

One time we got mixed up on our dates and worked all one Sunday, thinking it was Saturday. We started visiting the next day thinking it was Sunday and saw men working. We stopped and inquired why they were working on Sunday and to our surprise we were told it was Monday.

No crop was raised the first year, but in the spring of 1890 we began breaking land. Our neighbors, with several yoke of oxen, did the work. It seemed a shame to turn under grass. We could hardly see a cow when it was grazing in it.

Our first school was organized in 1890, I believe. The neighbors did the work and put up a log house for school and church. John Carver, Dave Miller, J. W. Ball and Rufus Sullivant paid for the land on which the school house was built. It was agreed Clearbrook should be the name of the new school since it was located near Clearbrook Creek. Mr. Vandever was our first teacher.

Just a few of my early experiences in the new country. I was 22 years old in 1889 and am 72 years old now in 1939."

MINNIE BALL

J. W. Ball died at the age of 78 in November 1933; he was buried in the Denver Cemetery east of Norman, Oklahoma. Mrs. J. W. Ball died in 1954 at the age of 87. She was buried in the I.O.O.F. Cemetery, Norman, Oklahoma.

Of the ten Ball children who lived to be adults only three of them are still living in Cleveland Country. They are: Mrs. Velma Carr, Ila Minnie (Mrs. Farmer Houck) and Miss Ella Ball.

THE FAMILY OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN BARTHOLOMEW

By Earl Bartholomew

In 1850, at Nobleville in Hamilton County, Indiana, James Bartholomew married Ruth Smith. A few years later they moved to St. Joseph, Missouri, and then to a farm in Brown County near Hiawatha, Kansas. Eight children were born of the union -- the five youngest in Kansas. Among these was Benjamin Franklin who was born in 1870.

In 1891 James made a trip to the newly opened Oklahoma Territory, became impressed by its opportunities, and bought a claim that had been staked in the 1889 "run". This was located about eighteen miles east of Norman, probably in Pottawatomie County but, in any case, close to the eastern border of Cleveland County. Returning to Kansas, to prepare for moving, James' enthusiasm for the new land was such that he and Ruth were soon followed by

These children were: the baby who died in Georgia, Velva, Ella, Velma, Viola, Era, Ruby, Wieley, Ila Minnie, Albert, Walter and Herbert. Ten of these children grew to adulthood.

This letter was written by Mrs. Minnie Ball to the Norman Transcript for publishing in The Norman Transcript, August 27, 1939. It describes the early life of the J. W. Ball family after they settled in Cleveland County, O. T., in 1889:

"We came to the Chickasaw Nation in 1888 from Georgia and rented a farm near Velma, Oklahoma, on Wild Horse Creek. Having heard of free land to be given away for homes, we came a year early.

My husband and brother came to Cleveland County the day of the opening. They camped on Little River with several other men. At 12 o'clock, April 22, 1889, they all started from camp, some on horses, some in ox wagons and some afoot. My husband was on a horse and he staked a claim on Clear Brook. My brother staked a claim adjoining this farm.

They cleared a little piece of land, built a log cabin, put up a little hay, and came for me and my babies. They loaded our belongings, which were scant indeed, into a wagon and about 50 hogs and 15 head of cattle were driven.

Travel was slow, as it was winter and very cold and sleet covered the ground. With the stock and no roads we made but a few miles in a day. At night the stock lay near the camp fire. We had to keep a fire going all night to keep warm.

We came by way of Purcell and the stock crossed the Canadian River without difficulty as there was but little water in it. The wagons however sank in quick sand and they had to be unloaded in midstream and the wheels raised by help of other men from Purcell.

We suffered many hardships due to the severe winter. Our cabin was crudely built and there was not a chink in the cracks. We managed to put up wagon sheets to keep a little of the snow and wind out. Thieves were plentiful. We had been here but a short time when 30 hogs disappeared. Wild animals were numerous and coyotes and wolves came around the cabin to howl. How well do I remember the first night that I and the babies were alone. Mr. Ball had gone to Purcell to get supplies as that was the nearest trading post. The wolves came and carried away all our small pigs and the other hogs made such a noise, I thought "my time had come". I could do nothing but pray.

Our water was carried one half mile from a spring. On wash days we carried our clothes to the spring and washed all day. Our nearest neighbor was one half mile away. All were good neighbors and helpful in time of need. We exchanged eggs for setting and the men helped each other with house raising. Timber was plentiful and in a few months most everybody had a good log house. Where ever we went we always had to take our ax and make our road. When the roads were surveyed we were a quarter of a mile from the road.

2. Michael
Married Debbie Hagen
 3. Gary David
 4. Dale Anthony
 5. Adrian Gail
- B. Lela Estelle, born April 10, 1935
Married Jerome Dunlap
1. Russell
 2. Lisa Ann
- C. John Earl - born May 3, 1938
Married Gail Jean Powell
1. Tammy Jean
 2. William Courtney
- D. William Paul - born June 1, 1945
Married Sherrill Cunningham
1. Lance Wayne
- E. Lee Courtney - born October 29, 1948
Married Cathy Busch

THE J. W. BALL FAMILY

By Ella Ball (daughter)

J. W. Ball was born in Georgia in 1855; he married Minnie McLellan in Georgia on December 23, 1885. Minnie was born in Alabama in 1866; her parents moved to Georgia and it was here she met and married J. W. Ball.

The J. W. Balls lived on a farm in Georgia; two children were born to them. One child died when a few days old, the other baby, Velva, grew to adulthood and moved with her parents to the Indian Territory and later to Cleveland County, O. T.

In 1888 the J. W. Ball family, with Mrs. Ball's brother, Angus McLellan, moved from Georgia to the Chickasaw Nation and settled on a farm near Velma on Wild Horse Creek to await the opening of the free lands to white settlement. While the Balls were living near Velma, their third child was born, a girl named Ella. In all, eight more children were born to Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Ball - altogether there were twelve children born to the family.