



Message from the President

Katherine Goldberg

It has been a wonderful year for the Polley Association and we are looking forward to exciting things coming in 2018.

On November 4, 2017, for the first time in many decades, the Polley Reunion was held at the Polley Mansion. It was a wonderful day, marked with a history of the Polley and Bailey families, a vow renewal, mansion tour and memorial cemetery tour. Make sure to check out the photos and all the details on pages 4, 5 and 8.

Our family cemetery across from the Polley Mansion is well maintained and looking very nice, thanks again to the work of John and Shirley Grammer, who coordinate the maintenance and care for the cemetery. It is a lovely and humbling place to be.

Our Polley Family Cemetery holds 11 family members, and through the diligent work of past Polley Association members, each grave is marked with headstones bearing the name and dates for each person. Though we can know a little bit about the people buried there from their headstones, we are all aware that there is much more to their stories than names and dates. Every time I visit, I always find my mind wandering to their life stories of which I can only guess.

While our primary responsibility within the Polley Association is to preserve and maintain the Polley Family Cemetery, the digital age has made it easier for us to track down, preserve, and maintain the life stories and legacy of our Polley ancestors. As the Polley Mansion is being restored, so too is a general interest in the family that built the home. We each know a little tidbit of family lore handed down from a relative that gives shape to the Polley family story, and we would like to weave those little tales together into the larger narrative of our ancestors. So look for upcoming opportunities to share your Polley family stories in near future.

The restoration of Polley Mansion is moving along wonderfully. As all who attended the reunion can attest, Whitehall has not looked this good in many years.



*Katherine Goldberg with her children Courtney and Nathan
Polley Mansion | November 4, 2017*

The beautiful white porch railings stand out against the lovely stone house. The grounds have vivid flowers blooming along the edges of the green grass. The windows have all been replaced in the last few months with carefully chosen and hand painted wooden framed windows. The leaning cook house chimney is being supported and will be re-anchored in place with foundation work to the fireplace in the coming year. The Linne house behind the Polley Mansion has been beautifully renovated to be a comfortable staging area for events at the mansion.

We want to continue to support Keith and Robin Muschalek. They have shown tremendous care and attention in the restoration of the Polley Mansion. You can check out the included donation card for details on how you may be able to support their efforts.

All the Best,
Katherine Goldberg

Join Us in Membership!

Your membership is important to us and your dues help the association to preserve the legacy of Joseph H. Polley and his family. Association dues remain at \$25.00 for the year, and we would appreciate payment by May 31st. You can do this by credit card online by going to www.PolleyAssociation.org/get-involved, or you can mail your checks to:

Shirley Grammer
P.O. Box 234
La Vernia, Texas 78121

Now is the time to invite your family members to join the Polley Association! We have exciting things planned on the horizon and it is a great time to be a part of this group.

Officers

President - Katherine Goldberg
Vice President - Melinda Kilian
Secretary - Pam O'Connor
Treasurer - Shirley Grammer



*Skeleton Key found on the grounds at Polley Mansion
January 13, 2018*

Whitehall Events of Note

- Polley Mansion received the 2018 Honor Award from *Preservation Texas* during the organization's annual meeting in Brownsville on February 27, 2018.
- Texas State University archeological students, led by Dr Todd Ahlman conducted an "archeological dig" of the cook house and potential slave cabin site during spring break, March 10-12, 2018.

You can see more about events related to Whitehall by visiting the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/PolleyMansion/>

Detecting Whitehall History

A metal detecting event was held on January 13, 2018 at the Polley Mansion with over 50 metal detectors participating from more than half a dozen metal detecting clubs throughout Texas, including Dallas, Austin, San Antonio, and Cuero.

The goal of the event was to try and locate the privies (i.e., outhouses) and the slave quarters and any unique artifacts. Over 300 artifacts were found and tagged by archaeologists from the Texas Historical Commission, Texas State University, and the City of San Antonio.

Unique artifacts included a 1903 Liberty "V" nickel, a Navy jacket button circa 1811-1831, metal toys from the 1930's and 40's, a skeleton key (probably from the mansion), and a metal coffee creamer dish. We did not determine any locations of the privies or the slave quarters, but the goal is to continue with other archeological digs in the future.

The plan is to release the artifacts back to Texas State University's Center for Archaeological Studies, where they will clean, preserve and classify each item so that they may be properly displayed in the Polley Mansion or the Sutherland Springs Historical Museum.

Finding Abner Hubbard “Hub” Polley in Frontier Times

CHILDREN OF JOSEPH HENRY AND MARY AUGUSTA BAILEY

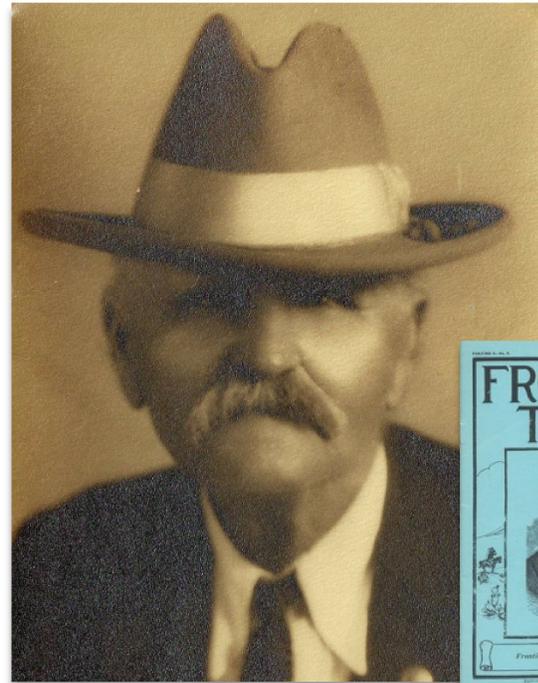


There are a number of great resources that catalog the history of the Polley family in Texas, and the Polley Association would like to point any interested family researchers to some of the best known sources. In this and future newsletters, we will highlight selected sources and we encourage all to delve further into them to learn more about our great family.

In this newsletter, I would like to highlight *Frontier Times Magazine*. This is a publication that was actively printed in the early part of the 20th Century, with the aim of recording the origins of Anglo Texas history up through the great cowboy and ranger stories. One such cowboy story was that of our own Abner Hubbard Polley, in the article from the June 1929 issue by Cora Melton Cross, entitled “A. H. Polley Tells How He Turned the Western Trail.” The story telling is done mostly in Hub’s own words, and though some of his recollected dates are a little fuzzy, his tales weave quite the life story.

He fondly remembered his early days hiding out in the large stone house at Whitehall with neighbor friends while Indians were raiding in the area. “It was the best opportunity we children ever had for a real playfest and I remember how rebellious we were because our mothers would not let us play in the yard.” He also recounted his first cattle drive with his former brother-in-law, John James, and the subsequent stop at the Plaza Hotel in San Antonio with the other cowboys before heading home, where the nine-year-old Hub “felt bigger than any of them, as we took in the sights of the city after dark.”

After Hub’s Civil War service on the border, he returned to cattle driving for various outfits. The tales of the different cattle drives and seasons are as iconic as any Texan could hope for. One season, Hub crossed over Charlie Goodnight’s land, and received directions from the famous rancher himself. Another time, he had to go to the King Ranch to rustle up any cattle with the Polley brand that may have wandered too far off.



He spent some time in Mexico buying up cattle for another drive, and despite having several thousand dollars worth of gold and silver on him for the trip, he managed to smell a rat of a deal and escape, only to earn the respect of the Mexican dealers and end up doing a fine bit of business with them.

Hub never had to work hard to find jobs to do, but his career was also never stable. His reputation as a hard worker and honest man assured that his assistance was always in demand. At one time, a business man, named Frasier, asked Hub to drive a herd for him, and Frasier took Hub to the bank to identify him as a man allowed to use his accounts to purchase the needed supplies. In Hub’s words, “When we walked into the bank, first one and another of the officers and employees began shaking my hand and talking to me, and Frasier, standing around watching them, finally came to me and said: 'By gracious, they know you a blamed sight better than they do me. I guess you won't need any identification here.'”

(Continued on page 7)

Polley Family Reunion

On November 4, 2017, Polley descendants from around the country gathered at Whitehall to celebrate our shared heritage and learn more about our ancestors that called the Polley Mansion 'home.' We began the gathering on the previous night at the Power Plant Grill in Seguin, Texas, a converted old power mill overlooking the beautiful Guadalupe River. It was wonderful to reconnect with familiar faces and to meet new cousins that have a shared interest in our family history.

Saturday morning began on the front lawn of the Polley Mansion with Texas History Professor and author, Paul Spellman giving us a brief account of the 'Old 300' families of Stephen F. Austin's colony and also an overview of the life of teamsters in the War of 1812 (a position held by Joseph Henry Polley). Interestingly, many of the teamsters, or supply cart drivers, served for very short terms, often numbering in the days, instead of months or years. Professor Spellman was followed by our Polley Association President, Katherine Goldberg,

who gave an account of the Bailey and Polley families in Texas from their arrival, up through the Polley children and their families. Much of this history was woven together as she worked to compile an extensive family tree, encompassing all members descended from Joseph Henry and Mary Bailey Polley (which was on display in the mansion's great hall).

After a short break, we all adjourned to the rear of the Polley Mansion, where Adam and Lola Polley, descendents through the Mary Augusta Polley Baylor line, renewed their wedding vows, with Keith Muschalek, owner of the Polley Mansion, officiating. It was a lovely ceremony and it was so nice to be a part of a joyous celebration at Whitehall, a place once known as the social hub of the community in the mid-1800's.

At lunch, while we enjoyed a fine example of local Texas bar-b-que, we took a moment to recognize our Polley family members in attendance. We had Polley descendants from age 3 to age 95 in attendance,



Photo courtesy of John Polley

For more reunion photos, see page 8, or check out the Polley Association website at www.PolleyAssociation.org/Event-Gallery, where you can share photos or download a full resolution copy.

If you took photos at the reunion that you would like to share, we would love to see them!

Contact us at PolleyAssociation@gmail.com

(Polley Reunion Continued)

and folks travelled to Wilson County, Texas from as far away as Nevada and California in the west, and Maryland and Florida on the East Coast. We were also treated to a guest appearance by the lovely Ms. Hannah New Spivey, a great granddaughter of Joseph and Mary Bailey Polley, and the last in her generation, who celebrated her 107th birthday the following week.

We took a moment to honor our own Shirley Grammer with the first ever 'Joseph Polley Paine Excellence in History Award' for her dedication to tracking down and recording the history and legacy of the Polley family. As I am sure most of you know, if you have a Polley question, Shirley will either know the answer, or know the correct direction to point you. There is also now a wonderful tree planted at the Polley Mansion in honor of Shirley and John Grammer for their contributions to the Polley family legacy.

Following lunch, Keith Muschalek spoke about how he and Robin came to own the Polley Mansion, and he provided us with a description of the extensive work they have undertaken to restore the beautiful stone structure. It is such a joy to hear Keith talk about Whitehall and the Polley history with the same enthusiasm and respect that all Polley Association members have for this shared history. We then had time to wander the property and hear about the history of each room from the local Junior Historians, led by their sponsor Tambria Read.

Once everyone had toured the home properly, we gathered for a memorial ceremony for the family members we have lost since our last gathering. Sisters, Melinda Kilian and Melissa Lingwall read the names of our loved ones and said a few words of remembrance. This was followed by a walk to the Polley Cemetery across the road from the mansion. Sara Pantin said a few words of tribute to our eleven Polley ancestors who are buried in the family cemetery. We rounded out our cemetery stops with the Sutherland Springs Cemetery, where sisters Candy and Tammy Tiner spoke about their ancestor, Susan Rebecca Polley Henderson Brooks, and Todd

Polley and his daughter Dawsha Polley spoke about their ancestor Mary Augusta Polley Baylor.

As the sun set on a beautiful and joy-filled day, we gathered at local restaurant, The Den, in La Vernia to continue the conversations and time together with cousins.

On Sunday, November 5th, those who were still in town, gathered at the Sebastopol House in Seguin, Texas. The Sebastopol House is the childhood home of Mattie LeGette, who would go on to marry Joseph Benjamin Polley after he returned from the Civil War. The tour of the very unique limecrete structure was highly enjoyable and a worthwhile stop if you are ever in the area.

If the mark of a good reunion is that you can't wait to gather again sometime soon, then I think this was a GREAT Polley family reunion. We will certainly not wait another 10 years for the next one.



Sebastopol House
Seguin, Texas

Honoring Sutherland Springs

On November 5, 2017, the day following the Polley Reunion, at First Baptist Church, two miles down the road from the Polley Mansion, 26 lives were taken from the small community of Sutherland Springs. We want to take a moment to remember them, and this wonderful community that the Polley Family helped to establish in the mid-1800's; a community that has helped to keep the Polley legacy alive for over a century. To our Sutherland Springs Polley Association members and the whole community, our hearts and prayers are with you.

Remembering Joseph Polley Paine

By Sarah Wood Pantin

A true Celebration of Life & Service of Worship was held on May 3, 2008 at the Polley Cemetery for Joseph Polley Paine, my Uncle Joe as he was affectionately known to me, my brother Robert and our children.

We began as I gave words of grace and greeting to family and friends gathered that day to praise God and to witness to our faith as we celebrated his amazing life and legacy.

A favorite scripture from Philippians 4: 4-7 was read as a final exhortation:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

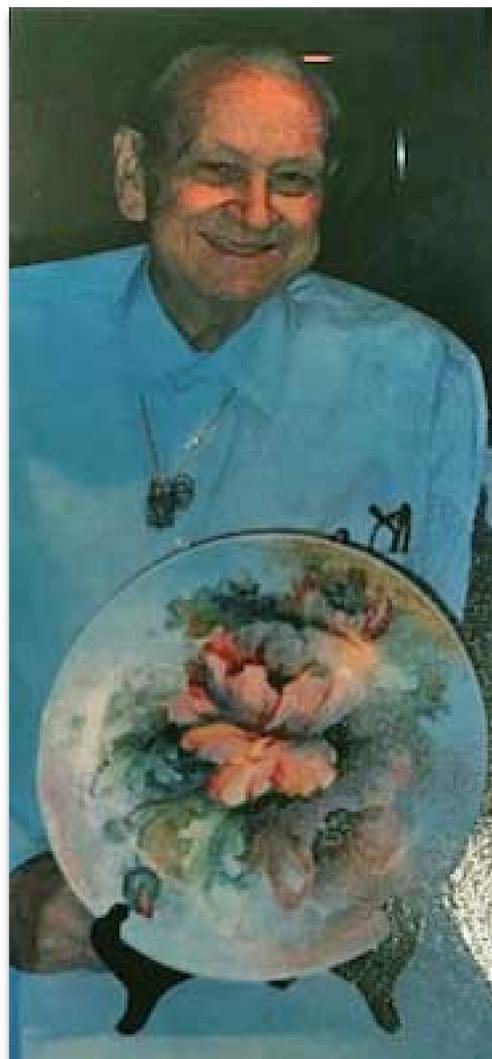
Several moments of silence were observed as those gathered on this somber occasion bid our personal farewells during this Committal Service. This reverent time was followed by the burial of Joseph Polley Paine's ashes in a lovely urn that our Uncle had prepared. Robert Paine Smith, nephew, Matthew Earl Brown, great nephew, and Sarah's son, John Burgman, great nephew by marriage to Tracey Smith Burgman, and Greg Guenther, also nephew by marriage to Shelly Smith Guenther served to cover the grave in the family cemetery. We know that he smiled down that day about his final resting place on earth and on those gathered to pay him tribute!

On a personal note, Uncle Joe was one of my first mentors...before I knew that that word really meant and he was always of great encouragement and support in my early in life endeavors. SO loved and missed!

Editor's Note: Joseph Polley Paine was a descendant of the Joseph Benjamin Polley line, and he was an avid family historian. This year marks the tenth anniversary of when his ashes were interred in the Polley Family Cemetery.

Tell Us Your Polley Stories!

We are beginning the process of collecting Polley Family stories. While it is amazing to have a complete family tree, names and dates don't tell the full stories of our ancestor's lives. We would like to be able to tell those stories, so if you have any biographical information that you would like to share about your Polley ancestor, a fond Polley-related memory, memories of the Polley Mansion, etc., we would love to hear about it! We will be adding some outlines and suggested topics to the website that you will be able to download and fill out for yourself, or use to help a relative recapture their Polley family memories. However, please do not feel that you need to follow a specific format. As always, you can send in stories to: PolleyAssociation@gmail.com.



Joseph Polley Paine with one of his works.

("Finding 'Hub' Polley" continued)

At another time, while cutting a new turn in the Western Trail for the cattle drives, one of Hub's fellow cowboys, Gid Guthrie, said "Polley, if any other man under heaven asked me to do this I would absolutely refuse. Do you understand? I am doing it for you, and I do not give a hang about it, excepting that you want me to do it." Hub followed up by recalling, "I felt pretty good when I saw those cattle take that new route and heard old Gid's declaration. "

Hub also talks about coming back home to Whitehall and the time he spent there with his mother, after everyone else had moved on. He felt the place was haunted with memories, though he mentioned that his mother didn't seem to mind that as much as he did. The article ends with his reminiscences' of the old house and the hearty people who settled the frontier of Texas. As we seek to understand our Polley family history, we know that his words ring true...

That old rock homestead is still standing and I guess it is in as good repair as any house could be that was built seventy-five years ago. Sutherland Springs is a good-sized town now and all of the once open range is crossed with barbed-wire fences, highways, railroads, telegraph and telephone lines and every other mark of progress. But I can shut my eyes and see it as I knew it best, an open range on which grazed thousands of cattle, and in the midst of it that big old rock house, a home for everybody that drew rein and a hearty handshake and welcome greeting for both friends and strangers. Times have changed, comforts have given place to luxuries which we accept as a matter of course and enjoy and appreciate, perhaps, all the more when we look back to when we were fortunate to have all the necessities of life.

I have had what the newspapers call a checkered career, but am still well and strong and perhaps enjoy life more than a lot of folks who came into the world after I did, who have never known any hardship greater than to eat three good meals a day and sleep twelve hours every night of their lives...Pioneer privations did one thing among many others for us. It taught us to appreciate blessings, to be grateful for the good things that come our way, to accept the less pleasant experiences and never to say die where principle and right were involved.



Frontier Times: Recording the Polley and Bailey Families of Texas

The article about Abner Hubbard Polley in Frontier Times Magazine was not the only story about the Polley family in that publication. Below are some other articles that are well worth checking out if you would like to read up on our Polley and Bailey heritage.

"J. B. Polley was A Texas Pioneer"
September 1928 Vol. 5 No. 12

"A. H. Polley Tells How He Turned the Western Trail" by Cora Melton Cross
June 1929 Vol. 6 No. 9

"The Affair at Anahuac and The Battle of Velasco"
by John Brown
September 1934 Vol. 11 No. 12

"Baileys and Polleys Among Earliest Texans" by Edward M. Golson
February 1936 Vol. 13 No. 5

"The Polley Family in Texas" by Edward M. Golson
August 1945 Vol. 22 No. 11

Polley Reunion 2017

For more photos of the reunion, please visit our website at www.PolleyAssociation.org/Event-Gallery. Photos courtesy of Shirley Grammer



DoraLea & Todd Polley, Adrienne Reeves, and Dawsha Polley

WE'RE ONLINE!

The website contains:

- Polley Family History & Biographies
- Whitehall History
- Membership Sign Up & Renewal
- And Much More!

Check it out at:

www.PolleyAssociation.org

We are also collecting email addresses so that we can more easily communicate Polley news and updates.

Send your email address to PolleyAssociation@gmail.com



Ms. Hannah Spivey, Ryan Goeth, and Melinda Kilian



Lola & Adam Polley renewing their vows, with Keith Muschalek officiating.



Cynthia Robinson, Gary & Claudia Goldman



Sara Pantin reading at the Polley Family Cemetery



Siblings: Tammy Tiner Harding, Wayne Tiner, Candy Tiner Hager, and Kenneth Tiner



Melinda Kilian and Melissa Lingwall reading names during the memorial ceremony.