

SAMUEL LAWSON NELSON

and Erma Jane Mead
Told by Zelma Irene Jennings

My parents, Samuel and Erma Jane Nelson, moved to the Stephens County Oklahoma area from Montague, Texas about a year after they were married in 1900. They homesteaded the place where I still live. For the first few years, they lived in a half dugout just a few feet from where my house now stands southwest of Duncan. My grandfather, Robert B. Mead, also made the run from Lawton in 1880 to stake out the homestead. He got seperated from my father during the hectic activities, but he wandered in the next day unharmed.

"Uncle Sam" Nelson spent his life farming the land he owned. He built a blacksmith shop near his home for his own use, but he never turned down a neighbor or friend who needed some work done.

There would have been 10 of us children if all of Mama's babies had survived. The oldest was Dovie, then came a boy named Roy who died at the age of 18 months. Next were Floyd, Dessie, then me. Luther had a twin sister, Lula Mae, who died at the age of 18 months also. The others were Levi, Sarmie, and R.J. My parents also raised Papa's nephew, Rufus Brown.

We older children attended a two room school called Center Point before the Empire Consolidated School District was formed. Dessie and I were still in school at the time, so we got to go to the new school with the younger children.

Dovie married Howard Miller of Duncan and they had two children, Leroy and Colene. Floyd married Mabel Shillman from Nocona, Texas. Their girls are Marlene and Shereie Sue. Dessie married Edgar Coffey, a local boy, and they had two boys, Kenneth and Jimmy Dale. Luther married Louise Adams from Tulsa. They had three children, Sammy, Phillip and Peter. Levi married Helene Moon from Burkburnett, Texas and their son is Evan Roy. Sarmie married Benton Bean from Wichita Falls, Texas. Their children are Sue, Larry, and Terry. R.J. married Alene Serson Stephens County and they have a daughter, Debra Lynn.

I [Irene] married William Loyd Jennings in 1928. After a few years living southwest of Comanche, we bought land near Mama and Papa and moved into a little house near the home place. My husband worked for the Lone Star Gas Company for 29 years in addition to working the old homestead. He was critically burned in 1976 and passed away a few months later. We raised our five children here. They were William Gene, born in 1929; Bobby Lee, in 1931; Lavidia Lucille, in 1933; Roy Allen, in 1940; and Barabra Ann in 1943.

William Gene married Jean Newman in 1952. They have a son, Dale Wayne. Bobby Lee married Jackie Berdsher in 1951. Their children are Ginger, Tracy, and Billy Bob. Lavinda married Jerry Johnson in 1952. Their children are Judy and Michael. Lavidia divorced Jerry and 1968 she married Glen Avey. They don't have other children. Roy Allen married Leta Parrish in 1961. Their children are Tammy and Lesa. Barbara Ann married Cletys Stiles in 1963. They have a girl Connie and a boy Steven.

I am fortunate to have my three children living in the Empire community, as well as three of my four married grand-children. Roy Allen lives Rush Springs, Oklahoma and Barbara Ann lives in Iowa Park, Texas.