

FAMILY PHOTO OF FAMILY OF HUGHIE MELTON

Back row, left to right: Otis Melton, Luna Melton Pierce, Freeman Melton, Ethel Melton Weaver, Howard Melton, Hazel Melton Adcock, Wayne Melton.
Front row, left to right: William Melton, Ida Melton Cherry, Hughie, Mattie, and Ed Melton.

(Circa: 1920)

Letter from John Dwight Melton, President, Benton County Historical Society:

Camden, Tennessee
Route 2
November 1965

Dear H.E.:

I wish to apologize for not answering your letter at an earlier date. I have been very busy and I don't get business attended to as promptly as I did when I was younger.

I very much appreciate the Will of John Melton which was made in 1797, one hundred and sixty eight years ago. I am passing this information on to others as I travel our Benton County.

The name John has been a common name in the Melton family for many generations.

When Cannon County Tennessee was organized in May 1836, John Melton was one of the first magistrates, which made up the first County Court of Cannon County. This court met in a tavern that belonged to Henry D. McBroom. The pioneer settlers of Cannon County.

This information is found in History of Tennessee, by John Trotwood Moore. This book was published in 1923, and is considered a very accurate work.

Benton County was organized in February 1836, just about one month after the organization of Cannon County. Cannon County is about fifty miles South East of Nashville. It is located in the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains.

Merritt Melton was one of the first Missionary Baptist Ministers of Benton County. When Susan Paffar and Americus Vick were married, in 1848, Merritt Melton performed the marriage vows. I notice that three Vicks witnessed the Will of John Melton made in 1797. Americus Vick was born in 1826. Merritt Melton was preaching in Benton County during the 1830's. He served as Trustee of Benton County from 1848-1852. I do not know, but believe that he was a son of Cooper Melton. According to the Census of 1840, which does not give much information, this man, Cooper, was born between 1770-1780. This would correspond with the Cooper named in the Will of the Old John Melton.

There have been so many John Meltons of past generations living in Benton County that this is a very confusing part of our history. John Wesley Melton, a very devout Methodist, built a church all by himself about a century ago. It was known as the Wesley Chapel Methodist Church. This old building was torn down about 15 years ago. It was a Northern Methodist Church.

John Wesley had a son born in 1854, who was a minister. I have heard him preach; his name was Newt Melton.

Joseph Melton, Mathew Melton, Cooper Melton, John Melton, Perry Melton, and James Melton have very early land entry records in Benton County.

Slon Melton, who was known as Si was born in 1802. He was part Cherokee Indian. He is buried on a high hill in the Harmon's Creek Community.

Most Meltons of Benton County have been believers in the Methodist doctrine, but it seems that Cooper and Merritt were leaders in the Baptist Church. Cooper deeded four acres of land to the Beaverdam Baptist Church in 1849. He entered this land in 1847.

This church was built at a very early date. The minutes show that the Baptist Association met in Beaverdam Church in 1824. I do not know, but believe that this could have been the oldest church in Benton County. When it was organized it was on part of the public lands that had not been entered. Just after Cooper Melton entered this land, he made a deed to the Deacons of this church.

Do you have the Federal Census of Benton County for 1850. I have the Melton families given in this census. If you wish, I will send a copy of this census to you.

Your friend,
John Dwight Melton

P.S. I would be glad to have a copy of the Melton Family History.

June 10, 1964

To the decedents of Hughie Melton:

On this day the writer made a search of the county records in Benton County Tennessee at the county court house in Camden. The purpose of the search was to find the antecedents of Hughie Melton. The task proved to be somewhat less than rewarding. Records of births and deaths were kept by the county only after about 1920 and then according to a state statute. Marriage records date back to the 1830's. Entries in the county records of deeds and land transactions date back to the 1820's.

Perhaps the most knowledgable person on the Melton family history was Mr. Roy Melton, the operator of the Melton Hotel in Camden, Tennessee. The writer received the following letter from him in 1953:

It would seem then that the Melton family in Benton County are descendants of either Joseph or Cooper Melton.

If, as Roy Melton stated, Mr. Hughie was a grandson of Joseph's brother then his branch is, of course, descendants of Cooper Melton.

LETTERS FROM AUNT RACHEL

The following are excerpts from letters to the writer from Mrs. J.A. Berry, Age 81, of Big Sandy, Tennessee:

June 1964

Sir:

In regard to Cooper Melton, he was my Grandfather's brother and there was another brother, Alvie Melton. My Grandfather's name was William. They had 7 sisters: Paty - married J.A. Berry; Sallie - never married; Morning - married a Melton; Mary Ann - married a Melton; Elmira - married J.A. Wheatley; Temple - married a Farmer; Elizabeth - married a Berry.

Their daddy's name was John Melton and their mother's name was Peggy Vester.

Hope this is what you want to know.

Yours,
Mrs. J.A. Berry
Eva, Tennessee 38333

P.S. Cooper Melton lived in Arkansas the last I knew and Joseph Melton was a cousin of them.

July 14, 1964

Melton,

Here is all the information I know. My Mother and Hughie Melton was Brother and Sister. There were my Mother and 4 boys, Hughie, Frank, Foster and Tommie. Their daddy's name was William and their Mother's name was Rachel. William Melton, my Granddaddy was born August 20, 1831.

William Melton had 4 brothers as follows: Alvie, David, and Cooper and had 8 sisters; Bell, Timpa, Patty, Sally, Morning, Mary, Elmira, Elizabeth. His father's name was Cooper and his Mother's name was Peggy Vester.

William died July 1, 1876. He married Rachel Holland. She was born April 14, 1838. She died July 3, 1919. She was 81 years old.

My mother was born in 1857, November 19 and died in 1933, Oct. 19.

I hope you understand that William Melton was my Grandfather and Cooper Melton was his father.

I am 80 years old last May and me and your Dad is own cousins. Me and you Aunt Ida writes one another quite often.

Hope you find this some help to you. I sure will appreciate a copy of your paper.

Yours,
Mrs. J.A. Berry
Eva, Tenn. 38333

July 29, 1964

Dear Mr. Melton,

In answer to your letter, I know all of your Father's sisters and brothers. Was raised up with them. Wayne was a baby when Uncle Hughie left here. I don't know any new information.

Berry Pierce's wife was Rachel Stockdale. I am glad I could help.

Yours,
Mrs. J.A. Berry

November 22, 1965

Sir,

Am sending you the record of my grandfather's family. Peggy Vester was my grandfather's mother. Her real name was Margaret. Peggy was a nick name. I imagine Cooper was an Uncle. Pervilly Melton - born November 19, 1857; Hughie Melton born October 7, 1858; Merrit Melton - born October 7, 1861; J.F. Melton - born July 14, 1867; T.J. Melton - born January 13, 1870.

William Melton was born August 20, 1831 and Rachel Holland was born April 14, 1838. They were married December 5, 1855.

Thank you for the copy of the Will.

Rachel Berry
Eva, Tenn.

LETTERS FROM UNCLE ED

Dear Herman and All,

Will answer your letter which was received yesterday. Was glad to hear from you and will forward your letter to sister Ida. Am sending the birthdate of all us kids.

NAME	BIRTH	DEATH
Carlos Melton	2/26/1884	
Ida Melton Cherry	1/23/1886	
Flora Melton Lowry	12/12/1887	4/28/1908
Luna Melton Pierce	3/27/1890	10/19/1965
Edgar Melton	1/26/1892	
William Franklin Melton	3/3/1894	12/12/1930
Howard A. Melton	3/4/1896	

Harvey Freeman Melton	12/25/1897
Hazel Melton Adcock	1/21/1900
Ethel Melton Weaver	2/24/1902
Otis Melton	1/20/1905
Wayne Melton	1/12/1907

Father Hughie Melton	10/7/1859
Mother Mattie Pierce Melton	9/16/1863

8/28/1945
11/4/1934

Love to all,
Uncle Ed
12-10-1965

In our conversations with R.E. Farmer of Quail, Texas in 1949, we learned that Hughie Melton's father married a Holland. He was very certain of this, but was hazy as to their given names. He thought it might be William and Mary.

LETTERS FROM UNCLE ED

The following are excerpts of letters from H.E. Melton of Pueblo, Colorado to the writer:

Dear Herman and family,

In reply to your letter, will give you all the information I can. I recall very well when we moved to Texas (from Benton County, Tenn.). I was the oldest boy at home. Mama had gone to visit her sister, Aunt Mary Phifer and was spending the night with her. The man who bought our place had paid Dad \$3,500.00 down. Dad had Flora and Luna iron out the money and sew it up in two different packages - one \$3,000 and one \$500. We didn't have mattresses for our beds. Had straw ticks with a feather tick to sleep on. Dad hid the money in the straw tick on his bed. The next day all the boys in the neighborhood were there to play. Dad told me to take the old straw ticks down to the wood lot and to burn them. We took them, eight in all, and made a straw heap on which we played for awhile. We decided to burn the straw. About the time it was burned up, Dad thought of the money. It was too late. The \$3,000 package had burned. While we were playing we kicked the \$500 batch out. The corner had burned off it. Dad found the \$3,000 package, but stuffed it in a fruit jar and mixed the numbers up. The Bank could not make heads or tails of it so Dad lost the \$3,000. He got new bills for the \$500 and meanwhile the fellow who bought the place paid Dad the other \$3,500 he owed.

We started for Texas, 10 of us kids still at home. We had killed 16 big hogs, meat smoked and boxed up for shipping. All our household goods got to Memphis. Met a crook there that knew Dad and knew he was carrying the money. He took us all for a street car ride and kept us until nearly train time. Dad hadn't transferred our belongings to the other Rock Island Railroad. He said, "you let me have the \$300 and I will transfer your stuff for you." So, Dad gave him \$300. Nothing showed up. Dad knew the

Postmaster at Memphis and wrote him to see if he could trace it down. He found the baggage at South Memphis. The man had pawned it for \$500 and skipped the country. It cost Dad another \$500 to get it out of the pawn shop. Dad still had his right mind. How, I don't know. We rented a place the first year. Had a hundred bales of cotton. I think Dad cleared nearly \$500 after picking costs. The next year, we built on our own place. Hauled water for one year for the house and stock.

One Saturday morning, I told Dad I wanted to dig a well with a drop auger. He said all right. I had a good little cow horse, so I pulled the drop auger up and down by saddle horn. We dug 100 feet the first day, and got the hole so crooked we could let a lantern down the hole and couldn't see the light. So, I had to stop the project. Dad got a well driller to set over the hole. He drilled two days with a tight rope straightening the hole out and went on down 25 feet. Got a good well of water.

I left Collingsworth County in 1915. Moved to Colorado. Homesteaded on a half section of land. Farmed it one year then the Draft got me for the First World War. Went to Camp Funston, Kansas. Had the spinal meningitis. Was discharged. Meanwhile, I had a sweet little girl waiting for me to return home. I was discharged on November 18 and we were married December 24, 1918. Ellen said you almost got her name right. It was Ellen Coulter.

My love to all,
Uncle Ed
11-17-65

MEMORIES OF THE TEXAS ERA

The writer, who first saw the light of day on July 25, 1920 remembers earliest and most of all the contacts with the Meltons and their kin. The years 1920-1930 were prosperous ones in Collingsworth County, Texas. Quail, Texas, the nearest village to his home, at one time or another during the decade, boasted Quail Mercantile, Long's Blacksmith Shop, Walker's Drug Store, Quail Gin Number 1 and Quail Gin Number 2 belonging to Paul and Walter Starr, Mike Gosnell's Quail Cafe, Jim Pierce's Hotel, Love's Service Station, Ward's Garage, the Telephone Central Office, Ogletree's Grain Mill, Beck's General Store, the Church of Christ, Quail Baptist Church, Quail Methodist Church, Quail Barber Shop, Masonic Lodge, and Grimes Store.

Also, lining the clay topped, but frequently sandy street, were the homes of Walter Starr, Etheridge Ward, Dr. Walker, Mrs. Blevins, Wes Hartman, Tom Crabtree, Curt Barton and Dry Tow. Other houses were rented to George Killingsworth, Sam Russell, etc.

The village social life really centered around the Quail Mercantile. Here one could sit all day on a fall Saturday and expect to see the major portion of the entire population of the outlying communities of Marella, King, Pleasant Hill, and Ring. Also, appearing would be numerous people

from Buck Creek, Salt Fork and Lillie. By the simple deduction of a few names of souls such as Zel Neely who owned a truck and El Woods whose profession was never clearly defined, the school teachers and the proprietors of the various establishments mentioned above, one could assume that every-one was of a cotton farming family. King Cotton ruled this central part of the county with a ruthless hand. On any given fall Saturday afternoon the writer could have been privileged to have the supreme thrill of accompanying his father Willie Melton on the four mile trip from the rented farm one-quarter mile south of Marella School to the Quail Gin. The trip would be made atop a towering wagon loaded with cotton pulled by four mules - two black, one brown and one red. His anticipation of joining the crowd in Quail was heightened by the knowledge that he would be there until way after dark.

Even a six-year old boy knew that at this time of the week the gin would be crowded. A line of wagons waiting to get "ginned" would line the one street and completely fill the gin yard. Usually, he was first taken to Grandpa Killingsworth's rented home which bordered the gin yard. The roar of the gin's Diesel engine had been in his ears for the past three miles. Now it was nearby and exciting. The Killingsworth home afforded a good headquarters for a prowling boy waiting for his father to get "ginned". From this frame house he could venture next door to the Quail Mercantile. Here he could spend one of his nickles for penny "B-Bat" candy and penny "O'Boy" chewing gum. The other nickel was reluctantly invested in animal cookies which were not eaten yet, but kept for play. The eating came after he tired of various arrangements of a circus. On occasions he was hesitant about spending the dime earned by picking a few handfuls of cotton alongside his father in the field that morning. This prudence was prompted by the tent show which was in town for the week and covered the vacant lot across the street next to Sol Beck's. "Ten Nights in the Barroom" was the silent film which would be shown after dark under the tent. Admission to this great spectacular was a nickel. Now the six-year old reasoned that he should buy the goodies at once because if his father got "ginned out" before dark he was as good as on his way home - the show notwithstanding. The last attraction that would have kept Willie Melton in Quail after he got "ginned out" was a "moving picture." The boy also reasoned that if the delay meant there would be time to see the show perhaps his father would weaken and produce another nickel. At any rate, it was pleasant to see the people come and go in the store and invigorating to stare at the display of "soda pop" in the mechanical marvel of the manual drink dispenser. Here, also were the only electric lights in central Collingsworth County. Tom Crabtree, who owned Quail Mercantile, and a Delco gasoline generator in a little lean-to back of the store which provided this marvel of incandescence. The big Diesel in the gin was the only mechanical device in Quail more interesting than the Delco. Next in interest came the forge next door in R.D. Long's blacksmith shop. Grandpa Killingsworth worked in there some. The boy was occasionally allowed to go in and watch the sparks fly out of the coals when Grandpa turned the blower handle on the forge. It seemed to the boy that R.D. Long was always black. He was short, fat, silent and always dirty. People said he had fathered twenty-one children.

Other technological marvels in Quail included the glass batteries filled with mysterious fluid, the wires and switchboard in the telephone "central office," the hand gasoline pump in Love's Service Station which dispensed gasoline to the Model T Fords, the rotary sewing needle can in Quail Mercantile, and the centrifuge in the cream testing station in the southwest corner of Quail Mercantile. It was great to be a mechanically inclined boy among all these wonders.

The social center also provided the boy with an opportunity to see friends of his own which he only saw at church or school. Bosom friend Bill Depauw lived across the road from the farm but during this time of year he may as well have lived in Pasquotank County, North Carolina, as far as getting to see him during the week was concerned. He probably would be in town that Saturday. The Brisbin and Aycock boys, all older, towered above as they entered the mercantile store. A six year old could be expected to marvel at their prowess on the outdoor clay basketball courts during the games between the various rural schools.

Most envied of all was Buel Taylor. His family gave evidence of affluence. Also, he was allowed privileges at home which turned his age equals green with envy. Buel was a born leader - daring, strong and aggressive. Most were somewhat afraid of him. He had few fights but should have had more. At any rate, he most likely stopped only briefly at the mercantile for he was on his way to Wellington, the county seat, with his family. Buel was an interesting, wonderful friend, who showed his respect and friendship in many nice ways. The colorful and mischievous Boutcher boys, Edgel and "Gotch", the nondescript Falls, the Allreds, Coffees, Grahams, Cagles, the Morgans, who were all great cow pasture baseball stars, the Robisons - a big brood, the Ogletrees, Pates, Blevins, Wards, Owens, Nunneleys, Childresses, Farmers, Claunch's, O'Hairs, Whites, Carmachs, Ewings, Weavers, Pierces, Smiths, Hammits, Aycocks, Meelys, Halls, Cummins, Morris, Glenns, Cherrys, Hookers, Atkinsons (the earliest settlers), and many others would make an appearance in the mercantile.

Other memories of Quail include summertime clandestine swims in the basin of the Quail Gin cooling tower, sneaking a look at the Masonic Lodge paraphanelia; the Tate Lax medicine shows on the lot of Ogletree's mill, the cistern under Tom Crabtree's porch, the scales at the Quail Gin (an engineering marvel), flying kites in Belvins' fields back of the "central office" with the Weaver boys, irritating old M.A. Grimes in his store, croquet games in back of the Post Office on the court built by Postmaster Otis Melton, the smell of the astringents in the barber shop run by Andrew Adcock who married Hazel Melton, the dust stirred by Charlie Depauw's truck loaded with bales of cotton, the water keg in the mercantile which still had indentations in its sides from a shotgun blast fired by a night watchman at a would be burgler, the vinegar barrel at the mercantile, and the marvelous Gin with its complex process and fascinating Diesel engine.

The most memorable of all of course, were the kinsfolks and friends. At the top of the list the writer places Uncle Cellus Weaver. Here was a

colorful character out of the ordinary. He married Aunt Ethel, Willie Melton's sister. The writer's memory there was never a time when two or more Meltons and their kin got together that a story about this legendary character was not told or repeated. The writer gleaned a few facts about his life over the years. He taught school at Marella (Aunt Ethel was a pupil then) married there, went to France as an ambulance driver in World War I, was a brother of Sam Weaver, the wealthiest man in the country, fathered eight children, taught school all over the county at one time or another, served as county agricultural agent in Howard County, owned two or three farms, ran a store in Quail for a while, liked to fish, had a captivating personality and sense of humor and could be, on occasion, a stern disciplinarian with children and their cousins. The Meltons and their kin all considered him brilliant. He was educated at Hardin-Simmons College and his intelligence was inherited by his children. Cousin Aubrey and R.H. were in the same age bracket as the writer and brother Hobart. Willie and Myrtle Melton and Cellus and Ethel Weaver practically reared their children together. Aubrey was the natural leader of the four boys. He was more advanced in school, could plan more activities (although on occasion disaster resulted) and had more initiative. Both Aubrey and R.H. graduated from Texas Tech. One to become a successful farmer and the other a county judge and practicing attorney. At any rate, Willie and Cellus hunted together, laughed at each other's antics and were as close as any two brothers.

Cellus, many times, was known to have loaded his family in a Model T Ford, after giving Ethel about thirty minutes notice, and driven a hundred miles to visit in-laws for the weekend. Myrtle was in the final stages of pregnancy with brother Hobart when an impromptu fishing trip over east of Aberdeen was decided upon by Willie and Cellus. Her condition did not deter these two. As a result brother Hobart is unsure to this day of his exact birthplace. He was born in the Aberdeen area of Collingsworth County very, very close to the Oklahoma border. While Cellus ran the store in Quail, Aubrey and R.H. were frequent visitors in the Melton home at Marella four miles north. Cellus, one day at dusk, hurried up to Marella to pick up the boys in his Model T. His haste was probably motivated by an unattended store. At any rate, a flat tire only delayed him the time required to rip off the tire, drape the tube over the radiator and resume his journey on the rim. The picture of this apparition tearing into the yard is still vivid. The tube was flapping in the wind and the noise of the wood spokes in the rubberless wheel is as clear today as when it occurred. There was no time for the cousins to engage in the usual farewells. His sons were hustled into the open car and were obscured by the dust of the Model T before Myrtle could gather up any articles of apparel which may have been shed by the barefoot visitors that day. The writer remembers a trip to visit the Weavers for a delightful two weeks. On the trip, Cellus made a never to be forgotten statement. He had generously driven up to Marella to bring the Melton boys back to Big Spring some two hundred miles away. As was frequently the case, on this occasion he was in a hurry. There was one stop made en route and that near Turkey, Texas.

Aunt Ethel, being well trained, quickly spread out a lunch of bread, lunch meat, pickles, cookies, etc. on a table at a roadside park. His only comments were "Eat til your eyes pop out boys, this is the last stop before Big Spring." The writer remembered this classic and imparted the same instructions to his own sons Eddie, Bill and Jamie on similar occasions. It is to this day an oft repeated story which these boys like to hear. Other stories are told about this lovable relative but are better repeated at family gatherings. He was a good provider, an excellent business man and a stimulating conversationalist and story teller.

Cousin Noal Pierce whose father Ernest Pierce married Luna Melton (who died in October 1965) was born and reared at Marella. Their farm was across the section line road north of Willie Melton's farm. Jim Pierce, Ernest Pierce's father, was one of the earliest settlers of the Marella community. He migrated from Benton County, Tennessee, as did Luna Melton's father, Hughie Melton. Jim Pierce was the first owner of the land Willie Melton broke and farmed and on which his children were reared. This farm was sold to Stannard Nursery Company of Emporia, Kansas, eventually. This nursery in turn sold trees to Jim Pierce. Some of these trees are still bearing pears and a few of the locusts still stand. Willie Melton was a tenant farmer of this nursery land. At any rate, the earliest possible memories include those of mischievous, handsome, generous, and popular Noal. He was admired by the Melton boys for his wit, daring and generosity. The entire family loved him, overlooked his mischief and recognized his love for them. His twin sister, Nola, was a dependable, quiet and extremely efficient person. She was in a like manner admired and copied by sisters Marie and Nina. Certainly some of the most enjoyable hours to be spent in a lifetime were the visits to the nearby Pierce home with its locust grove. There it seemed every variety of bird could be found. These were hunted relentlessly by Noal and the Melton boys. Luna and Myrtle fought admirably for the protection of their mocking birds. Their forbidding the destruction of this noisy native only made the bird more of a choice game to Noal and the barefooted Meltons. A "nigger shooter" (slingshot) was standard equipment for the three. Aunt Luna ranked among the best cooks in the clan. Her biscuits, pear preserves and stewed corn will never be equalled by anyone. All of Hughie's daughters were good cooks and prided themselves as such. The writer awards her his first prize, however.

Ernest Pierce was a good businessman, an excellent farmer and a good story teller. He had the good sense to maintain a daily diary covering several decades. Nola Pierce, who married neighbor Wilbur Depauw, plans to preserve this diary. A history of the latter day Meltons could no doubt be written from information carefully recorded in that document.

Uncle Ed Melton was a favorite of the clan. He had a sparkling wit, loved a joke and had an infectious laugh. He remembers very well the move from Big Sandy, Tennessee to Quail with the family. Ed tried to

drill the first well on the homeplace by using a rope and drop auger powered by his cow pony. He left home in 1915 to homestead in Baca County, Colorado on a half-section of land. The World War I draft caught him and he was sent to Camp Funster, Kansas, where he contracted spinal meningitis and received a medical discharge. Ed married Ellen Coulter, whom the writer as a boy thought to be the most beautiful woman in the family. Ed loved croquet and had a court in his backyard in Pueblo, Colorado. All the clan loved to visit Pueblo where Howard and Carlos also lived. Ed was a carpenter who worked for Nuckolls Packing Company for years. Howard rose to the top with Continental Baking Company. Carlos worked for several years in the C.F.&I. Steel Mill in Pueblo. These three uncles were wonderful hosts. A vacation in Pueblo was something to look forward to and a welcome diversion from the cotton chopping. The three practically devoted their full time entertaining visiting Meltons, Weavers, Pierces, Cherrys, and Adcocks. Their food bills no doubt doubled in the summertime. Their habitat was simply too inviting. At any rate, Ed was the ring leader in all pranks and verbal jesting of visiting kinsmen. The writer is a namesake of his (because of the closeness of Ed and Willie, no doubt.)

Of course, the natural meeting place for the clan was at Grandfather Melton's farm home. This farm was located one mile south and one and a half mile west of Marella store and Marella School was four miles north of Quail. Grandfather and Grandmother Melton bought the farm in 1908 and began improving it. The two story frame house was cool and pleasant in the summer and warm in the winter. Underneath the house was a basement called the storm cellar. To cousins John, Tom, Ed, Bill, Ethel, Noal, Nola, Conrad, Laura, Lois, Buford, Aubrey, R.H., Junior and Mozelle, sisters Marie and Nina and certainly brother Hobart, the greatest attraction on Grandpa's farm was the "tank". Today, it would be called a swimming pool. The tank was partially underground and measured about 20'x12'x5'. It was fed by a windmill powered water well (which cowhand Ed Melton began and couldn't finish) and stood adjacent to the well house. Here was the scene of many Sunday afternoon family gatherings. The older intrepid ones would show off their diving skills by plunging off the roof of the well house. Jim Cook, Wayne and Otis Melton, John and Tom Cherry were the most versatile aquanauts. Noal Pierce usually spent his time goading Aubrey, R.H., Conrad and the others into attempting feats beyond their abilities. They would have dived off the windmill tower to please him. The older aunts, uncles and grandparents stood around the outside and watched while the younger ones showed off in the water. None of the clan who were a part of this will ever forget it.

A family reunion always fit the same pattern. From Colorado came Ed, Howard and Carlos. From somewhere came the Weavers. From Shamrock came the Cherrys. From Wellington would come Freeman: from Lutie would come Jim Cook. Others from all over the country came and all brought food and families. There was always much laughter, picture taking, ribbing, swimming, tree climbing, etc. All the women who were overweight (and there were several) were kidded unmercifully. Most of the time was spent telling funny stories about other members of the clan or about Big Sandy, Tennessee, happenings. The dinner was incredibly delicious. Grandmother never submitted to the institution of the buffet. She insisted that

everyone sit at the huge dinning room table. Since no more than twelve could be served at one time there were always "tables". At first "table", of course, were the distinguished and seldom seen adults from Colorado. If no case could Aubrey, Hobart et al expect to eat before fourth "Table". To children who had already sneaked to look and sniff at the feast, the wait was pure agony. Aubrey, being the most articulate, usually served as the grievance committee. He always did an excellent job of pointing out this injustice to the elders but always failed to get the system changed. Despite this discrimination no cousin ever polished off one of those meals of fried chicken, iced tea, country ham, potato salad, pickled beets, boiled cabbage, green beans, stewed corn, cucumbers, chow-chow, black-eyed peas, corn bread, biscuits, wild plum jelly, pear preserves, onions, sliced tomatoes, cantaloupe, fruit salad, grape juice cobbler, coconut pie, chocolate cake and banana pudding without admitting to himself that the feast was worth every tormenting minute of the wait.

Other memories of Grandpa and Grandma Melton's home include accompanying brother Hobart on the two mile walk over there on Saturday evening to spend the night. Next morning, the ride to church in Grandpa's luxurious navy blue buggy pulled by two fine horses was most pleasant. He scorned the auto apparently. In their backyard were two huge mulberry trees. A boy could not be expected to understand the concern adults expressed in regard to his overeating of this delicious produce. The prolific orchard had apricots, peaches, cherry, plums and dew-berries. Grandmother like guineas, geese, ducks and chickens and they had open range in the yard. The most memorable of all was the smell of Grandma's kitchen. The source of this heavenly aroma is unknown to this day. She never had running water, but probably had the cleanest kitchen in Collingsworth County. Most of the cousins could not be forced to eat boiled cabbage at home. At her house though, it seemed a delicacy. Furthermore, she could boil cabbage in her kitchen without creating a disagreeable odor. Ranking with her cabbage in delectability was a Tennessee import called hoeecake. She was the sole master of this dish which had in its process the pouring of boiling water over a batter which was fried. Many times, the boys were amused by the noise of Grandpa's false teeth as he devoured her hoeecake and grinned back occasionally.

This woman was unquestionably the rock of the family. Her character was as impeccable as her dress. She took an active interest in the lives of every member of the clan. Without hesitation, she would give a tongue lashing to any erring son or grandson. Her judgement was respected and pleasing her was the ambition of every member of the Melton family. Grandma left her mark on the clan and each of them is indebted to her for the wonderful Christian example her life portrayed.

Other memorable characters include Uncle Willie Cherry whose gruff manner was only a front for a gentle heart. It is still said in the Melton family that all babies would leave their mother's arms to go to his. The writer remembers as a child being fascinated with his talk. His very, very earliest recollection consists of Uncle Willie holding him in his lap and placing his little hands on the steering wheel of a Model T Ford and driving from "Uncle" Sam Weaver's farm to the Merc.

Uncle Willie and Aunt Ida had handsome children. Ethel was once chosen "Miss Shamrock." Ed was great athlete. At Hardin-Simmons University as a football player, he was chosen Little All-American Fullback. W.T. Jr. was a graduate of Kelly and Randolph Field and as a flyer achieved much success. He had an outstanding war record. As the pilot of Eddie Rickenbacker's plane, he pancaked a bomber into the South Pacific and spent twenty-one days on a raft. He received worldwide publicity when found. During the war, he served as a ferry pilot and also "flew the hum" in Asia. Bill has logged thousands of hours as an American Airlines Pilot.

Twins named Paul and Pauline were the youngest of the Cherrys. Paul died as a child in one of the early sad occasions in the family.

One summer the Willie Meltons and Willie Cherrys took a trip to the Arkansas and Missouri Ozarks in two Model T Fords. The stories of this trip could comprise a book. Poor Lois spent her time taking care of young ones. It is invariably mentioned when the infrequent contacts between the two families are made to this day.

John Cherry is remembered for his participation in numerous telephoned musical concerts. The three, which also included brother Hobart, would gather around the Pierce's telephone and call sister, Marie. To the accompaniment of John's guitar, the three voices harmonized on current ballads for Marie's benefit and also hopefully for the benefit of other eavesdroppers on the rural party line.

Hughie's younger sons were Freeman, Otis, and Wayne. Freeman spent all his adult life employed by Traders Compress Company, a cotton processing station in Wellington. He began working for them around 1923 and was made Superintendent around 1947 and/or 1948. He was one of the more fortunate Meltons who had a good job through the Depression. Aunt Sudie was a Stephens and a sister to Carrie who married Wayne Melton. She brought two sons and two daughters into the world. Freeman, Jr. was a graduate of West Texas State where he starred in football. After graduation he coached awhile and later became a school principal at McLean, Texas. There are many pleasant memories surrounding childhood days with Cousins Mozelle, Conrad, Junior, and Claudine. They are certain to remember the Saturday afternoon movies at Wellington's Ritz Theater. A western serial frequently prompted the four Melton children from Marella to visit the four Meltons in Wellington on a summer Saturday afternoon.

Otis Melton remained single until his early thirties. He always owned the sportiest auto in the county and was most popular with the county belles. After marriage, he served as Postmaster in Quail. He was a soldier during World War II. Otis' marriage to Mary Frances Allen produced a son who died while still a boy. This was another of the sad events in the family.

Wayne was one of the more gifted Meltons. He is remembered as a good machinist and very adept with his hands. Possessing an incredible marksmanship and being an avid hunter, Wayne could perform unbelievable

feats with a 22 calibre rifle.

Howard Melton, who is mentioned earlier, married Verna Estes. Their only child, Artha Mae, became a beautiful woman. Howard was one of the more personable Meltons. His personality served him well in the sales department of Continental Baking. Everyone instinctively liked him. Howard survived World War I and was in France. The writer remembers Howard reciting some of the humorous experiences of his life in the A.E.F.

Carlos Melton married Erna Martin and also raised four children; Raymond, Darrel, Almeda, and Bruce. Uncle Carlos was a gentle, kind, and lovable man. He lived a Christian life and was a good stabilizing influence on the family. Son Ray studied Law in Colorado and later served prominently in the Veterans' Administration. He was a Naval Officer in World War II. Darrel was very successful with an aircraft company in California and like Wayne was a crack shot. Carlos had charming children indeed.

The most loved of all Meltons was William. Willie spent his entire adult life in ill health and finally died of cancer at age 37, December 10, 1930. As a father he accepted nothing less than his children's best efforts. He never expected perfection, but expected each to try to achieve it. Willie Melton's funeral is remembered to this day as the largest attended in the history of Quail Cemetery. This man led a God Fearing Life. As one of the earliest members of the Marella Methodist Church, he served as an official, helped build the new building, and figured prominently as a layman in Collingsworth County Methodism. As a Christian, he fought all forms of evil and listed alcohol and tobacco consumption at the top of his list. His Christian life never made him dull for a moment because he possessed such a dynamic spirit. Pioneering was almost an obsession with him. He had many firsts which included the first radio in the Marella Community. This crude battery powered table set was fashioned by his hands into a cabinet at least two years before manufacturers began producing cabinet models.

Placing Mother Myrtle and three children into a covered wagon, Willie momentarily followed the lure of cheap land which lay near Farwell, Texas. It was a disastrous financial venture, but the writer believes it satisfied in Daddy an urge to emulate his father and mother, who eighteen years before had moved West. At any rate, he was an extremely resourceful and self-reliant man.

The writer's fondest memories of Father Willie include the trap line. On the nearby Bourland Ranch he trapped for coyotes, skunks, and badgers. Arising long before daylight the eight year old boy was thrilled to be lifted into the small home built wagon and covered with a blanket for the trip around the trap line. Willie took along his Remington 22 pump rifle and when approaching a trap he would emit his inimitable chuckle if he smelled "skunk." By lantern light, and from a safe distance, never more than one shot was required to still the chemical warrior in the trap. The boy was thrilled, as Daniel Boone never was, if a coyote was found struggling in one of the skillfully laid traps. Here, again,

this crack shot impressed his son. These experiences are the greatest a boy every had. He always knew his father loved him because his father always took him along to the trap line, the baseball games at Plymouth, and the cotton gin at Quail. Mother Myrtle was an ideal wife for him. She too was resourceful. Her obedience to him was testimony to the respect he naturally commanded.

Space does not permit the accounts of the experiences with, and the memories of Daddy possessed by sister Marie, Hobart, Nina and the writer. Suffice it to say that in all their eyes he was Christlike and his influence on their lives is everlasting. These four remember most vividly a few incidents involving Daddy such as the time he caught his hand in a plow and called for help, his building of the blacksmith shop on the farm (what a place for a nine year old mechanically inclined boy), his overabundant peanut crops, his troubles with a spirited mule, his hog venture, his midnight encounter with the drunk Oldham boys in the Marella Church, his planting of the cherry trees, his craving for cold milk, his building of the most modern well house in the country, his providing Myrtle with the most advanced laundering equipment therein, his becoming wrathful when a child lied to him, his chuckles at the antics of his brothers, the courage with which he faced death and the cheerfulness with which he endured pain and ill-health. His health problem began as a boy who worked in the cold one day when he was, unknown to his parents, infected with chicken pox. The descendants of this intrepid man will do well to find out more about him.

It is most unfortunate that time and space do not permit the mention of all the Texas branch who contributed to the fellowship and enhanced the family pride. It is hoped that this work motivates another product of that era to provide this and it should be done.

Collingsworth County is colorless not, but it was not always so. Who could forget the beauty of Uncle Bud Farmer's home which was equipped with gaslight and surrounded by great trees, Aunt Penny Farmer's geese and her garden. The Bourland Ranch was a lovers' paradise and lured barefoot boys irresistably. The crowded square in the county seat of Wellington on an October Saturday afternoon, where busy Jewish merchants outfitted the cotton families with a year's apparel. This was the place where everyone in the county came to see and be seen. The Salt Fork River where Noal tempted the quicksand lay two miles north of Marella Rural School. Here on this river practically every boy spent April Fool's Day playing hookey unless the school provided a picnic there. This river had a tremendous fascination. To a ten year old, the most beautiful spot in the world was the confluence of Gyp Creek and Salt Fork River. Normally, the river bed, which was a quarter of a mile wide, contained a stream which could be easily waded across. However, the roar of the waters during a "headrise" could easily be heard at Marella. At these times, a cloudburst or downpour to the west caused the river to flow bank to bank.

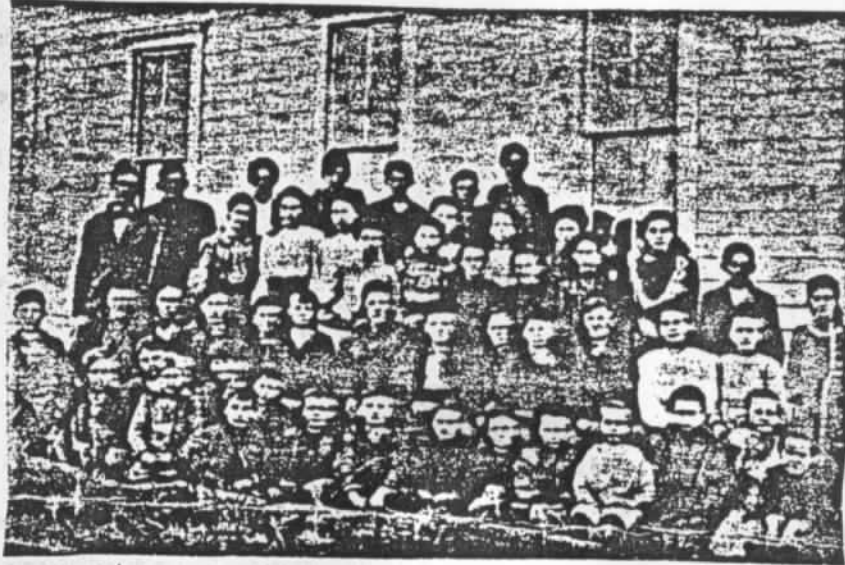
Other memories include the consolidation of the county schools, Mr. and Mrs. Duggins, who taught school at Marella, the robbery of Marella Store, the Epworth League, the Literary Society, the political "speakings," the Church of Christ revivals, the Friday afternoon basketball games with Dozier, Lillie or Salt Fork. Old Black the family dog; the terror of the "clouds" that came in the spring and drove everyone to the storm cellar while it obliterated the cotton crops, the devastating sandstorms, hog killing time, cookouts with Bill Depauw in the shinnery groves, the horsemanship of Guy Bell while riding the mare "Glass Eye", the Bell barn in which tomboy Vaudine Bell starred in "follow the leader;" the lean Depression years in which many survived partly by the generosity of storekeepers Swifty Dowdy, Tom Crabtree and M.A. Grimes; spending the night with the Carmacks, Val and Gerald, who were Killingsworth cousins; the Red Barn which was a landmark between Marella and Quail; and the rigors of living in a house without running water or electricity where one's breath sometimes formed frost on the bedcovers during the night.

The recording of all the boyhood impressions and the events surrounding the lives of the Meltons in those years in the Texas Panhandle is not intended here. This environment did leave an indelible mark on all who lived there. Here the family was closer than ever before or since. The memories deserve the space allotted them regardless of the writer's feeble attempt to record them.

It will be left to others to illuminate and elaborate of this phase in the history of the "Rulers of Harmon Creek."



WILLIAM AND MYRTLE KILLINGSWORTH MELTON (Circa: 1920)



MARELLA SCHOOL PICTURE - 1910

Some of those pictured here are:

Myrtle Killingsworth Melton (Front row, 3rd from right)
 Retha Killingsworth Brooks
 Ethel Melton Weaver
 Howard Melton
 Ernest Pierce
 Luna Melton Pierce
 Francis Pierce Weaver
 Claud Killingsworth
 Aleter Killingsworth Carmack
 William Melton
 Oscar Martin
 Ed Melton
 Hazel Melton Adcock
 Otis Melton
 Eva Pierce Pearson

THE WILLIAM MELTON FAMILY

William Franklin, son of Hughie and Martha Melton, was born in Big Sandy, Tennessee, 1894. In 1907, he came with his parents to Collingsworth County. Though handsome and popular, he would die young - a victim of cancer.

Among his young friends was an earlier pioneer: Claude Killingsworth. Willie would marry Claude's sister, Myrtle, seven years younger. Myrtle recalls parties at the Meltons during which she preferred to sit by his sickbed while others played.

After their October 7, 1917 wedding, they rented a 120 acre farm and broke virgin soil while constructing a Panhandle type storm cellar. Next, Willie drilled a fine coveted water well.

He built a two room prairie shack just prior to the appearance of Willie Marie -- so named because Myrtle expected Willie to soon be a part of Pershings A.E.F. and wanted a namesake. Willie's health eliminated him from service.

By 1926, three more children arrived. Willie added room as they opted to expand tenant operations as opposed to land acquisition. They would eventually till 250 acres without ownership. They were continuously improving farm equipment, expanding hog and cattle production and had a promising blacksmith shop.

The multi-talented and inventive Willie was the best smith in Marella, with adequate masonry and carpentry skills, also. He designed and built ingenious and unheard of livestock self-feeders. Being ahead

of his time, he built a prototype cotton boll harvester. Willie's battery powered radio set, the first in Marella, triggered his most ingenious invention. He built a cabinet to house his Atwater-Kent at least five years before RCA introduced a similar cabinet radio. He ran a profitable trap line, loved outdooring, and followed baseball devotedly.

Like their parents, they were active in building new schools and churches including Marella Methodist.

Myrtle was the best seamstress in Marella. Her talents always found their way into school play costumes. Her work for family and friends was usually gratis.

Willie served on the School Board and was active in county Democratic Party politics. Politicians coveted his influential support.

As their parents before them, two decades earlier, they headed West by covered wagon to occupy cheap land near Farwell, Texas, 200 miles away. Drought and health problems forced a subsequent return to Collingsworth County.

On a memorable occasion, shortly afterwards, a spring tornado coincidentally struck their farm and the county courthouse. Willie was on jury duty in the Wellington courthouse, dodging flying bricks while Myrtle and her three terrified children were trying to close the storm cellar door at home. Willie returned to find his barn roof askew.

Cancer eventually devastated his body and depleted all resources at age 37, in 1930. A two mile long funeral procession on an icy

December day spoke eloquently of his reputation.

Their issue:

Willie Marie, 1918, married Russel Brewer
Herman Edgar, 1920, married Helen Louise Dunn
Hobart Dawson, 1922, married Barbara Harrison
Nina May, 1926, married Tom Cole

They deserve to be called pioneers.

Herman E. Melton
Chatham, Virginia

THE GEORGE KILLINGSWORTH FAMILY

The Killingsworth Family is a relatively small family in America. They apparently made their first appearance in the Georgia Colony in the 18th Century.

Among the earlier pioneers in the Marella Community was the family of George Washington Killingsworth. He was born the son of Everett Killingsworth and Sarah Martin in 1860. He married Sally McGill at Conway, Arkansas in 1887. Thomas McGill and Caroline Lane of Tennessee were the parents of Sally.

The couple moved to Denton County, Texas, in 1888 and resided there until 1898. When they moved to Young County, Texas. The lure of cheap, rich Panhandle land induced the couple to leave their worn out land again. Their oldest child, Irene, was thirteen and the youngest, Aleater, was a babe. They left with three covered wagons for Collingsworth County and arrived there on October 10, 1902.

For four years, they existed on a farm rented from I.D. Atkinson, probably the earliest Quail pioneer. In 1906, George, Bill Price and Jim Kirby bought a section of land at Marella. After dividing it equally, they drilled a water well at a common intersection. George then built a 28 x 18 foot half-dougout for quarters. In 1912, he built a house adjacent to the dugout. The dugout was used for a kitchen during the years that they reared their children.

The couple later homesteaded in Colorado, in pursuit of cheap land again.

George loved telling hair-raising stories of prairie fires, twisters and Salt Fork headrises to his grandchildren. To them, he described the rising of countless covey of quail and prairie chicken ahead of the wagons as he rode a community trail. He possessed a historian's mind and indelible memory. George astounded listeners by being able to recall the exact date and locale of the first meeting of every person he knew. He could also recount the events of the day.

George and Sally returned to Collingsworth County in 1919 finally retiring on a small farm on the outskirts of Hedley, Texas. Here, the couple celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1937. Many kinfolk: Killingsworths, Martins, Carmacks, Amersons, Dowdys and Meltons attended.

George was to die there a year later.

Sally died in Wellington in the fifties.

Their Issue:

Irene, 1888, married Walter Martin
Carolyn, 1890
Mantie (Maude) 1901, married Oscar Martin
Clarence, 1892, married Hattie Russell
Claude, 1894, married Mabel Muncie
Retha, 1898, married (1) Wesley Breeden (2) John Dowdy (3) Rex Brooks
Myrtle, 1901, married (1) William Melton (2) Joe Payne (3) Floyd Ray
Lois Aleater, 1902, married Austin Carmack
Everett (Jack), 1903, married Alice Baggett
Ruth, 1907, married Cecil Amerson
Fay, 1909, married (1) Orbie Hartman (2) Bowie Robinson (3) Charles Rosenberg

The house George built is still standing on the farm now owned by Monty Mitchell. The casing in the old, unused well remains. The shelter-belt, planted there by the WPA in 1934 is verdant. Its stately trees stand

guard over soil that was untouched until broken by two sturdy pioneers --
George and Sally Killingsworth in 1906.

Herman Melton
Chatham, Virginia

Note to Publisher: The above material is lifted from the book, SASSAFRAS
SPROUTS, also written by the writer. Permission is hereby given for its
publication

H.E. Melton

THE HERMAN MELTON FAMILY

Herman Melton, born at Marella to a pioneer county family in 1920, married Helen Louise Dunn of Kansas in 1944.

He is a graduate of The United States Merchant Marine Academy. She graduated from Averett College. Herman spent his career in engineering, in the natural gas industry. Helen was an educator. Upon retirement, they worked two short-term contracts in Africa, teaching at the Algerian Petroleum Institute. Both hold Masters Degrees from The University of Virginia.

Their issue:

Dr. Edgar Melton, born 1946, graduated from Hargrave Military Academy, University of North Carolina, and Columbia University. He was awarded the Purple Heart after being wounded in Viet Nam. His wife is the former Mary Stilwell, Sapulpa, Oklahoma. He has a son, Seth, born 1967.

Dr. Melton is employed by The University of California Medical School, San Francisco. He was an IREX Fellow in Leningrad, Russia, 1976-77.

William Franklin Melton, II, born 1949, graduated from Northfield/Mount Hermon School and The University of Virginia. He has two sons: Cooper (7), McCann(5). He is married to the former Eliza Childs of Holyoke, Massachusetts.

He is Director of Development of Northfield/Mt. Hermon School, the largest coed prep school in America.

Dr. James Van Horn Melton, born 1952, is a professor at The University of Arkansas, Little Rock. He is a graduate of Northfield/Mount Hermon School, Vanderbilt University, and The University of Chicago.

He spent four years in Europe researching on a Fulbright Fellowship.

This bottom section is a reproduction of a card I received from the Research Library on the grounds of the Alamo at San Antonio, Texas.

I received the recognition for some research I did on the genealogy of Eliel Melton, a Lieutenant Quartermaster in the Texas Army, who died in the Alamo, March 6, 1836, the date of the Battle of the Alamo. Apparently he was related distantly to us. His father was Jonathan Melton of North Carolina. I found out for the library that he was (1) already a veteran (2) he received a Land Grant from the State of George in 1827 (3) that the bronze plaque with his name on it, which hangs on the wall of the Alamo is in error by listing his birthplace as being in South Carolina. (I love upsetting applecarts like this.) He was born in Clark County Georgia.

If you are ever in San Antonio, go to the Alamo and tour it. Then go to the Research Library at the rear of the grounds. Ask for Eliel Melton, a Defender's folder. They will courteously bring you some very interesting material. Buy the book "A Time To Stand", by Lords. It will tell you how he died.

Eliel had no children since he never married, and was 40 years old when he was killed. He was recruited by Davy Crockett. I have a reproduced copy of the Land Grant given his heirs around 1848, by the Republic of Texas. It consisted of around 1900 acres near Johnson City, Texas.



THE DAUGHTERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS
ACKNOWLEDGE WITH GRATITUDE YOUR GIFT TO THE LIBRARY

Milton Armentary Matua!

SYNOPSIS

Inundated by the waters of the dammed up Tennessee River is the Tennessee home of Hughie and Mattie Melton. Submerged too, or cleared out for progress, are most of the Harmons Creek sassafras sprouts. Forced off the land by the elements, economic pressures and the inevitable progress are most of the cotton farmers in the Texas Panhandle. Gone is the memorable old house which contained Granmother's soft feather beds and the delightful smell. Gone is Marella School, Bud Farmer's home and Otto Weaver's huge family. No trace at all remains of Marella Methodist Church and many, many other things which were once so near and dear. If this manuscript stirs memories in the hearts of those who lived in that era, or provides future descendents with prideful family knowledge, it will have achieved its intended purpose.

Perhaps in the future, the family will again, in some other locale, achieve a position of prominence similar to that in the days when it was said, "The Meltons and the sassafras sprouts rule Harmons Creek."

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