

CHAPTER 10

By Deward F. Lusk

(Several years ago, Deward F. Lusk, of Wills Point, TX, grandson of Jeremiah and son of Arthur, visited descendants of the 10 children of Jeremiah and Sally. He then wrote the history of the family as he remembered from the interviews and the events that affected their lives. Barbara Brown Wagner, great-granddaughter of Jeremiah and Sally, began researching the Luskfamily shortly before her grandmother, Essie Flinn Lusk, passed away in 1976. Together with the research and sources obtainedfrom Robert Monroe Lusk's descendants, the LuskFamily History is written)

Flatboats Down the River

Robert Monroe Lusk, along with his dad, built a flat boat out of logs tied together. They had two of these "flat boats" because they split up at the Mississippi River. From Carter or Blount Counties, they began their trip by floating down the Tennessee River that meander through Alabama and Mississippi, and then back through Tennessee. They would have to stop for the night to miss rocks, logs, etc. They had to because you see our great-granddad had 5 or 6 children on board with him and 4 brothers and 5 sisters as well as his father.

After weeks (maybe months) floating on the Tennessee River, they reached the Mississippi River. They stayed there for days. Also we have a letter from Elizabeth (Blevins) Lusk, wife of Boyd Lusk and a list of the names of his (Robert Monroe's) brothers and sisters who came down the river with our great-granddad. At this point John and his family went up the river to Missouri. Our granddad, Jeremiah, was born in 1850 in Arkansas. This area was filled with Lusks. They are kin by Robert or other sons and daughters that stayed in Arkansas.

Move to Oklahoma

Some of the older boys of Granddad Jerry married right in Arkansas. In about 1888, Dan moved to Oklahoma. A little later in 1890 Jerry moved right after my dad, Arthur, was born. They moved to Olustee, Oklahoma Arthur was 2 months old at this time and from the time he could, remember they lived in a dugout half under the ground, half above it. Underground is where Arthur, Ben, George, Lon, and Joe slept.

Fishing

Dad, Uncle Ben, and George learned to fish on the Red River in Oklahoma. They came there and camped out. Dad said he studied by himself and he told me: With a water elm club and "Old Pue", he'd go fishing. He said the farms filled the fishing holes up--this could be why they moved to Texas. Uncle Joe would take the "Long Tom" shot gun and would step out the door to kill ducks. That is, until he shot a wolf. He jumped a branch (didn't know it was there) and got mud in the gun barrel, but he didn't know it. When he shot he fell back into a branch. The gun barrel split and he had to saw it off about a foot.

Cotton Farming

Our Granddad Jerry was a farmer. He raised cotton mostly. Dad, as a boy, remembered how they would take cotton to Olustee, Oklahoma, to the Cotton Press. This would make it so one wagon could haul 2 or 3 bales of cotton. After getting it all picked, Dad said two or three families would form a wagon train of 15-20 wagons and the older boys in each family would ride the horses along side going and coming. There were lots of outlaws at that time and when they took the road to Vernon, TX, to sell the cotton, they would buy a year's supplies of staples. They had to make sure outlaws didn't get it. This was about Christmas time. Arthur, Ben, George, and Joe stayed, maybe

one boy to a wagon. Aunt Lou and Grandmother Sally Ann would only go to the store once a year. Lon Lusk also went. Dad said that the older boys had pistols and rifles to fight if they had to. This army all with guns was Dan, Lon, Joe, George, Lou, Ben, and Arthur. The other boys who had not moved to Oklahoma with Granddad Jerry but moved to Texas were Bud, Bob, and John. They moved back and forth to Arkansas. I will try to cover that later.

Jeremiah and Sally Ann Separate

After Granddad Jerry and Sally Ann separated, Jerry moved back to Arkansas and died there in 1909. I don't know if he stayed with Dan, but I know by our cousin, Edna Lusk Martin, that Uncle Lon Lusk kept him some and tried to get him unhooked from drinking. Uncle Lon didn't get married until 1905. He was born in 1881 and would have been grown at the time this took place.

Family Moves to Texas

Aunt Lou, Sally Ann, Joe, Ben, George, and Arthur moved to Texas (Hubbard City). Uncle Bud and John were there. They farmed with the boys. Uncle Joe was born in 1879, being two years older than Lon. He didn't get married until 1907 to Aunt Allie so he was the leader of the boys at farming. They went to parties and played baseball at Mount Calm. Aunt Lou met Uncle Ramp (Hampton James) there. He ran the cotton gin till he died. Its name was Shawnee Mining Co. at that time and they ginned cotton all over Texas.

Boys Marry

About this time the boys all married--1907--for Uncle Joe; then it was Aunt Lou, then Uncle Ben, and next Arthur. Dad, Ben, and George would travel to Woodberry, Texas, which was noted for gambling and drinking. At that time, our boys drank and there were girls over there. Uncle Ben went with one from Cleburne, Texas, as well as Woodberry, but this is where Dad and Mom met.

About this time the boys had married and moved off. Uncle George out of the five younger one is the only one not to marry a Texas girl. Uncle Lon married a girl from Anderson County, TX. Uncle Joe is the only boy to spend his life in Hill County, TX. All of his boys were still living in Blooming Grove, TX. One was born in Wichita Falls, TX, and one in Batesville, AR, but most of his family was raised in Hill County.

When Grandma Sally Ann moved to Texas, she was going blind. That and the fact that Grandpa Jerry was sick and drinking was the cause of their separation that led her to move with the four younger boys to Texas where Uncle Bud lived.

Aunt Lou and Hampton James

Aunt Lou lived in Shawnee, OK. Daughter Marie married G.N. Smith and was still living there as of 1994. Lou was with Grandma Sally when they came to Texas and was born in 1883 in Arkansas. She was about 21 in 1908 when she married Hamp James who was working at the cotton gin. Aunt Lou was all the boys' favorite. She was mine, too, from the start. She, as much as Grandma Sally Ann, kept the family together. It was not the city of Shawnee that called the boys back but this fine lady. She did things for all the boys--Bud, George, Ben, and Sally Ann, but most of all I remember the things she did for Arthur's family. Two of my sisters were born in her house on 1111 East 11th Street (about 1925). She helped Papy get work at the oil mill in Shawnee. When she and Uncle Hamp went off to California, they stopped by Uncle Lon's and Aunt Essie's in New Mexico.

Uncle George and "Jenny" (Virginia Criswell) Lusk

George Lusk died in Shawnee, OK. His only living son lives in El Paso, TX. One girl, Elnora Rodman, lives in Oklahoma, and one girl, Velma Smith, lives in El Paso. My memory of Uncle George was a lot the same way as Uncle John. My first time to see him when Velma was born. Then it was years later in 1940-50 before I remembered him again. We used to fish with him on the North Canadian River. There for years he ran a pool hall and wore striped overalls and as a young man, I would play pool and even drink beer with Uncle Hamp and Uncle George. But out of all the years that I remember best is the years that he was the caretaker for the city of Shawnee Lake.

Waitin' for the Sweet Taters and Cooking Possum

Papy, brother Leslie, and myself went to visit him. As we were almost there, I saw a lady walking down the road with a sack in her hand. It looked like Aunt Jenny Lusk and I stopped to pick her up. They lived about 3 miles from the store. She still liked to go. She had sweet potatoes in her sack. Uncle George had cleaned up the building the night before and took an empty barrel, put a board up to the top, then a plate of food in the bottom and a possum jumped in and couldn't get out. Uncle George had the possum cooking and was just waiting on the sweet potatoes. I well remember that I was not hungry. I visited Uncle George in the hospital and had sat with him all night just a few days before he died. I was pleased that the kids buried him in a new pair of overalls. It looked just like him!

Homesteading

Three of these uncles, Uncles Lon, George, and Ben moved to New Mexico around Clovis, NM, to homestead. Uncle Ben told me that he was "burned out" on Jack Rabbits. He and Uncle George gave up. I don't have dates on this but will look into it. I am trying to get one or more in each family of our uncles and aunts to write a little about the family to add to this. Barbara, .J. Wagner, of Chula Vista, CA, is going to write a book on the Lusk family. I might send it all to her and maybe push her a little so she could write it down before the first cousins pass on leaving only second and third cousins, grand kids, and great-grand kids.

For now,

D.F. Lusk 1990