



Sam Houston and Sarah Ridge

By Paul Ridenour

After being at the Bur Oak Tree in the Big Spring Preserve, where Sam Houston camped, I decided to write about my wife Dottie's Cherokee ancestors and their friendship with Sam Houston.

Sam lived with the Cherokee and married a Cherokee woman named Tiana Rogers (also known as Diana or Talihina). She is buried in the Fort Gibson National Cemetery. Dottie's 3rd great grandmother was Sarah (Ridge) Paschal Pix. She was almost full-blood Cherokee.

Her father's name was The Ridge. His Cherokee name in English was "He Who Walks Along the Mountaintop" or "He Who Walks Along the Ridge." Whites shortened his name to Ridge or The Ridge. In the War of 1812 Battle of Horseshoe Bend, General Andrew Jackson made him a Major, thus known as Major Ridge after that. Major Ridge was a Cherokee town chief, a lawmaker, served as a Speaker on the Cherokee National Council, and helped draft the Cherokee Nation Constitution in 1827.

Sam Houston wanted to be on the Cherokee National Council, but the council deemed him too much of a drunk. The joke goes – "Not good enough for the Cherokee National Council is good enough for the President of the Republic of Texas." When Sam Houston was a Tennessee senator and between ages 30 and 34, Sarah Ridge was between the ages of 9 and 13. During this period Sam took her around Washington DC in his carriage. The following is a quote from my wife's great grandfather who lived in Smith Point, TX (East Galveston Bay):

"As a small girl (Sarah) on the plantation in Georgia, a frequent visitor of her father's (Major Ridge) was Congressman Sam Houston of Tennessee, who made quite a pet of the little girl. When he was in Washington attending Congress and Ridge would go there on tribal affairs, he would take little Sarah along in his carriage. Then the young Congressman would come to the boarding house and get his little friend, and they would go hand in hand over Washington to see the sights. As to the friendship between little Sarah Ridge and Sam Houston, that was renewed after Mrs. Paschal (Sarah) came to Texas in 1848 and has continued through Agnes (Paschal) McNeir (Sarah's daughter) and myself (Sarah's grandson), since her girlhood and my young manhood, back in 1903. The old General's daughter, Mrs. Nettie Houston Bringhurst, was a splendid lady, and her daughter, Nettie Houston Bringhurst, at sixteen was a lovely girl. So the families have been friends for over a hundred and forty years."

By Paschal McNeir, great grandson of Major Ridge:

"Sarah Ridge's first cousin was Cherokee Confederate Brig. General Stand Watie, the last general to surrender in the Civil War. Stand Watie and Dottie are 1st cousins 5x removed. Dottie's Cherokee family are on at least 16 historical markers, monuments, museums, etc., in five states, and in 100s of books. Three of her family members were assassinated on the same day on June 22, 1839 – Major Ridge, his son John Ridge, and Stand's brother Elias."

Sarah Ridge



Major Ridge



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