

# RICE REUNION

July 27-29, 2007

Milano, Texas

## History & Recipe Handout

## MILAM COUNTY ROOTS

William Henry Rice (1828 - 1903) was born in Georgia. The earliest known record of William is an entry on the 1855 Milam County, Texas tax roll which indicates that William owned no property. By 1868, William had married Carolyn "Carrie" Rogers (1848 - 1906). Carrie was the daughter of Armstead Rogers, a Tennessee native who had served as a scout for the Republic of Texas during the Texas Revolution. Armstead's wife, Mary "Polly" Rogers, was the daughter of J. P. Jones, one of Milam County's earliest settlers. J. P. Jones was killed by Indians. The Milam County community of Jones Prairie derived its name from its location on J.P. Jones' land grant.

William and Carrie Rice settled near Jones Prairie. They had seven children. The family is listed on the 1870 and 1880 census records as follows:

CENSUS—1870 Milam County, Texas, p. 235, Family 383 (8 Jul 1870 – Maysfield):  
 Wm H. Rice 39 male GA saddler  
 Caroline Rice 22 fem TX keeping house  
 Armstead Rice 1 male TX  
 William Rice 5/12 male TX

CENSUS—1880 Milam County, Texas, ED 101, Page 62, Family 418 (22 Jun 1880 - Jones Prairie):  
 William H. Rice 49 GA GA GA farmer  
 Caroline Rice 31 TX TN IL wife / keeping house  
 James A. Rice 12 TX GA TX son / at school  
 William H. Rice 10 TX GA TX son / at school  
 Jessie E. Rice 6 TX GA TX dau  
 George Rice 3 TX GA TX son  
 Robert E. Rice 4/12 TX GA TX son

By 1891, William and Carrie had sold most of their Milam County land. Thereafter, they acquired and moved onto a 160-acre farm located near Blanket, in Brown County, Texas, where they resided until William's death.

Although William's and Carrie's oldest child—James Armstead Rice (1868 - 1935)—apparently moved with his parents to Brown County, Armstead returned to Milam County. It was there that Armstead married Jessie Lee Harrell (1879 - 1938) on December 23, 1896. Jessie Lee was the daughter of Thomas Washington Harrell, a Confederate veteran.

Armstead and Jessie Lee Rice made their home in Jones Prairie, where Armstead farmed. The home place was purchased, at least in part, with money that Jessie Lee had inherited. All seven of the couple's children were born at Jones Prairie. The family is listed on the 1900 and 1910 census records as follows:

CENSUS—1900 Milam County, Texas Census, ED 69, Sheet 6B, Family 107 (5 Jun 1900 – Jones Prairie):  
 Armstead Rice Head Sept 1869 TX GA TX farmer  
 Jessy Rice Wife Aug 1879 TX NC AL  
 Carrie Rice Dau Jan 1898 TX TX TX  
 Elmer Rice\* Sister Sept 1884 TX NC AL at school  
 [\*this actually is Jessie Lee's sister, Elma Harrell]

CENSUS—1910 Milam County, Texas, ED 57, Sheet 2B, Family 33 (18 Apr 1910, Pct 2):  
 James A. Rice Head 41 TX GA TX farmer  
 Jessie Rice Wife 30 TX NC NC (4 born, 3 living)  
 Carrie Rice Dau 12 TX TX TX  
 Hearrell Rice Son 8 TX TX TX  
 Irving Rice Son 5 TX TX TX  
 Gladys Rice Dau 3 TX TX TX

## CALIFORNIA DREAMING

In the Fall of 1918, the James Armstead Rice family left Milam County, Texas. Armstead moved the family to Belton, Bell County, Texas, where daughter Carolyn had obtained a job teaching school. Armstead then headed for California while wife Jessie Lee and the children remained in Texas. Armstead wanted to see if California life was as good as he had heard: he had been receiving letters from his brother, Robert Earl “Bob” Rice, who was farming in California.

In December of 1918 Armstead's oldest son, Harrell, joined his father at Imperial Valley, Imperial County, California. Armstead needed Harrell's help to make a cotton crop. Armstead received a good price for that crop. In fact, he made enough money to bring the family to California. At the end of the school year, Jessie Lee and the rest of her children packed their possessions. They rode the train to Imperial Valley.

The Armstead Rice family is listed on the 1920 Imperial County, California Census as follows:

CENSUS–1920 Imperial County, California, ED 27,  
Sheet 8B, Family 157 (January 30, 1920):

James A. Rice	51 male	TX GA TX	farmer
Jessie L. Rice	39 fem	TX NC AL	wife
Harold Rice	18 male	TX TX TX	son
Irving Rice	15 male	TX TX TX	son
Gladys Rice	11 fem	TX TX TX	dau
Mary L. Rice	8 fem	TX TX TX	dau
Armsted Rice	5 male	TX TX TX	son
Florence Rice	2 fem	TX TX TX	dau

Armstead's son Irving recalled that while in California he and his sister Gladys attended a local elementary school but that his brother Harrell rode the bus to a city high school. At some point, Harrell began driving a car for the school; he would pick up students in the morning and take them home at the end of the school day. Harrell completed high school in California.



*Imperial County California is located at the southeastern tip of the State. San Diego County lies to the west and Baja California, Mexico lies to the south.*

While living in California, Armstead's family attended a Sunday School that they had helped organize. Irving Rice recalled that the Sunday School was attended by people of many races and ethnic groups.

Jessie Lee did not like living in California. In addition to missing her relatives, she yearned to return to a place that offered regular church services. Consequently, after residing in California for about two years, the Armstead Rice family moved to Brownwood, Brown County, Texas.

Because Jessie Lee had been so unhappy in California, they left that State before Armstead's and Bob Rice's crop could be harvested. Bob was supposed to send Armstead a share of the crop-sale proceeds. However, Bob reported that bad weather (hail, flood, or both) ruined the crop. Armstead received nothing.

Bob Rice stayed in California. He married Effie Anderson Martin, the widow of Bob's business partner Richard M. Martin. Effie had five children by Mr. Martin. Bob Rice apparently never had children. Bob died in California around May 1, 1926.

## BROWN COUNTY LIFE

Armstead and Jessie Lee Rice chose to live in Brownwood, Brown County, Texas for several reasons: because some of Armstead's siblings lived in or near Brownwood; because Brownwood had good churches; and, because Brownwood had an institution of higher learning (Howard Payne College).

In Brownwood, Armstead occasionally worked day jobs at the freight depot; he loaded trucks and performed other tasks. However, Armstead could not get regular work at the depot because he did not belong to the union. When Brownwood installed a sewer system, Armstead contracted to dig sewer lines. This job lasted for several years. Son Irving Rice recalled that the project "paid good money." The Rice family is listed on the 1930 Brown County, Texas Census, as follows:

CENSUS—1930 Milam County, Texas Census, ED 25-6,  
Sheet 1A, Family 4 (2 Apr 1930 – 1005 Ave. A,  
Brownwood):  
J. A. Rice 61 TX GA TX plumber, city service  
Jessie L. Rice 50 TX NC AL wife  
Carolyn Rice 31 TX TX TX dau / public school teacher  
Mary L. Rice 18 TX TX TX dau  
Armstead Rice, Jr 15 TX TX TX son  
Florence J. Rice 12 TX TX TX dau  
Katherine Middleton 16 TX TX TX niece

CENSUS—1930 Milam County, Texas Census, ED 25-8,  
Sheet 9A, Family 209 (1700 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Brownwood):  
Irving G. Rice 25 TX TX TX mechanic, motor co  
Bernice O. Rice 26 TX TX TX wife  
Harrell B. Rice 3 TX TX TX son  
Jacqueline Rice 6/12 TX TX TX dau

Even though the Armstead Rice family lived in town, Armstead managed to resume farming and ranching. Apparently, Armstead's farm was quite a distance from Brownwood. At some point, Armstead began residing at the farm. He would periodically return to Brownwood (perhaps on weekends). Son Junior recalled occasionally staying at the farm with Armstead. How long Armstead Rice maintained this living arrangement is not known.

Armstead and Jessie Lee Rice continued to reside in Brownwood until their deaths. Their daughter, Gladys Rice, died in 1926. Armstead Rice died in Brownwood on March 4, 1935 after undergoing surgical removal of his prostate gland. The immediate cause of his death is listed as myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle). Jessie Lee Rice died in Brownwood on January 27, 1938. A mitral deficiency (defect in the heart valve) caused her death. Both Armstead and Jessie Lee are buried at Brownwood's Greenleaf Cemetery.

Three of Armstead's and Jessie Lee's surviving children remained in Brownwood: Carolyn Rice (1898 - 1987); Harrell Henry Rice (1901 - 1970); and, Irving Grady Rice (1905 - 1993). Daughter Mary Louise Rice Hale (1912 - 1974) settled in Brownsville, Texas. Son Jesse Armstead "Junior" Rice (1915 - 1982) lived in Brownwood, Austin, and other Texas cities before moving to New York, where he died. Daughter Florence Joy Rice Walker (1917 - 1990) settled in Milano, Texas.

### TEX-MEX DEVILED EGGS

*Submitted by: Rell Rice*

Comment: Here is a deviled egg recipe that I really like and have been making for a number of years. Unless one of our relatives is an editor with Southern Living... it's not much of a family recipe but hey... they are really good.

6 hard cooked eggs, peeled  
1 tbl spoon diced green onions  
1 tbl spoon chopped cilantro  
1 serano or jalepeno pepper, seeded and finely chopped  
1/4 cup mayo  
1 teaspoon mustard  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese  
Chili Powder

Cut eggs in half crosswise, carefully remove yolks. Mash yolks, and stir in green onions and next six ingredients (green onions thru Cheddar cheese).

Note: The recipe calls for the Cheddar cheese to be sprinkled onto the top of the eggs but I just add it into the mix.

Spoon into egg white, sprinkle with chili powder. Cover and chill.

Yield: 1 dozen

I use more jalepenos than recommended. I will use fresh jalepenos but will add some pickled jalepeno juice to taste. If you don't like them spicy but like the flavor of jalepenos...which make these really good... I hear that you can slice and de-seed the jalepenos and soak them in cold water for 4+hours.

### SPINACH AND ARTICHOKE CASSEROLE

*Submitted by: Louise and Harrell Bengé Rice*

Comment: People who think they hate spinach will love this.  
Serves 10 to 12

1 cup chopped onion  
1/2 cup chopped celery (optional)  
1/2 cup butter  
2 10 1/2 ounce packages frozen chopped spinach, cooked and squeezed dry  
8 ounces sour cream  
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
1 15 ounce can artichoke hearts, rinsed, drained, and chopped  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Oven: 350°

Sauté onions and celery in butter and remove from heat. Add spinach and stir. Add sour cream, 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese and artichoke hearts. Place in buttered 2-quart casserole dish and top with remaining 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese. Bake 30 minutes or until bubbly.

### CHOCOLATE FUDGE

*Submitted by: Louise and Harrell Bengé Rice*

Makes 5 pounds

Boil together (stirring): 5 c. sugar; 1/4 lb. oleo; 1 large can Pet milk

Let boil 8 minutes

Remove from fire and add: 3 pkg chocolate chips; 1 pint pecans (chipped); 1 pint marshmallow whip; 1 tsp vanilla  
Mix well and quickly drop by tsp. on waxed paper

### ASPARAGUS VINAIGRETTE

*Submitted by: Louise and Harrell Bengé Rice*

Serves: 12

3 10-ounce packages frozen asparagus spears; or comparable amount of fresh asparagus, blanched and drained  
1/3 cup cider vinegar  
3/4 cup vegetable oil  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon pepper  
1 tablespoon finely chopped pimento  
Cook asparagus according to package directions, drain thoroughly and place in shallow dish. Combine remaining ingredients; blend well. Pour over asparagus. Cover and refrigerate several hours. To serve, drain vinaigrette and arrange asparagus on serving platter. Garnish with pimento.

### HOLIDAY EGGNOG

*Submitted by: Louise and Harrell Bengé Rice*

Can partially do ahead.

Serves: 30 - 40

Preparation time: 20 - 30 minutes – Chilling: 1 hour

24 egg yolks  
2 cups (474mi) sugar  
1 qt (946mi) bourbon  
1pt (474mi) brandy  
1 qt (946mi) heavy cream  
2 qts (1.89i) milk  
1qt (946mi) vanilla ice cream  
24 egg white, stiffly beaten  
Beat egg yolks and sugar until thick and lemon colored. Add bourbon and brandy and stir thoroughly. Blend in cream and milk and continue stirring. Add ice cream and mix well. Fold in stiffly beaten egg whites last. Place in refrigerator to cool at least 1 hour before serving. Can all be done ahead except for adding egg whites. Add them one hour before serving.

### PUDDING / PIE FILLING

*Submitted by: Cheryl Walker*

Comment: Can be made sugar-free (with Splenda).

2 cups milk  
1 cup sugar (or 1 cup Splenda)  
1/3 cup flour  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
2 eggs  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1 to 1 1/2 cup whipping cream (optional)

Instructions

Scald milk and add sugar, flour, and salt...whip in slightly beaten eggs...stir over moderate heat until thick (or cook in microwave, stirring every one to two minutes)...stir in vanilla...chill...fold in whipping cream just before serving. For chocolate pudding add 1/3 cup cocoa with the sugar (or with the Splenda).

For banana pudding add bananas and vanilla wafers to cool pudding.

For pies pour pudding in baked pie crust and top with whipping cream.

## MEXICAN CORNBREAD

*Submitted by: Louise and Harrell Bengé Rice*

1 cup cornmeal  
½ teaspoon soda  
¾ cup sour milk  
2 eggs  
½ teaspoon salt  
2 ½ large jalapeños (chopped)  
1 bud of garlic (chopped)  
1 onion (chopped)  
1 small can of cream-style corn  
¼ cup bacon drippings  
½ pound cheese (use 1 cup)

Mix meal, salt, soda, eggs, garlic, onion, corn, and bacon drippings. Spread ½ of batter in well-greased pan. Sprinkle with cheese and pepper then cover with remaining batter. Bake at 350° for 1 hour.

## BROWNIES

*Submitted by: Cheryl Walker*

Comment: This was my mother's recipe, but I added the chocolate syrup.

2 cups sugar	1 cup butter
2 tsp. almond flavoring	4 eggs
1/3 cup cocoa	½ tsp. baking powder
dash of salt	2 TBS. white corn syrup
2 TBS. chocolate syrup	1½ cups flour

Cream sugar and butter. Stir in flavoring. Then add eggs, cocoa, baking powder, and salt. Mix well and then add flour. Bake in preheated oven at 350° for 20 minutes in a greased and floured 9x14-inch baking pan. Done when inserted toothpick comes out clean. Brownies will also pull away from the edge of the pan when done.

## POSSUM AND TATERS

*Source: Internet*

Ingredients:

1 young, fat possum  
8 sweet potatoes  
2 tablespoons butter  
1 tablespoon sugar  
salt

Directions: Skin possum and remove the head and feet. Be sure to wash it thoroughly. Freeze overnight either outside or in a refrigerator. When ready to cook, peel the potatoes and boil them tender in lightly salted water along with the butter and sugar. At the same time, stew the possum tender in a tightly covered pan with a little water. Arrange the taters around the possum, strip with bacon, sprinkle with thyme or marjoram, or pepper, and brown in the oven. Baste often with the drippings.

## TEXAS CAVIAR

*Submitted by: Vikki and Tim Powell*

Comment: Here's a recipe that we really enjoy a lot. Has a very Texas flair!

1/2 chopped onion  
1 chopped green bell pepper  
1 chopped bunch of green onions  
2 chopped jalapeños (omit seed or it will be pretty hot)  
1 tbsp minced garlic  
1 pint of quartered cherry tomatoes  
2 diced avacados  
1 bottle of zesty Italian dressing (8 oz)  
1 can black beans (15 oz) - drain  
1 can black-eyed peas (15 oz) - drain  
½ tsp ground coriander  
1 bunch chopped fresh cilantro

In a large bowl, mix together all ingredients except cilantro. Chill for 2 hours. To complete, add cilantro just prior to serving.

## CHRISTMAS MORNING QUICHE

*Submitted by: Mary Jane Hale Shands*

Comment: We like this quiche on Christmas morning, with lots of Mary Louise's salsa and good ol' chile con queso.

This recipe makes 2 quiches and can be cut in half easily.

1 two-pound package Jimmy Dean breakfast sausage  
1 package frozen potatoes O'Brien  
1 can evaporated milk  
½ C Progresso Italian bread crumbs  
8 eggs  
1 ½ C shredded Colby/Jack cheese (with some extra for garnish)

2 T. yellow mustard

Salt and pepper to taste

2 Mrs. Smith's deep dish frozen pie crusts

Cook, crumble, and drain the sausage. (I usually chop it finer in the food processor).

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, and mustard (secret ingredient!).

To the egg mixture, add the cheese, bread crumbs, and cooked sausage. Stir well; add salt and pepper if desired.

Divide the mixture between two frozen, deep dish pie crusts.

You'll have to gently pack down the quiche into the pie shells; try to keep the same thickness across the quiche (if it's mounded in the center, it will not cook evenly). If you have any leftover mixture, spray an oven-proof bowl with Pam and add the rest of the mixture for a "taster".

Bake in a preheated oven at 325 degrees for one hour, or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Sprinkle more cheese on top for color.

You can also skip the pie crusts altogether. Use non-stick cooking spray (Pam) in a large casserole dish, add the quiche mixture and bake.

These can be frozen after cooking.

Enjoy!!