

# The Josias Locke Family Newsletter

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## Another Successful Locke Reunion



Scott Agnew helps his sons Nate and Max fill their plates, while mom, Kim Locke, waits her turn, with brother-in-law, Barry Godlewski, who has already been eyeing the wonderful desserts yet to come.



# We Gathered Under the “Big Top”

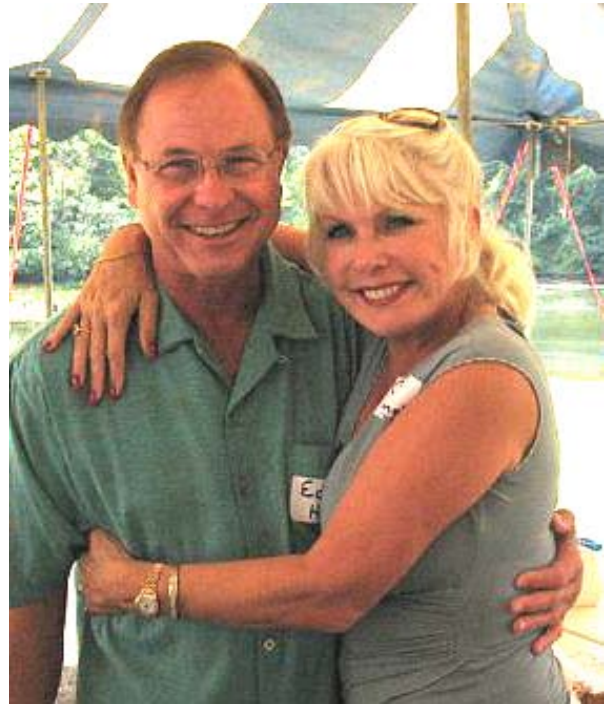
On Sunday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, the extended Locke family gathered once again to share colorful stories, delicious home cooking, family history, and a legacy of musical entertainment. Once again, **Ray and Bruce Howell** opened their farm to the family of Ray’s grandmother, **Martha Hope Locke Helms**, and the people streamed down the wooded hill, and filled the tables, chairs, and pavilion below. This year, Ray and Vann erected a large blue and white striped tent over the food area, which could have also protected us against those intermittent autumn showers that sometimes surprise you in the Piedmont. Even though the calendar read October 7<sup>th</sup>, you wouldn’t have known it by the hot temperature and the bright sun. Hovering near the 90 degree mark, the shade of the giant oaks proved to be the best place to set up shop. The iced tea certainly did its job on this Sunday afternoon. The lake was calm, and the paddle boat and row boat were finding the coolest spots in the shade. The herd of goats kept their distance, and the pot bellied pig, **Rooter**, chose not to grace us with his presence this year. Maybe it was the plates of country ham biscuits, and the baked hams that convinced him to stay elsewhere, not to mention those juicy pork chops. I can’t say I blamed him!







**Myrtle and Charlie Winchester share family history and lunch with the Rev. Gary Anderson.**



**Eddie Helms with his then fiancé, Carol Berry, who were married on November 10<sup>th</sup>**



**Many people found a cool spot in the shade to eat their Sunday dinner. A perfect day! Mary Ayers and Nancy Locke go back for one more helping, and a refill of iced tea.**



## The “Soggy Bottom Boys” Surprised Us with their Artistry



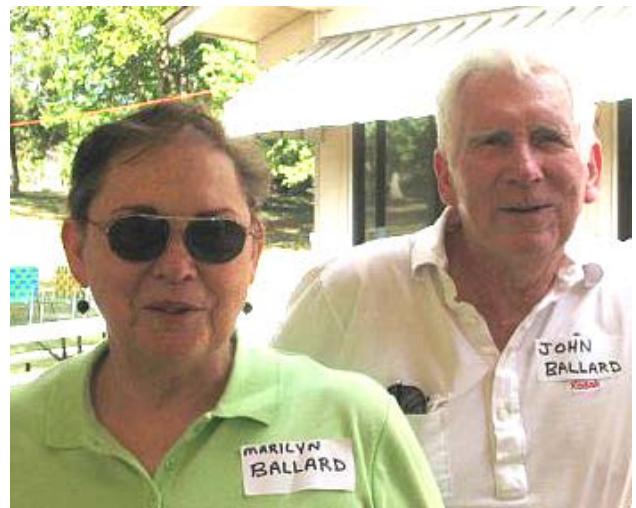
(photo by Deborah Fox)

**Left to right: Ray Howell, Eddie Helms, Furman Locke, Vann Helms, and Charles Gregory**

Just when we thought we had seen everything, the unimaginable happened. From out of the shadows of our Southern past emerged five of the hairiest varmints that had ever been seen east of the Missouri Ozarks. Their beards were down past their waists, and the smell of something real strong filled the air around them. When they took over our microphones, we had no choice but to let them play and sing. **Uncle Walston Locke and Aunt Mamie Locke Boyce** would have been a hootin’ and a hollerin’ had they still been with us. For the next twenty minutes we were treated to some of the best mountain music heard around these parts in many a year. Rumor has it that they will make a return engagement next year, with new songs and more practice.



**Furman and Eddie share a tender moment.**



**Marilyn and John Ballard came from Charleston.**

We were glad to see the Mamie and Hugh Boyce family represented this year. **Elizabeth Babb** from Charlotte brought here three children, **Caitlin, Jonathan and Emily**. Also, **Rev. Gary Anderson** joined us from Charlotte. He comes from the **Benjamin Locke** family, through his grandmother **Mattie Locke** of Spartanburg and Greenville.



A future Elvis Presley?



Bruce and son Kevin



**Bruce and Ray Howell with their granddaughters Cara and Whitney Howell.**



**Walt Locke**, son of Walston Levi Locke, with his cousin **Bennie Locke Wallace**, daughter of **Furman Locke, Sr.**, and **Sue Winchester Locke**.



Shelby Parker, G-G-Granddaughter of Mattie Hope Locke with Uncle **Jamie Fox**, and friend, **Shelby**,

## The Locke Family Reunion for 2008

The date for the **2008** family reunion will be Sunday afternoon, **Columbus Day, October 12<sup>th</sup>**. Ray and Bruce Howell have once again generously offered their Huntersville farm for the event, but we will have a contingency plan just in case their farm is sold before the reunion date. The Howells have built a spectacular home on a stream near Boone, North Carolina, and their farm near Charlotte, has been listed for sale. As is tradition, the gathering will begin about 1 p.m., and will go until sundown. If the Panthers have a game that Sunday, we'll have a television for all of you football fans. Deborah Fox and Friends will again provide their wonderful music, and we may have a return engagement of the Soggy Bottom Boys. The Karaoke machine will be back again this year. Of course, the best home cooking in the Carolinas will be the main attraction, and the variety will entice even the most discerning Southern Pallet.

*Let's all make a point to call at least one relative who wasn't with us this past year, and also, feel free to bring your friends. The more the merrier!*



## Oscar and Sadie Locke Winchester in 1915



Every year we seem to find another antique photograph that captures the spirit of the Locke family, and this year was no exception. **Charlie Winchester**, who just happened to win the Silver Dollar prize as the oldest Locke descendant at the reunion, (He turned 89 on February 23<sup>rd</sup>), brought this photograph of his mother and father, **Sadie Locke and Oscar Winchester**, that was made around 1916 somewhere in Union County, North Carolina. The mule has just pulled them across a one lane wooden bridge crossing a river on a cold winter morning. I speculate that it was Sunday, and they were on their way to church. Sadie is covered with a blanket, and Oscar has his hands under the blanket to keep warm. If you look closely in the lower left foreground, you'll see the shadow of the photographer who is wearing a hat. Sadie was the daughter of Absalom Locke and Lizzie Lemons Campbell Locke. What priceless image will the next year bring?

## More Reunion Memories

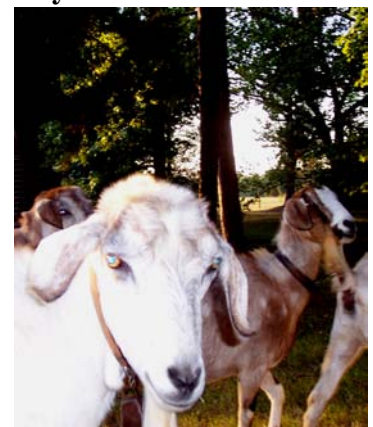
**Debra Brotherton Fox**



**Vann Helms and Carol Berry**



**Ray's Goats**



# Sherman's March through North and South Carolina

By Vann Helms

In early March, 1865, the army of **Gen. William T. Sherman**, under the command of **Major-General J. Kilpatrick**, moved south through Anson County, North Carolina, into Chesterfield County, South Carolina, on its way to join Gen. Sherman in Savannah. The following letter was written by my great-great Uncle, **George Cotton Ratliffe** (1838-1920), just before his death. He lived in Anson County.

*My Dear Mrs. Howard,*

*On Friday, March 3, 1865, I being one of the home guard, started out with a message to Chesterfield, S.C., that the Yankees were expected in town at any time.*

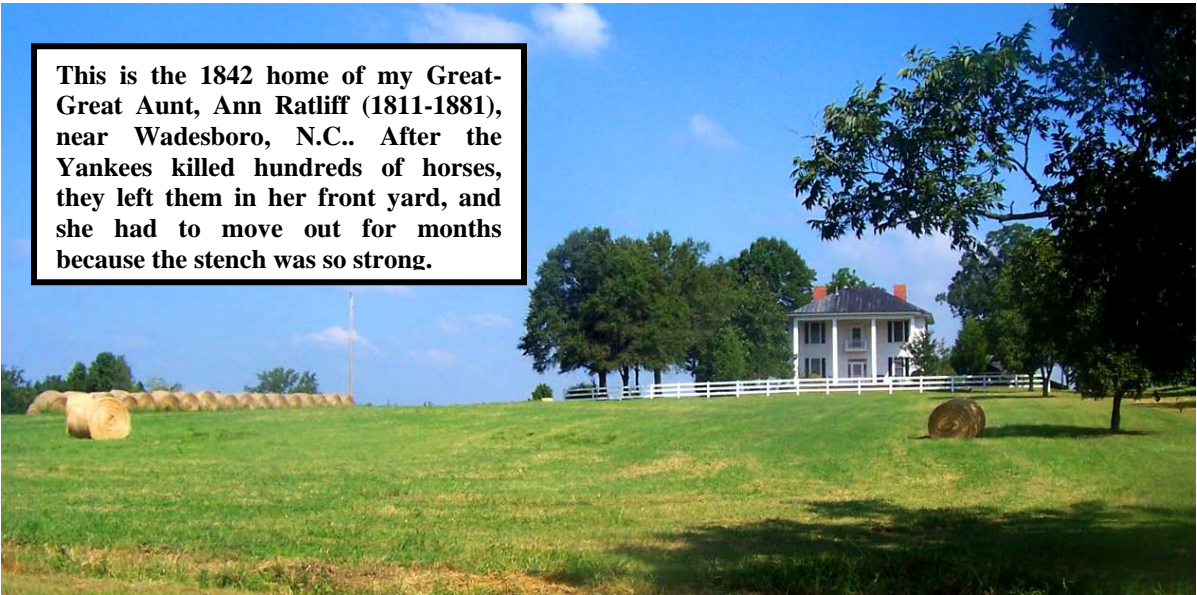
*My desire was to let my own family and neighbors know as I went by. The route was too risky, for I ran right into Kilpatrick's Brigade. They, of course, made me a prisoner and brought me back to Wadesboro. Spies were out, and the Yanks were sighted. As they were, only Kilpatrick's Brigade, about fifty citizens of town, and about three hundred negroes were lined up. From a little distance, they looked like quite a little company. There was a small skirmish in which one of Kilpatrick's men was killed. They soon took their dead man and we prisoners south where the large army had gone. We were taken to the late David Tillman's home in whose front yard they buried their dead man. (Mr. Tillman later had him moved) My horse had been taken from me. I had been forced to exchange my shoes with a Yankee for his old ragged dirty black boots. (I have never liked Yankee blue since) There was nothing for me to do but watch them burn gin houses and cotton piles, and destroy everything they could lay hands on.*

*What corn they could not carry off with them was poured out on the ground for the horses to trample on. All wheat, flour, meat, and molasses, and provisions of any kinds, were either carried off, or destroyed. They even took quilts, silverware, and everything of any value. That whole country around Deep Creek was blue with Yankees.*

*Many was the cow and sheep that was killed. They gathered up every horse that was any good, and were so afraid they would leave one that we might use, that they, on being persued by Wheeler's men, killed more than a hundred horses in and around Miss Ratliff's yard. So great was the stench that my aunt had to leave her home for months.*

*On Sunday, Wheeler's men could be seen coming from White's store. 'Twas then the Yankees pulled out in the direction of Morven. Between Lowry's Store and Deep Creek, Wheeler's men began to cannonade the Yankees. There were a number of cannons fired on each side, but no one was killed.*

This is the 1842 home of my Great-Great Aunt, Ann Ratliff (1811-1881), near Wadesboro, N.C.. After the Yankees killed hundreds of horses, they left them in her front yard, and she had to move out for months because the stench was so strong.



*I thought surely I could get away then, but not until we reached Fayetteville did our men become strong. Mrs. Howard, I am an old man, and soon will pass to the "great beyond". Before going, I want to leave this message. The South was never whipped! They outnumbered us. They destroyed our property. We saw starvation for our wives and children. For this reason alone, Lee surrendered. Sherman paid. It makes the blood boil in my old veins every time I hear the words, Sherman's Raid. If he had stayed out of the South, with the noble women (God bless them) at home doing their part, we would have won the victory, or still been fighting today.. Tell the rising generation we did our best.*

*Very sincerely yours,*

*George C. Ratliffe*

## Report from General Kilpatrick made the Same Day

**HDQS. CAVALRY COMMAND, ARMY OF INVASION, In the field, S.C.,  
March 3, 1865**

**Major L. M. Dayton, Asst. Adj. Gen., Military Division of the  
Mississippi**

**MAJOR:**

**The enemy appeared in a considerable force this morning from the direction of Monroe, on the road to Blakeny's, and skirmished with Colonel Spenser's command, which crossed that road at 10 a.m. today at a point about six miles north of Blakeny's. After striking the Chesterfield and Monroe Road, I moved down to**



Hornsboro Post Office, then out upon the *Wadesboro* road to within ten miles of that point, where my own headquarters now are. My scouts have felt the enemy all day upon the left. I think Allen's division of cavalry is now on the road from *White's Store* to *Wadesboro*. I do not know what other forces of the enemy may be with him. I send you a map indicating my encampment and country watched by my troops. I have had a horrible road to march on today. Tomorrow I shall move to the vicinity of *Sneedsboro* unless I hear from you. Five miles of this road will be red slate and firm. After that, sandy and, of course, good. I have a scouting party in *Wadesboro* who will bring me information of the enemy in that direction. Artillery firing is now heard north of, and near to *Clay's Creek*. Spencer, an hour since, had passed the road coming in from *Meltonsville* and *White's Store*, and should be at this moment in position, covering that road where I directed him to encamp tonight. My command is all in camp, and I believe my position a good one; covering, however, as I do so many roads, I shall have comparatively but a small force to resist any determined attack upon either one. I will be massed, however, at an early hour tomorrow morning on *Chesterfield and Wadesboro Road*, at a point just north of the *North Carolina* line. Please inform me what operations you require of me tomorrow, and, if possible, for the next day.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant, *J. KILPATRICK*, Brevet Major-General, Commanding/Cavalry



Civil War era map of the battle area. Charlotte is at upper left.

## A Remarkable Locke Coincidence...

Seldom do we come across a piece of **Locke** history so remarkable that we have to call the find a *miracle*. Wait until you hear this account of just such a find.

Let's go back to the early 1930's, to a large two story rooming house run by **Mattie Locke Helms** and her husband, **Lon**, on Eleventh Street in the Fourth Ward in Uptown **Charlotte**. A good friend of Mattie's, and possibly a person who was renting a room from her, had a request. She knew that Mattie's mother, our **Grandma Lizzie Locke**, was an excellent craftswoman when it came to working with yarn. **Grandma Locke** just happened to be spending time with **Mattie**, so the request seemed normal. The young woman's name was **Etta Greason**, and she wanted **Mrs. Locke** to crochet a large bedspread, either to be given as a wedding gift to Etta's sister, or made especially for Etta and her new husband. **Grandma Locke** agreed to make the piece, and they settled on a price of \$25.00. After a few months, the spread was finished, and Etta couldn't have been happier with the result.

Let's jump forward about forty years, to 1973. **Debra Brotherton**, the eldest daughter of **Hazel Helms** and **Bud Brotherton**, married **Jamie Fox**. **Debra** was the great granddaughter of **Mattie Locke Helms**, through her mother's father, **Harold Wilson Helms**. By a strange coincidence, the **Brotherton** family had long been friends with **Etta Greason**. In time, **Debra** had the pleasure of meeting **Etta**, and got to know her as a very nice lady.

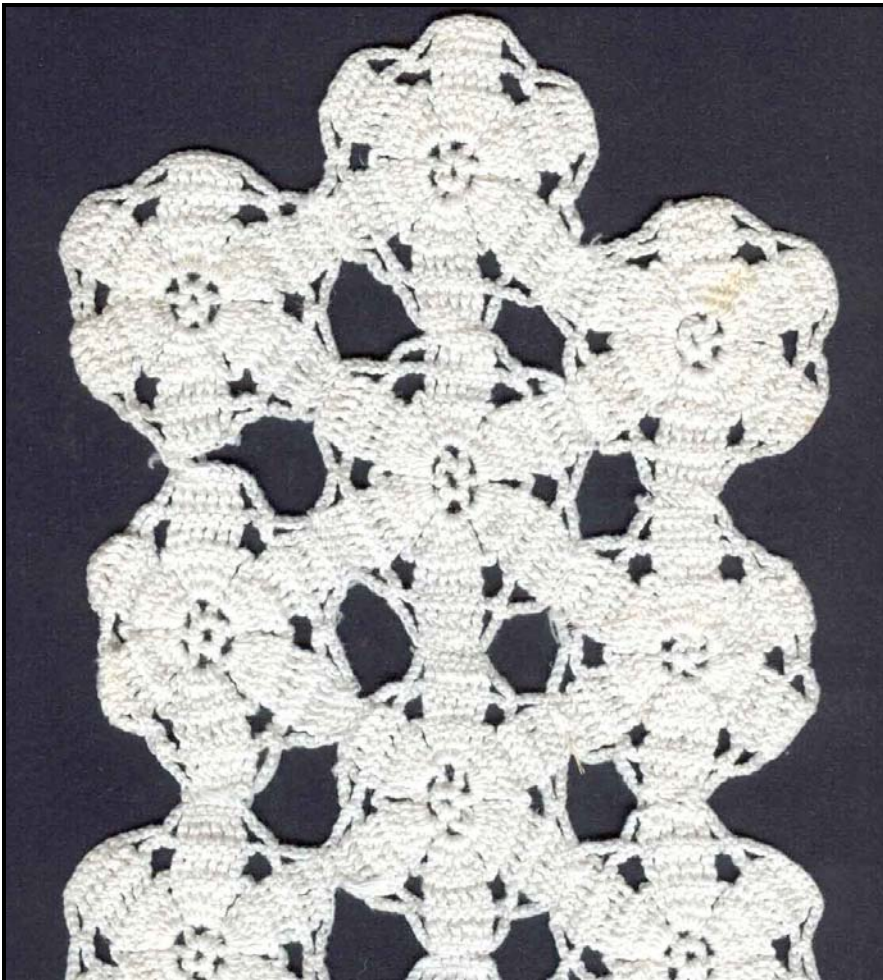
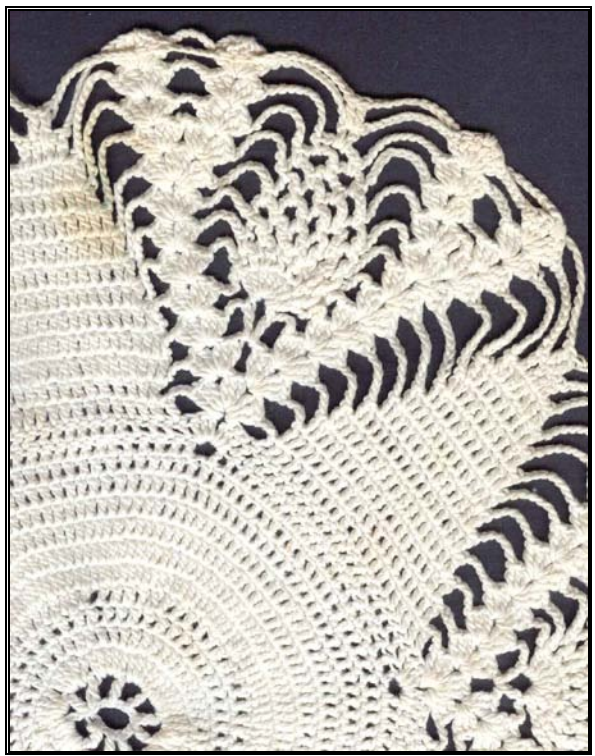
Somewhere along the way, Etta's name was brought to the attention of **Debra's** mother, **Hazel**. It rang a bell. When **Hazel** and her sisters, **Nora Etta** (Just a coincidence of names here?) and **Martha**, were very small girls in the 1930's, they used to have a babysitter named **Etta Greason**, when they would visit their grandmother's rooming house on Eleventh Street. A few telephone calls confirmed what **Hazel** suspected. There was a reunion after almost fifty years. *But wait, there's more!*

After **Debra's** mother, **Hazel**, passed away in 1987, **Debra** became a close friend of **Etta**, who by now was advanced in years. In one of their conversations, **Etta** told **Debra** that she had something she wanted to give her. Many months later, **Etta** presented **Debra** with a very large bedspread, and told her the story of its origin. After so many decades, the spread that **Grandma Locke** had made for **Etta**, was passed on to **Debra**, because **Etta** knew it should go back to the **Locke** family.

At the reunion last October, **Debra** produced a large plastic bag, and as though she were handling the *Holy Shroud of Turin*, she carefully removed the large piece from the bag, and displayed it on a table inside the reunion pavilion. It was magnificent, looking as though it had just been made. It was off-white wool, and was made up of hundreds of separate squares of very ornate needle work, all sewn into the final design. Just touching it brought a connection to a lady we all had only known through photographs and stories. Having this wonderful relic back in the family after so many years was *truly* a miracle.

*Somewhere out there is another miracle waiting to be discovered. Perhaps it's buried deep inside an old family trunk, or between the tissue thin pages of an old family Bible. Maybe it's been hanging on a wall in your house or in your grandmother's house, or just maybe it was in that box of "what-nots" that got passed down to you from a favorite uncle or aunt. Please take some time and find something special that the entire family can enjoy. Believe me, you won't regret the effort, and neither will we.*





Shown here are three examples of the beautiful needlework produced in the **Locke** family. The pieces were handed down from **Mattie Locke Helms** to her son, **Buddy Helms**, and were combined with similar work from Buddy's wife's family, the **Ratcliffes**. Many of you saved doilies that were passed down through your families, and they truly are works of art that deserve to be displayed and appreciated. Framed under glass on a velvet background, these masterpieces can become your most treasured family possessions.

## Life has its Highs and Lows!



In early September, **Vann Helms**, along with his sister-in-law, **Vicki Helms**, were the guests of **President Bill Clinton** at a private reception in Ft. Lauderdale. One week later, Vann was diagnosed with cancer of the throat, and underwent an aggressive program of chemo and radiation therapy. Although he lost his hair, his voice, much of his hearing, and thirty precious pounds, his prognosis for a full recovery is good. He looks forward to seeing everyone at the reunion this year! *You never know.*

## The Locke Family is Changing...

**Lewis Neal Boyce**, second son of **Hugh and Mamie Scenia Locke Boyce**, passed away last year. This word comes from **Diane Boyce Simpson**, daughter of **Wilson and Letha Moore Boyce**, who both passed during 2005. Neal was 88 years old, and lived at home right up to the end. Our sympathies are with Neal's large family. Neal was named for his maternal grandfather, **Absalom Lewis Locke**.

Our newest addition during 2007 was a new Great-grandson for **Gladys Hucks Howell**, widow of **John Glenn Howell, Jr.**, who was the oldest grandchild of **Mattie Locke and Lon Helms**. He was born to **Heather Marie Howell**, daughter of **Pat and Kathy Howell**, and **Ray Isalis**. Congratulations to the proud parents, grandparents, and great grandmother.

**Eddie Helms and Carol Roseborough Berry** were married on November 10<sup>th</sup>, in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Both had recently lost their mates of many years, and the union added Carol's large family of five children to that of Eddie's two beautiful daughters. The more the merrier, as they say.

Please keep **Sara Prozak** in your thoughts and prayers. She is the daughter of **Maydell Locke Thomas**, who is the daughter of **Arthur Hayden Locke**, who was a great-grandson of **Jesse McCullough Locke**, son of **Josias**. Sara suffered a double brain aneurysm, and is in ICU at Mission Regional Hospital in Mission Viejo, California.

Earlier newsletters neglected to inform everyone of the passing of **Jesse Winifred Locke**, in 2006. He was a great-great-grandson of **Jesse McCullough Locke**. Our belated sympathies go out to his children, **Gary, David, and Lisa**, and to all of Jesse's extended family.

Please let me know of any deaths, births, or marriages in your families. My e-mail address is [VANN@MIAMI-ART.COM](mailto:VANN@MIAMI-ART.COM). Your help is greatly appreciated.