

George T. & Sarah Cherokee McGehee

Grandson of Thomas Baytop McGehee



George T. McGehee, adopted daughter Clara Bell Vest, and wife Sarah Cherokee Woods

This portrait may have been from a book called *McGehee Descendants*. George T. McGehee was the son of John Gilmer McGehee, who arrived in Texas in 1835, and the grandson of our 3rd Great Grandfather, Thomas Baytop McGehee. Sarah Cherokee Woods was the daughter of Dr. Colonel Peter Woods, a famous "1" military leader during the days of the Republic of Texas. Dr. Woods was also the great-grandfather of Janice Woods Windle, who wrote the fact-based novel *True Women*, which also was made into a movie.

Both Sarah and George were born in Bastrop County, Texas, she on May 9 1849, he on February 5 1836. They married on May 12 1872. The couple apparently had no children, but did adopt the girl pictured above.. George died in September of 1926 and Sarah January of 1929. Both are interred in the cemetery at San Marcos, Texas.

Although George was not a direct ancestor (he was first cousin three times removed to Lawrence Snow and his cousins), he is worthy of note in that he figured in *True Women* - the book, not the movie. Following the Civil War, the Union Army occupied Texas, including the town of Sequin, where lived Georgia Lawshe Woods, Cherokee's mother. A Captain Haller was the commanding officer of the occupying force there, and he bullied the family constantly in an effort to be permitted to "have his way" with Cherokee. Finally, the family and George, who was courting Cherokee, ambushed and killed Captain Haller and buried his body in the woods.

(Researched and written by Larry Snow 2001)

George Thomas McGehee: A brief history

Much of this history is derived from articles of Tula Townsend Wyatt.

Among the early settlers and prominent citizens of San Marcos was George Thomas McGehee, born February 5, 1836 in Bastrop, Texas, to Thomas Gilmer McGehee (1810-1890) and Minerva Hunt McGehee (1813-1877). The family came to Texas from Huntsville, Alabama in 1834, and to San Marcos in December, 1846, settling at the confluence of the San Marcos and Blanco Rivers on the Thomas Gilmer McGehee headright grant from the Mexican Government in 1835.

McGehee helped his parents put the first large farm in this area into cultivation. At the age of sixteen in 1852, he became a scout for Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, to furnish buffalo meat or a surveying crew building a route for the Southern Pacific Railroad. After this and other adventures, he enlisted in 1862 in the Confederate Army in Company D. 38th Cavalry Terry's Rangers. He was wounded at Farmersville, Tennessee and again at Aiken, South Carolina. He was discharged in 1865.

He married on May 12, 1872. Sarah Cherokee Woods (1849-1928), a daughter of Dr. Peter C. Woods (1820-1898) and Georgia Lawshe Woods (1831-1872). Sarah was born in Water Valley, Mississippi. In 1850, the Woods family came to Texas and settled along the Blanco River on the old Austin Road.

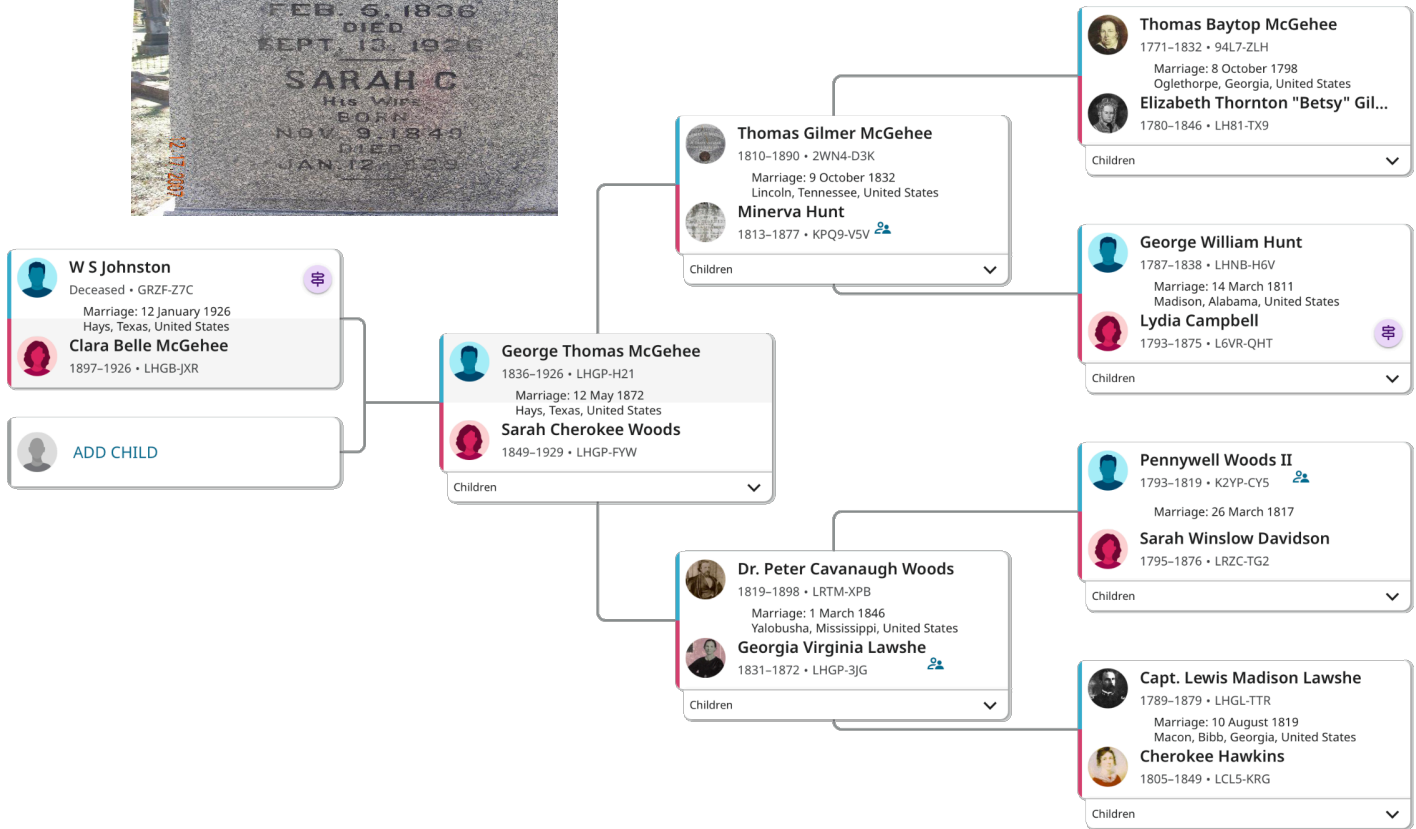
McGehee was active politically. He was a delegate to many State Democratic Conventions. In 1887 he was elected to the State Legislature serving three times. He was especially active in legislation to improve the conditions of the eleemosynary institutions and made a reputation as one who favored reforms. He was active locally and helped to organize the San Marcos Oil Mill in 1894, the Glovers National Bank in 1886, and a contributor to the San Marcos Fire Department and the Cemetery Association.

McGehee invented a Stump Pulling Machine. In perfecting this machine he spent much money and experienced great difficulty in getting a mechanism of sufficient strength to endure the great strain to which it had to be subjected. McGehee was granted a patent bearing No. 971,129 for Improvements on Stump and Root Pullers on December 27, 1910.

In January, 1910, he bought from J.G. Wilder a thousand acres of very fine farm land lying seven miles west of Sinton in San Patricio County, which was over grown very thickly with oak, huisache and mesquite timber. He moved his equipment to this land which he cleared. He contracted and cleared thousands of acres throughout the area of Texas for many years.

Mr. and Mrs. McGehee were active members of the First Methodist Church. They drove their surrey to church long after automobiles came into use. Finally he bought a car and drove it the last time on September 13, 1926, the day before he died at his home at the age of 90 years after driving from his Sinton, Texas farm and ranch. Mrs. McGehee ran a well organized home and was active in the community and her church work. She was a charter member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy when it was organized in 1897, at which time she was elected Vice-President. She continued her interest until the time of her death on January 11, 1929, in the house which had been her home for many years among many large oaks, shrubs and plants she grew. Her violets and plumbago vines are still growing in their rock bordered beds.

Mr. and Mrs. McGehee were survived by an adopted daughter (Clara Belle Vest) the late Mrs. William S. Johnston of Lake Charles, Louisiana.



From [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) (2025)

Additional Information and Reference:

1. George Thomas and Sarah Cherokee (Woods) McGehee home at 727 Belvin St, San Marcos, TX. ([Map link](#))
2. San Marcos Record, Thursday, Jan 22, 1976 - Article on the McGehee home and its designation as a historical Landmark ([Link](#))
3. Burial Marker - [findagrave.com](https://www.findagrave.com) ([Link](#))
4. [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) ([Link](#))

¹ Texians were white American immigrants to Mexican Texas and, later, citizens of the Republic of Texas. Today, the term is used to identify early Anglo settlers of Texas, especially those who supported the Texas Revolution. Earlier version was Texicans, later Texans.