

UPDATED OCTOBER 30, 2009

REDING PUTMAN

Of Washington County Arkansas

The Putmans of Washington County, Arkansas began with two brothers, Reding Putman and William Putman who came down from Illinois in the 1830s and settled in West Fork, Arkansas.

The lives of both these men, who were sons of Daniel Putman were told in the section on ILLINOIS PUTMANS. This section will contain what I know about their children who settled in Washington County, Arkansas.

REDING PUTMAN II

Reding Putman the Second was the only child born to Reding Putman and his second wife Phoebe Marsh Stelle. Reding is my lineage and the following section relates to him and his children.

Reding Putman Jr. was born on September 12, 1830 in Putman Township, Fulton County, Illinois. As mentioned earlier, this Township was named in honor of his father, the first settler in the area. Reding moved as a small child to Prairie Township in Washington County in northwest Arkansas. It was in this County that he spent the rest of his life.

As a young man, he grew up in a full household that contained four generations of Putmans. His grandmother, Prudence, lived with them through the 1830s and 1840s, as did his aunt Lavinia. In addition to his own brothers, he had the Rizley children living with him. His father, Reding senior, was taking life a little easier by then and had time to spend with young Reding.

Reding senior instilled in his sons the same interest he had in medicine as a boy. Young Reding read all he could about medicine and went on to become a Doctor.

On May 10, 1855, Reding married Elizabeth Reed in Prairie Township, Washington County. Elizabeth and her family had moved there from Georgia three years earlier.

Elizabeth was the daughter of Robert Reed and Elizabeth Fagala. She was born south of Knoxville, Tennessee in Sevier County on June 14, 1835. When Elizabeth was a young child, the family moved to near Dalton, Georgia where she spent her childhood. When she was sixteen, the family moved to a farm a few miles south of Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Elizabeth Reed's parents were born in Virginia and their parents were all from Pennsylvania before that. Elizabeth Fagala's father, Adam Fagala, was a veteran of the Revolutionary War. Robert Reed was the son of Alexander Reed who came from Pennsylvania to Virginia and died in Rockbridge County, Virginia at the age of sixty-four.

Reding and Elizabeth are listed in the 1860 census as being farmers on their own farm with three young children, Ann, Robert and Mary.

Sometime in the early 1860s, Reding and Elizabeth moved to the city of Fayetteville and it was

here that he became a Doctor of Medicine. Reding practiced medicine as a family doctor and became quite busy as the Civil War raged around the area. As I mentioned before, Reding chose no sides and aided the wounded as necessary no matter what side they were on. He supported the Union, but was a doctor first.

Reding Senior had moved in with his son after being burned out of his home by Confederate sympathizers. Reding senior died at his son's home on September 9, 1865 shortly after the end of the Civil War.

Reding and Elizabeth had four children. The eldest two, Anna and Robert, were two of the first eight students at what is now the University of Arkansas. On January 22, 1871, they enrolled in the first class at the Arkansas Industrial University in Fayetteville. In 1972, when the University of Arkansas celebrated its Centennial, three of Reding's grandchildren were invited to sit at the head table during the ceremonies. Those grandsons were: my father, William Byrnes Putman; Randolph Bernard Putman and Albert Michael Putman. They were all sons of Reding's son, Leigh Reding Putman.

When the State of Arkansas was deciding open a university, there was quite a battle as to whether it was to be in the capital, Little Rock or in Fayetteville. In order to make Fayetteville a more attractive site, many of the families agreed to provide housing for students not only while the university was being constructed, but later for students who could not afford dormitories. Reding and Elizabeth were prime movers in this effort and opened their home to a whole generation of students. Elizabeth's obituary stated she had provided a home for literally hundreds of young students attending the new State University. In the 1880 federal census there were over twenty students listed as living in their home.

Reding ran, unsuccessfully, as a Liberal candidate for the office of County Clerk in Washington County in 1872. Reding continued to practice medicine for several more years until he retired. He then went into business with George Reed in the business of running a general merchandise store in Fayetteville. He finally retired for good shortly after 1900.

Reding Putman II died after a three day illness at his home in Fayetteville on January 23, 1914 and his wife, Elizabeth, died in Fayetteville at her son's home on October 6, 1922. Both are buried next to each other in Evergreen Cemetery in Fayetteville.

Reding and Elizabeth Putman had four children born to them. The first three children, Anna, Robert and Mary Belle all were childless and it looked as if a long and illustrious line of Putmans would finally end. Fate had it, however, that the fourth child born some sixteen years later, Leigh Reding, would go on to have both male and female heirs and the line once again progressed.

The following are Reding and Elizabeth's children. All were born in Arkansas. All lived there throughout their lives and all are buried there.

Anna Elizabeth Putman

Anna Elizabeth Putman was born in Prairie Township on March 5, 1856. She attended local schools, then, as mentioned earlier, on January 22, 1872 she was one of the first eight students at what was to become the University of Arkansas and was the first woman graduate of that school.

Upon graduation at the age of nineteen, Anna began a teaching career that was to extend over a

half a century. She began teaching in Tahlequah, Oklahoma and was superintendent of their school system for three years. During this period, she taught a sister of Will Rogers. This old student was to come many years later to Anna's funeral.

Anna returned to Fayetteville and taught first grade for the next two generations of young students. In November of 1882, Anna and Howard Gates opened a preparatory school in Fayetteville.

She remained living at home with her parents and a continuing series of student boarders. One of these young students, Charles M. King of Greenwood, Arkansas, courted Anna for some twenty years before she agreed to marry him on November 28, 1900.

Anna and Charles moved to his farm in Greenwood, but he died some eighteen months later. They had no children, and Anna returned to her family home at 98 Hill Street in Fayetteville where she remained for the rest of her life.

Anna Putman King died, after a two month illness, Sunday night December 11th, 1927. Her funeral was held the following Tuesday in the afternoon. At noon on that Tuesday, the entire Fayetteville public school system closed for the day in her memory.

Robert Reed Putman

Robert Reed Putman was born in Prairie Township, Washington County, on October 12, 1857.

He was also among the first eight students at the Arkansas Industrial College. After graduation, he went west for a short period as I have tales of him returning with a Buffalo skin rug.

He never married, and shortly after his return home he contracted some form of illness that caused him to be institutionalized for several years. As the illness became worse, he was allowed to return home where he died shortly afterwards at the young age of thirty-three on April 20, 1891.

Mary Belle Putman

Mary Belle Putman was born on August 27, 1859. She grew up in Fayetteville and was educated at the University of Arkansas and graduated from Woodland College in Independence, Missouri in 1881.

Mary Belle is listed in the 1880 Washington County census as being 22 years old and living with the James McCormick family in Vineyard Township, Village of Evansville. She was a border and listed her occupation as school teacher.

On June 4, 1884, she married Benjamin Franklin Deaver in Fayetteville.

Benjamin Deaver was the son of William S. and Sarah Martin Deaver. His father was born in Maryland on April 14, 1813. On September 21, 1842, he was married in Virginia, to Sarah M. Martin who was born in Virginia on June 8, 1823. Benjamin was born in Virginia on December 27, 1849. He moved to Arkansas with his parents in 1850. This was his second marriage; being first married to Ellen Holcomb who died in 1882.

Benjamin Deaver ran the general dry goods store in Springdale, Arkansas, where they lived.

They had one child that was born and died on September 10, 1885.

Benjamin Franklin Deaver died in Springdale on July 2, 1903. Mary Belle remained in Springdale and died there on August 9, 1931 and was buried in Bluff Cemetery in Fayetteville.

Leigh Reding Putman

Leigh Reding Putman was born in Fayetteville in 1875 and it is from him that my line descends.

Leigh Reding Putman, like his father before him, was the last child born to his father, and yet it was these last sons that carried on the name and the family. Leigh Reding was born almost sixteen years after Reding's previous children. He was born in Fayetteville on May 29, 1875. Leigh Reding Putman was my grandfather. His life and his children are contained in this section.

He was born in Fayetteville, Arkansas on May 29th, 1875. He was named Reding after both his father and his grandfather. The name Leigh was selected by his two older sisters, Annie and Mary, who, I am told by Betty Putman, were great admirers of the Victorian English Poet, Leigh Hunt. However, Leigh Reding was always referred to as *Dick Putman* so there goes all sorts of thought and family tradition right out the window. I think he was called Dick to avoid confusion with his father, Reding.

Dick Putman went through the Fayetteville public schools and graduated from the University of Arkansas. After completing college, he went into the lumber business with The Byrnes Lumber Company. This company was owned by Albert Michael Byrnes, who was later to become his father-in-law.

After gaining experience in the lumber business, Dick Putman and A. M. Byrnes purchased a controlling interest in the Northwest Arkansas Lumber Company in 1899. Dick was elected secretary and general manager. A. M. Byrnes remained connected with the business, but his primary occupation was that of building contractor.

On June 5, 1901, Leigh Reding Putman married Helen Theresa (Nell) Byrnes in Fayetteville.

Nell Byrnes was the daughter of Albert Michael Byrnes and Mary Elizabeth McCoy. She was born in Fayetteville on September 14, 1878.

Dick and Nell Putman had all five of their children while living in Fayetteville. Reding 3rd was born on August 8, 1902; Mary Elizabeth was born March 28, 1905; William Byrnes, my father, was born on December 27, 1907; Randolph Bernard was born on June 12, 1911; Albert Michael was born on January 20, 1915.

In February 1917, the family moved to New Orleans, Louisiana. Dick went to New Orleans to become manager of the Southern Pine Wood Association.

In the summer of 1920, the family again moved, this time to Evanston, Illinois. Dick Putman was sent to Chicago to open a new office and to become manager of the American Wholesale Lumber Association, the largest lumber concern in the world at that time.

Later Dick Putman was elected vice president of the National Retail Lumber Dealers Association and still later became associate editor of AMERICAN BUILDER, the oldest and largest trade paper for the lumber industry. He held this position until his death in 1935.

During the Roosevelt Administration in the early 1930s, Dick was appointed regional director of the Federal Housing Administration.

Earlier, while living in Arkansas, Dick was president of the Chamber of Commerce and made an unsuccessful run for State Representative on the Bull Moose Ticket of Teddy Roosevelt.

All five of the Putman children graduated from Northwestern University in Evanston.

Dick Putman died suddenly of a heart attack on Saturday night December 28, 1935. He was returned home by train to Fayetteville for burial.

Nell Putman remained in Evanston until Michael Putman, the youngest child, graduated from Northwestern in 1936. She then returned to Fayetteville to live with family.

Nell Putman died on November 14, 1960 while visiting her daughter, Betty Putman Maxwell in Highland Park, Illinois. She was returned to Fayetteville for burial on November 17th.

Both Leigh Reding and Helen Theresa Putman are buried in Evergreen Cemetery near the resting places of his parents, Reding and Elizabeth Reed Putman.

Leigh Reding and Helen Theresa Putman had five children born to them in Fayetteville, Arkansas. All of these children had children themselves, and in turn, these grandchildren have had another generation. As most of these three generations are still alive and accomplishing things, I am treating them as active generations. As my uncle, Randy Putman, said, *"As soon as you think you found the roots, more branches and twigs pop out on the top."*

The following are the children of Leigh Reding Putman.

REDING PUTMAN 3rd

Reding Putman, 3rd was born in Fayetteville on August 8, 1902. He attended schools in Fayetteville, New Orleans and Evanston as the family moved around the country. He graduated from Northwestern University in 1924.

He married Margaretta Elizabeth Fenn on July 10, 1930 at the Drake Hotel in Chicago, Illinois. Margaretta was born in Chicago on March 26, 1900. Her family was from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania where her father and grandfather published the local newspaper. The Fenn family also ran a 'station' for the *Underground Railroad* helping run-away slaves in the years prior to the American Civil War. In fact many years later, their son, Fenn Putman, met a distinguished banker named Fenn. As the man was black, it did not seem they were related. But this banker's family had adopted the last name of Fenn in honor of the family that had helped them to escape slavery many generations earlier. Again, it's a small world.

The Fenn family goes back to the Revolutionary days in Northwestern Connecticut near Canaan. Margaretta was the daughter of Prosper D. Fenn and Ethel Scull Fenn. She graduated from Northwestern University in 1922.

Reding went to work first for the Hearst Papers in Chicago and then with the Koppers Company in the wood treating division. In 1931 they moved to the Boston area. Reding and Margaretta had one child, Reding Fenn Putman who was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, outside of Boston, on August 1, 1933.

Reding and his family moved to Texas in 1934 and lived in Texarkana, Austin and Houston. They moved to Kansas City in 1939. Reding was in the Navy from 1941 to 1945, where he served as a lieutenant commander. We were living in Glenview at the time, and I remember him coming by in uniform several times. One time he brought me a propeller from a fighter plane. This memento still hangs in my Inn here on Cape Cod.

In 1949 he moved to Longview, Texas and formed the Lone Star Creosoting Company. He sold out and retired in 1956 and moved to Dallas. In 1960 he moved back to the family home in Fayetteville where both he and Margaretta spent the rest of their lives.

Reding died on April 30, 1965 and Margaretta on April 3, 1973. Both are buried in National Cemetery in Fayetteville.

Their only child was:

Reding Fenn Putman was born outside of Boston in Brookline, Massachusetts on August 1, 1933. On July 10, 1960, Fenn married Mary Jane Ritchie, whom he had met in college. They have three children.

James Reding Putman was born in Kansas City, Missouri on October 1, 1961.

Jennifer Ritchie Putman was born in Morristown, New Jersey on November 13, 1964.

Jeffrey Fenn Putman was born in Morristown on September 3, 1966.

MARY ELIZABETH PUTMAN

Betty Putman was born in Fayetteville on March 28, 1905. She went to schools in Fayetteville, New Orleans and Evanston. And, like her brothers, graduated from Northwestern University, she in 1927.

While still living in Evanston, she married John Morice Maxwell on February 12, 1935. Morice was born in January 1904 in Brandon, Manitoba, Canada. Morice's father was John Scott Maxwell and his mother was Elspeth Russell.

Morice was an executive with Northern Trust Company in Chicago until he retired a few years ago. The Maxwells have spent their entire lives in the Chicago area.

Morry died after a short illness on September 27, 1991. Betty lived in Evanston, Illinois in a retirement home until she died in 2001.

Morice and Betty have three children, all of whom were born in Evanston, Illinois:

Mary Elspeth Maxwell was born on July 21, 1937. She married John Patrick Hoban in Highland Park, Illinois on August 20, 1960.

Helen Catherine Maxwell was born on January 2, 1940. She married William Joseph Cora

on May 25, 1962.

Susan Putman Maxwell was born on July 29, 1941. She joined the Order of the Sacred Heart and is currently in charge of their schools nationwide.

WILLIAM BYRNES PUTMAN

Bill Putman, my father, was born on December 27, 1907. He was born in Fayetteville, Arkansas. He was with the family in New Orleans and then in Evanston, Illinois.

Like his brothers and sister, he graduated from Northwestern University. His graduation was in 1929. Not really a terrific time to go out into a world that was falling apart financially. His first job was in a printing plant in Chicago. He finally got a position with the Montgomery Ward Company in Chicago, and was to remain with them for many years.

On September 28, 1934, he married Almeda Minerva Sharon. Bill met Meda while both were at Northwestern University. Meda was born in Carrollton, Illinois on January 12, 1909. They were married in the home of Meda's brother, John Sharon in Glenview, Illinois.

After they were married, they remained in Evanston, while Bill worked with Montgomery Ward in Chicago. While in Evanston, I was born in 1937. Shortly thereafter, in 1941, my family moved to Glenview, Illinois. Suburbia at last. It was our first house.



This is a picture of my dad Bill, his mother Nell, and yours truly at 9 weeks of age.

In 1944, Bill Putman was transferred to the New York Office of Montgomery Ward. The family moved in the summer of 1944 to Greenwich, Connecticut. In 1945, the family moved to another part of Greenwich, Riverside. In 1947, my sister, Minda Jones Putman was born in Riverside.

In 1954, Bill took over as sales manager for Fly Manufacturing Company in their New York Office. This was a position he held until his retirement in 1981.

After four house moves in town, both Bill and Meda continued to live in Riverside, Connecticut. Meda Putman died on April 19, 1994 in Greenwich Hospital. Bill continued living at home with some live-in help, until he died in his sleep on April 25, 2000 at age 92. Their children are:

William Byrnes Putman II, the writer of this history, was born on April 10, 1937 in

Evanston, Illinois. I married Suzanne Marguerite Danner in Riverside on July 22, 1961. On August 6, 1987, Suzy died of a sudden and severe asthma attack. I moved to Hyannis Port, Massachusetts on Cape Cod. I met a widow, Peggy Parkhurst of Dennis here on the Cape. We were trying to set up a widow support group. This we did, but became ineligible as, on November 18, 1988, we were married. Perhaps we were a bit hasty as in November 1993 we simply shook hands and were divorced. I presently run a Bed & Breakfast Inn, The Simmons Homestead, here in Hyannis Port, have a collection of over 50 red classic sports cars, 550 different Single Malt Scotches in another collection, and am enjoying life quite nicely with my 30 mostly orange long hair cats (probably another collection). We had one child:

William Byrnes Putman III 'Tripp' was born in Greenwich, Connecticut June 26, 1963. He married Eileen Sullivan on Cape Cod and they have two children:

William Byrnes Putman IV 'Liam' was born September 14, 1995.

Maxwell James Putman 'Max' was born October 28, 1997.

Minda Jones Putman was born in Greenwich, Connecticut on December 15, 1947. On November 22, 1969 she married James Avril Daniell in Riverside, Connecticut. They live in Powell, Ohio. Jim was president of a steel products firm. They have no children.

RANDOLPH BERNARD PUTMAN

Randy Putman was born in Fayetteville on June 12, 1911. After graduation from Northwestern, he married Mary Clare Brummett in Evanston on October 16, 1935. Mary Clare was born in Warren, Arkansas on March 26, 1914.

They lived in Evanston and had their only child, Bob, there in 1942. Randy worked in Chicago for American Lumber and Treating Company. A.L.& T. was purchased in 1954 by the Koppers Company in Pittsburgh. Randy and Mary Clare then moved to the Koppers Company offices in Pittsburgh and he remained with them until his retirement in 1976.

They then moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, where they lived until 1987 at which time they moved to Gallatin, Tennessee to be near their son and his family. Randy Putman died in Gallatin on March 4, 1990. Their only child was:

Robert Randolph Putman born in Evanston, Illinois on August 9, 1942. He married Blanche Clawson in Atlanta, Georgia on November 19, 1963. They live in Gallatin, Tennessee, and they have two children:

Mary Ann Putman born July 25, 1965. She has two daughters: Kristen Michelle Sloan and Alicia Ann Babbitt.

William Randolph Putman born in Gallatin, Tennessee July 13, 1972. He married Julie Marie Nemecek June 21, 1997. They have two children as of 2003: Kayla Marie and Noah Randolph Putman. They live in Nashville, Tennessee.

ALBERT MICHAEL PUTMAN

Michael Putman was born in Fayetteville on January 20, 1915 and was the youngest son of Leigh Reding Putman.

Mike remained in the Evanston, Illinois area after graduating from Northwestern, On October 2,

1937, he married Kathleen Mavoureen Harvey in Wilmette, Illinois. Kathleen was born in Chicago on August 31, 1913.

Their first three children were born in Evanston in 1940, 1942 and 1944. Their other three children were born as they moved around the country. Mike worked for Pure Oil and later for Unical when they took over Pure Oil. They lived in Wilmette, Illinois, Minneapolis and Chattanooga, Tennessee before they settled in Birmingham, Alabama in 1950.

Michael died in Birmingham on August 4, 1978. Kathleen also died in Birmingham on March 20, 1997. Mike and Kathleen had six children:

Michael Dennis Putman was born in Evanston on May 5, 1940. On October 5, 1979, he married Jane Mobley in Birmingham, Alabama. Dennis works for the State of Alabama, and Jane teaches school in Birmingham. They have three children:

Michael Dennis Putman II born in Birmingham on November 30, 1981.

Nathan Putman born in Birmingham November 24, 1983.

Jane Ann Putman born in Birmingham October 13, 1987

Leigh Reding Putman was born in Evanston on October 9, 1942. She married Clarence Frederick Plagens on August 6, 1966. As of 2002, they live in Rockwell, Texas. Leigh taught high school, Clarence was an electrical engineer with Dallas Power and Light. They had one child:

Kathleen Michelle Plagens born in Dallas August 30, 1968. She married Ronald Evans in Dallas on September 25, 1993. Ron is a dentist. They have:

Samuel Patrick Evans born October 18, 1996

Molly Kate Evans born January 26, 2000.

David Jeremy Putman was born in Evanston on May 24, 1944. He married Mary Bryant Treat in Birmingham on August 30, 1967. David was with Alabama Power Company, and Mary was a teacher. They have two children:

Patrick David Putman born October 6, 1970. He married Shannon Noelle Rafalsky May 17, 1997. Patrick is with Sun Bank and Trust in Atlanta. They have:

Patrick David Putman, Jr. born April 5, 2002.

Melinda Treat Putman born in Mobile June 10, 1973. She married Sean McBride July 6, 2002.

Jonathan Christopher Putman was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota on July 15, 1947. He married Nancy Lee Alexander on June 21, 1969 in Birmingham, Alabama. They live in Birmingham, where Jon has his own consulting firm, and Nancy operates a reading clinic. They have three children:

Jonathan Christopher Putman, Jr. born in Birmingham May 12, 1971. He married Kyla Annette Wells of Kansas City on June 3, 1995. They live in Liberty, Missouri where he is a project manager for a construction firm.

Benjamin David Putman born June 19, 1972. He is in the film industry in California, and lives in Seattle, Washington.

Elizabeth Putman born April 5, 1974. She married Matthew Harper April 20, 1996. They live in Roswell, Georgia.

Timothy Harvey Putman was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee on November 6, 1949. He married and divorced Mary Elizabeth Kearney. He currently lives in Bangkok, Thailand.

Mary Kathleen Putman was born in Birmingham on September 16, 1954. She married Joseph Lynch in Birmingham on December 27, 1977. They were divorced, and she then married Frank Holden on August 20, 1994. They live in Birmingham. Mary is with Health South, and Frank with Association of Assisted Living. There were two children in the first marriage:

Michael Joseph Lynch born December 11, 1978.

Megan Leigh Lynch born in Birmingham December 2, 1981.