

Roark-Conner Reunion News

Issue One

Published by Chuck Gross, :

Text

March 1992

1991 Reunion Report

The group gathered at the Salem Church site for the annual service. Then we traveled to the Harrison Ruritan Club house for a fine meal. Some old family photos were on display. A treasurer's report and other reports were presented. Officers were elected for 1992: President, Willa (Sweetie) Eslick, Vice-President, Chuck Gross, and Secretary/Treasurer, Getrude Davenport. (several months later Sweetie requested that the vice president take over for her due to family responsibilities.)

Impressions of the 91 Reunion *by Chuck Gross*

This was only my second Roark-Conner reunion that I attended and I did not know what to expect. (I will tell you that as a young child I never cared for the reunions that I attended) . I was pleased to learn many things about some of my ancestors. To view the house that Joseph & Judy Roark built in the Cherokee territory was both inspiring and depressing. To stand and think of the effort that they had to put forth to make a living was enriching, but to see the condition of the house was a "downer". To visit the grave site of my great great Grandfather 8t Grandmother at the Bald Hill Cemetery was rewarding. It was discouraging to learn that the Conner Cemetery was not fenced and that cattle and hogs were grazing in the cemetery. This land is privately owned and getting access to visit the graves should be handled carefully.

THE 1992 REUNION *by Chuck Gross*

This Newsletter is coming to you now so that you can make your plans to attend the reunion this year, Saturday, July 18th. Plan to attend and be a part of the activities. This year should see more of the Texas kin folks attending. As you may know, two brothers moved to Texas in about 1900 and many of their descendants have never seen the Joseph Roark home place. Again this year we will meet at 1 lam EDT at the Old Salem Church Site for a devotional and fellowship time. The devotional will be conducted by Rev. James Todd of Mission Texas. Rev. Todd is married to Dora Maye Roark, granddaughter of John W. & Permelia Conner Roark, who moved to Texas in 1900. Following the devotional service we will meet at the Harrison Ruritan Club House for a covered dish dinner, more fellowship and some reunion business. Bring any early photos, letters, or other material that you can share with the group. If anyone has an old "Family Bible" that they could display, it would add a lot to the reunion.

Important Information

If out of town relatives would like to help the local relatives with the food for lunch, they may purchase food at a deli, supermarket, or fast food place. There are several such places on Highway .58 (near the club house) where fried chicken, chips, etc., can be purchased. If that will not be convenient, the local relatives have asked that you do not let that prevent your attendance. There is always plenty of food. There are several motels in the area of I-75 and Lee Hwy. RV campers will find Harrison Bay State park nearby with 135 sites with water and electricity provided. Reservations are available on a limited basis, by calling (615)34.4-6214. More information about Hotel/Motel accommodations will be included in the next Newsletter.

If the wind is calm at the time of the reunion, approval has been obtained from TVA to visit Jolley Island. The trip to the island is scheduled after the reunion business is finished. This may interest the Texas folks as John W. & Permelia Conner Roark lived on the island with 11 other families and two of their children taught school on the island in the 1890's.

Births:

Sarah Elizabeth Gross, November 2, 1991 Parents: Robert & Jenne Gross grandparents: Chuck & Linda Gross

Natalia Anastasia Clayton, October 20, 1990 Scot Madison Clayton, H, December 4, 1991 Parents: Scot & Mary Clayton grandparents: C.M. & Belle Clayton

In Sympathy:

Marriages:

If you know of information about births, marriages, deaths, or major illness that should be included here, please get the information to me by the first of June so that I can get it in the next issue of the newsletter.

Second Edition of "Pioneer Days"

Effort is underway to revise and update Laura Roark Shropshire's 1963 edition of her book "Pioneer Days". Reba Wilson has found additional material to be added and some corrections have been made. The lineage charts have been brought up to date, for the

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are are willing to provide the dates and places of any family members' birth, marriage, death, and burial, please contact Reba Wilson or Chuck Gross. Our ancestors were real people who lived, loved, and worked in their times. Any stories that record events in their lives, that we can pass on to our children, will help them to understand our ancestors as real people. Any stories about your parents or grandparents that tell about their lives, that you are willing to consider for printing (in a newsletter or later book) can be hand delivered at the reunion or mailed to Chuck Gross or Reba Wilson. In order to have the book as complete as possible and ready for limited distribution by reunion time your information is required by May. Not much information is known about James & Jerusha Blythe Roark, John & Margaret Gross Roark, Timothy & Mary Williams Roark, James & America McGill Roark, Joel & Elizabeth Roark Talley, Bill & Margaret Roark Swafford, and Rev. Beene & Mary Roark Scott. If you know any contact in these families please get the information to Reba or Chuck. Contact either:

Reba Wilson or chuck Gross

In the interest of recording family history, let me encourage you to write your stories and make copies for all of your children so that your version of what happened will not be lost when you are gone.

I Remember "Uncle Joe"

by Chuck Gross

When I was about 12 years old and World War II had just ended, my family made the annual 175 mile trip from Milam County, Texas to Arlington, Texas to visit my grandparents. I recall the highlight of my trips was getting to see "Uncle Joe". Uncle Joe's real name was Joseph David Roark, the 5th son of John Wesley and Permelia Conner Roark. He was about 70 years old and just loved to trade you out of anything you owned. I think that he just enjoyed negotiating the terms of the trade. I remember him with two or three wrist watches on his left arm and one or two on his right. Of course he had at least two pocket watches, with fine chains and bobs in his vest pockets. A couple of years before, he had given me a portable radio that he had fixed up by putting a drawer pull on the top as a handle. The Rural Electrification Administration (REA) came into our area and we got electricity, so my father suggested that I return the radio to Uncle Joe. Well, on the next

trip to Arlington to visit my Grandmother (Mary Ellen Roark), I took the radio and returned it to Uncle Joe. He just took it and we walked downtown to the radio repair shop, in the Western Auto store. We learned that it only needed some new batteries, which he had the repairman install. As we walked up the street in Arlington with the radio playing loudly, I remember Uncle Joe saying, "Now all that it needs is a proud owner". Of course the style had changed and new radios were much smaller, but I would guess that he found someone who would be happy to own that radio. That was Uncle Joe. He could always find something that you wanted, which he had, and would trade. I noticed that everyone in Arlington made an effort to speak to Joe. He was well liked by all.

Roark-Conner Recipes

How about having a family recipe in the newsletter. I am sure that several people would like to have a Roark-Conner family recipe and by placing it in the newsletter everyone can share. If you have a favorite recipe to share, please get it to Chuck Gross.

Opinion Needed

If you like the idea of a newsletter you need to express your approval by sharing in the writing, producing and cost of postage. If you can not attend the reunion you can send a donation to our treasurer, Mrs. Jesse A. Davenport, 442 Glenn Hill Circle, Chattanooga, TN 37415. Besides the newsletter, we want to protect our family heritage by doing what we can. We need financial funding to do these projects and a collection is taken at each reunion to fund these activities which occur during the year. Come and add your support to the effort to learn, record, and protect what we have of our ancestors.

Mark your calendar now. Don't miss the 1992 RoarkConner Reunion, July 18th. Make plans now to attend. Meet relatives and renew friendships. Share your old photos, family Bibles, and any information you may be able to collect about other family members.

*Family Ties Makes a
Difference -Renew Yours!*

July 18, 1992