

The Legend of Bill Longley: v.0.3

This undated letter was written in her own hand by Berta Longley Standefer (Mrs S). 309 W 5, Clifton Texas.

Berta was the daughter of Bill Longley's brother, James Stockton Longley. Hence she was Bill's niece. She was born in 1897 therefore never met Bill. The letter is not dated. She died in 1977 aged almost 90.

The story was that Bill Longley really was not hanged in Giddings on October 11, 1878, but a hidden harness around his body saved him. His family and/or friends spirited him off and the coffin contained either rocks or a dead hog. Many years later his body was exhumed and DNA tests confirmed the body was indeed that of Longley. So, the stories, such as the one below, were not true. Perhaps these stories were to help make his mother feel better. She could believe that he was out in the world somewhere and that someday they would see each other again.

I suppose Berta could not have known for sure if Bill Longley was indeed hanged. It was not until his body was exhumed around 1998 and identified through DNA testing was the truth known. The people witnessing the hanging must have known the truth though.

Here are the contents on the envelope: Berta seems to use a _ instead of a regular period to end a sentence.

Bill Longley was born near Giddings, Texas went to public schools. Then when Grampa Longley moved to Bell County near Belton, Uncle Bill went to Solado College. He was a gifted violinist. It was said that he brought the stars right down from the skies playing violin.

He went to South America after the mock hanging & married. Got to be really well to do. Drowned on the Titanic. He and his young wife. He tried to persuade her to get on a life boat & on to a waiting ship _ but she would not leave him. Some of the Longleys have letters he wrote after he was supposed to have been hanged. I don't have any of his letters. I'd have one but it was stolen from my purse. Had letters in an oil packet. Mrs S.

Note: The 1st word in the 2nd last sentence: I am not sure what Berta wrote there so I guessed at I'd. I am interested in any other opinions. rboys@earthlink.net

