

Family History Tidbits

THE HELMS FAMILY

The Helms family produced some notable cousins over the years. Within the



family connections of Helms, Presley, Crowell, Winchester, Love, Polk, were presidents, politicians, and musicians. Here are a few of those who became famous and contributed much in their own respective ways to the United States of America:

Don Helms, "Drifting Cowboy," played steel guitar for Hank Williams, Sr.

The Helms family not only introduced many brave men to the service of our country, but produced many noted politicians and presidents, and even some multi-talented musicians. Bobby Helms is a distant cousin, and

then there is the "steel guitar legend" hailed from our Helms line of kin from Southern Alabama, Don Helms. Don descended from the Tilman Helms line.





Don was the first steel guitar player for Hank Williams, Sr. and a member of Hank's legendary Drifting Cowboys. "Your Cheatin' Heart," "Cold, Cold, Heart," are just a couple of the songs that highlight the magic of that Helms steel guitar.

Bernice Turner was a truly wonderful, gifted lady of Memphis had replaced Don Helms as Williams' steel guitarist when Helms was called to the service of his country. Bernice not only remembered Don with affection, but she also remembered Elvis with much admiration. The Kin of Rock and Roll founder, Barbara Lee, got to meet and talk with Bernice at Marlowe's in Memphis in 2007. Bernice was not only a devout fan of Elvis, and knew him, but also had quite a collection of Elvis' personal furnishings which she, regrettably, had to sell. Bernice had mentioned to Barbara Lee how lucky she {Bernice} was to be alive after her near fatal bus collision. Bernice had God foremost on her mind, thanking Him every day for her life. Sadly, Bernice Turner passed away August 20, 2013.



Sadly, Don Helms passed away in August of 2008. He was 81 years young.

The late Sen. Jesse Alexander Helms, (R-NC), former president Jimmy Carter, ninth president William Henry Harrison, president James K. Polk, and even president Abraham Lincoln were notable family members, some from the Helms, Presley and Hood lines.

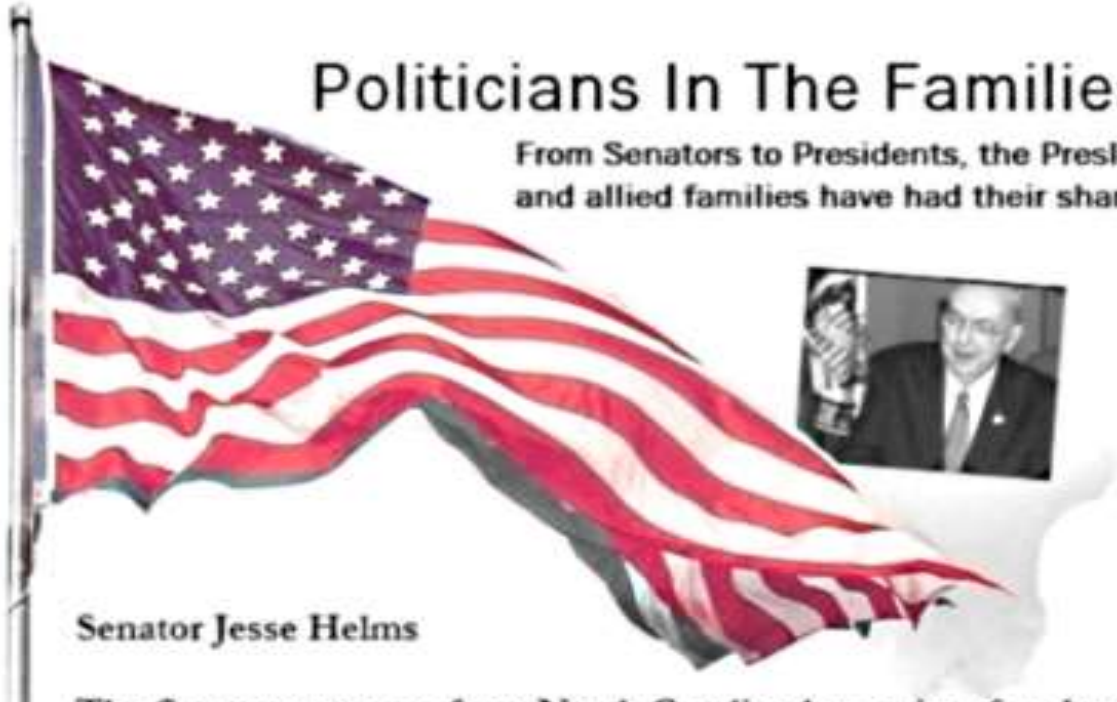
Senator Jesse Helms, as remembered, was a true patriot who tried to do what was best for the country and for his constituents, however, government plays a strong, dictatorial role in attempting to prevent those who serve from seeking justice from a system based upon evil, deception, biased, and corruption.



Jesse Helms Sr. and Jr.

Politicians In The Families

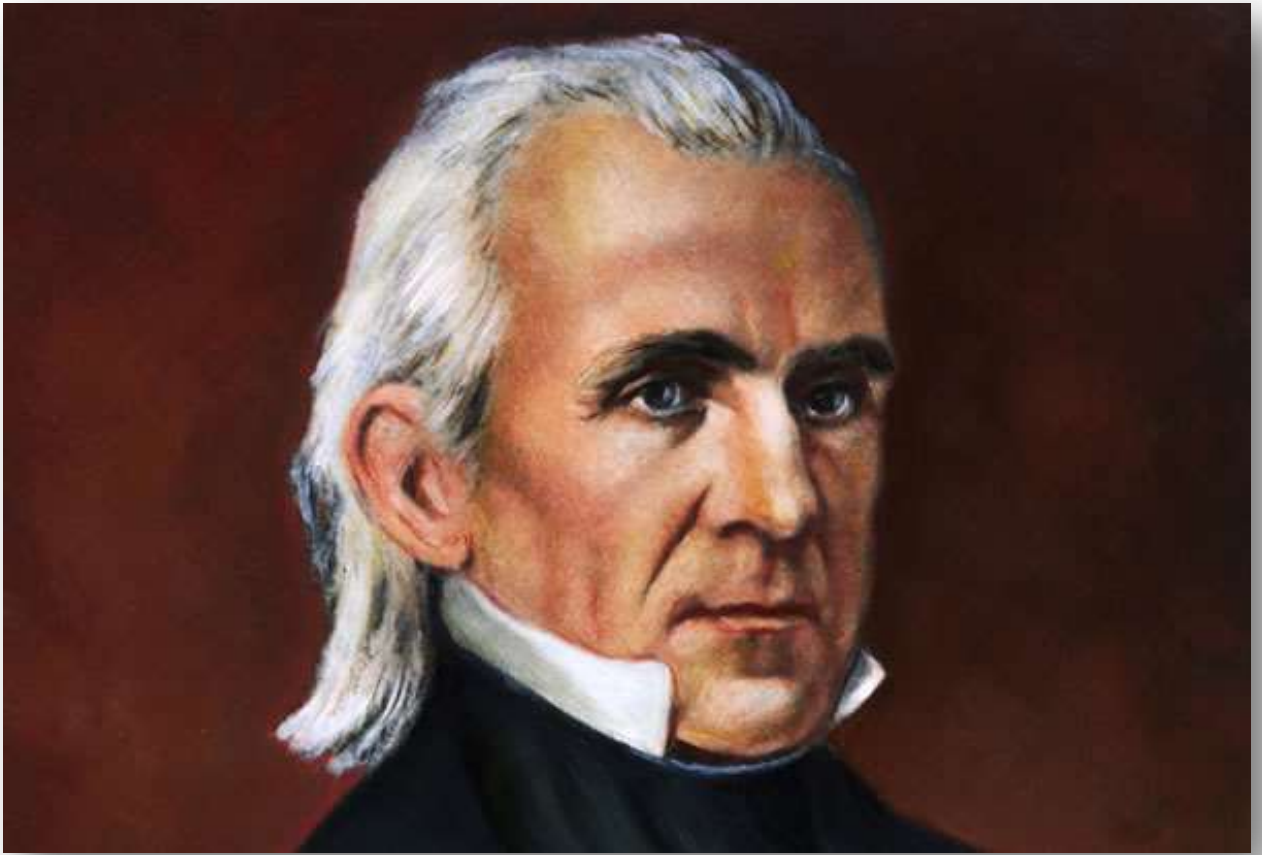
From Senators to Presidents, the Presley and allied families have had their share.



Senator Jesse Helms

The five-term senator from North Carolina has quite often been labeled a "racist" because of the strong pride he had in his southern heritage. Jesse was always proud of his Confederate ancestry, mainly because he knew the southern politicians stood firm on the Constitution and also kept to the conviction of their beliefs in the Bible and in God. Jesse was a firm believer in truth and justice. As one who served in the U.S. Navy, Jesse was proud of our nation's veterans and our military. He fought for many years on our POW/MIA issue, remaining an advocate for the return of all our men up until he was no longer able to speak out for them. When he was forced to stand back publicly on the issue, Jesse continued the fight from within his own ability and sources. If you check out the Jesse Helms center website which Jesse founded and still exists in his memory today, you can see the exemplary conduct practiced by this fine southern gentleman.

Below, President James K. Polk





Politicians In The Families

From Senators to Presidents, the Presley and allied families have had their share.

President James K. Polk - Helms/Presley intermarriage

President Abraham Lincoln - Harrison/Hood line

Presidents Benjamin and William Harrison - Harrison/Hood line

President James Carter - Presley/Helms line

Senator Jesse Helms - Presley/ Helms line

Senator John Edwards - Edwards/Palmer/other allied connections

Brandon Presley - Public Service Commissioner for Northern MS,
2007 and 20122 - Presley line

Harold Ray Presley - Lee County, MS, Sheriff (13 years) - Presley Line

Noah E. Presley - Mayor of E. Tupelo, MS (1936) and Marshall (1946) -
father of Harold Ray Presley - Presley line

While not all of them served in the best interests of our nation, some stand out most of all as those who served our nation and our heritage proud. We honor those here.

Famous Musicians In The Families...

Aside from Elvis Presley, to whom this website is dedicated, the various family lines can recognize as family members the following famous musicians:

Sir Paul McCartney
Don Helms
Bobby Helms
Rodney Crowell
Jesse Winchester

Notice any resemblance?



Rodney Crowell

Sir Paul McCartney



We know doubt come from musical roots as many family members started out as church choir singers, organ/piano players/ guitar...you name it, the experience, the voice, the instruments were all there from the beginning.

Sir James Paul McCartney - born June 18, 1940 in Liverpool, England. Sir Paul's "granny mac" was Florence "Florrie" Clegg McCartney. Her father was Paul Clegg and of the Liverpool Cleggs, Samuel came to America and his son, Samuel Campbell Clegg, fought at the Battle of Kettle Creek, GA, as a Loyalist and was hung in 1779 at Star Fort in Ninety-Six, GA. The family names connected to Sir Paul are Clegg, Rowe, Palmer, Edwards, Griffin, Bagwell, Bullock, Taylor, King, and more...

Rodney Crowell - Family members connected to Rodney descend down from George Crowell married to Jemima Sherrin. George was a Revolutionary War patriot and is from the Crowell family of Mecklenberg County, NC, and surrounding areas. George and Jemima are the fifth ggrandparents of Rodney Crowell. Family members connected to Rodney Crowell are Crowell, Presley, Preslar, Winchester, Helms, Pyron, Sherrin, Willoughby, Casiah / Keziah and more. Rodney was born in 1950 in Crosby, Texas to James Walter Crowell and Addie Willoughby. He was married to Roseanne Cash, daughter of Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash.

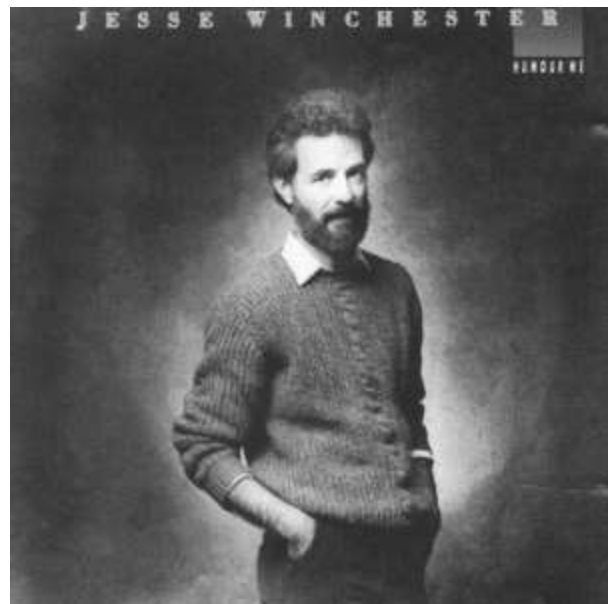
James Ridout Winchester (Jesse) is decended from the MDVA Winchester line some of who extended down to Louisiana and the Carolinas. His ancestor, John Ridout Winchester, was married to Aliza Lee, gdaughter of Richard Henry Lee, and 1st cousin of General Robert E. Lee. Family members connected to Jesse Winchester are Winchester, Rowe, Helms, Presley, Preslar, Casiah/Keziah, Culpepper, Houston, Howard, Hargett, Lee and more...



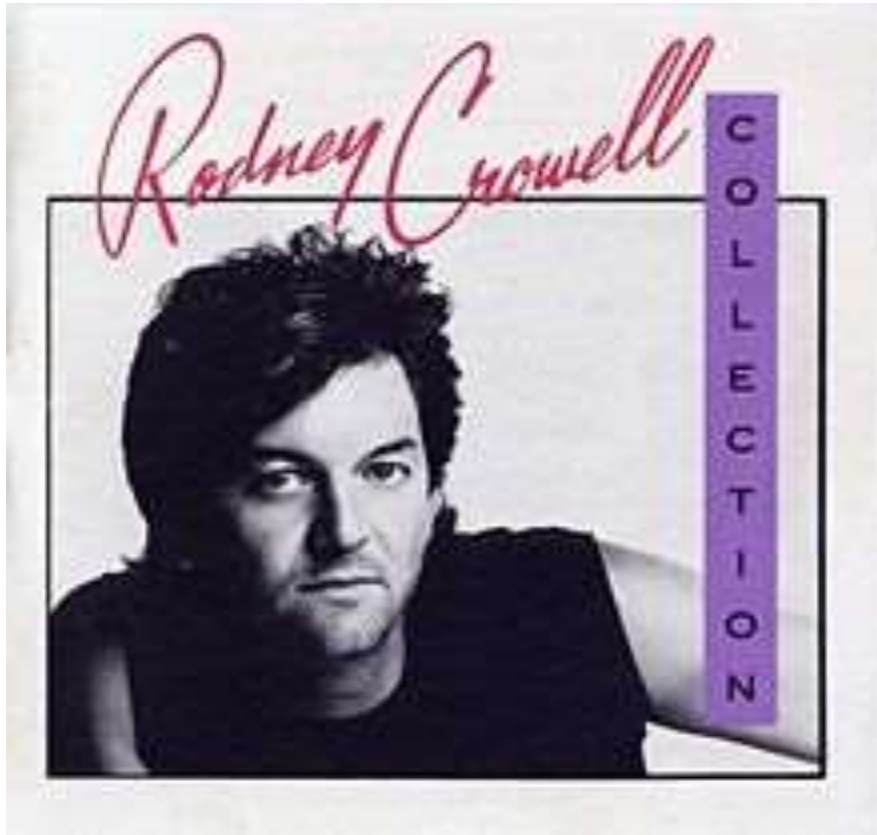
Sir Paul McCartney visiting Elvis' gravesite. Paul is a cousin on the Clegg side (his grandmother was Florence Clegg of London.)



Below, James "Jesse" Ridout Winchester was from Memphis, TN, ironically the city by the Mississippi River discovered by his ancestor, General James Winchester.



Singer, Rodney Crowell, former son-in-law of Johnny and June Cash.





Elvis' Aunt Lillian Smith Mann Fortenberry

"Take care of my boy." Gladys Love Smith Presley's request to her sister, Lillian. According to family members, Gladys had a strong premonition that she would not live to see her son come home from the service. She had not been well for a good while before her passing, and her oldest sister, Lillian, came to Graceland to care for Gladys while Vernon was in Germany with Elvis. After Gladys' passing, Lillian looked after Elvis for awhile, complying with the request of her younger sister.

Elvis remained close for a time to his Aunt Lillian Smith Mann, a very religious woman who was once a member of the Shawnee tribe out of Oklahoma along with her husband and sons. Lillian Smith Mann's second husband was, James Thomas (Isaac) Fortenberry, a kin cousin descended from the family of Isaac Fortenberry/Faulkenberry/Faukenburg. (Mary Margaret Fortenberry/George Helms) James predeceased Lillian who died in 1990. The Fortenberrys originally spelled their name Faukenberg, which is how James Thomas spelled it on his first marriage certificate. The Fortenberrys go back to NC with the Presleys, Helms and other allied families, however, they probably were not on speaking terms with the Presleys, Hoods, and Helms for a time during the American Revolution because Henry, Isaac and Jacob Faulkenburg chose to remain loyal to the crown and, thus, left NC for SC. It was at that time that the original spelling of the name was changed to Fortenberry. From SC the family spread to TN, AL and finally to MS. James Thomas and Lillian are buried in Forest Hills Cemetery in Memphis where there is a large monument erected to him there.

John Helms, a Tennessee artist, knew Elvis' and his mom and dad from when his (Helms) father owned a store not far from Graceland.® He remembered Gladys as a sweet, Christian woman. Helms was very good friends with Billy Mann, his hair stylist, and a cousin of Elvis. Mann passed away in a truck accident some time after he had taken the last photo of Elvis (in his coffin) and, despite the family request for privacy, had sold the photo to the National Enquirer for \$10,000

The Founding of Memphis, Tennessee

Memphis, Tennessee was named for Memphis, Egypt. The city by the river was founded on May 22, 1819 by General (later President) Andrew Jackson, General James Winchester and Judge John Overton. Because of its strategic position at the head of the Delta of the Mississippi River, the city was named for the ancient capital of Egypt which was located at the head of the Nile River Delta.

General James Winchester, of the MD Winchesters was the son of William Winchester, and cousin to the NC Winchesters. Andrew Jackson (the future president) was born in Monroe, NC, outside of Charlotte, in the area where many of our original ancestors lived. After Jackson, "Old Hickory," had moved on and settled in TN, his father remained at the home in Monroe, and many of his friends were lifelong neighbors, including the Winchesters. General James Winchester, though he had land purchases elsewhere, had settled in North Carolina after the Revolution.

"Foundation - 1819"

Sources found in Wikipedia. "TN Encyclopedia: John Overton". The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture. Retrieved 2008-10-24..

Roper, James. "The Founding of Memphis, 1818-1820", West Tennessee Historical Soc., 1970, 100pp.

The area of West Tennessee became available for white settlement after the Federal Government purchased it from the Chickasaw Nation in the 1818 Jackson Purchase.[12] Memphis was founded on May 22, 1819 by a group of investors, John Overton, James Winchester, and Andrew Jackson, and was incorporated as a city in 1826.[15] The city was named after the ancient capital of Egypt on the Nile River. The founders planned for a large city to be built on the site and laid out a plan featuring a regular grid of streets interrupted by four town squares, to be named Exchange, Market, Court, and Auction.[16] Of these Court Square, Market, and Auction remain as public parks in downtown Memphis, Exchange lying under the Cook Convention Center. The city grew as a center for transporting, grading and marketing the

growing volumes of cotton produced in the nearby Mississippi delta in the antebellum era (for background, see "King Cotton"). Memphis was a crossing point on the Mississippi River for Native Americans expelled from their original lands to Indian Territory on the Trail of Tears. In 1831 Alexis De Tocqueville witnessed "a numerous band of Choctaws" crossing the River at Memphis. The cotton economy of the antebellum South depended on the forced labor of large numbers of African-American slaves, and Memphis became a major slave market. Prior to the Civil War, one quarter of the city's population were slaves.[18] Seeking their freedom, slaves turned to the Underground Railroad to escape to the free states of the North, and the Memphis home of Jacob Burkle was a way-station on their route to freedom. The Gayoso House Hotel was built overlooking the Mississippi River in 1842 and became a Memphis landmark until it burned in 1899. The original Gayoso House was a first class hotel, designed by James H. Dakin, a well-known architect of that era, and was appointed with the latest conveniences, including indoor plumbing with marble tubs, silver faucets and flush toilets. In 1857 the Memphis & Charleston Railroad was completed, linking the Atlantic Ocean and the Mississippi River. Memphis was one of the two eastern termini of the Butterfield Overland Mail route to California from 1857 to 1861.



Andrew Jackson



Judge John Overton



General James Winchester