. His pastime was fox hunting. He always had a bunch of fox hounds. One he had was an egg sucker. Grandma Ellen kept telling him if he didn't break it from sucking eggs or put it up, she'd get rid of it. One morning, grandpa went to feed the dogs and this one was sitting on the side of the hill above the house and didn't move when he called it. He went to investigate, when he touched the dog it fell over. Grandma had kept her promise and poisoned the dog. He kept his dogs out of the hen house after that.

When the menfolk went fox hunting, if the dogs were running good, they'd spend the night. Grandpa taught me (*Evelyn*) how to blow his fox horn. I'd go out on the porch and blow the proscribed number of times and before long here would come everyone who wanted to go fox hunting. He also used the horn to call in the dogs when the hunt was over.

Grandma Ellen Reece was a fun loving person. She loved to play tricks on people. They were always funny but sometimes verged on being mean. She taught me to milk and would let me help run the separator. I never could understand how you could pour milk in a hopper and cream would come out one spout and milk the other. She would take me fishing sometimes when I was over there on Saturday. I was only 4 or 5 years old and only caught molly crawly bottoms but to me that was a big adventure. She was very active in church.

Grandpa Curn Reece had a home-made cider press. It set under a white sweet apple tree between the house and the barn. The apples were delicious baked but wouldn't keep. What couldn't be used was fed to the stock. They always made several gallons of cider and it would keep for a good while in the spring house in stone jugs. If it got hard before it was drunk up and you drank too much of it, it would make you high. Grandma also used it to make vinegar. I always had fun when I visited Grandpa and Grandma Reece.



Grandpa "Curnel" with grandma Ellen Reece in the early days.

Road construction methods in the early part of the century weren't impressive next to today's massive machines, but after the bottomless mud tracks that their generation grew up with the new roads they built were great achievements.

This is a drag pan which Max still uses and a "cattle crossing" bridge on Arthur's farm at the White House.



Grandpa's perfect driving record

By Evelyn Goforth

Grandpa bought one of the first cars in our community. I'm not sure whether it was a T-Model or an A-Model but I know it was a Ford.

Grandpa ordered the car from what was then Sears Roebuck and Company. It only cost him \$600 and came with a lifetime license. That was the only license he had for about 50 years. After they placed a permanent highway patrolman in this area he got into trouble. He got stopped for a license check by a patrolman.

Grandpa very calmly reached in his pocket, pulled out his billfold and removed this sheet of paper all folded up and looking very old and worn.

Grandpa very carefully unfolded the paper and handed it to the patrolman who looked at it in amazement. He said, "I'm sorry, sir, but this isn't a valid drivers license. You have to have one issued by the State of North Carolina". Grandpa talked himself out of a ticket.

I don't really know just how it happened except the patrolman reported the incident to his superiors who wrote the Governor. When they found grandpa had such a perfect driving record, the State issued him a permanent license.

There was a secret to grandpa's "perfect" record. Grandpa was a slow talking man who never got excited. I never saw him upset and never heard him utter a word in anger. He had accidents but always talked the other driver into believing he was equally at fault and that they should each fix their own car.

One of my brothers was riding to Murphy with him one day. They were coming down the crooked Pine Log Road. Most everyone drove in the middle of those dirt roads but grandpa ran into trouble in one of the sharp curves. He met car coming the other way.

Grandpa got over some but both ended up with dented fenders. Grandpa very calmly got out of his car, walked over to the lady who was driving and said, "Con Sam it marn you flatlanders don't know how to drive on these crooked country roads. You were going too fast around that curve, I couldn't get out of your way." She got so confused she agreed to fix her own car and forget it. That's how grandpa kept a perfect driving record!



WPA Road Crew

In 1937 in front of the house that Arthur built. Politics changed and Arthur lost his job.
Back Row left, Arthur, Middle Row Center, Hub Ivester,
Front Row Right, Nolan Ivester

Children of Susan "Ellen" Reece and Curnell Reece were:

1. J. Ethel Reece
2. Bonnie Elizabeth Reece – **b:** 03 JUL 1895 (*per NC Index to Delayed Birth Certificates*);
m: Dave H. Sharp (**b:** 1893; **d:** 1981) (parents of Two known children: Lois/James)
3. Alta Ellen Reece
4. Sarah Elise Reece
5. Ollie L. Reece
6. Lillie Atlanta Reece – **b:** 02 Nov 1903 (*per NC Index to Delayed Birth Certificates*)
7. Eula Vaughn Reece – **m:** Charles Russell Miller
8. Fred V. Reece
9. Roy Caldwell Reece– **m:** Kate Scroggs
(parents of Annie Mae Reece - **b:** 08 JUL 1931, Brasstown, Clay County, NC))
10. Annie Naomi Reece – **b:** 12 May 1919 (*per NC Index to Delayed Birth Certificates*); **m:**
Scroggs
11. John Valentine Reece – **b:** 17 AUG 1914; **d:** 16 MAY 1944; **m:** Flora Etta Myers (**b:**
12 OCT 1913; **d:** 17 DEC 2000) both buried in Pine Log Cemetery, Brasstown, NC
12. Arthur Talmage Reece – **b:** 07 OCT 1899 (*per NC Index to Delayed Birth Certificates*);
d: 25 JUN 1983; **m:** Doris "Dot" Miller in 1927 in Clay County, NC