



Cornville Historical Society

E-MAIL NEWS

P.O. Box 1200, Cornville, AZ 86325

CENTENNIAL COUNTDOWN EDITION

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The mission of the Cornville Historical Society is to gather, preserve and share information about the history of rural life within the Cornville postal area from 1860 to the present. This is the third in a series of "Centennial Countdown" articles leading to Arizona's 100th Birthday on February 14, 2012. The next article will be issued in September 2011. Have a great summer!

First White Woman in Cornville Nominated for Arizona Women's Heritage Trail

The Arizona Women's Heritage Trail is a project that links women's history and historic sites throughout the state. It will create curriculum, driving & walking trails, a website, maps & publications to encourage public awareness of women's presence and contributions to Arizona's history. The Cornville Historical Society has nominated its own pioneer, **Margaret Ann Martin Jackson Dumas**, for a place on the Heritage Trail.

Margaret Jackson was the first white woman to settle on lower Oak Creek. She is credited with naming House Mountain, a prominent volcano overlooking the Jackson Homestead, which was situated at the junction of Spring Creek and Lower Oak Creek (*now the Oak Creek Valley Residential Area*) in Cornville. After Captain Jackson's death, Margaret married David Dumas and became a loving mother to his teenage son. Mother Dumas was known far and wide for her hospitality. She and her husband welcomed everyone to their ranch homes, first at Lower Oak Creek and later at Crescent Moon, west of Sedona.

Margaret Ann Martin was born in Virginia on January 20, 1834. She married Andrew Jackson, nephew of General Stonewall Jackson, in December 1858; and they lived in West Virginia. In April 1861, Andrew Jackson joined the Confederate Army and was made Captain of Company B-19th Virginia Cavalry. Mrs. Jackson was ordered north in the fall of 1863. All of her possessions and property were confiscated and she was allowed to take only two saddlebags of clothing. She was carried on horseback, under a flag of truce through the Confederate lines to her previous home in Virginia.

At age 31, Margaret Jackson began her travels in wagon trains across country with Captain Jackson. They traveled for ten years, living in South Carolina, Texas, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Oregon and California, before coming to Arizona. After arriving in Prescott, January 1, 1876, Mr. Jackson made up his mind to move to Oak Creek in the Verde Valley. He settled on 160 acres at the junction of Spring Creek and Oak Creek. Living among the warring Apaches, Margaret saw many fierce outbreaks and raids. Captain Jackson was a stoic, carefree and dominating man. He traded and handled stock, traveling about the country for many miles, leaving his wife alone in their cabin on the creek. Mrs. Jackson tended the stock and did all the ranch chores alone. She related that many a time she saw and heard the yelling Indians ride by the place on the surrounding hills, but she was never molested and remained secluded in her small cabin. While living on lower Oak Creek, Mrs. Jackson is credited with naming House Mountain, an ancient Verde Valley volcano that she could see from her cabin. Apparently there was a tall spire at the top of the "house" that looked like a chimney, but it has since collapsed.

Captain Jackson received a patent to his homestead in 1891. After he died in 1892, Margaret managed her place on Oak Creek by herself, always welcoming weary travelers who came to and from Jerome or

Sedona. The 160-acre homestead included the "U" of Oak Creek, which now forms the southern boundary of the Oak Creek Valley Residential Area. The Jackson home was on the south side of the creek.

In 1895, Mrs. Jackson married David E. Dumas; and they became known throughout the valley for their sincere welcome and warm hospitality, which they extended to everyone. Never was a person refused a meal or bed at the Dumas Ranch. The hosts often would retire alone at night and awaken the next morning with a house full of hungry people, ready to eat hot biscuits, bacon and eggs with good strong coffee. Mother Dumas would never allow a single biscuit to be thrown out after a meal. She always said "*Someone will come along before morning and just might need a bite to eat*".

When David's sixteen year old son, Mack Oliver, came from Texas to live, Margaret welcomed him as her own. She was known as Mother Dumas throughout the valley. The Dumas family hosted large campfire gatherings of neighbors or travelers with David playing the fiddle and telling stories and Margaret leading the dancing. Margaret also raised hogs and grapes with the help of their son.



David & Margaret Dumas (2nd & 3rd from left) with homesteader Sexton B. (Boss) Acker, (right) during a visit to Apache Maid Ranch (circa 1900) -- Photo Courtesy of John Acker

In 1905, the family sold their ranch on Lower Oak Creek and moved to their "upper ranch", now the Crescent Moon recreation site, on the Coconino National Forest. There she lived until she passed away January 24, 1925 at the age of 91 and was buried beside Captain Jackson in Middle Verde Cemetery.

Margaret was a pioneer wife, mother and friend who set a strong example of work ethic and hospitality during the earliest stages of settlement in the Verde Valley. She endured the Civil War and long westward journeys by wagon trains, before establishing a home and living a long life. Her adventurous spirit, strengths, and personality qualify her for designation as a strong woman of the west. Margaret Jackson was truly "a remarkable woman of the early west" who had a lasting impact on the Verde Valley.

Sources: Dumas, Lenore, "*A Remarkable Woman of the Early West*", *Those Early Days: Pioneer History of Sedona and Vicinity* (p. 208-211), Sedona Westerners, 2008 (reprint); and "*Daily Diaries of David Dumas*" transcribed and on file at Sedona Heritage Museum.