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EARL RUSSELL CHASTAIN

Jean Chastain Holland (Mrs. R.L.)

Earl Russell Chastain was born in Cherokee County, Alabama, September 1, 1872. He was the son of Jephtha M. and Emily Hookey Chastain.

The Chastain family left Alabama and were living in Midland, Texas, when they heard that the United States was to open the unassigned Indian Land to white settlers on April 22, 1889. Mr. J. M. Chastain decided to "make the run" for land in the new territory, as Russell said later, "because we were long on family and short on money, and my father wanted moving room for all nine of us children, eleven counting himself and mother."

Russell was sixteen years old when one March day, all personal belongings, provisions and the eleven members of the Chastain clan, plus one extra man, were loaded into three wagons pulled by double teams, started from Midland, Texas, on the trip to the new territory.

One month and three weeks after they left their Texas home, the Chastain entourage arrived at Purcell, I.T. Russell later said, "We went to the south bank of the Canadian River, which was the dividing line between Indian Territory and the lands to be opened for settlement, and camped there on Sunday afternoon."

J. M. Chastain and his sixteen year old son, Russell, planned to cross the Canadian River at the Adkins Community ford. There were thousands of would-be settlers camped there also, ready to start the minute that the gun shot announced the start of "the run."

At twelve o'clock noon, April 22, 1889, came the shot and J. M. Chastain and his son, Russell, were off and running with the crowd of eager land

seekers. In describing the new land Russell Chastain said, "It was just bald prairie, no trees at all except along the creeks and rivers, but the grass was up about five or six inches and waving in the wind, it looked like the prettiest ocean you ever have seen."

Mr. J. M. Chastain staked his claim for 160 acres in the section now bounded, on the north, by Lindsay Street and on the west by Jenkins Avenue.

When an old soldier, Col. Bishop, contested Mr. Chastain's stake out, Mr. Chastain went on east and found a man with a staked claim willing to make a trade, so J. M. Chastain traded four of his Texas' horses for the land. This land was about half a mile east of Norman on the old highway No. Nine, sometimes spoken of as the Shawnee road.

The J. M. Chastain family moved on the land, but it was Russell's mother, Mrs. Emily Hooksey Chastain, who proved up the land because her husband, J. M. Chastain, died in 1889.

While most pioneers lived in crude homes made of sod or half dugout and logs, the Chastains fared much better. They used the large surface rocks they found on the land to build their house and barn. The big red stone house on the north side of old Highway No. 9 was a land mark for many years. Mrs. Emily Chastain sold the farm to Mr. Gideon Westervelt for \$2,000, July 18, 1896. Some member of the Westervelt family has lived in the red stone house until a few years ago, when Mrs. Z. K. Westervelt moved out of the old stone house to a modern home across the road. A point of interest here is that Mrs. Z. K. Westervelt is a sister of Cora Chastain, the wife of E. Russell Chastain.

Before young Russell was to marry and settle down to a business career in Norman, he was to make one more famous run, this time on his own.

Four years after Russell Chastain made the run of '89 with his father,

he and his brother, Thad Chastain, decided to enter the run which opened the Cherokee Strip outlet, September 16, 1893. This run attracted 100,000 homeseekers. Each of the Chastain brothers staked a claim in the strip but later Russell relinquished his claim "to a man to farm it."

Ten years after Russell Chastain entered Oklahoma Territory and after he had made a reputation as a builder, a cotton buyer and a ginner, he married Cora May Hayes, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alpheus A. Hayes, another pioneer family in Cleveland County. This is the story of the wedding as printed in the September 2, 1898, issue of the Transcript: "At White Mound school house, three miles south of town, after Sunday School on Sunday afternoon, August 28, 1898, Rev. J. H. Ferguson performed the ceremony which united Mr. E. Russell Chastain and Cora May Hayes in marriage. The groom is a substantial young farmer of Cleveland County as well as a respected business man in Norman, and the bride is the handsome and accomplished daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Hayes of Noble township. They have the best wishes of a large circle of friends for their future happiness, in which the Transcript heartily joins."

The first job that Russell Chastain had, outside of work on his parents' farm, was with the Pond Creek Lumber Yard in Norman, where he rose to be the foreman within six months after he started with the company.

Later Russell went into business for himself. In 1905 he bought the Red Grain and Coal Elevator in Norman and operated it for many years. He also owned and operated the Norman Cotton Gin and a cottonseed oil mill. Besides his Norman interests he owned several cotton gins and cottonseed oil mills in the area.

Mr. and Mrs. E. Russell Chastain were the parents of three children who were born in Norman. These children are:

I. Carl Henry - born January 8, 1900 - February 20, 1958

II. Claud - December 18, 1901

III. Bernice Russellen - November 18, 1909

Not only did Mr. and Mrs. Chastain live to see these three children grown and married; they lived to see and enjoy six grandchildren and nineteen great grandchildren.

I. Carl Henry Chastain married Vivian Adkins on August 9, 1919.

A. Jean Chastain - born June 11, 1921, married Richard L. Holland, June 2, 1939. They live in Norman and have three children.

1. Janet Holland Jones - B. Nov. 25, 1942

2. Richard L. Holland - B. Dec. 24, 1946

3. John M. Holland - B. April 16, 1950

B. Robert Carl Chastain, December 7, 1924, married Carolyn LaMarr.

They live in Norman and have two sons

1. Samuel

2. David

II. Claude Chastain - B. December 18, 1901, married Myrtle Price in Tuttle, Okla., in 1927. They have one son.

1. Russell Chastain, B. May 11, 1928. Russell and his wife, Ethel, have five children: Catherine Marie, Joan Elizabeth, Thomas Russell, James Robert and Paula.

III. Bernice Russellen Chastain was born November 18, 1909. Married Jim Foulson in 1933. They live in Waynesboro, Virginia. They are the parents of three children:

1. Patricia May Poulson, born 1935, married Owen Plymell.

They have two children, Brian and Susan .

2. James Thaddeus Poulson, b. 1936, married Annabel Montgomery.

They have four children: Rebecca, James M., Catherine, and

Robert.

3. Donald Chastain Poulson, b. 1937, married Carol Hamock.

They have three children: Stephen, John, William.

After the children were grown, Mr. E. Russell Chastain sold his businesses in Norman and he and Mrs. Chastain moved to a farm between Norman and New Castle, where they lived in semi-retirement. After they grew older the Chastains returned to Norman to be near their children.

E. Russell Chastain died in Norman, February 25, 1966, and was buried in the Norman Cemetery.

Mrs. Chastain continued to live in the home place on Elm St., Norman. She is now ninety-four years old, and until the last year she was able to be up and supervise her housework. She is mentally alert and enjoys having company to visit her and talk about old times.