

Atoka Cemetery, Novice, Coleman County, Texas

> **Genealogy**

> **Ann Staton MURRILL ASHLEY WILBER**

*On this page: Narrative to confirm the identity of Ann Staton MURRILL ASHLEY and Ann A. WILBER
Latest update: Friday, 09 April, 2021 **DRAFT***

The sources for the narrative below are available in the [Atoka Cemetery Family Tree](#).

NOTE: [Timelines in spreadsheet form.](#)

Certainly, the family who buried Ann S. WILBER knew who she was and why she was buried in the Atoka Cemetery in Atoka, Coleman County, TEXAS. However, community knowledge faded and without documentation, Ann's connection to the cemetery was forgotten, and she became a mystery as the only WILBER buried in the Atoka Cemetery.

Until 2020, when her third great grandson, Eric ASHLEY, contacted Atoka Cemetery during his search for Ann Staton MURRILL ASHLEY.

As in many family trees, there is a dearth of direct documentation as to Ann's identity, but enough circumstantial evidence to declare the Ann WILBER buried in Atoka Cemetery is **Ann Staton MURRILL ASHLEY WILBER**.

Based on the gravestone in Atoka Cemetery, Ann S. WILBER was born 15 December **1825**, and the 1880 Census for Coleman County, TEXAS indicates she was born in TENNESSEE. According to the 1850 Census of Sabine County, TEXAS, Ann MURRILL ASHLEY was born about 1822 in TENNESSEE and according to the 1860 Census for Bell County, TEXAS she was born about 1826 in TENNESSEE; Ann MURRILL is recorded in multiple family trees as the daughter of Joseph MURRILL and Mary D. BAILY MURRILL, although to date there is no documentation of her birth, beyond the US census estimates.

In 1835 TEXAS declared independence from MEXICO and in 1845 became a the 28th state of the UNITED STATES.

In 1855 **Camp Colorado** was established in Coleman County, TEXAS

Ann MURRILL married **James ASHLEY** before the **1850** census, where she is enumerated in Milam, Sabine County, TEXAS, with her husband and one year old

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Mary H. They had two more children, William Emerson ASHLEY (born 30 Jul 1854) and Sarah ASHLEY (born about 1857), before **James died 23 May 1859 in Belton, Bell County, TEXAS.**

On 02 June **1859** Ann S. ASHLEY executed a real estate transaction in the Miami District of Bell County, TEXAS, and in the **1860** Census for the Belton Post Office, of Bell County, TEXAS, she lived with her son William ASHLEY and daughter Sarah, enumerated as Family 534, with her father Joseph MURRILL's family "next door" as Family 533.

Alonzo H. WILBER was born about 1835 in Franklin, Warren Co, OHIO. In 1855 he enlisted for the first time in the US Army and by **1859** he was stationed in TEXAS.

On February 29, 1864, A. H. WILBER and Elisha CHILDRESS were both on the roster of McCord's Regiment Company I in Camp Colorado, Coleman County, TEXAS.

Remember, Camp Colorado was established in 1855. "**In the late 1860's**, the pursuit and near banishment of local Indian tribes, (first the Kickapoo, later Comanche) by the military and other interests, led to the settlers, ranchers and farmers entering the area in the early 1870's. **One of the earliest, perhaps the earliest, was the Rev. Hugh Martin Childress and family [including Elisha CHILDRESS and his wife Mary Mariah MURRILL CHILDRESS (married about 1857), younger sister of Ann Staton MURRILL ASHLEY WILBER]. He was the first official Circuit Riding Preacher in the Atoka area. He came down from the Camp Colorado area.** ("History of Atoka", presented by Bill Shields, Annual Homecoming, Saturday, 15 May, 2010)

So, it is fairly safe to extrapolate that Elisha CHILDRESS, with whom Alonzo H. WILBER had recently served, and Elisha's wife and Ann's sister Mary Mariah MURRILL CHILDRESS, were the connections between Alonzo and Ann.

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Although documentation has yet to be found, **Ann S. MURRILL ASHLEY** married **Alonzo H. WILBER** about **1863**, based on the birth of their son **Oscar J. WILBER**; Oscar was born 24 Aug 1863 TEXAS, according to his CALIFORNIA Death Certificate or August 1866 according to the 1900 Bexar Co, TEXAS Census.

Alonzo, Ann, sixteen year old William Emerson, thirteen year old Sarah, approximately seven year old Oscar have yet to be found in the **1870** US Census.

Still, Alonzo WILBER is recorded in the **1874 and 1876 TEXAS, Comanche County** Tax Rolls. And by **1877, 1878, and 1879** Alonzo WILBER is recorded in TEXAS, **Coleman County** Tax Rolls.

The **1880 US Census for Coleman County, TEXAS** is a substantial piece of circumstantial evidence, that all but confirms Ann MURRILL ASHLEY is indeed Ann MURRILL ASHLEY WILBER. The WILBER family was enumerated as follows:

Home in 1880: Precinct 8, Coleman, Texas, USA

Family 89; **Dwelling 85**

- Alonzo H. Wilber, 45 [abt 1835], OHIO, head, farmer
- Ann S. Wilber, 54 [abt 1826], TENNESSEE, wife
- Oscar J. Wilber, 16 [abt 1864], TEXAS, son

Ann's son William ASHLEY was farming alone in Family 102 enumerated as follows:

Home in 1880: Precinct 8, Coleman, Texas, USA

Family 102; **Dwelling 88**

- William E. ASHLEY, 26 [abt 1854], TEXAS, single, head, farmer [living alone]

Two notes: Alonzo WILBER was the only surname WILBER in Coleman Co, TEXAS for the 1880 census, and WILLIAM ASHLEY was the only surname ASHLEY in Coleman Co, TEXAS for the 1880 census.

Four more pieces of the circumstantial data puzzle have precipitated the merger of Ann S. MURRILL ASHLEY and Ann S. WILBER as Ann Staton MURRILL ASHLEY WILBER.

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After Ann S. married Alonzo H. WILBER the early 1860s, there is no documentation of Ann MURRILL or Ann MURRILL ASHLEY.

“Roadmaster” William Emerson ASHLEY died 29 Apr 1913 at 58 years old, in Maverick County, TEXAS and according to his TEXAS Death Certificate his mother was recorded as **“Ann Mirrill [sic] Kentucky [sic].”**

Oscar WILBER died 25 Feb 1943 in Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, CALIFORNIA, and according to the Ancestry .com transcript of his Death Certificate, Oscar’s **“Mother’s Maiden Staton.”** Ann’s middle initial has been well documented as S., although to date, no documentation has been found for the middle name Staton. In addition to family stories indicating Ann S. was Ann Staton, Ann Staton MURRILL ASHLEY WILBER had a niece Ann Staton MURRILL ANDERSON (1887 - 1959), daughter of James Henry MURRILL and Polly W. SLATE MURRILL; according to Ann Staton MURRILL ANDERSON’s daughter Callie Faye’s TEXAS Death Certificate, Ann Staton MURRILL ANDERSON’s middle name is documented as Staton. So it is a small leap of faith to believe the family stories are correct — Ann S. MURRILL’s middle name was Staton. Therefore, Ann Staton MURRILL ASHLEY WILBER, according to their death certificates, is mother to both William Emerson ASHLEY and Oscar WILBER.

Finally, Ann S. WILBER, died 06 Mar 1896 and is buried in the Atoka Cemetery, Coleman County, TEXAS, near her MURRILL family.

- Ann Staton’s sister Mary Mariah MURRILL CHILDRESS and her husband Elisha CHILDRESS, with whom Alonzo WILBER served in Camp Colorado,
 - Ann Staton’s youngest brother James Henry (J. H.) MURRILL and his wife Polly W. SLATE MURRILL and over a half dozen of their ancestors, and
 - many other SLATE’s and CHILDRESS’s
- are all buried in Atoka Cemetery.

And now, thanks to Eric ASHLEY, the records of Atoka Cemetery have put Ann S. WILBER back with her MURRILL ASHLEY WILBER family.

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On 28 Sep, 2020, at 4:07 PM, Eric Ashley wrote: " The discovery of Alonzo Wilber appears to have solved a major mystery for my family. My brother, dad, grandfather and great-grandfather are/were named Edward Alonzo, and we could never quite figure out where the name Alonzo came from. It makes perfect sense that William Emerson Ashley named one of his sons after the man who raised him."