

CURTIS, JAMES, SR. - One of the old "Three Hundred"; granted
title to land in what is now Burleson County, August 3, 1824.

CURTIS, JAMES, SR. Born in Alabama in 1780. He came to Texas in 1825, as is stated in the Headright Certificate issued to his heirs February 3, 1838, for one labor of land by the Bastrop County Board. On August 3, 1824, before coming to Texas, he had received a league of land from the Mexican government situated in the present county of Burleson. In 1831 he moved to a place below the town of Mina (Bastrop). He was a member of the First Three Hundred of Austin's First Colony. He was a member of Captain Jesse Billingsley's Company of Mina Volunteers at San Jacinto but did not apply for the land due him for having participated in the battle. On December 8, 1837 he was issued Bounty Certificate No 831 for 320 acres of land for having served in the army from February 22 to July 12, 1836.

Captain John J. Tumlinson organized a company of sixty rangers at Hornsby's Bend February 22, 1836, and in the latter part of March the Company was stationed at the abandoned town of Bastrop with orders to get as many cattle over to the east side of the Brazos as possible. The river was high and, having previously received orders to abandon the town, all of their boats had been sunk when the new order was received. Under the circumstances, there was nothing for them to do but wait for the river to recede. Felling no apprehension of the coming of the Mexicans, they had become careless and had adopted the policy of posting but one guard. A lone sentinel was stationed at the ford. Prior to this Captain Tumlinson and Lieutenant Rogers had left the company to remove their families to a place of safety, turning the command over to Judge Robert M. Williamson.

One morning upon awakening, the soldiers saw an army of six hundred Mexicans just across the river and naturally a hasty retreat was ordered. Noah Smithwick was a member of the company and in his "Evolution of a State" he wrote that he happened to remember that James Curtis who was on duty as a sentry at the crossing and remarked to Major Williamson, - "You aint going to leave Uncle Jimmie on guard, are you Major?" Major Williamson replied, - "Good God, No! ride back and tell the old man to come on." Mr. Smithwick said he galloped back and found Mr. Curtis sitting at the foot of a tree with a bottle of whiskey beside him, unconscious of danger. "Hello, Uncle Jimmie," he said, "mount and ride for your life. The Mexicans are on the other side and our men are all gone." "The hell they are! Light and take a drink." "There's no time for drinking. Come, mount and let's be off." The Mexicans may swim the river and be after us any moment." "Let's drink to their confusion." After Mr. Smithwick had accepted the invitation they set out to overtake their company. "Well," said Mr. Curtis, "we can say one thing, we were the last men to leave."

The old men of the company, Andrew Dunn and James Leach, had lost their horses and the younger men walked alternately letting them ride their horses. Becoming impatient at the slow progress being made, Major Williamson turned the command of the company over to Lieutenant George M. Petty and with James Curtis and Ganey Crosby hurried onward. Upon reaching Cole's settlement (Independence) the men found a note stuck on a tree by Major Williamson reporting the capture and massacre of Fannin's men. In crossing the river at Tenoxtitlan in search of the

main army, Andrew Dunn and James Leach were drowned.

In the Service Record of Ganey Crosby (No. 4361) it is shown that he joined Captain Gillaspie's company April 18th and it is reasonable to believe that Major Williamson and James Curtis joined the main army at the same time. Mr. Smithwick stated that a son-in-law of Mr. Curtis, Washington Cottle, fell at the Alamo whom Curtis swore to avenge. San Jacinto gave him his opportunity and he made the most of it. The boys said he clubbed his rifle and sailed in, in Donnybrook fair style, accompanying each blow with the remark, "Alamo! You killed Wash Cottle!"

General Edward Burleson in the Lamar Papers stated that Mr. Curtis was sixty-five years old when he participated in the battle of San Jacinto. He was probably the oldest man in the battle. He died in Bastrop County in 1838. Sarah Curtis, daughter of James Curtis, was married to Bartlett Sims. Elizabeth Curtis, another daughter, was married to Samuel W. Reid.

James Washington Curtis, son of James Curtis, died in Bastrop County in 1848, as is shown in the Probate Records of that county. Elijah Curtis was appointed administrator of his estate February 10, 1848. He had separated from his wife Tamer C. Curtis in 1847 and on June 21, 1847, he deeded 162 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land on Alum Creek to his daughter Sarah Ann, who would live with her mother. Mrs. Curtis died before August 27, 1849, at which time James Steward was appointed guardian of Sarah Ann Curtis. Mr. Steward died in 1854 and on February 15th of that year, J. M. Gray was appointed guardian.

Substitute for E. Curtis.