

William Pipkins  
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I have been researching the William Pipkins of Franklin County, Arkansas whose family was the subject of write-ups in the March 1983 and July 1987 newsletters. I believe I have some information that will shed new light on the family.

I agree with the writer that William may have been (I believe he probably was) the son of Zilpha Pipkins of Jackson (1830) and Marshall (1840) Counties, Alabama. Marshall County was established in 1836, from parts of Jackson and Madison Counties, plus what had been Indian lands, so Zilpha could have been on the same property in both census years. Regarding the legend that William's sons Ed, John, James, and Thomas were half-brothers to Mary Jane, I believe that is an error, but a natural one. My research indicates Ed was Mary Jane's natural brother, and the other three were not blood relatives, but were the sons of William Pipkins, who was the stepfather and guardian of Ed and Mary Jane, rather than their natural father. I believe the parents of Ed and Mary Jane were William and Frances (Tucker) Core.

I started looking at this family to determine if the grocer William Pipkins in the 1850 census was the same William Pipkins who married Emeline (Ransom) Steele in 1851. The fact that he seemed to have a family in December 1850 cast doubt on his marrying Emeline in February 1851. New evidence, however, has come to light. First, although the 1850 census was taken in Franklin in December, it was to list living residents as of June 1. If Frances died in June or July, for example, a remarriage in February is not out of the question. Also remember that relationships are not recorded in the 1850 census. I believe that Frances was the wife of William. (Even that is not totally proven; she could have been a live-in housekeeper and store clerk.) More importantly, **the legal surname of the three children listed in the household, though recorded as "Pipkins", was actually "Core"** (sometimes spelled "Coar"), even though they apparently often went by "Pipkins."

In the Franklin County Courthouse in Ozark, in the "C" file, are a lot of papers regarding guardianship of these children: William C., Mary Jane, and Edmund. On April 20, 1852, William Pipkins posts a \$600 bond as guardian to William C., Mary Jane, and Edmond [sic] Core. Later papers show they own land in the county. The fact that William posts a bond to be their guardian and that, although minors, they own land, indicates that William is not their natural father, and that their parents are deceased. Regarding the family legend that William Clay "Pipkins" drowned when about 12, court papers bear this out to an extent. In Feb. 1858, Mary Jane declares that she is a minor heir of William Coar [sic], deceased, and is asking for a guardian. In another document, the deceased William Coar [sic] is described as "sometimes known as William Pipkins." The fact that Mary Jane asks that a guardian be appointed, and does not ask for "removal" or "replacement" of current guardian, indicates that William Pipkins (b. 1820) is also deceased. This ties in with the William Pipkins who married Emeline. Their last known

child was born about 1856, and William is not found in the 1860 census or later. Last known court petition from him is Jan 1857.

Other notes: Marshall Co., AL records show a William Core marrying a Francis Tucker in 1838. Marshall 1840 census has William Coar [sic] 20-30 years old with female 15-20 (Frances?). This family is three names away from a Tucker family and two pages from Zilpha Pipkins.

A Private William Core (or his heirs, assignees, etc.) awarded Franklin County, AR land S29, 10N, 26W for service with Alabama Volunteers in Florida War (Second Seminole War). These volunteers served 1836-1837. This is same section where the above-mentioned children owned land, and adjoins land owned by George Ransom (Emeline's father) and Steeles (family of Emeline's first husband.)

Emeline Ransom's family came to Arkansas from Marshall Co. in 1840s (per Goodspeed's *History of Franklin County*; fits in with data from other sources).

My conclusions:

William Core marries Frances Tucker in Marshall Co., AL 1838. They have children William C. abt 1844 and Mary Jane abt. 1846. Several Marshall Co. AL families move to Franklin Co., AR in 1840s, including William and Frances Core abt. 1847. They have another son, Edmund abt 1848/9. William Core (Sr) dies abt. 1848/9, leaving widow Frances and children. Within a year or two, William Pipkins, who knew the family in Alabama (and may have traveled to Arkansas with them) marries Frances.

1850, Frances dies, leaving 3 children by William Core.

1851, William, now single w/3 orphaned stepchildren, marries Emeline Ransom (widow of John Steele, who died abt 1846-1850) who has a child of her own. They have three sons – John 1852, James 1854, and Thomas abt. 1856.

Jan 1857 – Feb 1858, William Pipkins, husband of Emeline, former husband (or other relative) of the widow Frances Tucker Core, dies.

Epilogue 1: The write-ups say Mary Jane Pipkins married Union soldier Thomas Jefferson Hardcastle in Springfield, MO. Probably true, but she was married before. Franklin court records show she married a Samuel McMury (sp?) before April 1860. They are in the 1860 census as Samuel and Mary Jane McMaury.

Epilogue 2: According to the write-ups, some of the family believed that William Pipkins' first wife, Frances, may have been Choctaw. There is no way to know, but this is considered unlikely, given her birthplace of South Carolina. At that time, the Choctaw were mostly in Mississippi, with some in what is now west-central Alabama, and others west of the Mississippi River. By the time the Alabama families were settling in Franklin County, Arkansas, there were Choctaw in that area. Some of the county had been Choctaw land until 1825, and during the Removal, one of the two main routes for the Choctaw was up the Arkansas River (which bisects Franklin County) to Fort Smith.

We do know that there were later Choctaw connections with this Pipkins family. John Pipkins, eldest son of William and Emeline, was considered a citizen of the Choctaw Nation for a while through his wife, even though neither he nor his wife had any Choctaw blood. John's wife Susan was the daughter of Harmon Mickle and Joanna McSweeney. Harmon's first wife had been Choctaw, and through that marriage, he, and later his second wife and their children, were considered citizens of the Choctaw Nation. The Mickles and John Pipkins and his family lived and did business in the Choctaw Nation (what is now southeastern Oklahoma), paid fees to bring non-Choctaw citizen laborers into the Nation, and otherwise acted and were treated as Choctaw citizens, including being enumerated in the 1885 Choctaw census. Beginning in the 1880s, the Nation re-evaluated claims of citizenship and the Mickle and Pipkins families were part of court cases and government hearings going all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1902, John and his family were finally determined not to be Choctaw citizens. Nevertheless, they ended up staying in the Choctaw Nation, up to and after it became part of Oklahoma.

I welcome any comments or questions regarding this family. The sources used are too numerous to list here, but are available on request.