

By Ira A. Connell for the Pioneer Days in Hereford, Texas--January, 1964.

There is not much way to decide my most vivid experience while growing to manhood in the Panhandle, but without recalling tragedy, I can remember how Papa was always tickled when us children were not fast enough, and were unable to run down enough white leghorn frying chickens for our coming Sunday dinner, when the preacher and other guests were to visit us.

The reason it tickled Papa was it gave him the opportunity to get out his six-shooter (Mama didn't permit it unless we gave up on catching the chickens), and came out, having us point out the frying-size rooster we had been chasing and he usually shot the bird's head off the first time. It did make "good" conversation at the table the next day for us kids to tell how Papa had to shoot the chicken for dinner.

Then there was the memory of how my mother thought so much of her old buggy horse. I don't remember who we purchased "Old Selem" from, but he had been used as a delivery horse and when we first got him, he would be trotting along the street and all at once he would pull over to the curb in front of a house and stop, and this would go on several times on most any route taken.

On one occasion Mama was visiting at a friend's house and as was our habit we just stopped Old Selem and wrapped the lines around the dashboard and he waited. That time when Mama came out to return home the house and carriage were gone. We had everyone we knew helping us look for him.

It was almost dark when someone suggested that we look at the First Baptist Church (old) and I was one that was there when we discovered Old Selem standing at his usual place at the hitching rack in back of the church. After that we called him the Baptist horse.

Old Selem was a most faithful horse, even if he only had one good eye, and was not the fastest trotter we ever had. He was certainly dependable. I do not remember what ever happened to him.

When we would get ready to go anywhere Papa and us children were usually first in the carriage. Papa would keep sending some of us into the house to rush up Mama. When she finally got in the carriage, Papa would say, "Hold the lines a minute while I make a cigarette." That remark usually meant a few (not too friendly) remarks from Mama.

On Sunday upon entering the church there was usually an usher there handing out a little magazine called Kind Word. When Papa would be asked if he wanted a Kind Word he would reply, "I sure would. I haven't had one since last Sunday."

After growing up in such a happy home, with such understanding parents, brothers and sisters, there would not be time or space available to record the many memories and I have received much enjoyment just recalling them to myself in preparation of these experiences.

FAMILY HEAD: Edward Fulton Connell, May 17, 1864-June 19, 1940. Born at Liberty Hill, Texas. Came to Deaf Smith County from Williamson County Jan. 1, 1894, as a Texas Ranger

duty on the XIT Ranch. In Nov. 1896 he was elected Sheriff and Tax collector of Deaf Smith County. He married Sophia Stockton at Bartlett, Texas and arrived Dec. 4, 1896 at La Plata, then the Deaf Smith County seat, to make their home. The trip from Amarillo to La Plata was made by buggy and horse.

Sophia Stockton Connell, Oct. 23, 1871-Sept. 4, 1944. Besides being a homemaker, she was a dedicated church and social worker, a member of the First Baptist Church of Hereford. She served on many different committees and did volunteer work among those who needed help to care for the sick or almost anything that would benefit the community.