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PRESS RELEASE

EBAY PHOTO SOLVES JESSE JAMES MYSTERY

For as long as Betty Dorsett Duke can remember she has heard family stories that claim Jesse James was her great-grandfather. The story goes that he assumed the name of James L. Courtney (an ex-Union soldier), hightailed it to Blevins, Texas in 1871, faked his April 3, 1882 death, (despite reports that 1995 DNA testing proved he died as history reports) , and lived to tell his great-grandchildren about his amazing exploits. In 1995 Duke began a quest to either prove or disprove the family story and determine her true heritage. She's written two books on what proved to be a very controversial subject: *Jesse James Lived and Died In Texas* (1998) and *The Truth About Jesse James* (2007). Duke says she's presented strong supporting evidence indicating that her family story and findings from her research are correct, but that none of her evidence is as compelling as a photo of Jesse James and his family that was recently up for auction on Ebay:

http://cgi.ebay.com/Lot-23-Jesse-James-Ephemera-Photos-gang-members-130454817614?pt=Art_Photo_Images&hash=item1e5fb6

Greg Ellison, a Missourian and owner of the Ellison Collection (<http://www.theellisoncollection.com/>, Historical Images of the Jesse James Family And Gang and Other Historical Figures), is familiar with Duke's family story and alerted her upon seeing the photo. Upon seeing it he told his wife, "Here's Betty Duke's proof." Duke agrees.

The Ebay picture's provenance is excellent. St. Joseph, Missourian Lee Starnes (now deceased) obtained it from Arch Nicholson (Frank and Jesse James' nephew), and when Mr. Starnes died his sister inherited it. After her death his collection was put up for auction and Illinoisan Cathi Basler won it and then put it up for auction on Ebay. Then through a stroke of good fortune, Duke won LOT 23 of the collection which included the James family photo.

This photo appears to be Frank James' 1875 wedding photo and appears to have been taken at Blevins, Texas for several reasons: the house in the Ebay picture matches the house of Duke's great-grandfather in old family photos; and Josiah Zachariah Jackson, Jesse James AKA James Courtney's neighbor, known for his hatred of traveling, is in the picture. The following individuals have been identified: Frank James, (seated on the ground far right wearing white suit); his new bride Annie Ralston (in between Frank and Jesse); Jesse James (tall man with dark mustache); Mary Ellen Barron (small woman seated behind Jesse); Frank and Jesse's mother Zerelda James Samuel (with missing arm); their step-father Dr. Reuben Samuel (standing on back row far left); and Josiah Zachariah Jackson (standing on the back row to the far right). The woman seated on Zerelda's right has been tentatively identified as Caroline Quantrill, Confederate Guerrilla leader William Clarke Quantrill's mother. Using an old typewriter Lee Starnes typed the following caption along the edges of the photo: "PICTURE REVERSED ... believed to be a sister of Frank...the tall man with dark mustache, seated [on] her left is supposed to be JESSE JAMES..."

Learn more about the Lee Starnes Collection by clicking on the link below:

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=QkwrAAAIBAJ&sjid=itQEAAAIBAJ&dq=mrs%20jesse%20james&pg=1379,867628>

Informative online posts regarding the Ebay picture may be read at the following links:

<http://forums.delphiforums.com/Zeke1/messages?msg=538.57>

<http://forums.delphiforums.com/Zeke1/messages?msg=524.1>

Several weeks before the Ebay picture surfaced Texan Dallas Hunt found a picture of Duke's great-grandfather attending the 1921 Quantrill Men Reunion proving that he was not a Union soldier but rode with Quantrill... just as her family story goes:

<http://forums.delphiforums.com/Zeke1/messages?msg=468.1>

To learn more about Jesse James and to view the Ebay photo click the following link:

<http://www.jessejamesintexas.com/>