

256

Nettie Polk Johnson - 1885 -

Stella Polk Heims - 1887 - 1960

Verna Polk Stine - 1891 -

Verna was born in Cleveland County, Oklahoma.

After several years of farming near St. Joseph Mo., Grandpa Polk's itchy feet took him to Spanish Fort, in Montague County, Texas. Then to bigger, and "hopefully" better things, in the "Old Oklahoma" opening.

William, Sr., came to Oklahoma in 1889. He left Texas with a friend, Mr. Keck. He and Mr. Keck pooled their possessions so as not to be encumbered with too many material things. They came in a covered wagon pulled by mules. Each was owner of a mule. They left the wagon and possessions in the soldiers' camp near Adkins' Hill on the Canadian River, Chickasaw, Indian Territory.

They, with other "hopeful settlers", were massed on the south bank of the Canadian River ready to cross over, at the "Pistol Shot." They crossed the river into "Oklahoma", ^{at} (12) twelve noon, April 22, 1889.

My Grandpa told me, laughingly, "I rode that old gray mule as fast as he would go, my arms flapping, for about (30) miles before I found the land I wanted.

"I staked my claim at the four corners of the quarter section and rode round and round the borders. A man thought he could bluff me and chase me off, but I was the biggest and most threatening. He gave up to go on to find other land."

The Polk quarter section was one half mile west of what became the Corn School house. Grandpa dug out some of the bank and covered it with

branches cut from nearby trees, and dirt; planted a small plot in corn; went to Norman, the county seat, to file on his claim; and then he went back to Texas.

That summer (1889) he, with some family help, came back to build a house, barn, and fences, and plow the virgin soil. That fall he brought his family to their new home. Of course, they had to cross Indian territory. But had no trouble though they brought a great deal of live-stock. Family legend has it they brought ~~(60)~~ sixty head of beef cattle and milk cows, mules, and horses. Also chickens, ducks and turkeys. Anyway, a good crop was reaped in 1890.

But misfortune struck. It was in the spring of 1893 that a "cyclone" (tornado) dipped down in that part of Cleveland County. It devastated a swath two ~~(2)~~ miles wide and several miles long, from the ten mile flat eastward. Most all the buildings in that area were swept away. They were literally picked up and slammed down. The Polk house left a hole four feet ~~(4)~~ deep where it had hit the ground.

All the children, except baby Verna, were in the new dugout nearby-- so new that the door had not been attached. It had looked stormy all day, but Grandma was not afraid of storms, and was quilting. She especially wanted to finish that quilt. She was very proud of her forty ~~(40)~~ quilts, they kept her family warm. Baby Verna began to cry, so Grandma picked her up, and went to the storm cellar to be with the rest of the family.

Almost immediately the storm struck.

"Such noise!" Grandma recalled.

A quilt, probably the one Grandma had been working on, floated down in front of the dugout door. Grandma said she wanted that quilt! She was

bound and determined to have it! But she was kept in the cellar by the family, for fear something heavy might fall on her, or she might be blown away. That quilt, as well as the other forty, was completely ruined when the rain poured down as the storm winds passed on.

The only thing saved from their house was an old clock which had been screwed to the wall. It was found face down about one fourth mile from where the house had been. It started running again when it was picked up.

I can remember that old clock still keeping time many years later. I learned to tell time by that old clock.

Many miracle tales were told by the family and other^s about that storm.

One of Grandpa's horses was lifted out of the lot over the barbed wire fence without a scratch.

Some of the chickens had the feathers blown from their bodies, yet they lived.

A straw, unbroken, was found driven through a fence post.

There were many tales told by the neighbors of what they did to stay alive.

A man who lived across the road from Grandpa's home, had no storm cellar, but he had been digging a well. He jumped into the well. He was sure he was doomed when he saw a wagon falling directly above him, but it was blown somewhere else.

The Banks family were neighbors. Mr. and Mrs. Banks and a man to whom they had given shelter, were killed. A daughter, her husband and three of the Banks sons stayed alive by crawling against an embankment.

In 1909 the senior Polks moved to the town of Norman. Then the population there had been some food in the Polk dugout, such as milk and cornbread, but it was not edible because of the sand or dust which had penetrated everything. Mr. Polk, Sr., (William and Esther) died in the 1920's. They were One can imagine the plight of that family. Those children were hungry, cold and had no beds. Food, clothing, bedding, furniture and family heirlooms were blown away. The rain had ruined everything not broken to pieces. unassuming, but his family and friends paid attention to his opinion. Their first food was next day noon when friends (not in the storm) ^{path} came to their rescue. Took the family home with them, fed them and housed them.

Grandpa said, "I never ate so many beans in all my life. The Red Cross came to our aid and to the aid of the many other homeless families. Brought us food, mostly beans, and helped us to rebuild our homes."

The W. L. Polk's, Sr., not only raised their own nine (9) children, but when their son George's wife, Ella, died in Texas, they took to their hearts and gave ^{them} a home to his three daughters. turkey nests! She let me tag along

Birdie - Mrs. C. D. Tool, Elmond learning and loving nature's ways.

Alice - Mrs. Ben T. Fleming, Norman when I was bitten by a "rattle"

Ella - Mrs. A.B. Floyd, Norman (deceased) when it was a

Grandmother Polk went to Texas and brought the three "babies" back to "Oklahoma" to live with them. This was the summer of 1900. No more hunting

turkey nests or picking wild flowers after that.

When I was quite small I remember being with Grandma when she went to Norman to shop. I shall never forget how embarrassed she was when she accidentally opened the door of a saloon. There were more saloons in

The children of William and Esther Polk grew in "stature and wisdom." Norman at that time than there were grocery stores.

George married Ella Willett and lived in Texas until her death. Later

There had been some food in the Polk dugout, such as milk and cornbread, but it was not edible because of the sand or dust which had penetrated everything.

One can imagine the plight of that family. Those children were hungry, cold and had no beds. Food, clothing, bedding, furniture and family heirlooms were blown away. The rain had ruined everything not broken to pieces.

Their first food was next day noon when friends (not in the storm) ^{path} came to their rescue. Took the family home with them, fed them and housed them.

Grandpa said, "I never ate so many beans in all my life. The Red Cross came to our aid and to the aid of the many other homeless families. Brought us food, mostly beans, and helped us to rebuild our homes."

The W. I. Polk's, Sr., not only raised their own nine (9) children, but when their son George's wife, Ella, died in Texas, they took to their hearts and gave ^{them} a home to his three daughters.

Birdie - Mrs. C. D. Tool, Edmond

Alice - Mrs. Ben T. Fleming, Norman

Ella - Mrs. A.B. Floyd, Norman (deceased)

Grandmother Polk went to Texas and brought the three "babies" back to "Oklahoma" to live with them. This was the summer of 1900.

When I was quite small I remember being with Grandma when she went to Norman to shop. I shall never forget how embarrassed she was when she accidentally opened the door of a saloon. There were more saloons in Norman at that time than there were grocery stores.

he homesteaded a claim in Roger Mills County which later became part of Beckham County, Oklahoma. He took two of his daughters, ages seven and nine, to live on this claim with him. He later moved back to Norman so that his daughters might go to school. He never remarried.

Rosa married Dr. Dan Tucker. They lived in Paoli, Okla., where Dr. Tucker practiced medicine. The family moved to Norman where Dr. Tucker died. She, with her two sons, resided in Norman until her death.

John Polk - Johnny, a bachelor, had a farm in Pottawatomie County. He was the first of the children to die.

Maggie married Albert Harrison. They lived in Cleveland County, about one half mile north of Corn School. After about ten years residence in Cleveland County they moved, with their four sons, to Canada.

Jake (J.W.) married Beulah Whitten. They moved to Cleveland County and lived here until death took them. They raised eight children. Two of these children still reside in this county.

Nettie married John Johnson. They moved to western Oklahoma, and had a family of six sons. She still lives in Elk City, Oklahoma (1971).

William L., Jr. married Annie Payne. They moved west and homesteaded in the Big Pasture. They later moved back to central Oklahoma, with their four children. They are now living in Blanchard, Oklahoma (1971).

Stella married twice. First Orville Courtney; there were two girls from this marriage. Later she married Carl Heims. There were two girls from this marriage also. She lived most of her life in Norman.

Verna married Ezra Stine. They reared six children, three boys and three girls. They lived many years across the river in McClain County. Verna now resides in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico (1971).

The WILLIAM I. POLK, SR., FAMILY

By Alice Polk Fleming

William Isaac Polk, Sr., (1840-1927) was born in Hardin County, Kentucky, of Scotch Irish ancestry. The Polk ancestors came to the American Colonies before the Revolutionary War. William I. Sr., and three (3) of his brothers served three (3) years in the Union Army. One brother joined with the South.

After demobilization at the end of the Civil War, William I. came West, and eventually to Missouri where he met Esther A. Schuchman (1848-1922) and married her Jan. 26, 1868. Her parents had been born in Europe. They had met, married, and lived in Missouri. Her mother was born in England and her father was born in Germany.

The children of William and Esther, except one, Verna, were born before the parents came to Oklahoma. All of these children came in the year 1889.

These were:

George Wilson Polk - 1868-1942

Rosa L. Polk Tucker - 1870 - 1955

John Polk - 1872 - 1899

Maggie Polk Harrison - 1875 - 1961

Jake W. Polk - 1877 - 1954

William I. Polk, Jr. - 1880 -