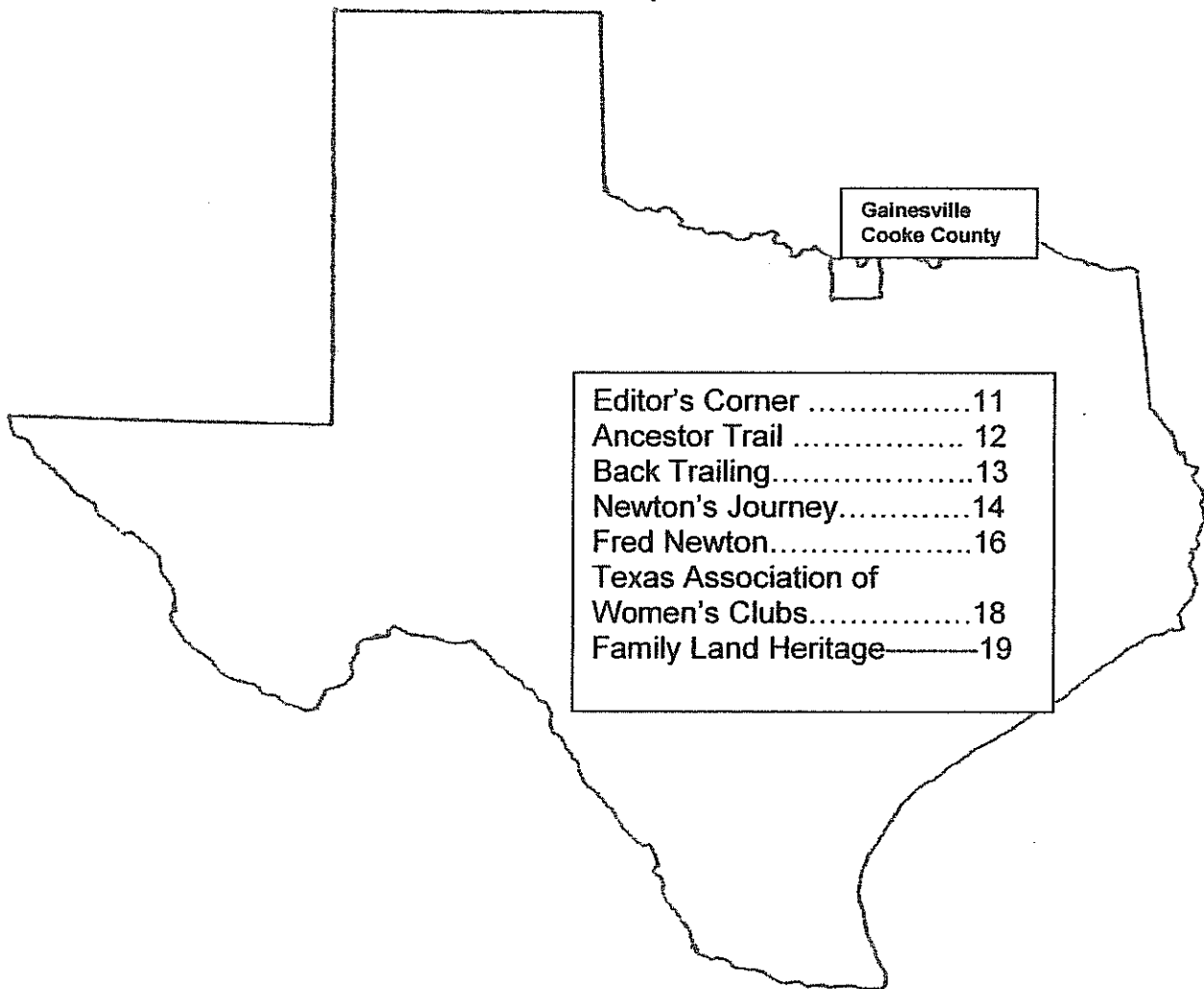


CROSS TIMBERS POST

Editor: Dick Sparkman



Cooke County Website: www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txcooke/

March 2011

CROSS TIMBERS GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF COOKE COUNTY TEXAS

Cross Timbers Genealogical Society was organized in 1977 to provide a forum for those interested in genealogical research and preserving records for the future generations.

Funds raised by the CTGS are used to research, preserve and publish records relating to Cooke County family histories. As a service to other researchers, CTGS has published several books which are for sale.

For more or additional information, please contact any of the officers listed here:

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The Cross Timbers Post is published four times a year: March, June September and December. Subscription is by membership in the Society. Annual membership dues are \$15.00 yearly per household. Memberships run from June 1st to May 30th the next year. All correspondence and material relative to the Cross Timbers Post should be directed to: The Editor, P.O. Box 197, Gainesville, Texas 76241-0197.

Note: The Editor of the Cross Timber Post will not be responsible for the accuracy of material printed herein since no proof is required.

EDITORS' CORNER

A number of our members let other people read our newsletter (this is great). So we would like to let everyone know that CTGS has the following books for sale. This price includes shipping and handling.

- Collection of Obits 1950-1988 pages 172 \$26.75
- Fairview Cemetery— pages 191 \$20.00
- Good Times Edition—pages 27 \$10.25
- Probate Records 1848—1940 pages 70 \$19.00
- Resthaven Cemetery pages 27 \$9.00
- Ye Gainesville Towne 1850-1927 pages 121 \$16.50
- Cooke County Marriages
- Vol. I 1849-1858 pages 10 \$6.75
- Vol. II 1858-1872 pages 48 \$15.25
- Vol. IIA 1872-1877 pages 48 \$15.25
- Vol. III 1877-1882 pages 78 \$22.50
- Know Your County Pages 64 \$19.00
- Early History of Cooke County Pages 103 \$23.50

These are non-member prices with shipping.

Should you need a complete description of these books, contact the Editor or the Treasurer.

Meeting Schedules

Our 2011 scheduled meeting dates are:
Jan N/M, Feb 7th, Mar 7th, April 4th, May 2nd
June 6th, July N/M, Aug 1st, Sept 6th, Oct 3rd,
Nov 7th, Dec Party

Go ahead and mark your calendar now so as not to miss a single one of our great meetings. Our meetings will meet in the Morton Museum, 210 South Dixon, Gainesville, Texas At 6:00 P. M. (go thru the front door on Dixon)

Good Hunting

Dick Sparkman

Following the Ancestor Trail:

This page covers research material and research locations in Cooke County.

MUENSTER LIBRARY,
418 No. Elm, Muenster, TX
[.http://www.muensterlibrary.com](http://www.muensterlibrary.com)

COOKE COUNTY LIBRARY
200 South Weaver St., Gainesville, Texas
<http://cookecountylibrary.org>

COOKE COUNTY-COUNTY CLERK
100 South Dixon, Gainesville, Texas
(courthouse)
*Death, Birth, Marriage records available.
*You can look up most records yourself.
Copies are \$1.00 per pages
<http://www.co.cooke.tx.us/ips/cms/countyoffice>
[s/](#)

MORTON MUSEUM of COOKE COUNTY
210 South Dixon, Gainesville, Texas
E-mail: mortonmuseum@att.net

**NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COLLEGE
LIBRARY—1525 W. California St., Gainesville**

http://www.nctc.edu/NCTC_Library/library

LATTER DAY SAINT CHURCH
Family History Center
1703 West California St., Gainesville, Texas
Hours: Tues. 9:00 am to -1:00 pm; Wed 7:00
P.M.to-8:30 p.m.

Church's in Gainesville with Libraries and Archives:

First Christian Church
401 No. Dixon 940-665-2053
Started May 10, 1874 Open Dailey
Web site: firstchristiangainesville.com

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
415 E. California St. 940-665-4705
Started August 6, 1885 Open 9 A.M. to
12 Noon Only Look-up's

First United Methodist Church
214 So. Dixon 940-665-3926
Started 1852
Web site: fumcgainesville.com

First Presbyterian Church
401 So. Dixon 940-665-5153
Started 1878 Archives
Web site: firstpresbyteriangainesville.com

St. Mary's Catholic Church
825 No. Weaver 940-665-5395
Started 1879
Web site: <http://stmaryscatholic.com/>

First Baptist Church
308 E. Broadway 940-665-4347
Started in 1871 Open
Web Site: fbegville.com

BACK TRAILING

90 years ago

The famous Johnnies Jolly Jazz Orchestra of Fort Worth will play for the dance to be given at K.C. hall Thursday night, March 10; by Prof. G. B. Rucker who is conducting a dancing school in this is city. This orchestra is one of the very best in the United States and these boys can make you jazz. Brings your friends!

Mrs. Minnie Copeland entertained Fed. 23 at her home on Depot street. Those present were: Mesdames J. W. Carey, C. I. Price, Hite Culwell, Bert T. Suddath, Lee McWilliams, Eason, Scarbrough, Hambright and Kennedy.

Valley View Items Of Interest in Gainesville: Several cares of chicken pox are reported among the school children.

The improvement club is doing quite a lot of work on the city park which will add much to its beauty.

W. W. Pitts has sold the telephone exchange to R. E. Solomon of Hebron, who has taken charge of the business.

Arrangements have been made to supply the public with water for stock, especially the stock of travelers passing through the town.

Arch Flint of Fort Worth has purchased the interest of Levy Leach in the Valley View Drug Co.

A row of shade trees has been planted on the West side of the public school.

MARKETS

Hens	per lb	18c
Turkeys	per lb	30c
Springs	per lb	25c
Ducks	per lb	15c
Geese	per lb	10c
Eggs	per dozen	20c
Butter	per lb	10c
Cream	per lb	38c

50 years ago

4-H Members Give Program

Cooke County 4-H Club members made appearances before two Gainesville civic clubs this week in observance of National 4-H Club Week

Members of the Kiwanis Club saw Sue Dillard and Mary Ann Harrell of Sivells Bend present their dairy foods demonstration Tuesday. Also appearing before the Kiwanis Club were Ricky Endres and Thomas Swirczynski.

Thursday, Jimmy Alexander and Larry Lewter presented a farm management demonstration for the Noon Optimist Club. They are members of the Era Community 4-H Club. Mary Ellen Endres presented a dairy foods demonstration at the Optimist Club meeting also.

FAVORITE TV SHOWS

Tuesday——Gary Moore

Wednesday——Perry Como

Thursday——The Untouchables

Friday——The Flintstones

Saturday——Gunsmoke

Sunday——Ed Sullivan

Monday——Andy Griffith

New lights for Leeper Stadium. An unidentified workman is pictured high a top one of the lofty poles at Leeper Stadium. He was busy Tuesday battling a stiff north wind and at the same time replacing old lights at the local high school stadium. The wind had just lifted his tin hat and sent it sailing to the ground. Ten Lights will be placed on each pole at the stadium and visibility will be much improved for the 1961 Leopard football games.

Newton's Journey Research leads to unexpected results

By Kathy Floyd
Editor, *Lindsay Newsletter*

When Norman Newton of Valley View volunteered to work with members of the Cross Timbers Genealogical Society and the TexasGenWeb site to develop a history of all the communities in Cooke County, he thought researching Era would be short and sweet.

After all, everyone knows that the town of Era is named for little Era Hargrove (sometimes spelled Hargroves), who died in 1880 when she was 5 years old. The story goes that when the early settlers were wondering what to name the town in 1878, little Era "tugged at her daddy's trouser leg and upon getting his attention asked, 'Why not name the post office for me?'" And according to Era's Centennial book, the settlement then became Era.

But after Era's death in 1880, her parents Allen and Mary sold their land and moved off to places unknown. Era's grave had to be relocated as the town grew, and was placed in the plot of one of the town's founders, J.N. Gist.

Newton thought that would be that or that he might be able to track down where Era's parents moved in their grief. But rarely are things as simple as they seem. Newton found Era's parents, and he found that losing a child was not the only grief that the Hargrove family faced. And he found out who is really buried in little Era's grave.

The journey took him to South Texas, the Panhandle and put him in contact with people as far away as Michigan.

"The more I dug, the more I learned," Newton said. "And when you start a journey you have to finish it." Newton's journey began in February. He just recently presented his findings to the Cross Timbers group.

Newton has been the coordinator for Cooke County's page of the TxGenWeb Project Web site for more than two years now, when the Cross Timbers group took it over. On the TxGenWeb site, each county has its own page where research is posted, and where the curious can post questions about the past.

Era's history is not Newton's only project — he has more waiting to be written up. He has researched one of Cooke County's judges from the past and the writings of one of Valley View's founders, Capt. L.W. Lee.

He is thankful for Lee's writings, because he wrote of his life before Valley View, giving many details about the way of life in the mid-1800s. But he did not

write much about Valley View, because he was in the process of settling the town.

"He wrote of his past, but Valley View was the current for him so we don't have as much information about Valley View's early days as we would like," Newton said.

Newton's research has taught him that every family has a story.

"Some may think their own story is dull, but everyone does have a story," Newton said. "The struggles and the hardships of Era's family were surprising to me. They thought they were simple, dull people, but the story is interesting, and full of heartbreak and survival."

Era's story was not typical genealogical research, beginning with a person and working back through the ancestors. It was beginning with Allen and Mary Hargrove 150 years ago and working forward.

"It's an important history that needs to be recorded," Newton said. "All the history we can get recorded the better. We have a rich history here. Cooke County is a fascinating place."

One history Newton has not yet recorded is his own, mainly because he is too close to the story and sentimental about his family. But he knows that for his own kids and grandchildren it is a journey he will have to take.

Newton began his journey looking for signs of Era's parents, Allen and Mary Hargrove, after they left Cooke County. He researched census records going back to the early 1800s and found Era's grandparents and parents.

Era's father, Allen Houston Hargrove, was born March 22, 1837, in Lawrence County, Ala. By researching the census records, Newton could trace where the family moved.

Allen Hargrove(s) is listed with his parents, James and Rebecca, and his six brothers and one sister. James Hargrove(s) was a blacksmith. Allen did as most young men did at that time — he enlisted in the Confederate Army in the Civil War. Around 1861, young Allen was transferred to the Texas Calvary. After the war ended and Allen had served his time after the surrender, he went to be with his family, who had settled in the Titus County area of East Texas.

Era's mother Mary was born Aug. 4, 1844, in Tallapoosa County, Ala. Her father was a merchant. They moved to Titus County, Texas, when Mary was about 17 years old. Somewhere Mary and Allen met, and they were married Oct. 31, 1865.

Allen and Mary lived in Mount Pleasant in 1870, where the census shows they had a 3-year-old daughter, Ida. Allen was 32 and Mary, 24. The Hargrove family came to Cooke County around 1872. Cooke County birth records show Era Lee Hargrove was born in 1874 and her brother John was born April 3, 1876.

The 1880 Cooke County census is where things got interesting for Newton. The census shows Allen as a farmer, with wife Mary as "keeping house." Their children were 5-year-old Era and John, 4 years old. Ida is not listed. Newton said that the transcriber also listed Era as "Eva." The Hargrove family left Cooke County in January 1881.

But it was the 1900 census that really raised Newton's eyebrows. He found the Hargrove's in Wise County, where Allen is now 63 and Mary is 55. Newton expected to read that Mary had three children, with one still living (John). What he found was that Mary had three children, with two still living.

"That answer certainly got my attention," Newton said.

After searching the Wise County 1900 census further, he found Era Wright, 25, with her own family and a boarder, 24-year-old John Hargrove. Newton knew then that he had found Era Hargrove; grown up and married with two children of her own — and a long-standing Cooke County legend had been shaken.

Era and James Wright were married Jan. 20, 1894, in Crafton, a community south of Bowie in Wise County. In 1900, their children were Hugh, 6 years old, and daughter Garland, 2 years old. James Wright's parents lived five houses away. Wright was a merchant.

The Hargrove family had already experienced loss when Ida died, and in 1900 Allen Hargrove, Era's father, died suddenly. Newton said that family records show he might have been drinking, fallen off a wagon and run over. He is buried in the Crafton Cemetery.

Newton said that the Wrights moved from Crafton in 1903, maybe because of James' merchant trade, and Crafton was a dying town. Its post office closed in 1917. In 1907, the Wrights moved to Amarillo, and Era's mother Mary and brother John joined them. By this time, Era had another son, David Nelson Wright. Newton found that in Amarillo, Mary applied for Confederate Widow's pension because John had served in the Confederate Army.

By the 1910 census, James and Era's family had grown to five, with daughters

Opal and Gertrude Lillian. Mary Hargrove is listed as living with the family. The Wrights had another child in 1911, six in all. The census showed that John Hargrove lived next door to the Wrights, and had married a woman named Bertha. They had no children.

The group, James, Era and children, mother Mary, brother John and his wife, and Wright's parents, sister and her husband, left the Panhandle and moved to the Corpus Christi area in 1911.

More mystery surfaced when Newton found that Mary Hargrove and her son John died on the same day. He found the answer in a 1919 newspaper article, which told of a letter from Era to her aunt Angie Cranford in East Texas "telling of the awful storm and the loss of her mother, Mrs. Mary Hargrove..." According to the letter, John Hargrove and his wife were missing, along with Mrs. Wright's "husband and his father and mother."

Newton did find that Era did not lose James in the storm, but they did lose his parents and his sister — 10 in all from their family were lost.

To survive the storm, James, Era and children waded to the Nueces County Courthouse for shelter, and with the tide rising 5 feet an hour, if they had waited, they might not have survived.

Records for the hurricane that hit Sept. 14, 1919, show 284 killed, with some officials believing the count may have been closer to 600-800, with many just washed away, and many unidentified. All the Hargrove and Wright family members were identified.

The Wrights stayed in the Corpus Christi area, but did return to Crafton in 1938 for an "old timers" reunion. Fort Worth newspaperman and philanthropist Amon Carter dedicated a pavilion to the town and in his speech, thanked James and Era.

"If it hadn't been for the Wright's (sic) I wouldn't be here," Carter said. Newton found out through Era's family members that the Carters settled near the Wrights and were building a log cabin when a cold spell blew in. Mrs. Carter had just given birth so she and her baby stayed with the Wrights until the weather warmed. The baby was Amon Carter. A group photo from the reunion shows Era standing next to Amon Carter.

In the early 1940s, James Wright suffered a series of strokes that left him incapacitated. Era died of cancer April 5, 1943, and James died 12 days later. They are both buried at Rose Hill Cemetery in Corpus Christi, where Era's mother and brother are buried.

James and Era's family held a reunion in 1983. Three of her six children were still living. Family members recorded the children's memories of the 1919 storm — a harrowing tale of wading through water that was chest-high for the children, dodging debris in the water, the night in the courthouse and seeing dead bodies covered in oil leaked from overturned ships.

"They brought in all those people that were swollen and black, and you couldn't recognize them," Mildred Wright said. "We weren't corralled because Mom and Dad were distraught. We lost both the grandparents Wright, Grandma Hargrove, Aunt Bertha, Uncle John and Aunt Dona

... "Dad and Mother were never the same after that, because Dad had to go in and identify each one of the corpses after they had been exposed to the weather and everything for up to 15 days" Nelson Wright said. "They were eaten by fish and crabs and everything in the water. It was horrible. You could smell them five blocks from the courthouse. I could still smell it in the courthouse for 15 years afterwards."

So Newton had completed his journey, and found not only what happened to Era's family, but what happened to Era also. Through all the research Newton did find another article that mentions the confusion of Era's death. It was written by Harvey Hulen for the *Gainesville Daily Register* and published March 23, 1923. Hulen said he knew the Hargrove family, and was fond of their children and had wept at Era's grave, and then he learned through a Mr. Odom that "Era was not the little girl that died, and was buried on the Hargrove farm. I accept it as such, and rejoice that my little girl friend is still among the living."

Newton has talked with Era's granddaughter, Mary Lou Wright Bartels, the daughter of David Nelson Wright. She has shared what photos the family does have — many were washed away in the 1919 storm. Era's family does know about the town named for her and visited it in the 1990s. Some in the family did not know about Ida — Newton said she or her death were not discussed and family members were glad now to have a name for the unknown sister.

But it may be a question for the ages as to how Era's name ended up on the tombstone in the Era Cemetery.

Newton closes out his research with this, "Though their time in our county was brief they left their mark and I am grateful they passed our way."

Newton's complete report is online at www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txcooke/era_a_marker.htm, with link to Little Era Hargrove, A Research Journey.



Era Hargrove

Fred Newton, the man who wouldn't quit

"The greatest distance ever swum is 1,826 miles (2,938km) down the Mississippi, U.S.A., by Fred P. Newton, 27, of Clinton, Oklahoma, from July to 29 Dec. 1930. He was 742 hours in the water between Ford Dam near Minneapolis and Carrollton Ave., New Orleans, Louisiana. The water temperature fell to 47 degree F. and Newton used petroleum jelly and axle grease. Mr. Newton, now of Gainesville, Texas, became the inventor of the famous Relaxo-Bak sitting support."

—Guinness Book of World Records—

Fred Newton had done what nobody else had done before, or has done since. He had swum the Mississippi River from Minneapolis, Minn. To New Orleans, La. —a distance of 1,826 miles.

The idea for the swim was born in the spring of 1929, at the Bungalow, a popular Clinton, Ok. hang-out. Newton, then a carefree 26 — year old, and several of his friends were sitting around talking about a coast-to-coast footrace whose participants had just run through town. The friends thought he, as the

best athlete of the bunch, should have entered.

He reminded them of his football knees, and everybody forgot about it. Well, nearly everybody, Newton himself knew he couldn't run across the country but he decided to swim across it—not from east to west like the runners, but from north to south, down the mighty Mississippi. He began training immediately, swimming and running to get in shape. But after several weeks of training, an appendix ruptured and he almost died.

The swim was postponed for a year, and Newton finally plunged into the Mississippi's head waters near Minneapolis at 11:48 a.m. on Sunday, July 6, 1930, with his brothers, Byron and F. S. Clinton and a friend, James Patterson, accompanying him by boat. Nearly six months later, at 1:20 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 30, he waded ashore at the Carrollton Ave. landing in New Orleans. Most days, he would swim seven to eight hours and at night. But early on, there was one 11 hour and 44 minute day that was interrupted only by a 10 minute lunch break. That was at St. Paul, Minn., where a big slaughterhouse was dumping its refuse into the river. "I knew I could never dive into that mess again if I ever got out." Newton said later. "I knew I just had to swim into clear water before I could stop." Toward the end of the trip, his swimming time was reduced to two or three hours a day because of the cold. (The first freezing weather had caught him on Oct. 31.) He eventually swam in wool long johns, wool socks, cap, goggles, tennis shoes and cotton gloves, all covering the axle grease.

Besides the two-week break when Newton was recovering from Ptomaine poisoning, he also took occasional days off to find odd jobs as a house painter in the river towns, since finances were a constant problem. In fact, when he first entered the river, he and two companions who accompanied him part way in a rowboat could count but \$5.63 among them. Occasionally, they would get invited into private homes for a good meal or, better

yet, a good night's sleep. (People weren't quite as suspicious of strangers then as they are today).

Although Newton nearly got run down a couple of times, the word was out among barge and boat pilots up and down the river to be on the lookout for the lone swimmer. "They would watch for us" he recalled "When they saw my head, they would give two toots if they wanted me to go to the right, one if to the left. We would always go where they'd tell us. December 26th found Fred swimming two or three miles a day, with the decision having been made to go to the foot of Carrollton Ave. instead of Canal Street. It shortened the swim slightly. On December 29th news reporters and photographers converged upon the campsite, about 3 miles from the final destination. The well known RKO Pathe News people were present to greet Fred as he came out of the water. He was led to a nearby tiny building where a lot of the grease was removed before being taken in an open car to the New Orleans Athletic Club for a better cleaning and welcoming, it was 1:20 p.m. on Fred's Memorable day.

After a celebratory welcome in New Orleans and raising money to buy John a train ticket to Cap Girardeau, Mo., Fred hitched back to Oklahoma. The town folks in Clinton, Ok welcomed home their son and listened to his amazing story.

Fred came to Gainesville in Jan. 1950 and stayed. In 1951, he related, his back was hurting and he was having muscle spasms from "a tender tailbone". After trying ways to get relief, he invented a device which goes on car seats and "keeps pressure off the tailbone." Then he decided that if it worked for him, it ought to work for others. But it took him 12 long years to get the idea into production. With financial backing from a number of sources, he finally succeeded in 1963. The first device went for \$3. It was called "Relaxo-Bak car seat support."

Fred lived at Moss Lake, but not sure if he ever swim in the lake after he came to

Gainesville. Fred had two sons, Phil and Don. Phil still lives at Moss Lake, and Don lives in Del Rio, Texas. — He went there in 1974 to Del Rio to start up the Bomber Bait Company factory.

Fred is listed in "Heroes, Scoundrels and Angels" by Ron Melugin and is buried in the Fairview Cemetery in Gainesville, Texas. He was born Jan. 20, 1903 in Boydeell, Ark., and died Sept. 19, 1992. His wife's name was Carmen and is buried next to me at Fairview. This information was obtained from the following, Texas Monthly, Dec. 1976, The Oklahoma, August 2010, Daily News, Clinton, Okla. Dec. 28, 1990, and The Leader, Clinton, Okla. , Dec. 25, 1980.

TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS. The Texas Association of Colored Women's Clubs was organized by Mrs. M. E. Y. Moore in Gainesville, Texas, in 1905. (Because black women were excluded from the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs, they had to form their own organization.) Their motto was "Lifting as We Climb." Women from around the state answered Moore's call to organize a federation to improve the home and the moral and social life in the communities of Texas, and she was elected president. She was succeeded by Inez Scott of Paris, Texas, one of the charter members. The first printed minutes of the association were produced during the administration of Mary Alphin, the third president, elected in 1910. The fourth president, elected in 1916, was Carrie Adams of Beaumont, who laid the foundation for establishing a home for delinquent girls—a struggle which took thirty years. In 1906 the TACWC affiliated with the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, which had organized in 1896. At least one Texas club, the Phyllis Wheatley Club of Fort Worth, became an affiliate of the NACWC between 1899 and 1901, even before the founding of the TACWC. By 1906 there were new women's clubs in Houston (the 1906 Art and Literary Club), Austin (the Douglass Club), and San Antonio (the Women's Progressive Club). The TACWC grew rapidly in Texas, maintaining an active program of education and culture for its own members, as well as addressing questions of racial uplift. By 1930 the NACWC revised its constitution, drastically reduced the number of its committees, and increasingly shifted its focus to a greater emphasis on home and family life. Although its goals still included civic and political rights, the organization's influence was soon supplemented by newer ones like the National Council of

Negro Women. The NACWC held its annual convention in Fort Worth in 1937, with more than 300 delegates in attendance. Mary McLeod Bethune, national club leader, spoke on the youth movement, and a popular song, "Call to Women," composed by Leana L. Parks of Marlin, Texas, was sung. In the period before World War II, the women were concerned with the preservation of peace. Several TACWC members achieved national leadership positions. Ada Bell DeMent, a Mineral Wells teacher, was not only president of the TACWC from 1930 to 1934; she was elected national president from 1941 to 1945.

The TACWC worked from 1916 until 1945 to convince the state to authorize and fund a home and training school for delinquent black girls. The plan was first adopted under the urging of Carrie Adams of Beaumont, in the period around the World War I. By 1923 the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs and the Joint Legislative Council had endorsed the concept, an early example of interracial cooperation. That same year the TACWC raised \$2,000 for the down payment on such a home. In 1926 Jessie Daniel Ames, a former suffragist, toured Texas speaking to white women's organizations about the importance of the project. In 1927 the legislature finally authorized the construction of the home but provided no money for another eighteen years. In 1945 the state finally appropriated \$60,000 to establish the Brady State School for Negro Girls, located in a former prisoner-of-war camp near Brady (*see* CROCKETT STATE SCHOOL). The first students were admitted in 1947. In 1950 the school was relocated to Crockett and at that time housed more than 100 girls. The TACWC also worked for a state hospital for black tuberculosis patients and supported the agenda of its parent body, the NACWC, which included a fight against lynching and the struggle for voting rights. In 1982 another Texan, Ruby Morris, was elected president of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, and the word "colored" was dropped from the name of both the state and the national organization.

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Ruthe Winegarten, "TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS", *Handbook of Texas Online*, (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/vet01>), accessed November 05, 2010

FAMILY LAND HERITAGE

They came to the State Fair in Dallas October 14, 1974 - over 1,200 honorees and relatives, from 93 to three months old, to celebrate Family Land Heritage Day. The same determination that had kept the land in the family for 100 years or more also led them to travel through record autumn rainstorms and adapt to shifts in plans with good spirits. An outdoor presentation had been scheduled, but the deluge moved the participants into the Pan American Livestock Arena for the first state ceremonies designed to recognize the hard Texas farmers and ranchers.

Requirements were kept uncomplicated. The farm or ranch must have been established during or before 1874. At least ten acres must have been managed directly and continuously by family members with minimum annual sales of \$50. If the acreage was larger than 10, the annual income must have totaled at least \$250. County judges confirmed the applications. Dating back to 1821, the oldest farm with supporting documents in the 1974 Registry is owned by Harry McLean of Crockett in Houston County.

The beginning of the State of Texas, when most families lived off the land, growing rich from its bounty or poor from its unyielding stinginess. In those days it was not unusual for a father and son to die defending their home or for a bandit to drop by for lunch, gun on the table, eye riveted to the door. White settlers lost their scalps to Comanches and circuit riders ablaze with the Lord defied loneliness and peril to carry the gospel to pioneer families. No hazard seemed great enough to keep people away. Texas laid

waiting for the plow and the fence post, and thousands of immigrants were eager to oblige.

The family was an independent unit, working together for the benefit of all. Fathers sowed cotton and corn under a scorching sun; children milked cows and pulled eggs from the nest of squawking hens. Mothers baked, churned, scrubbed, sewed, nursed sick children and learned to survive under the harshest conditions. Many wives assumed full responsibility for running the farm or ranch when their men died or went off to war.

Today the family farm faces drought, poor markets and encroaching suburbia, but the hardy souls that settled this land is still evident today. And by surviving have qualified for the Texas Department of Agriculture's first Family Land Heritage Program.

Glossary of Terms

Austin's Old Three Hundred - the first settlers who received land grants in Stephen F. Austin's original colony.

Empresario - Spanish word for men who performed a specific deed such as importing a given number of settlers in return for grants of land and power.

Headright - a grant, usually of land and/or money, formerly given someone who fulfilled specified conditions relating especially to settling and developing land.

Hectares - a metric unit of area equal to 100 acres or 10,000 square meters.

Labor - an old Texas unit of land area equal to 177.1 acres.

League - old unit equal in Texas to 4428.4 acres or 1792.8 hectares.

Patent - a legal document by which the final title to any survey is passed from the government to an individual.

Preemption - the act or right of purchasing before others, as in purchasing a piece of public land not previously owned by anyone.

Sitio - Spanish word for league.

Survey - a particular parcel of land in which the metes and bounds are defined. Named after the original grantee from the time of Spanish control onward.

Vara - a Texas unit equal to 33.33 inches.

Land Grants in Early Texas

Spanish Land Grants - The original colonization began when Stephen F. Austin entered into an agreement with the Mexican governor, Antonio Martinez, in 1821. The agreement allowed for the granting of 640 acres to each family head, 320 acres for the wife, 160 acres for each child, and 80 acres for each slave.

Mexican Land Grants - The first law passed by the New Mexican government, dated January 3, 1823, invited immigrants of Roman Catholic faith to settle in Mexico (Texas). Promised to families who farmed was a labor of land, for those who raised cattle, a league, and for those who both farmed and raised cattle, a labor and a league. No tithes or taxes were to be levied against settlers for a period of six years, with half payments due for an additional six years.

Mexico's Federal System - Except for Austin's first contract, the national colonization law dated August 18, 1824, and the state law of Coahuila and Texas of March 25, 1825, became the basis of all contracts affecting Texas. Titles of land were limited to residents with no individual receiving more than eleven leagues.

Texas as a Mexican State - Texas adopted a state colonization law which gave heads of families who immigrated a league of land upon payment of a nominal fee in installments. Colonists in the state would also acquire citizenship by settling land.

Mexican Homestead Exemption Decree - The decree, dated 1829, was enacted as a measure to relieve those colonists who had entered the state leaving behind outstanding debts in the United State. Under the decree, lands of the colonists were exempted from seizure for the collection of all debts acquired prior to settling in Texas. This decree was later enacted into the laws of the Republic of Texas in 1840 and is still a part of the jurisprudence of the state.

Republic Land Grants - Texas became a Republic on March 1, 1836. Land grants of up to four million acres was made to foreign speculators by the Mexican government. This became a major reason behind Texans seeking independence. The first bounty act was passed March 2, 1836, with all heads of households, excluding Negroes and Indians, could received a league and a labor of land with single men receiving a third of a league. A second-class headright act, passed December 1837, conferred 1,280 acres of land to married heads of households and half that to single men. A third-class headright began in 1838 and a fourth-class headright in 1842. Different kinds of immigration were encouraged in the early 1840's through laws similar to the empresario system in which various promoters, including W.S. Peters,

Henry Castro, and Charles F. Mercer, brought settlers into the area.

Texas as an American State - After Texas' entrance into the U.S. as a state in 1845, the government continued to issue land grants, this time primarily in return for work, including the building of railroads, canals, waterways, roads, the state capitol building, factories, and public schools and universities. As well, more than 4,800,000 acres, mostly in 160-acre tracts, were given in homestead grants to people willing to live on, cultivate, and improve the land. In 1836, Texas had 216,314,560 acres of unappropriated land, which was disposed of by the end of the century.

We will now look at farms and ranches established in Cooke County.

Cogburn Farm - -1854 - Twenty-one miles southwest of Gainesville

Founder: O.A. Cogburn of Georgia

1974 Owner: Austin Elbert Cogburn, Gainesville

The family cemetery on the Cogburn land today has been used by the entire Leo Community. Cogburn, the founder, raised cotton, corn and cattle on the 457 acres which he acquired. His grandson, Austin Cogburn, now runs a cattle operation on 112 acres of the original land.

Ware Ranch - 1854 - Twelve miles southeast of Gainesville

Founder: John Ware of Missouri

1974 Owners: Mr. & Mrs. Pat Ware, Gainesville

The original grant of 320 acres which John Ware received in 1854 was increased to nearly 3,000 acres at one time. Presently, the holdings include 364 acres in the name of Pat & Alpha Ware, and 332 acres in the name of their son, Rad R. Ware, and his wife, Jeannette. The ware founder saw service in

the Civil War and died returning home at war's end. His son, John W. Ware, was born in a log house which, though in need of repairs, still stands on the property. The present Ware home is nearly 100 years old, and two generations of Wares have been born there. Also on the land is a small section of rail fence that was constructed in 1854, with the original rails still intact. Cattle, hogs, sheep, goats, chickens, corn, cotton, feed, and grass were the maid products raised by the founder. Today, the Wares center their operation primarily on cattle and grass production.

Cartwright Farm - 1856 - Nine miles southwest of Gainesville

Founder: Matthew Cartwright of San Augustine, Texas

1974 Owner: Mrs. G.C. Cartwright, Gainesville

Matthew Cartwright received a land grant of one league and one labor from the B.J. Thompson Survey on April 4, 1854, and Governor E.M. Pease signed the patent April 8, 1856. Originally, livestock, grain, and hay were produced on the farm. Today, Mrs. Cartwright, with the help of her son, raises wheat, oats, maize, and livestock on the present 290-acre farm.

Neely Ranch - circa 1857 - Ten miles southeast of Gainesville

Founder: James Martin Neely of Illinois

1974 Owner: J.O. Neely, Valley View

James Martin Neely, who came to what is now Cooke County in 1845 or 1856, settled in the Mountain Springs Community in the late 1850", where his family lived during the time he was in the Civil War. Neely came looking for a place to settle, with "lenty of wood and a permanent supply of spring water." Neely raised corn, peas, cane, and various other vegetables and fruits on the 139 ½ acres he acquired. His grandson, J.O. Neely, now runs a beef cattle operation on the same acreage.

Sam Murrell Estate - 1860 - fifteen miles northeast of Gainesville

Founder: William Murrell of Missouri

1974 Owner: Mrs. Cecil Murrell Buck, St. Jo, Texas

William Murrell purchased 132 acres in Cooke County from T.W. Ward, who had originally bought the land from the state. A total of three generations have farmed the land on which Murrell originally grew corn, cotton, and wheat. Today, Mrs. Cecil Murrell Buck raised feed on the same 132 acres founded by her grandfather, William Murrell.

Nelson Grove Farm - 1861 - Eight miles east of Gainesville

Founder: Robert Carroll Nelson of Pulaski County, Missouri

1982 Owners: J.R. & Eunice Nelson, Gainesville

At the age of 21, Robert Carroll Nelson had married Elizabeth Stephens, a widow, in Missouri and they traveled together finally settling in Woodbine. R.C., as he was known settled two miles north of Woodbine in what was to become known as Nelson Grove. A Civil War veteran, R.C. donated land for a school, and then also donated land for a cemetery, where his daughter Mollie was buried. His first wife died in 1888, and he married Mrs. Elizabeth Woods. In all, Nelson and his two wives reared nine children: William Henry Stephens (his step-son by his first marriage), Blanche and Anna Pearl (Sullivant) (Step-daughters by his second marriage), and John Edward, Richard Henry, Mary Elizabeth, Robert Carroll Jr., Martha Jane, and James Francis. He also gave a home to two orphan children, Charles Compton and Ethel Scarvey. Nelson raised large fruit orchards as well as cotton, oats, and livestock on his original 160 acres, which he increased by 66 ½ acres. Following his death in 1914, R.C.'s land went to his sons

Ed, Richard Henry, and James F. and step-son William Henry. There were two houses on the acreage and their mother occupied one and James Nelson lived in the other. Seventy acres of the family land which John Robert and his wife Eunice Nelson inherited in 1943, has been in continuous family ownership since it was founded by John Robert's grandfather. In 1945, the current owners also bought back the rest of the founder's land which had been sold in 1933, so that now all of the original family farm is owned by the Nelsons.

Rocky Acres Ranch - 1863 - Sixteen miles northwest of Gainesville

Founder: Langston Pace of Missouri

1974 Owner: Joyce Pace, Gainesville

The land grant which deeded 160 acres to Langston Pace January 4, 1863, was signed by Governor L.R. Lubbock. Livestock, corn, wheat and oats were included in the products of the original Pace Ranch. Joyce Pace, great grandson of the founder, today concentrates his efforts on livestock production on his 149.6-acre spread.

Sycamore Creek Ranch - 1867 - four miles north of Dexter

Founder: J.R. Washington of Virginia

1974 Owner: Mrs. Neva McCain Yost, Whitesboro

Shortly after he had settled thousands of acres in Cooke County in 1867, J.R. Washington built a home with lumber hauled by oxen from Jefferson. Today that home bears a historical marker which reads in part: "As a home of the cattle industry leader, it attracted distinguished visitors, including ranchers, Charles Goodnight and J.C. Loving and statesman Sam Rayburn." The excellent water facilities on the land made the ranch a collection center for cattle prior to cattle drives. Sycamore Creek Ranch, now 1,000 acres, is run by Washington's granddaughter, Neva McCain Yost. As each child married, the

founder gave portions of land as wedding presents. Crop lands which once produced corn, cotton, wheat and oats are all now planted in Coastal Bermuda grass.

Campbell Ranch - 1871 - Six miles west of Gainesville on U.S. 82

Founder: George E.N. Ball of Grayson County

1974 Owners: Mr. & Mrs. Elbridge R. Campbell, Gainesville

George E.N. Ball, who purchased 320 acres of land from William Howeth February 25, 1871, went on to develop his land to include some 7,000 acres. Pasture land was the main purpose of the acreage in the early years, where Ball raised mixed cattle. In later years, production was centered primarily on raising Herefords. The house which Ball built in 1871 still stands on the land, and for many years after the family had moved to Gainesville, they returned to the house to spend the summer months. Cattle carrying two brands range the 4,000 acres Campbell Ranch today. The seven-six brand was developed by Mrs. Campbell's grandfather, J.C. Whaley, while the Mashed O brand was originally used by Mr. Campbell's grandfather.

Gwyn Ranch - 1871 - Seven miles west of Gainesville

Founder: George E.N. Ball of Missouri

1976 Owners: Mr. & Mrs. William Miller Gwyn, Jr., of Gainesville

The founder purchased 168 acres from William Howeth, and began adding property that soon totaled 7,040 acres. Barbed wire was used to hold cattle, but also to baffle the Indians, who were afraid that the barbs would cut their horses. George was married to Sallie Maxwell, who bore three children: Eldbridge, Mary Geraldine (Gwyn), and Louise (Campbell). When George died in 1921, Sallie continued operating the ranch. In 1923, Sallie died, and the land was divided among the

children. Mary Geraldine was married to W.M. Gwyn and they established their ranch on 2,700 acres. Their children George E., W.M. Jr., and his wife Frances Louise (Whitfield) obtained ownership of the ranch in 1946 where feeder calves are produced. The brothers shared the land jointly until 1972 when George E. had a heart attack. W.M. Jr. and Frances have two children, William Roger and Elizabeth Mary.

Holcomb Ranch - 1871 - John Findley Survey, A.337, southwest Cooke County

Founder: Whorton C. English of Bonham, Texas

(See also English Land and English Ranch this county.)

1974 Owner: Mrs. Ruby English Holcomb, Graham

Whorton C. English, purchased 1363 acres of land September 7, 1871, from J.F. Davidson, who operated a fort on the old Butterfield Stage Line. The old fort was located on 82 acres of the original tract which Mrs. Holcomb, granddaughter of the founder, now owns. She is continuing the tradition of raising livestock and feed on her land.

English Land - 1871 - Western part of county near Rosston community

Founder: Whorton C. English of Bonham, Texas

(See also Holcomb Ranch and English Ranch this county.)

1974 Owner: Marvin Joseph English, Sr., Rosston

Whorton C. English came to Cooke County from Bonham, where his father, Bailey English, had settled in 1837, founding the town of Bonham. The Chisum Cattle Trail went north through the English property and any calves that were weak or too young to make the trip were given to Whorton's son, Bailey. The

home which Whorton English built in 1871 still stands on the English Land, which covers some 76 acres. Marvin Joseph English, Sr., grandson of the founder, raises hay and cattle on the land. As well as raising cattle, the founder also produced corn and wheat.

English Ranch - 1871 - Three miles east of Rosston

Founder: Whorton C. English and wife of Bonham, Texas

(See also Holcomb Ranch and English Land this county.)

1974 Owners: Mr. and Mrs. William Bailey English, Rosston

William Bailey English, great grandson of the founder, operates a cattle operation on land which has seen the production of cattle continuously since 1871. English received his 276-acre property from his aunt, Ruby English Holcomb.

Enderby Ranch - 1876 - Six miles southwest of Gainesville

Founder: E. Enderby of Lincolnshire, England

1974 Owners: Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Enderby of Gainesville

One thousand acres comprised the first ranch of Enderby when he came to Texas. He dug wells, built a house and fenced land to raise Hereford cattle. Later, 5000 more acres were added to the ranch. Mary (Donahue) was Enderby's wife. There were five children: Dave, Charley, Jim, Will and Joseph. All except David assumed ownership of 1,000 acres of the founder's original property in 1898. Charley was married to Nora, who bore three children: Abner, Joe and Mary. Their son, Abner was the next to own the property, which in turn passed it on to the current owner, his son Samuel; in 1953. Cattle are

still raised on the 1,000-acre ranch, managed by Samuel's brother J.A.

Cooley Farm - 1875 - Two miles east of the Mount Springs Community

Founders: J.R. Hallmark and W.M. Cornelius (Original Unknown)

1981 Owners: Willard B. and Mildred I. Cooley

J.R. Hallmark and his son-in-law W.M. Cornelius purchased 71½ acres of Cooke County land on the day before Christmas in 1875. The log cabin that Hallmark built still stands on the land where cotton, corn, hay, peanuts, and maize were produced by the founders. Hallmark is also credited with helping to build one of the first schools in the community. He joined the Confederate Army during the Civil War and it is believed that he was ambushed and killed on the way back to his regiment after being home on leave.

Following Hallmark's death, the land became the sole possession of his son-in-law W.M. Cornelius and he and his wife Lucinda reared their four children on the land: Sarah Jane, Lucrita Mindory, Huldah Cathrin and Morian C. Cornelius cleared the land of timber, built fences and terraces, dug a water well, stock ponds and storm cellar, leveled some of the land, and set out fruit trees. At one time, he also rerouted Wolfe Creek that runs through the property, as it was overflowing a field. Neighbors came in wagons to get fresh spring water from a big spring near the creek.

A daughter, Lucrita Mindory, married John Gooch and in 1896, the 71 ½ acres were acquired by the son-in-law. Gooch divided the pasture, fencing and improving it. He also hauled rocks and stopped the ditches on his land where he raised cattle, corn, peanuts, hay and fruit. The seven children born to John and Lucrita were: Claudie Ernest, Gracie

Livonie, Marian Chess, Veola Elena, Ester Elvin, Bessie Lee and Vester Terelon.

In 1951, the husband of Bessie Lee, Jim T. Steele, took over 71 ½ family acres where he continued cotton, hay, peanut, and cattle production. As a member of the Community Improvement Club, he helped on the upkeep of the school grounds and building.

Today the only child of Bessie Lee and Jim T. Steele owns the 71 ½ acres with her husband. The great-great-granddaughter of founder W.M. Cornelius received the land in 1977 where her husband raises cattle. They are active in community improvements as well as in maintaining and improving their property, including planting improved grasses and mowing the pastures. They are also kept busy pruning their more than 200 pecan trees. The owners live on the land with Mildred's mother Bessie Steele, their son and daughter-in-law Willard Kent and Rebecca Cooley, and their two granddaughters Hennessey and Wendy Joe. Plans are to restore the original log cabin while archeological work done recently on the land has unearthed an Indian camping ground on the property.

Cross Timbers Longhorn Ranch - 1881 -

Fourteen miles southeast of Gainesville

Founders: James Morrow of England

(See also Morrow Ranch, this county.)

1981 Owners: Mr. and Mrs. David Kent Isbell, Pilot Point

Samuel Morrow, The father of the founder of this ranch, received a grant of Canadian land as payment for his service in the Grenadier Guards in London, England, and moved his family to Texas. James Morrow received title

to 60 ½ acres of land July 26, 1881, where he began raising cotton, corn, tobacco, milk cows, an orchard, and horses. Married twice, the founder had a total of eight children, seven by his first wife Elizabeth (Maxwell): Thomas Earl, Annie, John, Elizabeth, Wesley, Mina, and Mary Jane. His second wife Phoebe (Wells) had one son, Samuel George.

The founder's son Wesley took over the 60 ½ acres in 1907, having bought the heirs. On the heritage land and an additional 460 acres which he adjoined, he raised cattle, horses, sheep, hogs, chickens, peafowl, and guineas. Wesley also grew sorghum cane from which he made his own molasses. He cut fence posts from the native cedar and grew corn and feed for the animals. His cattle brand was a combination of the initials JHK. Martha Leah Vaughan became Wesley's wife and they had seven children: Clement Wesley, Willie Cleo, George Samuel, David Luther, Lelah Mae Esther, Joseph Lee, and Edward Atlee.

The current owners of 12 of the original acres received the land through David's grandfather George Samuel, son of Wesley. David K. and Sherry A. Isbell live on the original homesite with their sons Jeffery and Bradley. The great-great-grandson raises Coastal Bermuda, Texas Longhorn cattle, and horses and is a member of the Texas Longhorn Breeders Association of America.

Grundy Farm - 1859 - Three miles south of Era

Founders: Felix Grundy of Bardstown, Kentucky

1981 Owner: Mrs. Willie Mae Grundy, Gainesville

It was the first month of 1859 the Felix Grundy received title to 395 acres of Cooke County land, having come to Texas from his native Kentucky due to health reasons as well as in the search for new land. Felix and his cousin

William Gregory founded the Gregory School and Cemetery in the late 1860's. Cattle, wheat, corn, oats, barley, cotton and horses were produced by the founder on his land; he eventually increased his holdings by 172 7/8 acres, selling off 80. Two of the sons born to Felix and his wife Mary Jane (Rodgers) joined up during the Civil War, with one, John Andrew, returning home from the war one year late as he was held prisoner at Andersonville, Georgia. Indian attacks were a problem for the pioneer family which included nine children in all: William, Felix T., Robert Adley, Christopher Columbus, Isaac Pollard, John Andrew, Sara F., Margaret S., and Priscilla.

Robert Adley took over 195 acres from his father in 1895. He gave land for Buck Creek School which was consolidated with Era in 1938. The building is still in excellent condition and is being used for classrooms in the Era Independent School District. The home built in 1900 by Robert Adley and his wife Alabama Ann (Pace) is being lived in today by Robert Andrew and his wife; Robert is the son of the current owner of the land. The second-generation owner and his wife had five children: Ewing Weldon "E.W.", Samuel Pollard, Mary Clyde, Marguerite, and Owen. Because the Grundy Farm was always kept clean of weeds and Johnsongrass, many nearby farmers bought seed and grains from the owner.

Samuel Pollard married Willie Mae Bratcher in 1924 and they reared four children on the land: Sam Jr., Marilyn, Robert Andrew, and JoAnne. Samuel Pollard passed away in 1937.

Upon the death of Alabama Anne in 1995, the land was passed on to E.W. Grundy, who had married his widowed sister-in-law Willie Mae.

Since E.W.'s death in 1962, Willie Mae Grundy has owned 300 family acres. Wheat,

cattle, hay and red oak trees are produced on the land now under the supervision of her son Robert Andrew. A grain barn consisting of four separate granaries still stands from the founder's time. Used for storage of antiques, it has a tin roof over wood shingles with the separate granaries held together by iron rods.

Morrow Farm - 1881 - Fourteen miles southeast of Gainesville

Founders: James Morrow of England
(See also Cross Timbers Longhorn Ranch, this county.)

1981 Owners: Mr. and Mrs. John W. Isbell, Pilot Point

Mr. and Mrs. George Morrow,

Pilot Point

The current co-owners of this portion of the founder's land are the grandson and his wife George and Essie Sullivan Morrow and great-granddaughter and her husband John W. and Odessa Morrow Isbell.

The founder James Morrow originally emigrated from England with his parents Samuel and Susan Sadlier Morrow to Canada around 1832. After acquiring his 60 1/2 acres in Cooke County, he cleared the remainder of the land, hand dug a well, planted his crops, and grew most of what his family needed. An orchard which he planted bore peaches, pears, berries, and figs; one fig tree still on the Morrow place grew from the fruit taken from the original tree. James raised his own geese for good and for the feathers to make pillows and mattresses.

In 1944, ten acres from the original homestead passed from the founder's son Wesley to the current co-owners George and Essie while 38 acres came into the hands of John and Odessa in 1974. George has since added 394 acres and on the acreage that has been added by him as well as by his father, there are more than five families living who

are all descendants of the founder. For this reason, the land is today called the Clantation. George Morrow has long been known in the area as a horse and mule owner and trainer. An article which appeared about him in the Pilot Point paper in 1974 stated that George was taking mules and horses to the field to pull a walking turning plow by the time he was 10 years old. He purchased his first saddle when he was 16 for \$20 in cash and \$25 worth of hauled cords of wood. One horse in particular, Maude, stands out in George's memory because it was the one which took him to his wedding in 1918 to Essie Sullivan. The preacher came out to the buggy driven by the couple to the Valley View Methodist Church in Gainesville and married them on the spot. The article about the co-owner also records a wagon trip made by him and his brother Joe to Dallas, a four-day journey with overnight stops both ways in Denton on roads which were nothing but gravel and dirt. George, who served on the local school board, has always strived to maintain good ranch management. He has dug stock tanks, fenced and cross fenced, planted Coastal Bermuda, and rotated crops on the land. He has also run Angora goats to help fight the never-ending regrowth of brush. Today, white-faced cattle and horses are raised by George on his ten acres as well as on the 38 heritage acres owned by his daughter and her husband.