



**Governor Robert Bowie.**

THE  
**BOWIES AND THEIR KINDRED**

**A**  
**Genealogical and Biographical**  
**History.**



**BY**  
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With an Introduction  
by  
**Raymond B. Clark, Jr.**

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**POLYANTHOS**  
Cottonport

## The Bowies of Louisiana.

In the absence of documentary evidence, family tradition must be accepted for the following account of the ancestor of the Bowies who settled in Louisiana about 1800, and were such noted actors in the early history of that State and Texas. The current tradition among all branches of the family who are sprung from these first Bowie settlers in Louisiana, is that the father of the elder emigrants was James Bowie, who removed from Maryland, where he left two brothers, and located in South Carolina prior to the Revolution, married, and died there. Further, that the brothers whom he left behind him were members of the well-known "Bowie family of Maryland." Mrs. Joseph H. Moore, a granddaughter of Rezin Bowie, Sr. (son of the above-mentioned James), was born in 1817, resided with her grandparents when a child, was nearly grown when her grandmother died, and, doubtless, often heard them refer to their ancestry. A few years before her death she published an article regarding her Bowie lineage, in which she positively asserted that her great-grandfather removed from Maryland to South Carolina, where he married, and where his son Rezin was born. That the latter served in the Revolutionary Army when a mere boy, married when very young, and some years later removed to Louisiana.

Other members of the family in different States (including Mrs. Eugene Soniat, of New Orleans, who has frequently heard her mother discuss the subject) all agree that their ancestor, father of Rezin Bowie, Sr., was named

either James or John Bowie; that he removed from Maryland to South Carolina and left two brothers in the former State.

The only member of the Maryland family who could thus have gone to South Carolina, and of whom the record is obscure, was James Bowie, born about 1739, and a son of John Bowie, Jr. (See Article No. 2, Maryland Bowies.) Of him we have no information after he reached his majority to indicate whether he died young or left the State. It may be observed as significant that he had two brothers, Allen and John, who lived in Maryland and left numerous posterity. There is also a tradition among the Maryland Bowies that those of Louisiana were nearly related to them.

### No. 1.

**James<sup>1</sup> Bowie**, born in Maryland, removed to South Carolina before the Revolution, and is said to have left two brothers in the State of his birth. By a number of the Maryland Bowies he is thought to have been the second son of John Bowie, Jr., and his second wife, Elizabeth Pottinger. If such was the case he was born about 1739, and left Maryland about 1760. (See Article No. 2, Maryland Bowies.) It is not known where he located in South Carolina, but it seems to be an established fact that he married a Miss Mirabeau shortly after reaching that State; was the father of four sons and a daughter, and died young, probably a short time before the Revolution. One of his wife's sisters married Sir Cæsar Ashley, and removed to the Southwest. James Bowie's first children were twins.

Issue:

- 2 I REZIN<sup>2</sup> BOWIE, Sr., b. about 1762; m. Elve Ap-Catesby Jones.

A-1 P241 18 JULY 1799 JOHN BOWIE TRADE HORSE  
A-1 P300 19 FEB 1800 REASON BOWIE SELLS LAND  
C P66 2 MAY 1810 1/2 INDEBTED TO REZIN BOWIE

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RESA

- II RESA<sup>2</sup> BOWIE, a twin brother of Rezin. Removed with the latter to Louisiana in 1800. Located in the Opelousas District, where he died in 1815. He is reported to have been unmarried, but left an *adopted* son who took his name, but of whom we have no further record.

- III JOHN<sup>2</sup> BOWIE. Is said to have removed to North Carolina.

It is not known that he married. - *Sons DAVID & WILLIAM*

- IV DAVID<sup>2</sup> BOWIE, removed with his brothers to Louisiana in 1800. He is mentioned as owning both land and slaves in the Opelousas District in 1803. The court records for that year show he had a law suit with a man named Tucker, and in his testimony it is developed that he was married and had children. He was alive in 1812, and it is supposed that he removed to Arkansas, where his descendants yet live.

- V MARTHA<sup>2</sup> BOWIE, m. Jesse Bowden, of South Carolina.

Issue:

- 1 MYRA<sup>3</sup> BOWDEN.

- 2 RESA<sup>3</sup> BOWIE BOWDEN, was twice married.

- 3 SARAH<sup>3</sup> BOWDEN, m. ——— Smith.

- 4 MARTHA<sup>3</sup> BOWDEN, m. ——— Zeaster.

Issue:

- 1 ELIZABETH<sup>4</sup> ZEASTER.

- 2 STEPHEN<sup>4</sup> ZEASTER.

### No. 2.

**Rezin<sup>2</sup> Bowie,** (JAMES<sup>1</sup> BOWIE.) a twin son of James Bowie and his wife, FANNIE Mirabeau, was born in South Carolina about 1762.

Served when a mere boy in the Patriot Army as a private soldier under General Marion. At the storming of Savannah he was wounded and taken prisoner. In warding off a blow directed at his head by a British officer, his hand was nearly severed by the saber of the Englishman. While confined in Savannah his wounds were dressed by the patriotic women of that city, among whom was Elve Ap-Catesby Jones, daughter of John Jones, a Welch emigrant. Young Bowie lost his heart with his nurse, and married her in 1782, when not twenty years of

## THE LOUISIANA BOWIES.

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age. For some time he devoted himself to the cultivation of his plantation, in Burke County, Georgia, where five of his children were born. Mrs. Bowie had several brothers and sisters; one by the name of Seaborne Jones, left a large family; a second was Stephen, and a third settled in Georgetown, D. C. All married and have numerous descendants. A sister married a Mr. Lamar.

In 1791 Rezin Bowie removed his family to Elliott Springs, Tennessee, where his four youngest children were born. Attracted by descriptions of the wonderful fertility of the land in the Mississippi Valley, he emigrated to Louisiana in 1800, and with his brothers Resa and David, entered lands in the Parish of St. Mary's, on Bayou Teche, and in the New Madrid District. In 1812 he located in the Opelousas District, where he died in 1821. His twin brother Resa also died there some four years earlier. After the death of Rezin Bowie, his widow removed to Shreveport, Louisiana, and resided with her daughter, Mrs. A. B. Sterrett, until her death in 1838.

In those early days Louisiana was filled with turbulent characters, who, attracted by the possibilities of the new region, flocked there in great numbers. There was little semblance of law, and the strong right hand was often called upon to protect both life and property, but Rezin Bowie was equal to such emergencies, and the turbulent class soon learned he was not to be intimidated. He is described as a man of fine physique, tall, red-headed, and possessing a determined, fearless disposition. He was fond of hunting, and his rifle ball seldom missed its mark. His wife also was a woman of rugged character, and endowed with masculine courage. Raised in the rough school of border life, she was a fit partner for her sturdy spouse. Many stories are told of their struggles with their aggressive neighbors. On one occasion Rezin Bowie was compelled to defend his property against a set of reckless squatters encamped near him. In the conflict which took place he killed one of his adversaries, and a

few days later he was arrested by a sheriff and charged with manslaughter; he was confined in an insecure wooden structure used as the "calaboose," or jail, to await trial. Mrs. Bowie knowing the constable to be an enemy of her husband, suspected he would allow his prisoner to be foully dealt with. Mounting her horse, and accompanied by a Negro servant on another fleet animal, she rode to the jail and demanded admittance to her husband's room. She was allowed to enter, and in a few moments re-appeared at the door accompanied by Rezin Bowie, each with loaded pistols in their hands. While the jailer sought a place of safety, they mounted the horses in waiting and rode away. It is not recorded that he was again molested.

As indicative of the iron nerve possessed by this remarkable woman, it is said when told her gallant son James had been killed by the Mexicans at the Alamo, she received the news calmly; remarking that she would "wager no wounds were found in his back," stoically resumed her domestic duties. It was from such intrepid parents that their sons inherited the cool courage and indifference to danger for which they were so celebrated throughout the Southwest, and which indeed has made the name a synonym for bravery.

Issue of Rezin Bowie and his wife, Elve (Jones) Bowie:

- I LAVINIA<sup>3</sup> and LAVISSA<sup>3</sup> BOWIE, (twins) b. 1783; d. in infancy.
  - 3 II JOHN<sup>3</sup> JONES BOWIE, b. 1785; m. twice; d. 1859.
  - III SARAH<sup>3</sup> BOWIE, b. 1787; m. ——— Davis, of Opelousas, Louisiana; d. at the birth of her only child, which did not survive her.
  - IV MARY<sup>3</sup> BOWIE, b. 1789; m. Abraham Bird, of Bird's Point, Missouri.
- Issue:
- 1 JOHN<sup>4</sup> BIRD, planter, m. Winifred Pipes, of Baton Rouge.
- Issue:
- 1 ANGELINA<sup>5</sup> BIRD, m. James L. Lobdell, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
  - 2 THOMAS<sup>4</sup> BIRD, m. Arthemisa Esnard.

Issue:

- 1 MAJ. ABRAHAM<sup>5</sup> BIRD, lost his life in Mobile Bay, 1861-5.
- 3 MARY<sup>4</sup> BIRD, m. Gilbert Dargre, of France.

Issue:

- 1 MARY<sup>5</sup> ELVE DARGRE, m. Henry Von Phul, of St. Louis, Missouri.
- 2 GILBERT<sup>5</sup> DARGRE, Jr., m. ———.
- 3 LUCY<sup>5</sup> DARGRE, m. Dr. Joseph Beard.

Issue:

- 1 DR. GEORGE<sup>6</sup> BEARD.

- V MARTHA<sup>3</sup> BOWIE, b. 1791; m. twice, 1st when sixteen, James Nugent, who was killed a few months later by being thrown from his horse against a tree while racing with his brother; 2d Alexander B. Sterrett, first settler of Shreveport, Louisiana. Was killed a few years afterwards while performing his duty as sheriff.

Issue:

- 1 MATILDA<sup>4</sup> STERRETT, m. ——— Gooch.

Issue:

- 1 JOHN<sup>5</sup> BOWIE GOOCH, m; left two sons.
- 2 EMMA<sup>4</sup> STERRETT, m. 1st ——— Austin, 2d ——— Ivy, of St. Louis.

Issue:

- 1 WILLIAM<sup>5</sup> AUSTIN.
- 2 REZETTA<sup>5</sup> AUSTIN, m. ——— Donley.
- 3 REZIN<sup>4</sup> BOWIE STERRETT, d. single.

- 4 VI REZIN<sup>3</sup> PLEASANT BOWIE, b. September 8, 1793; m. Margaret Neville.
- 5 VII JAMES<sup>3</sup> BOWIE, b. 1795; m. Urselita de Veramendi; d. 1836 at "Alamo."
- 6 VIII STEPHEN<sup>3</sup> BOWIE, b. 1797; m. ——— Compton; d. 1830.
- IX DAVID<sup>3</sup> BOWIE, drowned in the Mississippi at the age of seventeen.

### No. 3.

**John<sup>3</sup> Jones Bowie,** (REZIN<sup>2</sup> BOWIE. JAMES<sup>1</sup> BOWIE.) eldest son of Rezin Bowie and his wife, Elve Ap-Catesby (Jones) Bowie, was born near Savannah in 1785, and removed with his parents, first to Elliott Springs, Tennessee, then to Louisiana in 1800. He ac-



quired six hundred and forty acres of land in Rapides, and other tracts in Catahoula Parish. Later removed to Issaquena County, Mississippi. Was elected to the Legislature when living in Louisiana, and again when he removed to Mississippi. He finally bought a plantation in Chicot County, Arkansas, which he named "Bowie," and where he permanently settled. In 1806 he married Nancy Scroggins, who was born in Scotland, but came with her parents to this country when very young. She bore him five children, and died in 1816. In 1830 he married a widow, Mrs. Kirkland, who was born in 1798, and whose maiden name was Americus Watkins. She died May 18, 1891, at the age of ninety-three. By her first husband she had two children, viz: William Kirkland, who emigrated to South America, and Elizabeth Kirkland, who became the wife of James Bowie, Jr., son of Stephen Bowie. John J. Bowie died at his plantation, "Bowie," in Chicot County, Arkansas, in 1859, and is there buried.

Issue by Nancy Scroggins, his first wife:

- I MARY<sup>4</sup> BOWIE, b. 1808; m. 1826 to Richard Burnett, of Port Gibson; d. 1896, at Jackson, Texas. One daughter married — Burnett, of Jackson, Texas.
- II NANCY<sup>4</sup> BOWIE, b. 1810; m. — Sanford, of Arkansas.
- III HATTIE<sup>4</sup> BOWIE, b. 1812; m. — Hollingsworth.
- IV MATILDA<sup>4</sup> BOWIE, b. 1813, m. Rezin Homer, of Helena, Arkansas.
- 7 V REZIN<sup>4</sup> BOWIE, b. 1815; m. twice, 1st — Smith, 2d — Lattimore.

Issue of John Jones Bowie by his second wife, Americus Watkins:

- I JOHN<sup>4</sup> J. BOWIE, Jr., b. 1831; d. 1859, at Chicot County, Arkansas; single.
- II MARTHA<sup>4</sup> BOWIE, b. 1833; m. 1853, Zach Leatherman, of Vicksburg, Mississippi. He died in 1875, leaving

Issue:

- 1 JAMES<sup>5</sup> BOWIE LEATHERMAN, d. 1892.
- 2 LULU<sup>5</sup> LEATHERMAN, b. 1856; m. 1873, Samuel Nelson, of Vicksburg, who was a widower with a son and daughter.

Issue:

- 1 HOWARD<sup>6</sup> NELSON, of Vicksburg, Mississippi.

- III COL. JAMES<sup>4</sup> BOWIE, b. 1835. When twenty-one years old

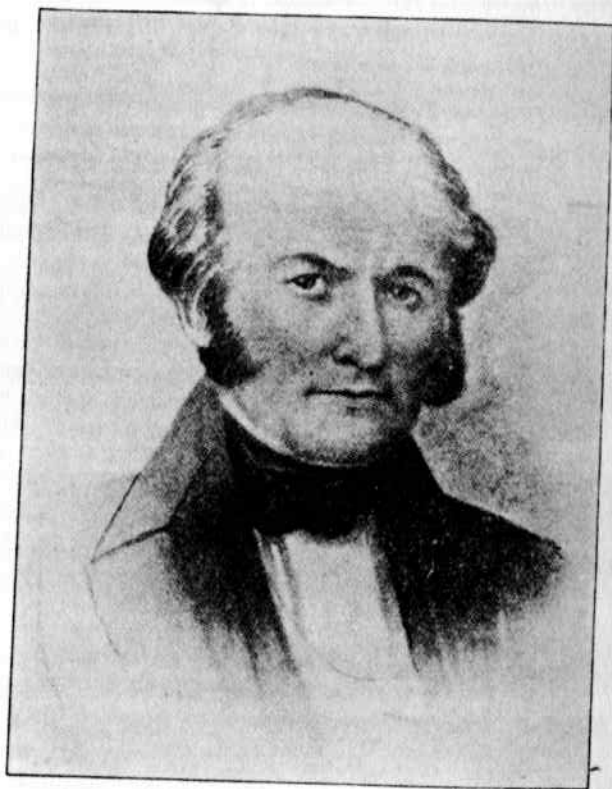
was elected sheriff of Chicot, the largest and wealthiest county in Arkansas. In 1861 was elected captain of a company of men which he raised, and entered the Confederate Army at Memphis under Forest, who attached him to his staff. Was badly wounded at the battle of Shiloh, and forced to return home. Later recovered, raised another company of men in Chicot County, and was assigned to General Price's command, and with it invaded Missouri. For gallant conduct on the field of battle was commissioned colonel. When near Jefferson City, Colonel Wright, his immediate commander, asked for an officer who would undertake the difficult and dangerous task of making a reconnoissance within the enemy's lines. Colonel Bowie volunteered, succeeded in successfully passing the pickets, and was returning, when fired upon from ambush. Both arms and shoulders were shattered, and his body pierced by fourteen balls. Though almost helpless, he did not fall from the saddle, but catching the reins in his teeth, galloped back to his command with the desired information. He died in great agony some hours later, and his body was sent to Arkansas and buried near his father. He was unmarried. Colonel Wright, the ranking officer who sent Colonel Bowie on his fatal errand, was a nephew of that Major Wright who fell in the famous Sandbar duel with Col. James Bowie, uncle of the subject of this sketch.

#### No. 4.

**Rezin<sup>3</sup> Pleasant Bowie,** (REZIN<sup>2</sup> BOWIE, Sr. JAMES<sup>1</sup> BOWIE.) third son of Rezin Bowie, Sr., and his wife, Elve Ap-Catesby Jones, was born at Elliott Springs, Tennessee, September 8, 1793, and removed with his parents to Louisiana in 1800. Was a successful cotton and sugar-planter, and jointly with his celebrated brother, Col. James Bowie, owned the magnificent "Arcadia" sugar plantation, whereon was erected the first steam plant for grinding cane in the State. This fine estate was afterwards sold by the brothers to Wilkins & Walker for

August 1861  
Just before Wilson Creek?

ninety thousand dollars. In 1821 Rezin P. Bowie lived in La Fourche Parish, and later in Avoyelle Parish, which he three times represented in the State Legislature. Although his father was a Presbyterian and his mother a Methodist, Rezin P. Bowie at an early age became a member of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1813 at



**Colonel Rezin Pleasant Bowie.**

Opelousas, Louisiana, he married Margaret Neville, daughter of Dionysius Neville, and lived for several years at Natchitoches. During the War of 1812-14 he entered the army and served as a private soldier in Col. Colman Martin's company, and took part in the Battle of New Orleans. That same year he was elected Colonel of

the Avoyelle Mounted Riflemen and was commissioned by Gov. Isaac Johnson. While in the Legislature he was distinguished for his eloquence and clear forcible reasoning. He held other public positions, and with his brother James was very active in his efforts to assist Texas in her revolt against Mexico. He participated in several desperate engagements with the Indians on the Texas border, and his intrepid bearing in the battle of Nacogdoches is especially described in Brown's History of Texas. Fond of hunting, it was he who designed that celebrated weapon known as the "bowie-knife." It was fashioned from an old file under his personal supervision by the plantation blacksmith, Jesse Cliffe, and was intended as a hunting instrument—not for war. He finally gave the knife to his brother James, when the latter was peculiarly exposed to assaults from certain personal enemies, telling him that "in the hands of a strong man, the knife was more effective than a pistol, as the latter sometimes missed fire, the knife never." Rezin P. Bowie was in many respects one of the most remarkable men who have borne the name. Calm, fearless, and talented, at an early age he rose to distinction among the men of intellect who emigrated to Louisiana, eager to make their fortunes in that promising new State. He is described by his contemporaries as possessing wonderful originality, genius and numerous accomplishments. A fluent linguist, he spoke both French and Spanish like a native. His polished manners, genial nature and social disposition won the admiration of all who knew him. Fond of adventure, careless of the present as indifferent of the future, ever quick to serve a friend and to defy a foe, as ready to fight as to forgive, he was *little* in nothing, and noble even in his faults. Always cool and courteous, he never sought a difficulty, but never quailed if a quarrel was thrust upon him. He liked politics and indulged his taste both in Louisiana and Texas. In private life, was a fond husband and father, a faithful friend. He is described as tall and

graceful. His portrait, now owned by his granddaughter, shows a thoughtful, determined face, with broad, massive forehead, firm chin and mouth. For a number of years his eyesight was bad, and his health became much broken from brooding over the death of his brother James, to whom he was devotedly attached. He seldom went out during the last year of his life, and died in New Orleans, January 18, 1841. His widow died in the same city August 26, 1876.

## Issue:

- I JOHN<sup>4</sup> BOWIE, b. 1814; d. in infancy.
- II MATILDA<sup>4</sup> ELEANOR BOWIE, b. August 15, 1817; m. April 18, 1841, Joseph Hickman Moore; d. at New Orleans, May 19, 1892. Mr. Moore was born at Milltown, on the Brandywine, Chester County, Pennsylvania, but removed to Louisiana in early life, where he became a wealthy sugar-planter. He died many years before his wife.

## Issue:

- I ELVE<sup>5</sup> ANNA BOWIE MOORE, b. 1842; m. Maj. Eugene Soniat du Forsat. He is a member of an old Creole family of New Orleans which claims descent through a long line of illustrious ancestors from the royal houses of both France and Spain. A son of Charlemagne, it is said, was the original progenitor of their line. The first one in America was an officer in the French Artillery. Major Soniat served with distinction in the Confederate Army, and his wife's occasional contributions to literature possess an easy fluency of style that at once attracts and interests the reader. They have lost five children, but have living one son:

- 1 JOSEPH<sup>6</sup> MOORE SONIAT DU FORSAT. A physician in New Orleans, and chief of clinic to Professor Reynaud, of the Chair of Materia, Tulane Medical College. He married, October 17, 1898, Ola Nelms, of Iberville Parish.

- 2 JOHN<sup>5</sup> SEYBORNE MOORE, b. 1846. Served in the Confederate Army. In 1865 married Elizabeth Bird, of St. Louis, Missouri. Settled in New Orleans, where he was a well-known cotton broker. Died October 23, 1896.

## Issue:

- 1 MATILDA<sup>6</sup> ELEANOR BOWIE MOORE.
- 2 JOHN<sup>6</sup> SEYBORNE MOORE, Jr.

- 3 JULIAN<sup>6</sup> F. X. MOORE.
- 4 MARIE<sup>6</sup> LAURETTA B. MOORE.
- 5 EUGENE<sup>6</sup> E. NEVILLE MOORE.
- 6 ROSE<sup>6</sup> GENEVIEVE MOORE.
- 7 GLADYS<sup>6</sup> C. K. MOORE.
- 8 GWENDOLIN<sup>6</sup> MOORE.
- 9 RITTA<sup>6</sup> ANTONETTE MOORE.
- 10 MURIEL<sup>6</sup> MOORE.

- 3 EDGAR<sup>5</sup> MAURICE MOORE, b. 1851; m. Julia Isabelle Eanes, of Mississippi. Settled near Austin, Texas, and was elected sheriff of his county. In his official capacity he had many desperate characters to contend with, and in November, 1887, was killed by a noted desperado. An article published in one of the local papers described him as "a man of inflexible determination, a dead-shot, and dauntless foe. In private life gentle and tender-hearted. Though five men have fallen by his hand, he never took a life in a private quarrel, and only when forced to do so in self-defense while in performance of his duty as an officer of the law."

## Issue:

- 1 MAURICE<sup>6</sup> BOWIE MOORE.
- 2 SARAH<sup>6</sup> MATILDA BARROWES MOORE.
- 3 PEARL<sup>6</sup> MOORE.
- 4 BESSIE<sup>6</sup> BIRD MOORE.
- 5 ELVE<sup>6</sup> ANNA BOWIE MOORE.

- III SEYBORNE<sup>4</sup> BOWIE, d. at the age of three.
- IV MARTHA<sup>4</sup> ANDREMELLA BOWIE, d. at the age of twenty-one.
- V ELVE<sup>4</sup> ANNA BOWIE, b. September 8, 1820; m. in June, 1841, John Taylor Moore, a first cousin of Joseph H. Moore, her sister's husband. Died in 1873 at their home, "Fairview," near Port Gibson.

## Issue:

- 1 EDWARD<sup>5</sup> BOWIE MOORE, m. Hattie Hunt; d. 1880.

## Issue:

- 1 ELVE<sup>6</sup> ANNA BOWIE MOORE.
- 2 JOHN<sup>5</sup> E. MOORE, d. in childhood.
- 3 ANGELAR<sup>5</sup> ELIZABETH MOORE, b. 1845; entered a convent; d. July 22, 1873, a few hours after her mother.
- 4 MARY<sup>5</sup> MARGARET MOORE, b. 1847; d. July 29, 1874; single.
- 5 JOHN<sup>5</sup> TAYLOR MOORE, Jr., b. 1849; m. Lulu Harrison; d. 1879.

## Issue:

- 1 JOHN<sup>6</sup> TAYLOR MOORE.
- 2 EFFIE<sup>6</sup> MOORE.



3 ELVE<sup>6</sup> MOORE.

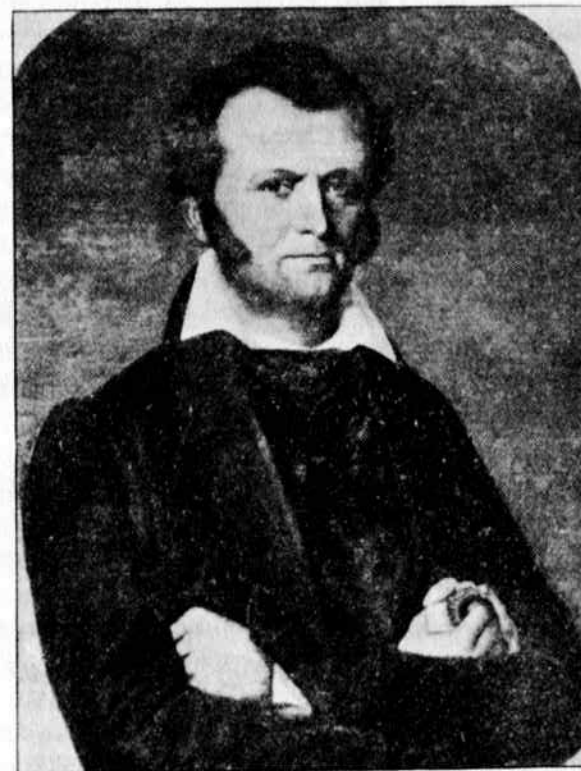
6 REZIN<sup>5</sup> BOWIE JOSEPH MOORE. Lives at Corsicana, Texas. Is married and has several children.

### No. 5.

**"Col." James<sup>3</sup> Bowie,** (REZIN<sup>2</sup> BOWIE, Sr. JAMES<sup>1</sup> BOWIE.) fourth son of Rezin Bowie, Sr., and his wife, Elve Ap-Catesby (Jones) Bowie, was born at Elliott Springs, Tennessee, in 1795, and while still a child removed with his parents to Louisiana. He was a sugar-planter, and together with his brother, Rezin P. Bowie, owned several very valuable estates in La Fourche and Rapides Parishes, and in the Opelousas District. On the "Arcadia" plantation the brothers introduced the first steam mill for grinding sugar cane ever used in the State, mules having been the motive power prior to that date. He left the active management of their lands to his brother, and took more interest in politics, especially in the trend of events in the neighboring Republic of Texas. Yet he was a very wealthy man for that era, and at the time of his marriage, when certain provisions were made for the bride, he stated his property to be worth about two hundred and ten thousand dollars. The Arcadia plantation sold for ninety thousand dollars, and in the will he made just before entering the Texan Army, much property was mentioned and handsome bequests were made to the son and daughter of his deceased brother Stephen.

April 22, 1831, at San Antonio de Bexar, James Bowie was married to Maria Ursulita, daughter of Don Juan Martin de Veramandi, Governor of Coahuila and Texas, and his wife, Don Maria Joseffa Navarro, both Castilians by birth and education. Mrs. Bowie is said to have been one of the most beautiful women of the South, and when on the street with her distinguished husband they were the "observed of all observers."

James Bowie is described as six feet tall, slight, but graceful and very muscular; gray or hazel eyes, and chestnut-brown curling hair. He wore short side whiskers and his face is said to have been singularly handsome. His portrait owned by his great nephew shows a strong, determined face, with traces of sorrow. In his right hand



**Colonel James Bowie.**

he grasps the hilt of a sword. So much has been said and written of this famous man that it is difficult to separate the false from the true in narrating his eventful career. In disposition he is represented as cool, determined and enterprising. Although not possessing the sparkling talents of his brother Rezin, he was however



endowed with much native eloquence. His oration at a dinner given in New Orleans to General Jackson, and a speech before the Council of State at San Antonio in 1835, are mentioned as most able and eloquent. But it was as a *soldier* that he shines forth in all his greatness. As colonel of Texas Rangers he gained a great reputation at the battle of San Saba, November 2, 1831. The Indian tribes which were then so powerful and so dangerous called him "Fighting Devil." His Texan followers, who idolized him, called him "the young lion." The battles with the Indians and Mexicans, at Nocogdoches, Conception, and "Grass Fight," in 1835, were occasions when James Bowie displayed his great military genius and intrepid courage. It is said that "to him the meaning of the word *fear* was absolutely unknown."

Most of his time was spent in Texas, whose independence he was constantly scheming to accomplish, and was therefore hated and dreaded by the Mexicans. Both in Texas and in Louisiana there were at that early period many desperate characters, and everyone went armed to the teeth. Titles to the new lands were constantly being disputed and many enmities were fostered. In his section of the country the duello was a recognized law of the social system; from that appeal there was no retreat; the man who flinched would have been publically branded as a dastard. It is not surprising that James Bowie, sensitive and proud, brave to recklessness, and when aroused, as fierce as the hunted tiger, should in such a community be frequently involved in desperate personal affrays. Though tolerant of opposing opinions, always courteous in bearing and polished in manners, he yet would not brook the presence of an enemy, and believed all difficulties should be settled promptly on the spot. An unyielding adversary he pursued unrelentingly, but was ever ready to forgive when properly approached. His power of will was remarkable, and in the presence of real danger the fiery impulse of his nature was instantly subdued into cool cau-

tion, though the flash of his bright eye and the compression of his thin lips told in a moment that he considered himself in the presence of an enemy. His name has been the synonym of personal bravery, and a hundred tales are told of alleged duels and quixotic encounters in which he is made to figure as a hero. Many of them are without foundation, though unhappily he was the principal actor in a number of bloody and desperate altercations. These fights were seldom if ever pre-arranged, but took place upon the accidental meeting of the belligerents.

The "Sandbar duel," as it was called, which took place on a little island in the Mississippi River opposite Natchez, September 19, 1827, has been more written of, perhaps, than any other of his numerous fights. Some of the writers alleging that more than a dozen men lost their lives in the affray. The following statement of that celebrated fight is based on a letter written two days after the duel by one of the participants, and an article in a Southern paper, published a short time after the occurrence. For many years a feud existed between two parties in the Parish of Rapides, on Red River. On one side was Col. James Bowie, Gen. Momfort Wells, Samuel Wells, General Cuney, Dr. Cuney, and McWhorter. On the other Dr. T. H. Maddox, of Charles County, Maryland; Maj. Morris Wright, of Baltimore; Col. Robert A. Crain, of Fauquier County, Virginia; Alfred and Edward Cary Blanchard, of Norfolk, Virginia (the latter the father of Senator N. C. Blanchard), and Dr. Denny, composed the leaders of the two parties. Their quarrels finally resulted in arrangements for the fight on the Sandbar, the principals, however, being Dr. Maddox and Samuel L. Wells, the others as witnesses, seconds, and surgeons. After two ineffectual exchanges of shots, Wells and Maddox shook hands, but Cuney stepped forward and said to Colonel Crain, "This is a good time to settle *our* difficulty;" Bowie and Wright also drew, and the firing became general. Crain killed Cuney and shot

Bowie through the hip. Bowie drew his knife and rushed upon Colonel Crain. The latter, clubbing his empty pistol, dealt such a terrific blow upon Bowie's head as to bring him to his knees and break the weapon. Before the latter could recover he was seized by Dr. Maddox, who held him down for some moments, but, collecting his strength, he hurled Maddox off just as Major Wright approached and fired at the wounded Bowie, who, steadying himself against a log, half buried in the sand, fired at Wright, the ball passing through the latter's body. Wright then drew a sword-cane, and, rushing upon Bowie, exclaimed, "damn you, you have killed me." Bowie met the attack, and, seizing his assailant, plunged his "bowie-knife" into his body, killing him instantly. At the same moment Edward Blanchard shot Bowie in the body, but had his arm shattered by a ball from Jefferson Wells.

This ended the fight, and Bowie was removed, as it was supposed, in a dying condition. Of the twelve men who took part in the affray, Wright and Cuney were killed, Bowie, Craine, and Blanchard badly wounded; the remaining seven men escaping any serious injury. Colonel Crain, himself wounded, brought water for his adversary, Colonel Bowie. The latter politely thanked him, but remarked that he did not think Crain had acted properly in firing upon him when he was exchanging shots with Maddox. In later years Bowie and Crain became reconciled, and, each having great respect for the other, remained friends until death. The knife used by Colonel Bowie was the one fashioned from a file by the plantation blacksmith and given to James by his brother, Rezin, as previously mentioned. This knife, it is asserted, was used by Col. James Bowie in *nineteen deadly encounters*. It finally was given by him to the actor, Forest. But the terrible reputation it had gained while in the hands of James Bowie gave it the name which is now applied to all weapons similarly fashioned. It is eight inches long,

broad, single-edged, and with a curved point. The "bowie-knife" is now known as one of the most effective arms of its kind manufactured, and takes precedence over the old dagger.

It is said that on one occasion James Bowie and a neighboring Spanish planter, descended of a haughty Castilian family, became involved in a difficulty and decided to fight it out with knife and dagger. Their left hands were tied together, and, as the Spaniard drew his arm back to strike, Bowie thrust forward and drove his awful knife through his antagonist's body; then coolly cutting the cords that held them, allowed the corpse of his adversary to sink to the ground.

Though he gained such a terrible reputation as a duelist, he is especially noted for his efforts to free Texas from her Mexican oppressors. His name is revered and honored to this day by the citizens of that great State, where a movement is now on foot to erect a monument commemorating his brave deeds and gallant death. The latter occurred in the Alamo, March 6, 1836. General Houston had directed Colonel Bowie to raise a company and cooperate with his advance against Santa Anna. In Houston's correspondence with Governor Brown he states he had selected Colonel Bowie for this important service on account of his great ability, perfect coolness in the presence of danger, and remarkable courage. The sudden appearance of the Mexican Army rather disarranged the plans of Houston, and Col. Bowie with a small body of rangers became separated from the main army and joined Colonel Travers (a North Carolinian by birth) at San Antonio. Upon the approach of the enemy, the Texans, comprising but 185 men all told, fortified themselves in an old mission known as "The Alamo," possessing strong stone walls, but otherwise unfit for a fortress. Here on February 26 they were besieged by Santa Anna with an army variously estimated as numbering between four and six thousand men. Bowie had been stricken down with

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typhoid fever, and a Mexican woman known as an experienced nurse was brought into the building to attend him before it had been surrounded. Santa Anna demanded Travers to surrender, but he defiantly refused and was supported by the other leaders, including Bowie and the noted Davy Crockett. For eight days the little band fought day and night, often hand to hand with their savage assailants. Travers seeing that the fort must shortly fall, called the men around him and told them of the probable fate which awaited them, but said *he* would remain and fight it out. He then drew a mark on the floor with his sword and requested all who wished to stand and fall with him to cross the line to his side—the others might endeavor to escape by cutting their way through the enemy under cover of darkness. Every man except one it is said stepped to the side of Travers, and Colonel Bowie, who was too weak to stand, had his cot taken up by two men and carried across the line. The old Mexican nurse who lived to be more than a hundred described the events which followed. She was known as Madam Candelaria, and for forty years was pensioned by the State of Texas, until she died in January, 1899. Colonel Bowie became weaker and weaker, finally delirious, and died about three o'clock on the morning of March 6, a few hours before the last assault was made by Santa Anna. Every man sold his life desperately. Crockett, with a cutlass, stood at bay with his back to the wall and cut down his assailants until shot. Not a single man was left alive. After the carnage was over and the heroes of this modern Thermopylæ had all been slain, their corpses were burned by the savage Santa Anna, who lost in the eight days fight against one hundred and eighty-five men, more than two thousand of his best troops.

"Remember the Alamo" became the war cry of the Texans, and Santa Anna, a short time afterwards, had his army annihilated and himself taken prisoner with that shout ringing in his ears.

Three years before the death of Colonel Bowie he lost his wife and two infant children by cholera. They were on a visit at the time to her father, and the latter also fell a victim to the scourge. Colonel Bowie did not again marry, and left no descendants to inherit his indomitable will and fearless spirit.

All cotemporaries of this noted man agree that notwithstanding his reputation as a duelist, he never provoked a quarrel in his life, but, on the contrary, prevented many. He was a man of singular modesty and sweetness of disposition, with a reverence for women and a fondness for children; ever ready to protect the weak; in fact, nothing at all of the desperado about him. He neither drank, swore or *gambled*, but possessed "that desperate courage which makes *one* a majority," and his name became a terror throughout the Southwest to that reckless class of law-breakers who infest a new country. He always dressed with good taste, and his extreme politeness and fascinating manners captivated those who knew him best. The perilous adventures of his early life heralded his name to the country coupled with exaggerated accounts of desperate deeds, and he was thus credited with many sanguinary acts entirely foreign to his really generous and heroic character.

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#### No. 6.

**Stephen<sup>3</sup> Bowie,** (REZIN<sup>2</sup> BOWIE, ST. JAMES<sup>1</sup> BOWIE.) youngest son of Rezin Bowie, Sr., and his wife, Elve Ap-Catesby (Jones) Bowie, was born at Elliott Springs, Tennessee, in 1797; removed with his parents to Louisiana in 1800, and finally settled in Issequeuna Parish, of which in after years he was elected sheriff. About 1823 he married Mary Compton, daughter of a



wealthy Red River cotton planter, and died about 1830. His widow only survived him two or three years, and their two children were reared by their grandfather Compton.

## Issue:

- I MARY<sup>4</sup> ANNE or MARION BOWIE, b. 1825; m. Charles Leckie.

## Issue:

- I SYDNEY<sup>5</sup> LECKIE, living at Alexandria, Rapides Parish, Louisiana.

- II JAMES<sup>4</sup> BOWIE, Jr., b. about 1828; m. Elizabeth Kirkland, the step-daughter of John Jones Bowie, his uncle. Was provided for in the will of his uncle, Col. James Bowie. A cotton-planter by occupation; he was accidentally drowned some six years after his marriage. His widow then resided with her brother, William Kirkland, in South America, and later became the wife of ——— Hamilton.

## Issue of Elizabeth and James Bowie, Jr.:

- I RICHARD<sup>5</sup> GEORGE BOWIE, d. in South America; single.

- MARY ANN (MOLLY)<sup>2</sup> MARY<sup>5</sup> BOWIE, m. Dr. Sanford Wood, of Princeton, Kentucky.

## Issue:

- 1 JAMES<sup>6</sup> BOWIE WOOD. M<sup>2</sup>: LINDA EVANS SIMPSON

- 2 ELIZABETH<sup>6</sup> WOOD.

- 3 MINNIE<sup>6</sup> WOOD.

4. EDMOND WOOD

5. SANFORD WOOD

## No. 7.

**Rezin<sup>4</sup> Bowie, Jr.,** (JOHN<sup>3</sup> JONES BOWIE. REZIN<sup>2</sup> BOWIE, Sr. JAMES<sup>1</sup> BOWIE.) eldest son of John Jones Bowie and his first wife, Nancy Scroggins, was born in Louisiana about 1815, and removed with his father to Chicot County, Arkansas. Was a cotton-planter near Helena. Was twice married; first to ——— Smith, of Kentucky, by whom he had no issue. His second wife was a widow, Mrs. Feriby, whose maiden name was Nancy Lattimore. He died at his plantation on Lake Providence, and his widow died at Helena, Arkansas, in 1864.

## Issue:

- I JOHN<sup>5</sup> JONES BOWIE, Jr. Engaged in the lumber business with his maternal uncle, ——— Lattimore, of Montecello, Arkansas, where he died single in 1887. He was the last of the male line descended from Rezin Bowie, Sr., who, with five sons, moved to Louisiana in 1800. The descendants of Rezin Bowie, Sr., who are now living, descend through the female lines, and he has, therefore, no posterity at the present time who bear the name of Bowie.

JAMES BOWIE WOOD

M<sup>2</sup>: LINDA EVANS SIMPSON

1. CLAUDE BOWIE WOOD b 1890
2. JAMES BOWIE WOOD b 1892
3. LUCILLE EVELYN WOOD b 1897
4. EDMUND BOWIE WOOD b 1910  
M<sup>2</sup>: HELEN FANN BENTON, Ky