

## What is a Broome Road?

by Jim Morriss

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Maybe the most entertaining creation to come to us through the internet, over the last ten years, is a freeware program called Google Earth. If you haven't had the pleasure of flying over your own neighborhood you really need to give it a try. When you do you will notice that our area of Denton County is growing. Fairly large blocks of land that were hay meadows and cattle pastures just a few years ago, are now filled with houses. These new homes are served by roads with quaint names like Green Oaks Drive, Golf Club Drive, or Ridgewood Circle. But they invariably empty into older connecting roads that were named after real people. You may wonder how McMakin, Jeter, Porter or Broome Roads got those names, but you're not likely to find anyone who can tell you. But as we watch our part of north central Texas transform itself from a farm community into a suburb, it is important to remember the self reliant people who first lived here.

Broome Road is one of those trails that has obviously been here for a long time but no one seems to know for whom it was named. There don't seem to be any citizens around here named Broome, so who can we ask? Fortunately there are places such as Denton's Emily Fowler Library, the property records in the court house, the National Archives Center in Fort Worth and other sources on the internet where historical data can be found. It just takes a little detective work. By searching all of the records that were immediately available for the Bartonville area, we found numerous accounts of a family named BROOM, but nothing of anyone using that name with an "E" on the end. It would seem that perhaps we are misspelling the name of our road.

In public records going back to the 1850's it was found that there was a man living in Belton, South Carolina named Jesse Broom. Jesse and his wife Sarah were about 30 years old when the Civil War started. They had four sons: John, James, William and Augustus. It is likely that Jesse and his oldest son, John fought in the war but no records have been found to confirm that. We do know that five years after the war, James was living with his two younger brothers in Mississippi. There is no

evidence that James' parents or oldest brother survived the war.

Sometime around 1878 James Broom, who was 28 years old, married a 19 year old girl named Eliza Crow. The two settled in Tate County, Mississippi and started raising a family of their own. It is well known that the reconstruction era was a difficult time to be living in the "Old South." By 1890, James and Eliza had adopted a young girl and had two sons and two daughters of their own. Then for some reason the family decided to move to Texas.

We have no idea why the Brooms chose Denton County. It is likely that they knew someone who suggested this as a desirable place to live. There is also no way to know whether the family came by wagon or by train but they must have arrived around 1890. There is a record in the court house which confirms that James A. Broom purchased 157½ acres of land from William E. Mooney on December 22, 1890. William and Mary Mooney were long time residents of the area who were related to T.J. Dinkins, another old time Bartonville resident. The land that became the Broom homestead can be located on a map by starting at the intersection of Jeter and McMakin Roads. Block off the area from that point ½ mile to the south and ½ mile to the west then remove a 2½ acre block in the northeast corner of this square. That area is now bordered by Jeter Rd on the north, McMakin Rd. on the east and Broome Rd. on the south.

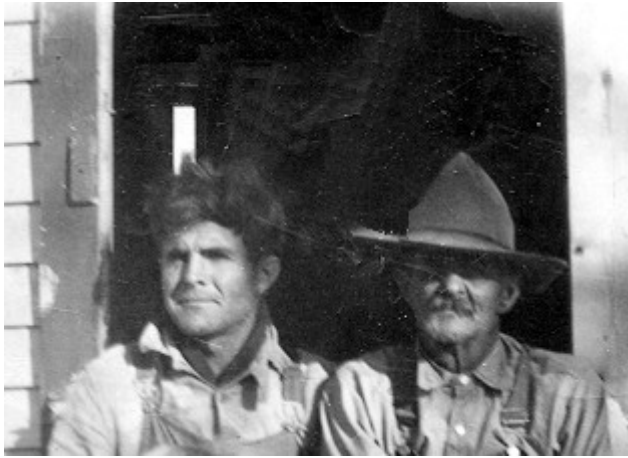
Just like most Americans of that time, the Brooms were farmers. The effort to clear and plow the land and grow enough food to feed the family must have been formidable. In the 28 years that they lived here, James and Eliza succeeded very well. In June of 1892, not long after their move to Texas, Eliza delivered a son (Lewis) and a daughter, (Lula.) This may be the first set of twins ever to be born in Bartonville. Eliza bore a total of 13 children, 4 of whom died before the family left Texas. James not only paid off the mortgage on his farm and kept a large family fed, the Brooms also acquired enough surplus cash that he was able to finance land for other farmers. The Broom family continued to thrive in Bartonville until around 1917. James, who was then 67 years old, retired and moved to

Lincoln, Arkansas. Courthouse records show that James returned to Denton several times to sell off his land in the county. Eliza Broom died in 1927 at the age of 70 and James died in 1940 when he was 90 years old.

A request was placed on the internet for information from any of the descendants of James and Eliza Broom. I received a note from one of the Broom's great-grandsons who lives in California. He told me that the family decided to change their name to Broome sometime during the depression. He also

sent a copy of an old picture that was passed down to him. It was probably taken in Denton or perhaps Grapevine in the fall of 1892. Proud parents Eliza and James are holding their twins, Lewis and Lula who were born in Bartonville. On the back row are a son whose initials were R.H.T. and who probably died prior to 1900, and an adopted daughter named Nora Young. The girl on the left is Lizzie and the girl next to her father is Susie. The boy between the twins is John G. Broom who also farmed here in Bartonville until after WWI.

Jim Morriss – June 2008



John G. and James A. Brrom, taken in Bartonville before WWI



Location of the Broom Family Homestead

