

Our Family's Scattered Leaves

A Tale of a Texas "Lone" Horne

I am hoping this latest breakthrough in looking for my Grandmother's Horne relatives is finally coming to an end. When my Grandmother passed on March 20, 1964, the obituary was all I had that even began to link Grandmother Steve to her immediate family. I had never known her maiden name and it gave me my first clue, her brother and sister's names...Jim Horne of Mountain Park, Oklahoma and Mary Grooms of Groesbeck, Texas (my Grandmother is the middle child in picture). I tried off and on for the past four years to find some information on them, but it wasn't until this year (2009) that I began a real earnest search to see if I might find the branch that held more of "Our Family's Scattered Leaves."



Just on a whim, I began a search for my cousin Darla, whom I had not seen or spoken to in over 55 years; guess I should be lucky we both are still alive...lol It was not because we didn't want to stay in touch; our family, which was made up of my Dad and her Mother who lived on the far ends of Texas, made it impossible and when one's father and mother divorce, that makes it even harder...ok, back to the story.



I finally found her through the wonders of the internet. I did a search on ancestry.com under her maiden name and came up with the birth information for one of her children, which gave me the name of her husband. Lo and behold, People Search gave me their address and phone number...I was a wreck wondering how the reunion would go over the phone...yet as we spoke, it was as if we had last spoken only the week before (Darla is on left, I'm on the right, notice the Capitol of Texas in background).

As luck would have it, neither one of us knew much of anything about our Grandmother. My Cousin Darla's mother had recently passed and my father's memory was gone. In fact, my father had told his other family that all of us were dead. Don't we all wish we had dead living relatives that could answer our questions? Guess that is the closest I will ever get to that wish.

Anyway, after talking to my Cousin Darla and calling her back, I realized I had been so excited to talk to her that I had forgotten to ask any really revealing questions about what she could remember. After hanging up the phone, she remembered going through her Mother's personal papers and seeing her Baby Book.



She went and found her Baby Book again, inside was the name of our Great Grandfather and Grandmother, Sam and Ellie Horne. I was so excited about her calling to tell me this that I forgot to ask her how Ellie was spelled or was it Nellie? To make a long story short, this wonderful information didn't get me anywhere in my search for our roots.



After going through pages upon pages of census, newspapers and anything I could think of to find them...I looked at a map of Oklahoma. The town of Mountain Park seemed awfully small. Surely someone there would know something about my Great Uncle Jim Horne. So I looked up Mountain Park Oklahoma on the internet and it said: Mountain Park has a population of 390 with 210 housing units; I could tell the "luck of my Irish ancestors" must have been smiling down on me.



Couldn't go wrong with this many...or I should say so few...people; even the dog couldn't bark without someone knowing who owned it. I searched the website looking for someone or someplace to call. As if it had been placed just for me...there was the phone number to the Mountain Park Senior Citizen Center (not that I was looking for a center for me...my joke).

in her community.

It was almost 5 o'clock; I figured it wouldn't be worth my while to call, but "oh heck," why not. The phone rang several times and I was getting ready to hang up, when a lady answered the phone. I identified myself and told her that I was working on a Family Tree and the only clue I had to possible relatives was the obituary of my Grandmother that identified her brother, Jim Horne who was living

Of course he wouldn't be living now, but maybe she might know of someone who knew about him and his family.

She indicated that I had really been lucky; she had already gone out the door and was locking up when the phone rang...and that her parents belonged to a genealogy group and had been working on data from the cemeteries in her area. She assured me she would ask them to look for any Hornes and, she might just know of someone who was related to my Great Uncle. I gave her my phone number and thanked her profusely for her time.

It wasn't more than a week and the phone rang; it was Katie, the lady I had spoken with at the Mountain Park Senior Citizen Center. She had some information for me. It seems that she had found Eleanor Horne, the daughter of Jim Horne. (That's my Grandmother Steve with her second husband Marvin Stevenson and my Aunt Florence Mozelle McCurley and my Dad (Arlin McCurley).



Ok, can you feel the swell of excitement rushing through my veins? Yep...that's it! She gave me her phone number; I repeated it back to her very carefully...these 10 little numbers were "pure gold" to me and I didn't want to foul this up now. I thanked her for all her time and told her I would let her know how my search went.

This is Eleanor Geraldine Horne Lance, my First Cousin 1x removed.

There I sat, holding the numbers, the possibility of that brick wall I had been banging my head against finally crumbling...I picked up the phone and dialed...Eleanor answered. I gave her the "two cent version" of doing the family research and how I had come to have her number. She was very cordial, but drawing a total blank on any family history. She was in the same spot I had been when I started this journey...who would have ever thought that anything we or our relatives did would be of value someday??? or now! She gave me what information she could and I thanked her as I asked, "Would it be alright if I were to call back if any other questions came up?" As soon as I hung up, a flood of questions I should have asked stampeded through my brain! So I waited a few days and called her back.

When she answered the phone, she laughed and said, “You know, when you called, I could not think of a single thing, yet after we hung up, I went to the Family Bible and I can now give you all the information that I have.

Eleanor's information has opened the door to locating those long lost and unknown ancestors. I am eternally grateful to her. Thank goodness she was there for surely I would still be banging my head against that proverbial brick wall.

One name that she gave me, a sister to my Grandmother's father, was the link to finding other branches of the tree and now I am off to beat my head against another wall...just a different one this time.

Oh, I forgot to tell you the name, I call her “the traveling gal”, it's “CORDIE”, the name that Eleanor gave me. Seems that Cordelia Horne Whitby Ring (my Great Aunt) was always traveling between Mountain Park, OK and Austin, TX to visit family, and this was the information I needed to continue my search. I thought I had already gone over the information in the Austin area with a fine toothed comb, so I started searching again and I can say now, “A traveling gal” got me to where I needed to go...her travels gave validation that I had been searching in the right places all the time. I just didn't have her, Eleanor, and Katie's help to speed me along on this

journey into the past. I hate to end on a sad note, but I learned on June 30, 2009, my dear friend and cousin Eleanor Horne Lance had passed, I know she is still rooting me on, she now knows what I continue to seek. You will be truly missed, my cousin, my friend.



Footnote:

Eleanor was instrumental in getting her brother Jackie Ray Horne (my First Cousin 1x removed) to do a DNA test for our Horne branch to be a part of a Horn/Horne DNA project at Family Tree DNA. Currently we have traced our Ancestors back to Elijah James Horn born about 1740, died 21 Feb 1815 in Cokey Swamp, Edgecombe County, North Carolina and we know this for a fact because of Eleanor and Jackie Ray Horne. Their contributions will allow us to continue the search for distant ancestors with the DNA markers that are now a part of today's history.