

REUNION OF THE PRIDEAUX FAMILIES, MAY 1st, 1965
AT THE ORIGINAL HOMESTEAD OF DR. R. O. PRIDEAUX

Written by Claude W. Bryant, Box 192, Stephenville, Texas

It was a happy thought on the part of Chester Prideaux, his good wife, Elizabeth and their children to plan a re-union of the Prideaux families and their descendants. This included various families related by marriage and, when the count was made of registrations, there were eighty-five present. There were possibly more because the gathering included a wide range of "babies in the cradle" on up through the "gray-templed" elders. Of course, the younger ones were not registering, unless Mama registered for them.

This generous invitation had gone out to all the clan who could be reached over a territory extending from Tucson, Arizona on the West to South Swansea, Massachusetts on the East.

The appointed day for the re-union, May 1st, dawned bright and clear, thereby insuring a pleasant trip. All converged on the original ranch home of Dr. R. O. Prideaux, now a part of the Chester Prideaux ranch, located in a rather sparsely settled section of Archer County near a point where the four counties, Archer, Young, Jack and Clay, come to a corner. The relatives came by train, plane (at least part way) and by automobile. The "folks" began to arrive early and kept trickling in until noon, but they all arrived for the bounteous spread of barbecue and all that goes with it.

A bit of family history should be told in order to fully appreciate this unusual gathering. The Prideauxs are of English descent, having come to the United States, arriving by boat in New Orleans in 1856. They traveled North to St. Louis, thence to Morris, Illinois where most of the children grew up. Some of the children came West to Missouri and Kansas, then two of the brothers, Dr. R. O. Prideaux and George H. Prideaux came into Indian Territory, then into Texas by way of Sherman, Cleburne and Brownwood. They proceeded North and, in 1873 settled on the very land where we held our re-union. Before this final decision, they explored up and down the

streams in Young, Jack and Archer counties and decided in favor of the present location on the head-waters of the West Fork of the Trinity. About this time Dr. Prideaux married Miss Sophia Johnson, a native of Sweden. The brother, George H. Prideaux decided on a course for himself and went to Milam County, where he soon married Miss Nannie Perkins. They moved to Lott, Texas where they reared the one son, Tom, and two daughters, Minnie and Mabel. The ones in attendance last Saturday (May 1st) were descendants or related by marriage of either Dr. R. O. Prideaux or his brother, George H. Prideaux.

Children of the R. O. Prideaux family were: May, Nellie, Frank, Ed, Chester, Elsie, Jesse, Henry and George. May, the older girl, was the first white child born in Archer County. Actually, at the time Archer County had not been organized, the organization becoming effective in 1880. There were three babies who died in infancy and were buried in the South section of the yard --- the little graves are enclosed today by a curbing of heavy native stone. No doubt there were no cemeteries near at the time and the bewildered young parents selected a burial place in the yard.

Getting back to the re-union proper, the writer had made the trip as part of a "two-car caravan" which started from the home of my son Alton W. Bryant, of Dallas. In the two cars were Alton, his wife Barbara, their three sons, Douglas, Addison and Charles; myself, wife Pearl and Alton's Aunt Mabel Prideaux Abshire of Fort Worth. The family connection here is that Minnie Prideaux, deceased, was the writer's first wife and, in this way, the Bryants are related.

The day for the re-union came and all headed for the ranch under clear skies and with a gentle breeze blowing from the South.

From Jacksboro on to the ranch we were in the "Prideaux Brothers country". Part of their earliest Texas experience was to harvest hay and sell it to the army post at Fort Richardson in the South edge of Jacksboro (some of the buildings still standing). They sold buffalo hides and marketed cattle in Fort Worth. They rounded up wild hogs, which had grown up in the wooded section, feeding on mast, and "topped off" the feeding with some sort of grain. The hogs were part of their meat supply.

Their first residence was a log structure down near the barn (the barn, or at least, a portion of same is still standing) then, a little later, the home was built as you see it today. Not exactly as you see the residence, either, for in that day there was no such thing as asbestos siding which covers the walls today. However, the shape of the house is practically the same and could be called a kind of English style with tall walls and very steep roof. There is a second story to the building, reached by a stairway from the kitchen and, no doubt, this was "sleeping quarters" for the boys in this large and growing family. A tall rock chimney with fire-place opening into a large downstairs room serves a kind of double purpose -- it has the fire-place inside made for long lengths of fire-wood and, on the outside, the chimney serves as a kind of personal history. In other words, the children and grandchildren and possibly great-grandchildren have playfully carved their names in the sandstone. On one rock is carved the name of Martel Bryant 1912; on another rock is the name of Alton W. Bryant, 1920. The boys are both sons of Claude W. and Minnie Prideaux Bryant. Other names are listed in various forms. Barbara, wife of Alton Bryant, started to list her name (the day of the re-union) and got as far as the "B" in her name but decided it was too hard a job.

Elaborate written instructions had been given by Elizabeth, the gracious wife of Chester Prideaux, as to just how to reach the ranch. We were to go North 28 miles from Jacksboro on Highway # 281, then West 4 miles on Highway # 61, then to the right and so on for about another 5 miles to the ranch. Alton, our "head-driver" had been to the ranch many years ago and remembered the ranch-house when it came into view. His Aunt Mabel, in the same car, also remembered the home.

The ranch home and corrals are located on a hill with magnificent scenery in almost every direction. Approaching the headquarters around a curve in the road, there were silhouetted against the sky-line the horse-back riders, apparently having a grand time. There were all ages of boys and girls in the group and, no doubt, some of them were taking their first ride. This went on all morning until the reins were dropped at the fence for the noon hour. And there was the one-horse carriage, dating back for

more than half a century. They had borrowed the carriage from some antique collection at Windthorst.

It seemed that Chester and Ed and their families, also the other relatives of Archer City had tried to think of everything which would insure a good time for all, and more especially the children. The horses were all fat and sleek and gentle --- just right for the children's rides and to pull the venerable carriage around. And not alone the children for "grown-ups", too, tried out the carriage.

Came time for lunch and Ed "sounded off" by ringing the cow bell. The shiny truck of the Wichita Falls caterer had already arrived and soon the lines were forming to partake of the generous meal. There was barbecue, and all the trimmings, coffee and soft drinks, capped off with ice cream.

With lunch-time over, the 85 relatives gathered in little groups to visit or scattered out under the oak trees or inspected every nook and cranny about the house. It all had a history for the immediate family and they were glad to describe to the "new-comers" various incidents of early-day ranch life. So the "grown-ups" began to reminisce and tell of unusual happenings around the home place.

At one point I thought Ed was fixing his boot but he finally drew out of the boot-leg the biography of his Father, which I have reproduced and enclose with this.

Chester told of his Father's instructions if the boys became lost in riding the range ---- that was, to drop the reins and his faithful horse would take him home. Chester spoke of the time during World War One when he and his brother George were in training at San Antonio and he remembered visiting the Alamo.

Elsie (Mrs. Charles Smith) of Lubbock and Richard Prideaux, her nephew, were glad to show the underground cellar which was as old as the house itself. It was in good condition with concrete walls and a ledge of concrete for seats or for storage of fruits. Elsie told of how her father would travel by wagon to Bowie and buy a supply of groceries and other needs. He would return with cane syrup and sugar in barrels and flour in 500 pound quantities. The trip to Bowie by wagon required three days. After the country had more settlers it was the custom to "take turns"

at slaughtering a beef and distributing it among the families. Elsie told of watching from a safe distance as the boys would "break" young horses ---- all her brothers were good riders but Ed and Henry were thought to be the best. Elsie remembered the names of one team of horses as "Big Enough" and "Pack".

In contrast to reviewing "old times," is the fast-moving story of Captain Daniel L. Steen, who was in attendance at the meeting. Captain Steen is a pilot for Pan American Air Lines. He piloted a commercial plane from Venezuela to New York on April 30th (Friday), then boarded an American Air Lines plane to Dallas, and joined us for the noon meal at the ranch on Saturday, May 1st. Captain Steen is a descendant of Walter Steen and May Prideaux Steen.

Tommie, widow of Frank Prideaux, and now living in Graham was there. I had known Tommie as the daughter of Tom Phillips of Marlin.

Azile, widow of Jesse Prideaux was in attendance. I remembered her in the days when she and Jesse would pass through Stephenville en route to visit their daughters and would stop at my office. I enjoyed them so much.

I remembered Inez, widow of Henry Prideaux, who now lives at Graham. Her memory about early events is remarkable.

It was on Henry's land that oil was first discovered in Southern Archer County in February, 1925 but it has later reached to all the Prideaux holdings.

Pardon my writing the story from a rather personal standpoint but, no doubt, my experience at the re-union was very much the same as others and I hope the account will be of interest.

Mrs. Ruth Waring, vivacious and smiling wife of Ellis A. Waring of South Swansea, Massachusetts edged into the "chow" line wanting to make sure that she was in on the barbecue. Said she, "I have been to a lot of New England clam bakes but this is my FIRST BARBECUE."

Mrs. Mabel Abshire was busy meeting the relatives and locating landmarks. Some of the oak trees near the home had been there even before the house was built. Mabel's father, George H. Prideaux was said to have fastened a swing to a certain tree

limb in the front yard. The sturdy tree with the straight-out limb is still standing.

The family felt sorrowful that Jesse, one of the favorites with them, passed away only a few months ago but his widow, Azile, braved everything and came along to add what she could to the occasion.

Above are some of the high points, as I recall them, and I trust that it is a fair recording of events on that memorable re-union at the R. O. Prideaux ranch home.

I am glad to mail these copies, three in a group, to each household without cost to you. The mimeograph company will keep intact the stencils which they have cut and, if you should need additional copies for friends, the extras may be obtained at \$1.00 each.

PRIDEAUX RANCH, ARCHER COUNTY

REUNION, MAY 1, 1965

Ed R. and Ruby Prideaux
1543 Mesquite, Wichita Falls, Texas

Juanita Prideaux & Janelle (8) Ed's daughter
205 Sunnyland Drive, San Antonio

Elsie Prideaux Smith (Mrs. Chas.)
3205 26th Street, Lubbock

Helen (Mrs. Chas., Jr.) Smith, Kay & Shari
4205 Bilglade Road, Fort Worth

Claude W. and Mrs. Bryant
Box 192, Stephenville

Mr & Mrs. Alton Bryant, Douglas, Addison & Chas.
5907 Martel, Dallas

Mrs. F. A. (Tommie) Prideaux
718 Kentucky, Graham, Texas

Mrs. H. O. (Inez) Prideaux
704 Cherry, Graham

Mr. and Mrs. R. O. (Audrey) Prideaux (Henry's son)
Route 1, Windthorst, Texas

Mr. & Mrs. W. R. (Larue) Hall, James and Pat
2417 Skyline Drive, Waco, Texas

Mr. & Mrs. Michael H. Hall, Miles and Lyles
Tucson, Arizona

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Greer (Sadie Prideaux)
209 E. North Street, Fayetteville, Arkansas (Henry's daughter)

Mr. & Mrs. Larry Phillips (Anita Greer), John, Sherri and Steve
1655 Broadview Drive, Fayetteville, Arkansas

Mr. & Mrs. Richard S. Greer
209 E. North, Fayetteville, Ark.

Mr. & Mrs. Chas. Loveless (Nadine Prideaux), Lucinda and Carolyn (Nadine is Henry's
1508 W. Eighth, Roswell, New Mexico daughter)

Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Steen, (Mae Prideaux's Son)
310 Bryan Street, Weatherford

Mr. & Mrs. Enoch Steen and Dewayne (Mae Prideaux's Son)
Idalou, Texas

Mr. & Mrs. Dan Steen, Debbie, Dana and Jane
65 Salem Ridge Drive, Huntington, New York

Mrs. Mabel Prideaux Abshier
Westbrook Hotel, Fort Worth

Mrs. J. L. Prideaux (Azile)
Archer City, Texas

J. L. & Gail (Mr. & Mrs.) Prideaux, Brannin, Barton and Lisa
2502 Clark Lane, Paris, Texas

Mr. & Mrs. T. J. Kline and Carol (Jess' Daughter)
10425 Yorkford Drive, Dallas

Mr. & Mrs. Frank Lauderdale (Jess' Daughter), Lee, Sue, Lou and Mike
4101 Raguette, Nacogdoches, Texas

Mr. Frank Lauderdale, Sr.
Nacogdoches, Texas

David Moxley (Vondelle's Son)
3112- 21st Street, Lubbock

Jenny Baldwin (Vivian's daughter, Vivian is Jess' daughter)
6215 DeLoache, Dallas, Texas

Mr. & Mrs. E. A. Waring (Dick's mother and father-in-law)
132 Baypoint, South Swansea, Massachusetts

Dr. & Mrs. G. E. Hurt, Jr. (Ann Prideaux) Catherine, Douglas, Carolyn and Ellison (Chester's daughter is Ann Hurt) 3544 Greenbrier Drive, Dallas	Richard (Dick) Prideaux (Sue, his wife was Archer City, Texas in hospital (Chester's son is Dick)
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Chester & Elizabeth Prideaux
Archer City, Texas, Box 906