

**THURSDAY**

September 7, 1989  
San Antonio, Texas

**FINAL ★**

25¢

# Express-News

San Antonio's quality newspaper—largest circulation in South Texas



PHOTO BY DENNIS DUNLEAVY

William Hall (left) and daughters Tara, 9, and Lona, 7, enjoy a family reunion.

## Detective's work reunites girls, dad

By **ADOLFO PESQUERA**  
Express-News Staff Writer

Two young girls who were whisked out of Houston by their maternal grandmother in violation of a Houston court order six weeks ago have been found in San Antonio.

A private detective's investigation led to the sisters being reunited Wednesday night with their father. The grandmother has been jailed on a charge of interfering with child custody.

Miller, who claims to operate the only organization that conducts physical searches for missing children, said his career as an investigator began less than two years ago when he realized no organizations went after missing children.

"I felt there was a need. (The children) deserved better than they were getting. They can be found, if people will look for them," Miller said.

The girls, Lona Hall, 9, and Tara Hall, 7, were for the most part confined to their grandmother's apartment, living with false names and kept in fear, said Mark Miller, the Houston private investigator who tracked them down. They were only allowed to leave the apartment to attend a private church school.

"I'm glad I don't have to hide anymore," Tara told the Express-News Wednesday night at the Hilton Palacio del Rio, where she and her sister were reunited with their father, William Hall.

### Told to use alias

Tara, who was told by her grandmother to use the alias, Cindy, when in public, said her only contact with the outside world was through the private church school where she and her sister had been enrolled.

After keeping the grandmother's apartment under surveillance Wednesday, Miller called Bexar County sheriff's deputies.

The deputies arrested the woman on a Travis County warrant, which charged her with interference with child custody, Bexar County Jail records show.

Geraldine Isaac, 55, was being held Wednesday night in Bexar County Jail in lieu of a \$25,000 bond.

Hall praised Miller and his associate, Elizabeth Whittington, who worked on his case. Both have a non-profit business known as the American Association for Lost Children.

"They all ask for money and none of them do anything," Hall said of other missing-children organizations. "They just print some fliers and put your child on a milk carton."

Hall said his ordeal began three years ago when the maternal grandparents were awarded custody of the girls after a bitter divorce.

He said he kept trying to regain custody, but his efforts became more urgent when the grandparents began hiding the girls from him last December.

In July, based on evidence that the girls were being abused, a Houston district court judge gave custody to Hall, he said.

However, rather than release the girls, the grandmother disappeared, Hall said.

"Before (Hall) called us, they were in North Carolina," Miller said. "But they disappeared from there and a long search began as Miller and his associate began tracing the woman's whereabouts through bank records and Social Security numbers."

### Took three days

"I found out about (Miller) through a newspaper article," that related another recovered child, Hall said. "I contacted him last week and they found (the girls) in a total of about three days."

Miller said he tracked the girls to a North San Antonio apartment complex and confirmed their identities through a neighbor.

"She said the woman was too secretive, that the girls had to be down in the back seat when entering the apartment complex to avoid being seen."

"She said they weren't allowed to play with the other kids and on one occasion, when being introduced by one name, (one girl) said, 'That's not our name.' That clinched it for me," Miller said.

**American Association For Lost Children**  
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