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Hatchett Reunions

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Hatchett

—By Doris Hatchett Beverage

My grandfather, John Crittenden Hatchett, and his wife, Julia Brown, had twelve children. He was the first judge of Washita County after Oklahoma became a state, and the county seat was then Cloud Chief.

My dad, John Edgar Hatchett, next to the youngest of Grandpa's children, had ten children. He had nephews who were only six or seven years younger than he was. All the Hatchetts, or most of them, had from two to seven or eight children. My grandfather died before I was born, but I'll never forget our family reunions. Most of my memories about the reunions were good, but not all.

One year, in about 1926 on the Fourth of July, the Hatchetts had a reunion on the old Murphy Ranch about five or six miles north of Foss. That year, Indians came from Caddo County and slaughtered a couple of buffalo and butchered them to barbeque for the crowds. We ate our lunch early and then went into town to watch the buffalo rides.

At that time, Foss had a rather nice park; therefore, many people from Butler, Stafford, and Clinton came to the Foss Picnic. I had saved sixty-eight cents in an old snuff can that my uncle, Bill Hollis, had given me. We had much overnight company from Missouri and Illinois.

Everyone was ready to go to the celebration, but I couldn't find my snuff can

and money. Knowing I wouldn't have any money at all unless I found the can, I ran upstairs and prayed, "Dear Lord, help me find the money." Immediately I remembered I had set it in the kitchen window while Mom was cooking breakfast. Sure enough, that's where I found it.

Cold, pink lemonade made in a big stock tank was five cents a glass; an ice cream cone was also a nickel. I was scared to ride the Ferris Wheel, so I had several rides at ten cents on the Merry-Go-Round.

Our old dining room table seated twelve—five on each side and one on each end. Many Sundays there would be two or three tables full of relatives. Children always ate last. I vowed when I was a child that if I ever had children, I would feed them first. Sometimes there would be only chicken wings or backs left by the time the children ate. After our meal, we children played many kinds of games.

We would play "Hide and Seek," "Go Sheep Go," or roll around barrel rings with a stick. One time we were playing "Hide and Seek," and we couldn't find our little cousin. We yelled and yelled for her to come in free, but she didn't come. Later she was found dead in the back seat of a Model 2 touring car. I am sure that all of us felt a little guilty and couldn't understand. She was a twin, very small for her age, and the doctor thought she

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might have had a congenital heart defect or just got too hot. That reunion was the only sad one that I remember. All of the other ones were happy.

My mother could make the best homemade ice cream ever—with eggs, rich, separated cream, and a junket tablet. Every Saturday night, we invited some family over for homemade ice cream. We kids loved it. We looked at the Big Dipper and the man in the moon and competed with one another to determine who could catch the most fireflies in a jar.

What wonderful memories we had with all the cousins, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters, and our family at family reunions! *

(DORIS HATCHETT BEVERAGE of Anadarko was a Registered Practical Nurse during World War II. This article is her first publication in WESTVIEW; other articles have appeared in CAPPER'S WEEKLY and FORT SMITH TIMES. Now seventy years old, she enjoys reading, writing, and keeping up with Western Oklahoma events.)



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