James E. Purkerson was born March 1, 1841 in South Carolina to two native South Carolinians. Purkerson told the 1910 census taker he was a Confederate veteran.

He was married twice. His second wife, Zaney A., was born in Alabama to an Alabamian father and a Georgian mother. She was born February 3, 1849 and died July 28, 1935. They were married about 1887, probably in Alabama. They had only two children, Lawrence P. Purkerson and Mamie F. Purkerson, both of whom were born in Alabama and both of whom came to live with them near Bedford.

In 1895 Purkerson was living in present-day Bedford along the north side of State Highway 183, about where Murphy Drive intersects it today. He died July 5, 1920. He and his wife are buried in Bedford Cemetery.

Mrs. Purkerson’s death certificate says she died at 6 p.m. on July 29, 1935 at her home at 332 Grace Street in Fort Worth. She died of pulmonary edema and senile debility. Her death certificate says she was born May 3, 1850, and her maiden name was Freeman. The informant was Mrs. C. H. Hackney of the Grace Street address in Fort Worth.