

ALLEN LEWIS JANUARY, SR., AND VERA LENORE JURY JANUARY

*By Arlene January Wakeman (daughter)*

By 1887 the Santa Fe Railroad had built a railroad across the Indian lands from north to south. This was in anticipation of the opening of the Indian lands to white settlers. Ever so many miles along the railroad the Santa Fe Company had set up "stops" for watering purposes or for switching cars or for camps for their workers. These stops came in handy on April 22, 1889, the day of the grand opening--the famous "run" for free land.

On the morning of the run the Santa Fe trains were loaded with people who wanted to make the run either from the Kansas border or from Purcell on the border of Indian Territory. As the Santa Fe trains moved along they made their regular stops, this allowed the passengers to unload and make their run for land. Often the runners settled near the railroad stops and small towns grew here, such was the case of Lexington, Noble, Norman and Moore.

Many stories have been told about how each of the early towns got its name -- the early settlers in Moore say the town got its name when a Santa Fe train conductor, by the name of Moore nailed a board over the door of a box car sitting on a siding, he then painted his name, Moore, on the board and went on about his other business. The name stuck to the little settlement. It became official when the town of Moore was incorporated June 12, 1893.

When the farmers tethered their horses to the hitching posts in front of the frame building in the small settlement of Moore in the 1890's, little did they dream of the city it has become today. A few of the people who remember Moore in the early days are still living there today. Allen and Vera January are among those who can talk a long time as they reminisce the "good old days."

Allen Lewis January, Sr., was born September 7, 1896, in Kaufman County, Texas. He was one of ten children born to William and Emily January. Allen lived in Texas until he was eight years old when William January moved his family to Oklahoma Territory in 1904. Allen, with his father and two brothers rode from Texas to Oklahoma Territory in a box car along with the family furniture and cattle on the railroad.

The William January family settled on a farm near Moore and the children attended the Perry school. William and Emily January continued to live on the old home place as long as they lived. Today the Broadmore Golf Course occupies the old January farm.

Allen like other farmer children walked to school carrying his books by a belt. He hurried home from school in the evening because he shared the work on the farm with his brothers and sisters. He helped tend the cows, pigs and chickens as well as care for the farm machinery of various types. In the spring and fall Allen's farm chores increased due to his helping in the gardening and harvesting. The farm boy had very little time for pleasure.

Allen Lewis January married Vera Lenore Jury, a school mate from the early days at the Perry school house. Vera Lenore Jury was born in Oklahoma City, November 19, 1896, the first child born to William and Artie Jury. Mr. Jury was a grocer, a real estate dealer and a farmer. He came to the Oklahoma Territory in 1889 after the run and bought a relinquishment of a homestead near Moore from the man who had made the run three weeks earlier and had filed a claim on the land. Mr. Jury lived alone on the farm for six years before he married Artie Johnson. Later the couple opened a small grocery store in Moore. Today the parking lot for the First National Bank occupies the site where the Jury grocery store once stood.

Vera Jury like the neighboring farm children went to the Perry school where she first met Allen January. Later the Jury family moved back to Oklahoma City where they had lived a while after they married. Vera went to Lee school and later to Washington school and finally graduated from Central High School.

In 1917 William Jury moved his family back to the farm southeast of Moore. Here Vera Jury renewed her friendship with the neighbors she had known as a child, among these old friends was Allen January. This renewed friendship led to the marriage of Vera Jury and Allen January on October 5, 1919.

Allen and Vera January lived in and around Moore all of their married life. To this union nine children were born: Viola (Mrs. Iverson), Willis, Roberta (deceased, July, 1968), Allen Lewis, Jr., Leonard, Eugene, Arlene (Mrs. Wakeman), Arthur and Myron. All of the living children reside in Moore except Willis who lives in Del City.

Mr. and Mrs. Allen L. January now live on a farm southeast of Moore where they moved in 1942. They have lived to see the town of about one hundred people in 1890, and less than 500 in 1940, grow to the size of a city with a population of 18,765 in 1970. They saw the first street car come to Moore from Oklahoma City in 1910; the use of electricity in the homes of Moore, August 11, 1918, the paved Highway 77 was built through Moore in 1922 after the people of Cleveland County had voted bonds to build the highway, a city wide water system was installed in 1928, a city wide gas system in 1930, a city sewer system in 1933 and the new I-35 Highway and overpass which runs through Moore.

The January family like other pioneers in Oklahoma have lived through one of the most remarkable periods in history 1889-1972. During this period of 83 years the people in Oklahoma went from living in the wilderness with tents to sod and log cabins to steel and cement 36 storied towers, from dirt paths to 4 and 6 lane paved roads, and the population of a few people to cities of hundreds of thousand population, yet these people remember those early pioneer days and the friends who helped one another build their houses

and harvest their crops. They have built up fond memories of the early days even to knowing the name of the first baby born in the town, such as Dick Kitchen was in Moore in 1890.