

# The READ/DUNCAN Family of Allen County, KY

The following is my transcription of two 1889 newspaper clippings which provide wonderful details about the lives and history of the Read/Duncan family of Fauquier Co., VA and Allen Co., KY. If you read them carefully you will see why I have linked them to other County Pages. I made every effort to retain the original spelling, punctuation and grammar.

In case you are wondering, the two clippings were in a two-ring binder which belonged to my great-grandmother, Nancy Helen (Carlock) Groves (19 August 1843-1 Feb. 1935, Hermleigh, TX), whose mother was Kitty Virginia Read (13 December 1815- ca 1845), wife of George W. Carlock. Kitty was born Catharine Virginia Read, daughter of Robert C. and Nancy Read, and granddaughter of John and E. Read of Culpeper Co., Va.

**Willis P. Oliver woliver@hiwaay.net**

## **The Louisville Courier Journal, February 11, 1889**

Three Happy Brothers

They Were Married in 1839 and Will, With Their Wives Celebrate Their Golden Weddings During the Summer or Autumn.

One Brother Lives in Allen County, Another in Simpson County, and the Third in Louisville.

The Remarkable Kindness with Which Fortune Has Treated the Members of the Read Family.

An unusual event is to occur this year in Kentucky.

In 1839, three brothers, Samuel J., Edmond D. F., and Traverse Arthur Read, all then living in Allen County this State, were married to three of Kentucky's daughters. All three of these brothers who started on the matrimonial voyage the same year, and their wives are alive and well today, and the six old people propose to have a grand family gathering to celebrate together their golden weddings. Although the snows of half a century have bleached the locks of their younger days, and their forms and faces bear the imprint of old Father Time, the feelings of these six estimable people are still as fresh as in the days when the brothers a-courting went. The grand event of the year is looked forward to by them with a pleasant anxiety, exceeded only by that preceding those other weddings of the long ago.

In 1810 Mr. Theopolis Read, a native of Fauquier County, Virginia, moved to Allen county, Kentucky and settled there. His family consisted at that time of four young sons and his wife, who was Miss Margaret Duncan of Culpeper county, Virginia. Mrs. Read, the mother of the subjects of this sketch was the Aunt of Hon. James G. Fields, a gallant Confederate leader and former Attorney General of Virginia.

He is now practicing law at Culpeper C. H. Virginia.

The experience of the elder Read was about that of all early settlers of Kentucky. There were many hardships to be endured but they were bravely overcome. In what was then, to the people of the Eastern shore, the "Far West," Theopolis Read hewed the forest away, and, with a part of the felled monarchs from the "clearing" built himself an ample and substantial home. The ravages of time have not impaired the usefulness of that structure, and, although it has been changed some in the course of all the years that followed, it is still the "old home" of the family. Four generations have found beneath its roof that haven of which the praises were sung so immortally by John Howard Payne.

The children of Theopolis Read who were born in Virginia before the removal to Kentucky were: John C. Read who died many years ago at the age of forty-two years; Charles D. Read who died a few years since in his eighty-fourth year; George G. Read, now living in Allen county at the advanced age of eight-seven years, and Samuel J. Read, one of those to celebrate the golden wedding this year. Four sons of Charles D. are now prosperous farmers of Warren county.

Mr. Samuel J. Read was born in Virginia, April 24, 1808. On November 5, 1839 he was married to Miss Elizabeth Jane Berry, a daughter of Thompson Berry, Esq., of Barren county. They had seven children, of whom two are dead and five are still living in Allen county. Mr. William H. Read, Clerk of the Allen County Court, is one of his sons. The latter was a member of Sixth Kentucky regiment, CSA Infantry, which was commanded by Col. Joe Lewis, afterward made a General. Mr. Read was in eighty hard fought battles and skirmishes yet his skin was never broken by either ball or blade. Mr. Samuel J. Read is now about eighty-one years of age, and his estimable wife is about ninety.

Mr. Edmond D. F. Read lives nine miles from Franklin, in Simpson county. He will be seventy-five years of age in August this year. His wife was Miss Elizabeth Pulliam, daughter of William Pulliam, Sr., of Allen county. They were married in May 1839, and have four living children. "Uncle Edmond," as he is affectionately called by relatives and friends alike, is liked by everyone, and the good woman who has borne his name for fifty years is a favorite of all who know her. The celebration of the golden wedding is anticipated by them with pleasure, which is shared in by their children to an equal degree. Mr. Read was born in the old home where his brother Samuel and his family now reside.

The youngest of the brothers is Mr. T. A. Read, Sr., who resides at No. 504 Twenty-sixth street, in this city. He, too, was born at the old home in Allen county, October 29, 1820, and is therefore in his sixty-ninth year. On September 12, 1839, he was married to Miss Mary Frances Cockrill, a daughter of Johnson J. Cockrill, Esq., of Allen county. Mrs. Read was born December 14, 1823 and is, consequently, now in her sixty-sixth year. By reference to the dates, it will be seen that Mr. and Mrs. Read were a youthful couple when they life's path together, be being only eighteen, and she but fifteen years of age. Mrs. Read is a cultured lady and does not look over fifty years of age. In speaking of the very youthful age at which she gave her hand and heart to her young suitor, Mrs. Read said with a smile, a blush, such as what might have surmounted her cheek when she plighted her troth, and glanced at the husband who sat opposite her, at the fireside: "If one of my children had offered to marry at the same age, I should

have scolded fearfully, yet, we have never for a moment regretted marrying so young."

Mrs. Read's youngest daughter, who was present, and is herself a counterpart of her mother when she was young, listened to this remark with an air of interest.

There are several old people still living here who were present at the wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Read. Among them are H. C. Caruth, father of Congressman Asher G. Caruth, Mr. H. C. Mitchell, and Mrs. Charles Alexander, mother of Rev. Gross Alexander of Vanderbilt University. Mrs. Read's father was a brother of Congressman Caruth's grandmother. Rev. B. D. Cockrill, pastor of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, of this city, is a son of Mrs. Read's brother, Elijah M. Cockrill of Simpson county. Mr. Benjamin F. Cockrill of Glasgow is also her brother. She also has a brother, Thomas J. Cockrill, of Dallas county, Texas, and one in Western Kentucky, Harvey J. Cockrill. Mrs. Lee Ann McFarland of Allen county is her sister.

Mr. and Mrs. Read's oldest son, Oscar E., was a member of the same regiment as his cousin William H. Read during the late War. He died in service and was buried in the "Kentucky Graveyard" in Atlanta, Georgia. The living children are Mrs. Alice Sanders, Mr. John C. Read, Mrs. Fannie M. Brown, Mrs. Mary J. Smith of St. Louis, Mr. Traverse Read, Jr. and Miss Evalee Read, all of this city.

The exact time of the remarkable golden wedding has not been decided upon but it will likely occur during the coming summer or fall, and will probably take place at the old Read home in Allen county.

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## **The Scottsville Sentinel, May 1889**

### **The Golden Wedding**

#### **Celebration of the Most Remarkable Event Ever Occuring in this County**

The most unique event that ever occurred in this county and the only recorded occasion of a similar gathering, so far as we know, in the world, took place at the old Read homestead, about two and a half miles Northwest of this place last Thursday. It was the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the wedding of the three Read brothers, S. J. Read of this county, E. D. F. Read of Simpson county, and T. A. Read of Louisville. [missing words] relatives and guests [missing words] at the beautiful old home [missing words] where, a half century ago, the three brothers dwelt and together roamed over the hills, drank of the crystal springs and breathed the invigorating air of old Allen county, which might be fittingly called the Virginia county of Kentucky. They seem to have imbibed from the influence a veritable elixir of life that now preserves them in hale and respected old age, the frosts of the years touching their heads but leaving unchilled the genial current of their lives and the hospitality of their souls. Each guest was welcomed with an old time stately greeting that recalled the days of the harpicord,

the minuet, queued and powdered hair, and the court dress and polished manners of the eighteenth century.

Old men and old ladies whose ruddy faces and silver locks preached volumes for their regular, honest, simple lives, lovingly grasped each other's hands and talked of events, which, to the stalwart grandsons and robust granddaughters present sounded like ancient history and the days when carding and spinning and weaving were flourishing industries in every home. Grizzled beards and wrinkled faces and dimmed eyes were forgotten and harmless jokes restored fullness of laughter to the cracked voices, vigor to the faltering steps and sparkles to the eyes. Just the influence of watching and hearing these renewings of love and friendship was as exhilarating as a draught of mellow old Madeira and as pathetic as the minor strains drawn by a Paganini from a Cremona violin.

When most of the guests had arrived, Rev. M. F. Ham, the spiritual father of all the pairs, having been their pastor 40 years ago at the Bethlehem church, this county, and who had baptized E. D. F. Read and wife, T. A. Read and wife, and Mrs. S. J. Read, was invited to address the congregation. After a beautiful prayer, this noble old patriarch, standing near his beautiful old wife, to whom he had been wedded for 52 years, addressed the audience thus:

"How clearly does this impressive scene demonstrate how false an impeachment of God's wisdom is the statement that marriage is a failure. Some assert that the matrimonial contract is no more binding than any civil contract and that fallacy has much to do with divorce laws in all countries. These loved ones before a half century ago, judiciously chose companions and, welded by tearful trials and melying misfortunes into one, their lives have been successful and happy. Where on earth will three similar couples to these be found? Besides these, E. D. Garrison and wife, and myself and wife have been married, the former 51 years and the latter 52 years and probably nowhere in this section will another couple be found. The oldest brother, G. D. Read, has been bereaved sorely but he, with the rest, will join you in the reunion beyond Jordan. May we all be prepared to meet with the Reads in the next reunion which will be in Glory."

Rev. J. W. Dixon then gave a short talk drawing an illustration from the old wedding coat worn by all brothers and said they had all put on the garment of the gospel which had protected them from the chill of misfortune and warmed their souls in time of trouble. He was glad that nothing had occurred during fifty years to disturb the mutual love and confidence of the couples. It is pleasant to meet in the old home here, but it will be more joyful to meet in the heavenly home, in the sweet by and by.

Shortly after the speeches, dinner was announced. About 150 people gathered around the long tables that had been put up in the shady yard and loaded with both substantials and sweets to the satisfaction of every guest. The old people sat at the head of the tables, and the five couples who had been married over 50 years occupying prominent places. No such dinner was ever set in this section as the one enjoyed by the guests. It was simply all the appetite could wish and when all had eaten to repletion, as much more food was left in baskets and boxes that had not been opened.

The sun's rays were throwing long shadows toward the East before the leave takings began and all, as one man, bade the unique sextette farewell. In the East, where the sun of Righteousness rises to shine throughout the ages, where the crystal river flows, where partings are no more, where tears and sighing and pain and death are over, in the shade of the tree of life, once again shall hand clasp hand in the Eternal Morning Land.

## The Family History

Some time near the end of the last century Chas. Duncan and Theophilus Read lived in Farquier county Va. The former had nine daughters and four sons, as follows; Pricilla Bowman, who went to Texas; Margret Read; Mary Dulaney who died in Warren county in 1853 or 1854; Nancy Carter; Maria Field, mother of Judge James Field, late Attorney General of Virginia; Lucy, who married a Stark and then Threlkeld in Allen County; Elizabeth Stark, Allen county, Ky.; Sallie Settle; Jennett Threlkeld, Crittenden county, Ky.; Edmund Duncan; Traverse Duncan, Eastern Ky.; Dillard Duncan, Logan county, Ky.

Theophilus Read, who married Margaret Duncan, had three brothers, Samuel, James, Robert, and four sisters, Tabitha Chowning, Rebecca Corbin both of who married in Central Ky., Winnie Spillman, Mary Huffman, both of whose husbands lived in this section.

Theophilus Read and his wife came to Allen county, Ky. in 1811. To them were born six sons and two daughters, John Read, who died in in Missouri, Charles Read, who died in Warren county, G. D. Read, S. J. Read, E. D. F. Read, T. A. Read, all yet living, Frances, wife of L. D. Potter, both dead; they had seven children, two of whom were present at the reunion; Betsy Stark, who moved to California.

George Dillard Read, the oldest of the four brothers now living, is 87 years of age, has been married twice and is a widower. By his first wife, Lucy Willis, he had two children, Charles W., who married America Allen and has seven children, and Mary, who married T. A. Long, and had one child. By his second wife, Serena Duncan, his children are Lucindy, wife of J. P. Cushingberry, and mother of nine children, Fannie who married J. B. Morgan, five children, R. A. Read married M. A. Lyon, three children, and E. J. Riherd, wife of D. F. Riherd.

Samuel James Read the oldest of the three celebrated couples is eighty one years of age, and his wife severty one. He married Elizabeth Jane Berry on November 7, 1839 at the residence of Thompson Berry near Cave City in Barren county, Rev. Jacob Locke officiating. To them have been born W. H. Read, now clerk of our county court, who married Mattie Porter and has 3 children; Kate, wife of W. W. Page, Louisville, who has seven children, Eugene Rogers, deceased, wife of J. L. Rogers, deceased, Barren county, one child; Taylor Read, dead in infancy; Johnnie Mary, wife of Anthony Welch, four children; J. A. Read, who married Martha W. Burton, one child, S. J. Read, Jr.

E. D. F. Read, of Simpson county, is 76 years old, his wife 68. He was married to Elizabeth Pulliam may 23, 1839 at Esquire William Pulliam's residence this county, by Rev. Jesse L.Hickman. To them have

been born one child who died in infancy; Mary W., deceased, wife of P. B. Dunn, one child; C. B. Read, who married Bell Wade, five children; G. P. Read who married Lou Simmons, four children; Virginia, wife of W. H. Bryant, one child; Fannie, wife of Daniel Ray, one child.

Traverse Arthur Read, Louisville, the youngest brother is 69, his wife 66. He was married to Mary Frances Cockerel, at the residence of Johnson Cockerel in Allen county on September 13, 1839 by Rev. Jesse L. Hickman. To them have been born, besides three who died in infancy, Oscar E. Read, who died in the Confederate Army at Atlanta; Alice, wife of John Saunders, one son; John C. Read, who married Miss Mollie Hopwood; Fannie, wife of W. N. Brown, one child; Mollie, who married J. F. Smith of St. Louis two weeks ago; T. A. Read and Miss Evalee Read, neither married.

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