

Amonett Family Newsletter
Volume #1 Chapter #10
May 10, 1991-by Glen Amonett*

Just feed the stock a little early today, so you can get off to join the family for a day of visiting, and the banquet that we have at noon when all these good cooks get together. You should just turn the calves out with the milk cows today and let them enjoy a banquet too.

Before we get into reminiscing about the days that used to be, let's pause to remember a dear old uncle who won't be with us this year.

George Earl Whitaker

Born August 12, 1903 in Indian Territory near Comanche, Oklahoma. Married Earline Amonett on August 20, 1932. They have three children; Charles, Nan, and Jan, and ten grandchildren and twenty-one great-grandchildren.
Earl died October 19, 1990 at Quitaque, Texas.

We measure the length of our stay on this old planet by birthdays. I was just noticing the interesting dates that are beside the names of people I knew well. Some of us in the younger generation have interesting dates with our names also, and the numbers of birthdays require a good education just to count that high. Some birthdays of the preceding generation that relate to us are John Alvis Amonett, born March first of 1873. Almira Octavia Amonett was born February first of 1877. This couple was married December 27, 1894. They started a family pretty soon, and Uncle Floyd was born Oct. 9, 1895. The second youngster, Aunt Pearl, was born on June 3, 1897. The third youngster, Leo, was born November 30, 1899. These three were born in Tennessee. After relocating to Comanche County, Texas, seven more youngsters were added to the family. The fourth was Aunt Myrta, born Feb 27, 1902, then Willis on March 10, 1904, and Posy on April 5, 1907. Aunt Cordie arrived March 7, 1910. Earline came along on October 8, 1913. A couple of boys were next; Clyde on January 25, 1916 and Thayne (also known as Red or Shorty) on December 29, 1919.

I'd say that couple was a good match to produce that many good citizens.

You can understand why the American Frontier moved across the continent so fast. Large families were customary, and each new family needed a place of their own.

As Granddad's family kept growing, the older kids went out on their own. Floyd, the oldest, served a hitch in the U.S. Army during World War I, but the

other boys were too young. Floyd worked on the ranch of Will Pettit south of Gustine. Leo also worked on the Pettit ranch, which was across the county from the family farm. Possibly the boys got those jobs because their Uncle Bruce Irwin and Aunt Hattie lived next to the ranch. Uncle Bruce was a brother-in-law of Will Pettit, and Grandma's younger brother.

Next to Uncle Bruce's farm was the farm of Willis Rollins and Ellen. Ellen was a daughter of Uncle Bill and Aunt Polly (Irwin) Young, Grandma's older sister. Uncle Bill Young was a grocery man in Gustine.

Will Pettit's Dad had been an early settler in that area and established the ranch. Will Pettit had continued to expand the ranch and often leased land to farmers in the area. A lifelong friendship continued after Leo left the ranch. When we returned to that area to visit kinfolks, we would also visit Will Pettit and Maggie as long as they lived.

Floyd, Pearl and Leo matured and married in Comanche County. Floyd married Marjorie Crockett from the Baggett community near Gustine. They were married about 11:30 in the morning in her parent's home on January 29, 1925. After visiting local relatives Uncle Bruce Irwin, Uncle Billy Patton, and Uncle Scott Irwin they went to the Hamlin area where his Dad had already moved. Floyd acquired a house over in a pasture about a mile from his Dad. Floyd farmed with his Dad until the crop was "laid by" in September, then he and Aunt Mart moved to Electra, Texas where he spent his career in oil refinery work.

Leo also married at Gustine. He and Audrey Kee were married August 26, 1922, in a double wedding while seated in a buggy in front of a blacksmith shop. His friend Troy Pettit and Lida ___ was the other couple married at that time. The preacher was a part time blacksmith, and they found him at work across the street east of the Methodist church in Gustine. Marriage ceremonies weren't fancy in those days but they seemed to last a lifetime.

None of us pass this way alone, as some philosopher has said. Other families have become friends and kinfolks to the Amonetts as they years have rolled by. During the time Granddad's family was growing up in Comanche County a nearby family was the Starks who lived on the next farm. The Starks were early settlers in that area, and the older members of the family are buried in the cemetery at Proctor. The Starks were good neighbors. They became almost kin. Fletcher Stark was one of the kids about Posey's age. Fletcher's mother was a Jayne's and sister to Aunt Vesta who married Uncle Scott Irwin. (Grandma's brother), in 1904. Another of Aunt Vesta's sisters married R.D. Cox, a long time family friend who settled in the Farmer community near Petersburg and was a neighbor to Posy and Jessie, after so many of the Folks moved to this area.

When they lived in Comanche, Fletcher and Posy played together and worked together, although Posy was a little older. The Starks had nine kids, but two died while young. Posy's job was to gather the eggs, but he sometimes saved back a few to trade for a sack of Bull Durham smoking tobacco at the Bibb grocery store. The Bibb Grocery supplied the family grocery needs. One time when Grandma needed some flour, Granddad just walked across the fields - about two miles - to the store and carried the 50 pound sack of flour home on his shoulder.

The babies were all breast fed in those days. One time there was a problem with the milk supply. Grandma just didn't have any milk for Clyde, her youngest at that time. Mrs. Stark was nursing a baby girl about the same age as Clyde. The milk problem was solved by Mrs. Stark keeping Clyde a few days and nursing both babies. Clyde was carried to the Starks by Posy, who was ten or eleven years old then, Clyde had a terrific voice as a baby, and he was really sounding off when Posy brought him over.

The bread and butter crop at that time was peanuts. It involved lots of hand labor. The land was tilled and planted with one row horse-drawn equipment. When the peanuts were mature, a plow turned the vines upside down and left the peanuts on the surface. (Peanuts are a root crop.) The family youngsters would go down the row, shaking the soil off the vines so the peanuts would dry. After shocking and drying came the harvest, which was a community activity. When the threshing machine was at a farm the neighbors came over with their wagons to haul the peanuts to the thrasher. When one farmer's crop was finished, the machine would move to the next farm and the neighbors and their wagons went along, until the threshing season was over. Both the men and the women would go to the farm where the threshing was going on because a threshing crew eats heartily. The women worked together at the house, while the men working together in the field. The peanuts ended up sacked and sewed by hand in the field, and the hay from the peanut vines was baled.

The farm Granddad originally bought was a quarter section of some of the best land in the county. After a few years he bought an additional eighty acres. That was a large farm in the days of small equipment and hand labor.

Depressions have broke many farmers. The depression of the early 20's was severe. John Amonett and Robert Stark headed west for greener pastures. A report from the Hamlin area was good, and they knew Alec Joiner, a farmer who had relocated out there. Much of the crop was still in the field when the Amonetts and Starks moved to Hamlin. John Amonett's second son Leo had just got married, and he would stay and complete the harvest and apply the proceeds on the farming debt. Leo would then stay in Comanche County and farm with his Father-In-Law, Jeff Kee, near Gustine. Leo and Audrey were there three years before he took his

family to Hamlin to re-join the Amonett clan. By that time he had two sons, the youngest only a month old. (Me).

Robert Stark and John Amonett chartered two railroad cars for their move to Hamlin. On one R.R. car they placed their household goods and their farming equipment. On the other R.R. car they loaded their livestock, except for their horses and mules. These animals travel will. They were hitched to the wagons or trailed behind them. Each man had a covered wagon, and Fletcher drove a buggy. Other family members rode the train. At that time Sipe Springs was an oil town. It was a bustling city of several thousand people and a railroad. That's where the Amonett's and Starks loaded their farm equipment and livestock for the trip to Hamlin.

The trip with the wagons and teams required five days and four nights on the road. It was winter time and some of the nights were cold. The wagons were lightly loaded and made good time. Mostly they carried feed for the horses and bedding for the men. The last day on the road was a long one. They wanted to reach Alec Joiner's place, and it was late at night when they got there. Joiner had been helpful in locating the farms they were moving to. The new farms belonged to Dr. Pardue, in Hamlin. He bought a lot of land, and later oil was found on much of it. The Stark farm was only a short distance from the one rented by John Amonett, and they were located about seven miles west of Hamlin and three miles north of Royston, where the kids went to school. Willis and Posy didn't really like the new school. They joined the farm work force with Granddad, even though they were not yet out of grade school. Aunt Pearl was more impressed with education, and she had become a school teacher at Nineveh, a community between Sipe Springs and DeLeon. The Hamlin farm produced good crops. Kinfolks from Comanche County came out to Fisher County to help with the harvest. Even though the land produced abundantly there was hardly a market for the crops. Huge well-filled heads of maize were often used for winter fuel.

There was a canyon in the pasture where water had carved out a space the size of a large room. John Amonett diverted the water and cut some long cottonwood poles to cover the top, and installed shop equipment. John Amonett had many talents. As a youngster several years later I remember his anvil, bellows, vise, and blacksmithing tools that he had carried on to Motley County.

After three or four years, John Amonett moved on to Motley County to a new and larger farm that had been bought by Dr. Pardue. The Starks moved to the Snyder area.

In the fall of 1928, Elmo and Fletcher Stark came to Cone in Northern Crosby County to help kinfolks gather the crops. The stark family then moved to this area. They rented one railroad car for the move from Snyder to Ralls for moving their farm equipment, and made their first crop in this area in 1929. Fletcher farmed

until the fall of 1936. He tired of the perennial farm debt and had a sale of his farming equipment. With the proceeds he paid off the bank and bought a second hand model A Ford with a single axle trailer. He and Georgia and the two kids went to the Louisiana oil fields.

Fletcher came back though, as others of us have. He ran a country store, and then he bought a butane business which he operated for years. Another war or two came and went, and by that time we were into the sixties. Fletcher Stark sold his butane business and was elected sheriff of Crosby County.

The job of Sheriff is dangerous, but someone has to maintain order. During the sixties three sheriffs in the adjoining counties of Crosby, Dickens and King Counties were shot in the line of duty. Fletcher, who was sheriff of Crosby County, recovered but there still seems to be some damage to his health.

The sheriff of Dickens County, whose first name was Jimmy, recovered a pick-up for me that had been taken off down there. Jimmy was shot also one time and he recovered. I'm not familiar with the details.

Paul Vinson, who was sheriff of King County, didn't have a chance. He was killed by a kid with a big game rifle while picking up a disorderly drunk. Paul was distantly related. His mother was a cousin to my wife's dad. Many of you went to school with Paul at White Star rural school in the thirties. Most of us recognize the importance of the sheriff, and we appreciate the work that they do. Not many people have the talent and ability for that job. Besides the danger involved in the work, much skill is needed in handling people and situations.

We'll be looking for you the second Sunday in June at the Reunion, 5012-50th St. in Lubbock.

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*I'd like to recognize the help of Dorothy Thames and Fletcher Stark with this letter.