



# A Tribute to Our Founders

Who sacrificed to keep our families connected by any  
means necessary!



# WCKHTB



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...and so it  
continued!

So determined to carry on this tradition of meeting annually, members of each principal family, the McKeown's, Keown's, Tolbert's, Browns and Bush Families, as they migrated out of Brooksville, Ms, began asking family members to travel to cities as far away as Marion, Arkansas; Marianna, Arkansas; St Louis, Missouri; Little Rock, Arkansas; and this tradition continues today.

*Albert Hubbard, Jr. (No photo available)*

Hosted the 1939 family reunion in Marion, Arkansas. We have been unable to find very much information about him, and his children. Perhaps realizing that the story of this tradition might someday be lost, members felt it important to begin documenting as much as possible.

*Albert, Sr (1894-1961) and Hallie Keown (-) - St Louis, MO*

Albert and Hallie hosted several reunions in St Louis.



*Lou Birdie McKeown Collins -Marianna, AR*

Cousin Lou Birdie McKeown Collins can be described as one of the “super glues” and foundations of the reunion longevity. She worked tirelessly until her death to pass on as much information concerning our ancestry and history until her death. She was one of those members who served as our hostess and sponsor.

She was one of those who gathered and catalogued as much information as possible to pass down to future generations. Lou Birdie and her contributions was captured and shared in a documentary video for the 2019 Family Reunion in Virginia. As presented by Bobbie Banks.

She was an Educator by profession and was aligned with the ideals that family unity presented was paramount in the development of our youth. She was relentless in her efforts to ensure that we always held a reunion! Through her declining health and eventual death, she was contacting as many family members as possible to establish our legacy.

Several reunions were held in Marianna and Brickeys, AR where she received support from her brother Tom McKeown, and Cousins Teresa Jackson and Mary McKeown





# WIKHIS

**Arthur (1892-1959 and Gracie Keown (1896-1995)- Little Rock, AR**

Arthur (no photos available) and Gracie were the first to host the reunion in Little Rock. After his death Gracie and their children (Bennie, Annie Bell and Lou) continued as active members. Arthur and Gracie moved to Little Rock from Brooksville around 1920, they settled in Padgett and what is now College Station. We are told that he encouraged his brother Willie C. to move there because the jobs were good. He bought land and eventually became a farmer after ending his public work career. His successes persuaded his siblings, Willie C., Bessie, and their spouses moving out of Brooksville, MS, and Aliceville, AL, to Arkansas. Arthur and Gracie were hosts of several family reunions in Arkansas with his brother Willie C, and his wife Janie. You could see him every day with his rickety old pick-up truck hauling food for his hog farm. "Uncle Arthur" was a quiet gentle soul. He was one of the founders of the Pleasant Hill C.M.E. Church in 1927. He remained an active member of the reunion until his death in June, 1959.

Gracie was a minister and eventually relocated to the Chicago area to live near her children until her death.

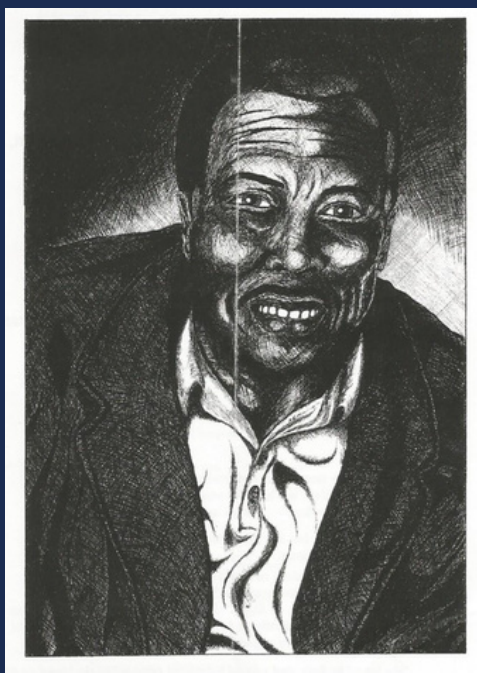


**Willie C. (1894-1966) and Janie Keown (1898-1961)**

Willie and Janie moved to Little Rock settling in Padgett, now College Station, Arkansas. "Dad-O" and "Momma Janie" as they were known by their grandchildren. Were hosts several times. Some with his brother and sister-in-law, Arthur, and Gracie.

After moving to Little Rock, he worked for the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company.

As told by his children, the Family Reunion was a really big event. Dad-o and Momma Janie set up the back yard, side yard any open space to host his families coming in from all over. As his youngest daughter has said, "If Daddy couldn't go, he made sure we we got there." His youngest daughter is 93 years!!



*Isom McKeown (1912-1959)*

*Isom was another family who resided in St Louis, As one of the early host reuniting with the family in the late 1990's has resulted in reconnecting another link in our family chain.*

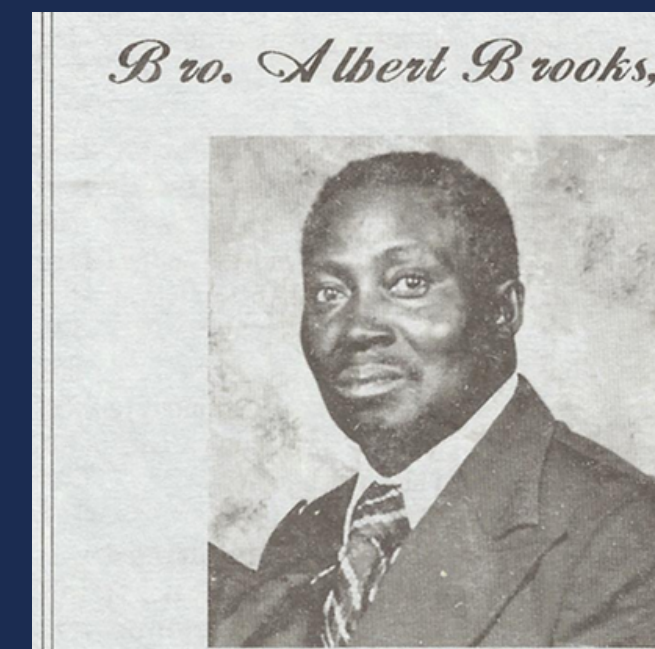
*Doc and Hattie Bush*

*Jim Tolbert (1902), and Annie White*

*Burley Tolbert (1934-1980) and Mattie Tolbert*

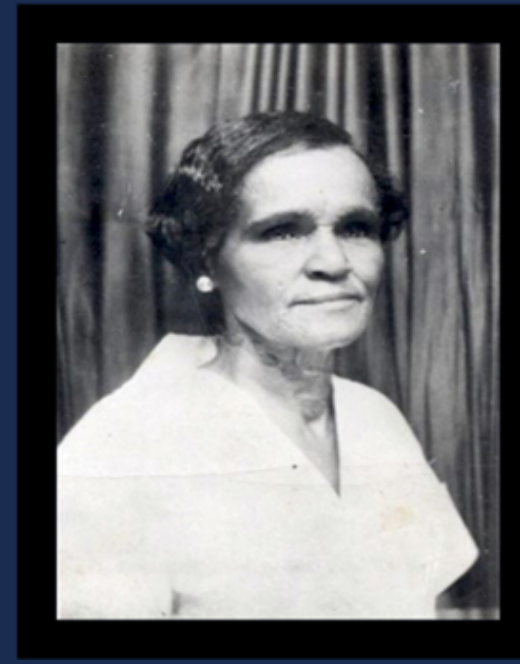
*Willie (1914-1984) and Paralee Hubbard Tolbert*

*Albert Brooks, Sr (1933-2000)*

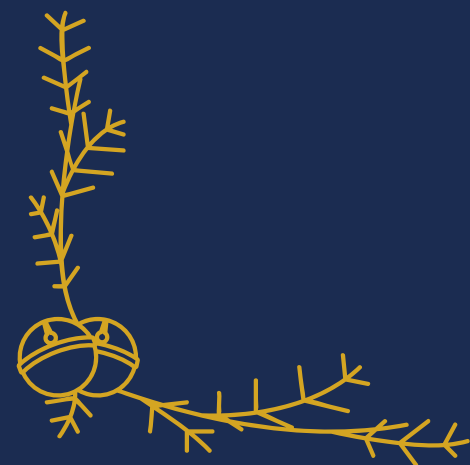




Beverley McKeown (1866-1958)  
(No photo available)  
and Laura Hubbard (1871-1970)



Our Legacy begins in Brooksville, AL with the marriage of Beverley and Laura. Working with "Papa" Hubbard (Alfred, Sr) they decided to hold the first family reunion. The story of our legacy as the McKeown-Keown-Hubbard-Tolbert-Brown Family reunion is told in this edition of Reunions Magazine .



*Conrad "Big Boy" Brown*



*Connie Brown-Locke*

*Milton Brown*

*Ruth Brown Irby*

*David Brown*

**So many tributes should go to the Browns in Louisville, and Columbus, M s. Always present and al ways ready to stand up and offer to bring the reunion back to our roots. The reunion rarely ended without a solo from our own cousin , "Big Boy"Brown**

*Carrie Brown*





*Bessie Keown McKinstry (1917-2011)*



The close relationship of cousins Bessie and Lou Birdie resulted in them working tirelessly together to create the history and genealogy of the Keown's, McKeown's, Hubbard's, Tolbert's and Brown families. She and her husband hosted several reunions in Birmingham, AL. Bessie, and Lou Birdie, left letters in which they exchanged information and along with her son Willie David McKinstry, and her brother Woodrow, they would research all available media, libraries, documents, they could find.



*Woodrow (1920-2012) and Mable Keown (1929-2012)*

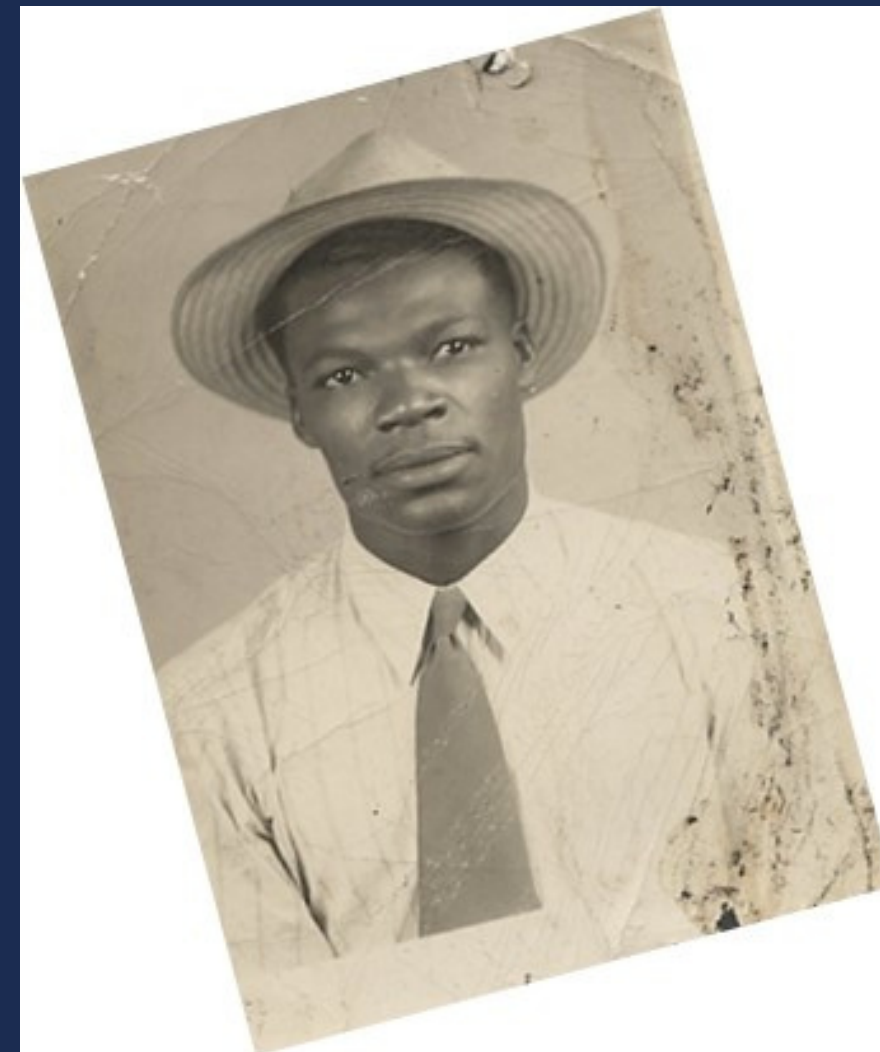
Woodrow Keown, Sr. She and Woodrow were the parents of 7 seven children. Mable and Woodrow were key members who ensured that the reunion was carried forward every year. They were often Co-Host/Hostess and sponsors when the reunion was held in Little Rock. Woodrow was ever so passionate about learning the history of his family, the ancestry and collaborating with his cousin Lou Birdie, they made every effort to dive into his family's lineage. After Lou Birdie's death he and his Nephew Willie McKinstry and Carolyn contacted Bobbie Banks, Marianna, and our McKeown family in Missouri. Working together we were once again connected to our McKeown Family in St Louis and Colorado. This was his passion until his death trying to contact as many family members as possible.

Both loved to travel and visited countries as far away as Hong Kong. They never turned down an opportunity when asked if she would like to accompany or visit any one of her children wherever they were or planned to go.

Regardless of where the family reunion was held, Woodrow and Mable would travel to be there. This tradition was passed down to their children and now grandchildren.

*William Phillip Keown (1924-1977) and Webster Keown ((1922-1999)*

Phillip and Webster, along with their wives were hosts for the reunion in Little Rock along with their parents and siblings. they would also make up the traveling convoy whenever the reunion was held in another state.



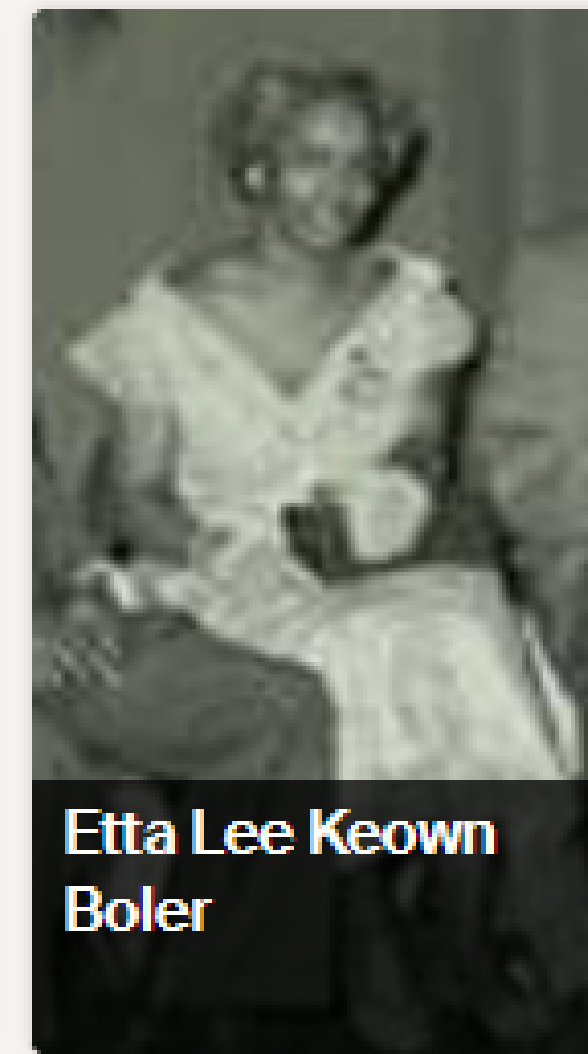
Daucie (D.C.) Boler (1898-1966) (or Dancie) was the husband of Etta Lee Keown (1904-1990).

Together with Isom McKeown, they were the hosts of several reunions in St Louis, MO. They were also the parents of Mildred Boler Blow (1926-1989) who also hosted the reunion in St. Louis.

After the death of one member of this team, we sadly have lost contact with any of our Boler/Keown Family. Because for so many years they were vital and active in the reunion, if any family member has information we would like to update this tribute.



**Etta and Daucie**



**Etta Lee Keown  
Boler**