

Early Day Pioneers
Mobeetie Texas 1877-1899
James Alexander Clark was a Mobeetie Ox Freighter. He was born August 17, 1845 in Mississippi. He knew hardship and hard work as a child when his parents lived near Cumberland, Mississippi. His mother died when he was a child. Jim did not get along with his new stepmother so he ran away from home. He lived with his aunt and uncle near Viaden, Mississippi. He joined the Confederate army at the age of 17. He instructed his guardian to buy land with all the money he sent home. They didn't just save it in a chink in the mantle fireplace. He was captured in the Battle of Vicksburg, Mississippi. When he was free he sent home to learn that his savings were worthless, being in Confederate dollars. Shortly after the war ended he went west. In 1870 he was near La Junta, Colorado. He was a cowboy.

He met Amanda Kirkpatrick in La Junta, Co and they were married there. Amanda was living with her grandfather Anderson. Their son Walter Alexander was born there March 18, 1875. They decided to return to the Texas Panhandle in the spring of 1877. The families were that of Henry Madison Anderson, his sons William Walter Anderson, John Anderson and grand son-in-law James Alexander Clark. They traveled in caravan with cattle, horses, farm animals and equipment, and household goods. The trip was plagued with problems. At one point James lost his temper with a young mule that was not working in the harness. He cut the mule out from the team and cut its throat with his pocketknife. The Anderson children saw this, young John and siblings took the mule and doctored it. The knife only scratched the mules' tough hide. The children stayed clear of James with his red hair and temper to match. The mule was their prize pet thereafter. Amanda drove one wagon with her two-year-old son, Walter. The caravan ran out of water one day. Walter suffered so that day and cried often. Amanda would pacify him by saying that there may be water over the next hill. They topped the hills his wailing became louder; finally they located some water near nightfall. Amanda thought nothing of driving one of their wagons, even though she was just weeks from delivering their second son James Wesley Clark. This was not a pleasant trip for anyone.

Henry and W. W. Anderson settled on the Chicken Creek,

making shelter for their first summer. James and Amanda settled on a draw on Sweetwater Creek near the Red Rock School that James helped to build a few years later. He was proud to throw off the first rock for its construction. They named the draw Clark Draw. The first house they built was of sod. There was no lumber to be found at that time. Windows and doors came much later. They had been in their Soddy home just a few days when on July 29, 1877 James Wesley Clark was born. James began a small operation of hauling freight for the Army at Ft. Elliott, then later for the merchants of Mobeetie. When traveling with empty wagons through the vast areas where the buffalo had been killed, there would be bleached

bones as far as the eye could see. James and his helpers would gather buffalo bones to be sold at Dodge. Fertilizer and buttons were made from the bones. Some bone yards were fifty feet high. Most of the time he hauled from Ft. Dodge Kansas, then later Ft. Supply, and even from Wichita Falls, Texas. James used oxen to pull his wagons. They were superior in some ways. Their digestion was such so that they could graze a short while in the evening and thrive. Horses and mules could graze all night, start the day tired and be undernourished to do work of the day, so lost weight and strength. There was another well-known ox-freighter operating at that time, L. B. Anderson, a nephew of Henry Madison Anderson.

The first spring on their homestead brilliant flowers bloomed from the sod covering the roof of their sod house. Birds even nested there. They had very little trouble with Indians, but some did. Renegade Indians slipped off the Oklahoma Reservations and raided the

settlers' homesteads or would catch them away from protection and attack. They stole livestock continually. During the summer-time the Clarks ate under a brush-covered arbor, it was cool there and sometimes they slept there. One day as the family was having dinner an angry Indian charged the family as they sat at the table. James grabbed his rifle quickly to shoot the Indian, but he turned his horse just before jumping over the table. Sure scared the family.

Henry Madison his wife Sarah Collier, and their Negro cook and her two children moved from Chicken Creek to the mouth of Gageby Creek, mostly because his cattle kept running off to that area to graze the better grass. Henry built a southern style home, he lived in one structure, and the cook and her children lived in another structure connected by a dogtrot made of pickets. Mary Anthony cooked in her part, and delivered meals to the other part of the house.

The Indians were given commodities of food at the various Agency Warehouses. They took their allotment, even if they did not want all of it. One Kiowa man told of emptying out the flour making a big pile in front of their shelter. The whole family would run through the pile of flour making themselves white-men, with much laughter and fun. They also would take pork meat, then throw it into a ditch along the trail, they thought it was bear meat. They did like the brightly colored blankets though. But for warmth their buffalo robes could not be beat.

One time a group of Indians rode into the Clark's yard after getting their supplies. They traded some blankets for a small patch of watermelons the Clarks had grown. One Indian woman wanted to trade a blanket for little Nancy Alice Clark, ababe in arms, as a tease. Amanda was horrified and went into the house. The Indian woman had much fun with this bargaining. The children went to the watermelon patch after the Indians were out of sight, they had eaten green melons, this caused the whole family to laugh, knowing the belly ache that would follow.

James would take his orders to be filled in Dodge City and any freight to be sold, and he always hauled buffalo bones to be sold where space could be found. The prairie was speckled with white buffalo bones, from hundreds of thousands of buffalo. Amanda could calculate within a day of when James and wagons would arrive. If the weather was good, she would load a buggy with children and home comforts and drives to meet the caravan of freight wagons. James would be happy to see them, they would always have a picnic, and sometimes he would leave the freight wagons for the bull whackers to drive on to Mobeetie where he would meet them the next day.

One day the children found an orphaned buffalo calf. They brought it home and put it on a fresh cow to nurse. The buffalo thrived and soon was larger than the nurse cow. When it would hunch for milk it would almost lift the cow off her feet.

James Clark made freight hauls in the winter if it was absolutely necessary. These trips were painfully cold, and the animals suffered on these trips. James had buffalo robes and gauntlet gloves to protect himself, but the animals had nothing. If the wind blew they would take shelter in a gully or creek bed.

Near the Clark homestead lived the Davis family. This was a large family from Virginia. One of the boys named Ed lived closest to them. Clara Davis asked Amanda to help when it was time for the twins to be born. Clara died before the second child could arrive. Amanda laid out Mrs. Davis before burial. She was buried in a little cemetery on a hill above the Red Rock School House. Clara's maiden name was Chilton, and that family lived nearby also. James threw off the first rock for the construction of the rock school. Several neighbor men hauled the rock;

(Continued Page 6)



Mrs. Dallas Fillingim ... nee Krystal LeAnn Berend

Berend-Fillingim Vows Exchanged

Krystal LeAnn Berend and Dallas Fillingim were married on March 1 at St. Mary's Catholic Church. Father David Kraeger officiated.

The bride is the daughter of Melvin and Joyce Berend of Windthorst. The groom is the son of David and Rita Pearson of Briscoe, TX.

Kelli Garrett, sister of the bride, was matron of honor. Bridesmaids were Kerry Dillon, Kandace Berend, both sisters of the bride, Lindsey Criswell, sister of the groom, Stacey Steinberger, Carla Taylor and Michelle Hubbard. Junior bridesmaids were Paige Dillon and Brooke Dillon, nieces of the bride. Corrina Lackey, cousin of groom, was flower girl.

Clay Gentry was best man. Groomsmen were Bart Wyatt, Kirk Self, Tab Hathaway, Charlie Blalock, Chris Bell, and TJ Crawford. Klay Dillon, nephew of bride, was ring bearer.

Ushers were Jerry Dillon, Louis Garrett and Kenny Davis, all brother-in-laws of the bride, and Ken Criswell, brother-in-law of the groom.

Candlelighters were Cody Geis,

Joseph Berend and Christian Curtin.

The bride's parents were hosts for the reception at the Parish Hall. Mr. and Mrs. Pearson were hosts of the rehearsal dinner.

The bride is a graduate of Windthorst High School, and is employed at Texas Recreation Corp. The groom is a graduate of Briscoe High School and West Texas A&M University, and employed at Mid-American Research Chemical Corp.

After a cruise to the Caribbean, the couple will make their home in Wichita Falls.

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Wheeler Church of Christ

I was down in Abilene last week for the annual Abilene Christian University Lectureship. Basically it is a three day gathering where there are several sermons, Bible classes, and a lot of singing. It usually helps me re-energize and prepare me for some things I want to preach in the months to come. I got one additional thing out of the Abilene trip, though: COLD! To the sounds of thunder the freezing rain, sleet, and snow came down from the sky. Driving around Abilene became nearly impossible. Watching the television you could see all of the school and business closings. Even the Lectureship was affected. A few speakers were unable to make it to Abilene. The Lectureship was cancelled from 4:00 p.m. Monday afternoon through 11:00 am. on Tuesday. So not everything that was scheduled to happen actually happened. Yet it was an excellent

week for a variety of other reasons, too.

For instance, my grandparents live in Abilene and I did stay at their place while there. I got to spend more time with my 90-year old granddad and 88-year old grandmother. My Great Aunt Mary from Kilgore was in town. And all of us were stranded at their house. We played several games of 42 and Poor Man's Bridge. I was able to look through the old photo albums of when I was just a little boy, and also when my dad was just a little boy, and also of when my granddad was just a little boy.

I have always been proud of my heritage, and I am now glad that the bad weather hit Abilene - allowing me to spend more time with these wonderful people. Cherish your family. Cherish your heritage.

Shawn D. Johnson

An Invitation: You are cordially invited to attend any of the weekly services of the Wheeler Church of Christ which meets at 1001 S. Alan Bean Blvd. in Wheeler, Texas

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