

The Amonett Family Newsletter  
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By: Glen Amonett  
And Dorothy Thames

Martelia (West) Irwin  
Married May 31, 1867 to J.H. Irwin  
Overton Co. Tennessee

Martelia (West) Irwin- Sept. 8, 1844 to Dec. 27, 1927  
Sons and Daughters of Martelia and John Hardin Irwin:

1. Sarah Jane (Aunt Sallie) Irwin, born 21 April 1868 in Overton Co. Tenn.
2. Martha Electa (Mattie) Irwin, born 21 April 1868 in Overton Co. Tenn.
3. Polly Ann Irwin, born 18 April 1870 in Tenn.
4. William Thomas Irwin, born 10 July 1872 in Tenn.
5. Nancy Elizabeth Irwin, born 9 Oct. 1874 in Tenn.
6. Almira Octavia Irwin, born 1 Feb. 1877 in Tenn.
7. John Bruce Irwin, born 1 Feb. 1879 in Tenn.
8. Scott Ryan Irwin, born 13 May 1881 in Tenn.
9. Lexie Lee Irwin, born 7 April 1884 in Pickett Co. Tenn.
10. Elmer Easton Irwin, born 6 June 1886 in Pickett Co. Tenn.
11. Bob Taylor (AKA Robert Lee), born 23 August 1888 in Pickett Co. Tenn.

Martelia West grew up in Northern Tennessee and matured between the war with Mexico (1846-1848) and the War Between the States, known as the Civil War. (1861-1865). Early family members lived in Pickett, White and Overton Counties.

Martelia married a confederate Soldier, Barton M. Matheny who was killed by Union troops in 1862. He had been fifteen years older than his young bride, who was widowed at the age of eighteen years. Barton was the son of Samuel Matheny who lost six sons and a daughter during the war.

Martelia remained a widow during the remaining war years. When she was 23 she married another former Confederate soldier, John Hardin Irwin, age 34. They married May 31, 1867 in the home of the bride's parents, the Stephen West's Jr's. To this couple was born eleven children over the following twenty years. They raised their family in Northern Tennessee. John H. Irwin was born November 27, 1833 and passed away April 29, 1905.

Some time after her husbands passing, Martelia moved to Comanche County Texas. Several of her grown children had located there. For a number of years she made her home with a daughter, Octivia, known as Tiva, who was Mrs. John Amonett. The harsh economic times for farmers caused many farmers to re-locate.

When the John Amonett's loaded their wagons and headed west on October 10, 1923, Martelia was seventy nine years old, and she remained in Comanche County, where she had five other mature children. She passed away at Gustine, Comanche County, Texas on December 27, 1927.

John Hardin Irwin, husband of Martelia (West) Irwin, was born and spent his life in Tennessee, except for Military Service. Most Tennesseans served with the Confederacy. His birth date was November 27, 1833.

Our history of the Irwins in America goes back to Richard Irwin and Ella Henderson who were betrothed in Scotland and married on their arrival in New York. They settled in Pennsylvania. That was during the Revolutionary War when the United States was fighting to gain independence from Britain. Some Americans were loyal to Britain. They were known as Tories. The Tories pillaged the property of the Irwins, and they moved to Rockingham County Virginia.

The Acts of the Tories ceased after the United States gained independence from Britain. The Irwins moved again, to Jackson County Tennessee. About 1804 they located in White County Tennessee where they stayed. Ellen (Henderson) Irwin lived there to the age of ninety-six.

They raised seven children:

1. and 2. David and John were sent to Kentucky when mature with the family assets - \$13,000 - to buy land. The report was that the Indians killed them. The money disappeared.
3. James married Elizabeth Roberts and moved to Texas. A second marriage was to a Mrs. Flineham or Clineham.
4. Margaret married a Sullivan and moved to Ohio, one son Jerry became a lawyer in the Dallas area of Texas.
5. Elizabeth married a Brady. Edward Brady in April 11, 1791 in White County, Tennessee and raised a large family.
6. Alexander married Jane Taylor in Virginia about 1799 and later returned to White County.
7. William married Margaret Taylor.

We have some interesting data from the arrivals in this country that we need to get better organized. We'll plan on putting that in another letter. A good starting place for today will be with Martelia (West) Irwin.

Martelia West was born September 8, 1844 to Stephen West Jr. and Eliza Brown in Tennessee. She had four sisters and a brother.

1. Caroline (West) Somers

2. Nancy West (unmarried)
3. Lucinda West (retarded)
4. Almira (namesake for Martelia's sixth child)
5. one brother, name not on record

Martelia's first husband, Barton M. Matheny, was killed in the Civil War. He was the father of Sythia B., who died July 21, 1888.

Martelia's second husband, John Hardin Irwin, also a former Confederate Soldier, was the father of their eleven children. (J.H. Irwin had a sister, Elizabeth Buckley.)

1. Sarah Jane (Aunt Sallie) came to Texas and married Billy Patton, a widower. Billy Patton's daughter Hattie married Uncle Bruce and another daughter married Will Pettit, a well known rancher. Billy Patton was elected road commissioner several terms. His son Tom was later Commissioner, and grandson, also named Billy, was elected several times in the 70's and 80's. Commissioners are county managers and have many other responsibilities. Aunt Sallie became a widow. Her next husband was Uncle Billy Stovall. Most of us remember him because in that time a mustache was rare. Uncle Billy had a mustache, and it was white when I remember him from the thirties. They lived on the north edge of Gustine, next door to the Church of Christ, which didn't have a building when I was a kid. In a time when wine was frowned upon, it was reported that Aunt Sallie could make the best. However, we visited there each trip to Comanche and I never saw any. She died November 25, 1956.
2. Martha Electa Irwin, also born April 21 1868 was a twin to Aunt Sallie. She stayed in Tennessee. She married a James Knight on August 24, 1897 and died June 6, 1947.
3. Polly Ann(Irwin) Young, born April 18, 1870, was the first of the Irwin girls to be married on September 28, 1890 in Tennessee, before they came to Texas. Her husband, William H. Young, known as Uncle Bill, was a grocery man in Gustine Texas. They had one daughter Ellen Young who married Willis Rollins. The Willis Rollin's had one son Carl. Aunt Polly died on November 30, 1939.
4. William Thomas Irwin, born July 10, 1872, remained in Tennessee. He married Maggie Hart on September 25, 1898. We don't have much information in this case. He died May 24, 1948.
5. Nancy Elizabeth Irwin was born October 9, 1874 in Overton County Tennessee. Married Oct 22, 1893 to Isaac S. Garrett of Jamestown, Tenn. Their six children were:

1. Stephen Douglas Garrett (8/31/1894 to 5/23/1960) married 6/29/1917.
2. William Thomas Garrett (8/6/1896 to 11/11/1946) married 11/11/1928.
3. John Irwin Garrett (5/19/1998 to 2/7/1949) married 12/25/1920.
4. Walter Marion Garrett (8/23/1902 to 2/6/1970) married 10/20/1948.
5. Delma E. Garrett (10/31/1913 to ?) married 12/9/1933.
6. Ellen S. Garrett (2/15/1916 to ?) married 1/18/1936.

Births were in Pickett and Fentress Counties of Tennessee.

6. Almira Octavia (Irwin) Amonett was born February 1, 1877. She married December 24, 1894 when she was sixteen to John Alvis Amonett. He was 21. He is listed as a school teacher in Moodyville, Tennessee in 1889 when he would have been seventeen. They came to Texas with three children, shortly before the fourth was born. Seven children were born in Comanche County Texas:

- A. William Floyd Amonett was born Oct. 9, 1895 in Tenn., and married Marjorie Crockett Jan. 29, 1925. He was a refinery worker at Electra. The Crocketts came by train from Smith Country and settled in the Baggett Community of Comanche County. Their two sons are:

- Troy Bruce, born Nov. 17, 1927.
- Walter Crindon, born Sept. 17, 1934. (I'll list the younger generations next year.)

- B. Ida Pearl (Amonett) West, born in Tennessee on June 3, 1897, and taught school before she married Clarence King West on April 23, 1963. Their four children are:

- Dorothy Kay (West) Shaw, born Aug. 26, 1923.
- John Thomas West, born Feb 3, 1925.
- Donnie Laudane (West) Carr, born Nov. 24, 1926.
- Nelda Bess (West) Loyd, born Oct. 29, 1928.

- C. Leo Amonett, born in Tennessee near Byrdstown on Nov. 30, 1899 and married Audrey S. Kee on August 26, 1922. Both were involved in farming almost all their lives. Two sons:

- Derwood Leo Amonett, born July 24, 1923.

- Glenith Berlyn Amonett (Glen), born Dec. 12, 1925.
- D. Myrta Delphia (Amonett) Welch, who arrived after they came to Texas, was born Feb. 27, 1902 and married Marvin Welch in 1922. He was in the car business about 50 years and traded in horses and mules early in his career. Their three children:
- Gloria Novelle (Welch) Wolf, born December 4, 1923.
  - Delphia Ladelle (Welch) Opitz, born Sept. 1925.
  - Marrin Gerald Welch, born Apr. 30, 1927.
- E. Willis Hardin Amonett, born March 10, 1904, and married Alta Mullins December 18, 1928. Willis was a lifetime farmer, mostly in the Haskell area. Willis later married Eunice Pannell on December 7, 1946. Her birth date is February 24, 1907. Willis was named for his Granddad and perhaps his middle name for his Granddad on his mother's side. Three children:
- Dorothy Lane (Amonett) Strickland, born Feb 1, 1929.
  - Roy Alton Amonett, born Nov. 17, 1930.
  - Eldon Ray Amonett, born Feb 11, 1933.
- F. Posy Odell Amonett, born April 5, 1907, and married Jessie Mae Mullins December 17, 1927. Posy was a farmer and co-op director, mostly in the Farmer community of Crosby County, TX, but also in earlier days in Motley and Haskell. He loved to play baseball.
- Wanda Fay (Amonett) Campbell, born Sept. 24, 1930.
  - Marjorie Ann (Amonett) Reynolds, born July 17, 1935.
  - Billy Jo (Amonett) Hughes, born July 16, 1937.
  - Clifford Gaylon Amonett, born April 1, 1945.
- G. Cordie Mattie (Amonett) Stephens, born March 7, 1910, and married Bud (F.F.) Stephens December 15, 1928. Bud was a pretty good mechanic and also drove the school bus in the 30's and farmed. Six children:
- Paula Deloyce (Stephens) Eubanks, born Sept. 9, 1929.
  - Farrel Duane Stephens, born August 1, 1931.
  - Bobby Jo (Stephens) Claunch, born February 8, 1935.
  - Harold Cloyd Stephens, born March 9, 1937.
  - Doyce Elwyn Stephens, born March 14, 1942.

- Glenna Latricia (Stephens) Powell, born Nov. 18, 1945.
- H. Blanche Earline (Amonett) Whitaker, born on October 10, 1913 and now the senior living member of our group. She and Earl were farmers near Flomot most of their lives.
- Charles Glen Whitaker, born Feb. 7, 1935.
  - Myra Nan (Whitaker) Brown, born May 12, 1937.
  - Jan Amonett Whitaker, born Dec. 12, 1950.
- I. Clyde Freeman Amonett, born January 25, 1916 and married Juanita Amick December 5, 1940. They started farming but mostly were in the oilfields, chiefly around Lamesa, Texas. Four children:
- Ronald Robert Amonett, born Sep. 15, 1941.
  - Jerri Lynn (Amonett) (Price) Williams, born November 22, 1945.
  - Di Ann (Amonett) Napper, born Jan. 28, 1947.
  - John Alvis Amonett, born July 30, 1948.
- J. Deward Thayne (Red) Amonett, born December 29, 1919 in Comanche County and married Maxine Johnson of Crowell after he was coaching there. Best known as a football player in college (and high school) he coached for many years, and then was in school administration. Two:
- Randall Amonett, born April 22, 1954, dentist.
  - Robin (Amonett) Greene, born January 20, 1961.

We intend to bring this family tree up to date next year, and include the very youngest. I reckon that's going to put some of us "over-the-hill", but we can then have an accurate head count.

This is a good place to mention that the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries lately have included:

- Deloyce and Oran Eubanks.
- Dorothy Lane and Ira Strickland.
- J.B. and Dorothy Thames.

We regret that Earline will be unable to attend the party this year. A new granddaughter in Nacogdoches belongs to Carl and Sharon Amonett. (Glen's granddaughter).

7. John Bruce Irwin, seventh child of Martelia West and John Hardin Irwin was born February 1, 1879 in Tennessee. After coming to Texas he married Hattie Patton on December 26, 1909. He was a farmer. They had no children

but the children of Will Pettit on a nearby ranch were nieces and nephews. He built a beautiful rock home on his farm in 1935, but he passed away on May 12, 1937.

8. Scott Ryan Irwin was born on May 13, 1881 and also came to Texas. He married Vestia Jaynes of the Bibb community on July 12, 1904, in the home of his sister and brother in-law, the John and Tiva Amonett's. Six Children:
  - Willie Ann (Irwin) Leslie was born March 6, 1906 and married Judd (Judson) Leslie December 12, 1925. He was a farmer and in the building trades. Yvonne (Leslie) Morrow born March 11, 1927; Dorothy Virginia (Leslie) Thames born December 12, 1928.
  - Audrey (Irwin) Leslie, born July 16, 1908 and married Jim Leslie July 24, 1926. Seven children: Wanda - died at age 12; Carol (Leslie) Young; Gerald Leslie married Chloye Fulfur from Matador; Kay Leslie Kemp married Richard Kemp; Anneta Gail Leslie married Gene Martin; Sharon (Leslie) married Charles Conway; Gloria Nan Leslie died at age two.
  - Odessa (Irwin) Norton, born June 30, 1912 married Ralph Norton in 1934; He was a friend to young folks and played the guitar. Duane Norton; Dan Norton; Pat Norton; Judy (Norton) Barber died in 1997.
  - Truman Irwin, born January 26, 1918 and married Wanda Blagg in 1939? He was a carpenter in Lubbock. In later years he moved to the Fort Worth area. Four children: Ann (Irwin) Westbrook; Linda Irwin; a boy and girl were younger.
  - Laverne (Irwin) Johnson, born April 1, 1925 married Walter Lee Johnson January 7, 1945. He was a lumber yard manager at Post, Tx. Two children: Gayle Joyce Johnson; Walter Lee, Jr.
  - Sonny Irwin died in boating accident.
9. Lexie Lee Irwin, - ninth child, born April 7, 1884 and died May 4, 1904.
10. Elmer Easton Irwin, born June 6, 1886 and died October 21, 1889.
11. Bob Taylor (A.K.A Robert Lee) Irwin, born August 23, 1888 in Tennessee. He was Martelia's sixth offspring to come to Texas. He married Lena Pinnell June 1, 1913. Two children:
  - Voyle (Irwin) Sparkman born December 30, 1914 and married August 19, 1939.
  - Fern Ray Irwin, born November 21, 1926 and married Robbie Dell Howell June 21, 1952. Brownwood, Tx. was his main residence. Voyle was the

first person I had ever met who could paint. It was 1933 and the painting was a sailing ship.

Enclosed is the History of the Scotch and Irish people. I hope you find it interesting.

### *History of the Scotch and Irish People*

We can trace the Irwins farther back than their move to the United States. The name of the Irwins was spelled several ways. Three other popular versions are Ervin, Irving, and Irvin. A few centuries ago the schooling of early generations was limited, and they often did their spelling just by sound. A variety of ways to spell the name occurred.

One early location of "Irvines" was at Drum, Scotland. Also a clan of "Irving's" was at Bonshaw, Scotland. These settlements at one time were from the same family.

In the old days when Scotland and Ireland were thinly settled, some clans moved around more. We can trace the Irwin family to both Ireland and Scotland.

Would you like to go back even farther into Scotch and Irish history? Can you imagine a thinly populated Europe that had only settlements here and there?

In 2,000 B.C. the Phoenicians from the eastern Mediterranean had a number of settlements around that enclosed sea. They were a sea-faring people and traders. They were the first sailors to travel at night, by using the North Star as a guide. Eventually they came around the Spanish peninsula and established a few settlements in the British Isles-which includes Ireland, Scotland, and England. The Islands were mostly primeval forests then. A few Phoenician settlements didn't shape the course of history. They were only a page in the book of immigrating people, when open spaces were the normal situation. The time was 2,000 years B.C.

The most dominant influence in Irish and Scottish history was the Celts. They were tribal wanderers but they came to stay. They were a fair skinned red haired people who moved across Europe when it was just a hunting ground. The Celts were from east of the Caspian Sea, and came in pre-Christian times. They settled Galatia, to whom the apostle Paul later addressed one of the books of the Bible. Their many skills were unique in that day and time. They could smelt iron and make armaments, and possessed such agricultural skills, such as curing meat and keeping bees. They could make barrels, a valuable skill in a developing society. They had a religious outlook, including a belief in immortality. The Celts dominated Europe for centuries, and population increased.

The growing population developed into states and organized armies. The Romans grew strong in Italy. Carthage became a power in North Africa. The



developing states of Greece became a rival and the Greeks and Persians often clashed.

An expanding Teutonic population grew strong in Germany, and put a few settlements across the channel in Scotland, where they eventually merged with the native people.

The Romans conquered Britain in 55 BC and ruled there for four centuries. They changed England but had little effect of Ireland or Scotland. The Romans withdrew from Britain in 401 A.D. because of crumbling internal politics at home and military reverses in conflicts with the Goths, a Germanic people. When the Romans withdrew in 401 A.D. they left little change except the Christian influence which had spread throughout the Roman Empire.

The Angles, Saxons, and Jutes on the continent were feeling the growing power of the Teutonic people, later known as Germans, and they moved into England soon after the Romans moved out.

There was a minimum on international activity for several hundred years. This period is known as the Dark Ages, from 500 to 1000 AD.

The Vikings from Scandinavia livened things up somewhat from the eighth to tenth centuries A.D. Their main objective was raiding cities to the south and hauling off any valuables they could find. They were good ship builders, sailors, and navigators. A Viking settlement was maintained in Britain in a couple of places for over-wintering of their raiding parties. The settlements were eventually absorbed by the British people.

The conquest of Britain in 1066 by William the Conqueror brought the French influence, but after 200 years the British influence dominated. Again there was little change for Ireland and Scotland.

The discovery of America in 1492 by Columbus made the British Isles an important shoving off place for the ships making the two month crossing. Supplying ships for the journey brought prosperity to many of the fine English ports.

Scotland's many border wars with England ceased when Scotland became part of Britain in the 1707 treaty. Marriage between ruling families was a factor in smoothing political tension, but the Scotch retained their strong individuality. The geography of Scotland and Ireland had much to do with their independent spirit, and the people didn't like change. In isolated hamlets of the back country there is still spoken a version of Gaelic, the language of hundreds of years ago.

The next major influence of Ireland and Scotland was economic. There are more Irishmen in America than in Ireland. Let's look at the reasons for the changes that the Irish made willingly that were greater than invading armies could produce. International trade was developing. A growing number of ships were plying

international waters. For hundreds of years the spinning of cloth was a family affair. The countries with a surplus of cloth found a ready market. The Scotch were wool producers with extensive grazing lands. The Irish were not far behind. It was a cabin and hoe existence with family spinning until the Industrial Revolution, when manufacturing found a faster way to produce goods for commerce. Until 1600 the weaving was a family business, then textile production moved to mills with machinery to speed the process and they located along rivers for water supply, power and shipping facilities.

Towns grew up around textile centers. People who worked in the mills brought their farm animals with them, and often kept them in their living quarters at night and the youngsters grazed them in the country during the day. There were no zoning regulations at the time. Working hours were long and pay was low. Huge numbers of people were unable to compete with the machine age, and the mining of deeper coal became possible. Improved quality of metals made machinery even more efficient. The industrial age was on and England was the leader, and developed shipping to match her commerce. Skilled craftsmen moved to England. The war between the Catholics and Protestants on the continent caused many tradesmen to migrate to England. Overcrowded cities developed. There wasn't much money in the hands of the people and they paid for their needs by indentured service. That was exchanging a period of work for something they wanted. Passage aboard ship was often paid this way and known as indentured service. That's how many people arranged to come to America.

America welcomed immigrants. There was adequate land and escape from the crowded cities of Europe where famine was frequent. When there was crop failure, the people starved. Immigration caused by famine has been around since Bible times. Jacob's sons went from Canaan to Egypt to buy grain. Ruth and Naomi traveled to a distant land and returned after a famine. In more recent times, famine caused immigration to our shores. A potato blight in Ireland in 1845 and 1846 caused hundreds of thousands of Irish to migrate. The potato had been introduced to Europe about 1500 from South America. It was a huge success. The potato did so well in Ireland that it was known as the Irish Potato. Ireland was overpopulated and the potato enabled the population to increase even more. When the potato blight hit in 1845 the only alternative was immigrate or starve.

Other famines affected European immigration and American growth. A crop failure in Russia in 1891 caused the starvation of millions and some immigration to America. In Persia, in 1870 a fourth of their people starved. That was 1,500,000 people. India has had many famines. In 1877 they lost 500,000 people by starvation. In 1865 it was 1,500,000 that starved, and back in 1769 more than 3,000,000. China has had similar famines but less documented. In the middle ages some European cities drove the poor and destitute outside the city to starve during a

famine. In 1125 the population of Germany was reduced by half because of a severe famine.

Our ancestors left Europe before the famine, caused by the potato blight, but possibly the Industrial Revolution (1750- 1850) might have influenced them.

At any rate, I'm glad they came this way. I'm proud to be an American. Our party is June 8<sup>th</sup>. You All Come.

-Glen