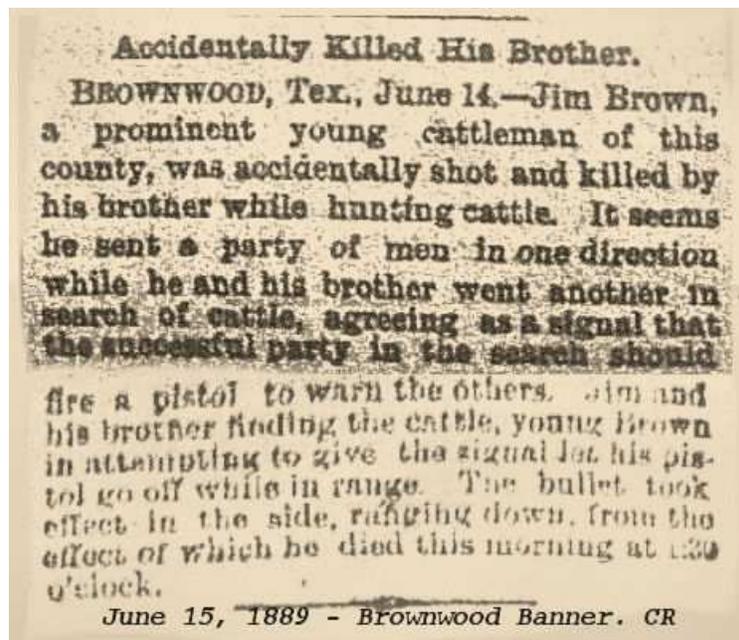


A Detective Story

or "What To Do With Too Much Time On Your Hands"

Looking for more information for a research project, I was browsing through a historical newspaper database. I get easily distracted unfortunately. I came across an item published in 1889 in reference to Brown County.



I thought, "how awful to have killed one's brother. and to live a lifetime with that on your conscience". At that point, I had to know more about these brothers.

I next checked the area cemeteries for a possible burial place for a Jim Brown. Since that would be a fairly common name, I had to determine which of the many J. Browns in the area this Jim Brown could be. I used the death date (June 14, 1889) as the only bit of real information I had to "sift" through the names, and came up with a J.C. Brown (Apr 30 1851 - Jun 14 1889), buried in Greenleaf Cemetery's Masonic section, had to be the one I was looking for!

The marker had initials only, J.C. Brown and the birth and death dates on a rather impressive grave marker. The death date: 14 June 1889!



Marker photo by Terry Teague

It was obvious that the family was fairly prosperous to have placed such an impressive marker on the grave site.

And fellow history researchers, Terry Teague and Ed Walker were also intrigued with this story. Terry found a web page tucked away on the McCulloch County site with a biography of Julia Norris Brown. In the bio was mentioned the "family tradition", that James Claiborne was tragically shot by his younger brother, Joseph Samuel while searching for cattle, as was the photo of the brothers, below.

James's parents were James W. and Julia Norris Brown. In 1865, James W. Brown was discharged from the Confederate forces and returned home. He was 55 and had six sons with Julia, now aged 39: Elias R (1845-after 1880), Daniel (1847-1847), John Riley (1848-1897), James Claiborne (1851-1889), William Albert (1854-

1938), Thomas Zacharias (1857-1916), According to the Texas and Texans interview, Elias also served in the Confederacy, along with four of Julia's brothers. Joseph Samuel was born to Julia and James (25 January 1866-9 December 1935).

In April 1866 James W. left for Mexico either to "settle the revolution of that time" or on a "prospecting trip", according to the above interview, he never returned. In 1870 James is still listed in the Census of Nacogdoches county as head of household, albeit absent.

James C. Brown is listed on the Brown County Tax Rolls from 1874 thru 1888. In 1888 he listed with 65 horses, 300 cattle, one wagon or carriage and paid \$28.00 tax on \$3,000.00 of value. A fairly successful rancher by 1889 standards.

Photo use, courtesy of: Tamara Stevens



(Joseph, the younger brother who tragically shot his older brother James, are sitting beside one another in this 1885 photo of four of the Brown brothers taken in Brownwood)

After 1889, Joseph S. moved to Midland, becoming a successful cattleman in his own right, taking care of his mother until her death in 1917. She is buried in Fairview Cemetery in that county.

This is one instance where documentation, not known by the family, proves their family story was right all along. This really is an exception, since known documentation rarely corroborates a "family tale".

It is amazing the amount of information that is available on the internet for those who are easily distracted and have way too much time on their hands. :o). But, it is fun, non-the-less.

~ Clay Riley