

2017 Essay - Legacy Ramblings

There Is Nothing Special About Dying

There is nothing special about being born, living, and dying. Every tragedy, happiness, love, success, fulfillment, effort, physical and spiritual need that we enjoy or suffer thru as we live is not unique or special. It has all happened before. It is all dust in the wind.

It is a prerequisite that you are born since you can't live or die without being birthed. But, once we are born (which is not special) our lives and deaths are not special. Anyway we can figure out how to be born, live, and die has already occurred a million times. So, when I claim that being born, living, and dying are not special, it is because billions of others have already done it the same way will do it. This will make some of you mad because of religious or personal beliefs. I mean, how can I not be special when I am (almost) the most special thing in my life?

I am asking you to separate the adjective meaning of "special" (unique, rare, or uncommon) from "important" (great significance or value). Being born, living, and dying is not special, but, how you live can be very important.

- What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. (Ecc 1:9)
- No one remembers the former generations, and even those yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow them. (Ecc 1:11)

Older People Seem to Die Sooner than Young People

As you get older, you have more friends and peers die. The reason is obvious: the age of the people you know tend to be older as you get older. Older people seem to die sooner than younger people.

Over the past few years, the people who once were my mentors have been passing away. By mentors, I mean the people at work and church that use to help guide me; give me advice; and just hang around me and my family because we were younger and probably needed their help. These people were 15-30 years older than me and darn it, now they are dying faster than I am comfortable with. Pretty soon my siblings, sister and brother-in-law's, maybe even my children, and ultimately me, myself, and I, (or even worse, my wife) will die.

There is nothing special about dying, but, the people who die can be very important.

I Once Was Immortal

As a child, teenager, young adult, probably up until I was in my 40s, my exposure to death was ridiculously low. I avoided the Vietnam war, so missed that opportunity to shake hands with that sort of death on a regular basis. I had seen a couple of bad car accidents and although I saw seriously injured people, nobody was dead while I stood around them. When I was about five, my maternal grandmother died. Other than when the family dog got ran over, that was my first experience with death. That lady was so old and shriveled up it was only natural that she died. Besides, since we lived 500 miles away, I had only met her once or twice. I missed the chance to experience paternal grandparents dying since they were both gone before I was born.

When old people died, that was to be expected. When young people died, it was because of bad luck or strange health or mental problems and both of those would not affect me. I had a cousin in the Green Berets die in a plane crash. That

was pretty bad luck. I had a college dorm associate (not really a friend, but, since he was President of our dorm house, I knew him) commit suicide. He grabbed some poison out of an ISU lab and took it while in the ISU cemetery. They found him dead, lying on somebody's grave. The explanation I got was that he was an obsessive over-achiever who wanted to get into the ISU vet school. The conjecture was, he was disappointed with his last set of grades and had just broken up with a girl and for some reason, took the poison option. We shared a close friend, Jim Allen. I had to call up Jim and tell him that this kid had taken his own life. Like any suicide, I never got it: never understood the pain that caused such an action; and certainly never thought it would happen to me.

I had almost no personal experience with death. What experience I had, was certainly not going to happen to me. Therefore, I assumed I was immortal.

Then I was No Longer Immortal

A significant but not life threatening medical problem helped me figure out I was not immortal. I had vitreous separation in my eyes, one-at-a-time, that caused detached retinas. The medical solution was eye operations that required me to sit still, with my head tilted, and then sleep upright, for 6-8 weeks each time. I could not watch television or read. This happened twice within one year so I had almost 4 months of "doing nothing" within an 8 month timeframe.

Q: What do you do for four months when you are to be still, not read or watch television, and not be in a car?

A1: You listen to books on tape.

A2: When you get tired of books on tape, you do a lot of thinking.

I probably spent about 6-8 weeks in total, doing nothing but thinking about things. Give that a try. Spend 6 weeks sitting or maybe even out sun-tanning, just thinking about things, 10-14 hours a day. Try that once when you have nothing else to do. It was a life changing experience; having nothing to do but think for hours at a time. (May it never happen again!)

I thought a lot about "why" and "what". I won't bore you with the long list of conclusions, but, here are the ones important to legacy:

1. I had always been able to use hard work, effort, and my intellect, to control what happened to me. Yet, I had absolutely no control over what happened to my eyes. Why did my eyes "go bad" on me? This is the same question as: why do people catch diseases, or, why do people die? As an atheist, I was not well versed in the bible, so, I did not have a solid biblical perspective. One clear answer to me was; it happens, it happens to everybody, I could not control what happened, and I am not special. Oh no! I concluded that if I could not control everything that happened to me, I was NO LONGER IMMORTAL. It is not all under my control! What was I going to do with my life?
2. I was also the most blessed person I knew. Blessed with good health, wife, kids, jobs, education, way-of-life, avoiding the draft, you name it. Since it was not all under my control (see item 1 above), then why was I so blessed? I found the answer in Romans 2:4: "Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?" I concluded that only God could have blessed my life, and, since I was not in control of it, he must be.

My thinking led me to: if you do what you should do with your life, and submit yourself to God's will, you will assure your legacy. Legacy by itself is not the goal, but the result. Of course it is not that simple, so, read on.

Ben Franklin's Take on Legacy

"If you would not be forgotten as soon as you are dead, either write something worth reading or do something worth writing." —Benjamin Franklin

Come on Ben, it ain't goin to work that way. 1 out a million; 1 out of 10 million might write something well read, or, be memorized in history. I have a book written in my mind so I am ahead of most other people. What are my chances of getting that book actually written, published, and read by more than one generation? I am not going to be an Ann Ryan, Charles Dickens, or even a Larry McMurtry (more about McMurtry, later.) I am not going to be a Bob Hope or a Ben Franklin. I can get some sort of presence on the internet; pay for a domain name with my name in it and hold it for 50 years; write myself up in Wikipedia and see how long my bio stays in it. How long do you think that is going to last? How many people will actually read or know about me?

Steve Saint's Take on Legacy

"Your story is the greatest legacy that you will leave to your friends. It's the longest-lasting legacy you will leave to your heirs." —Steve Saint.

Steve is the son of Nate Saint. Nate was a famous missionary pilot. Nate Saint was killed, along with 4 other missionaries, by flying into a remote location in South America and trying to evangelize to an isolated tribe that didn't take to visitors. Their story was made into a movie.

Nate Saint hit the 1 in 10 million jackpot by being martyred for Christ and having a movie made about it. But, his son's statement is not claiming that his legacy came from being martyred. It is "your story you leave to your friends and heirs" that is your legacy.

Steve, you're closer to right than old Ben was. You state that you leave your legacy (story) to friends and heirs. I think that is pretty dead on, except, I would add *"Your friends remember you for one generation, your heirs for maybe three, max."*

I never met my father's parents or grandparents. I know nothing about my paternal grandmother or her family. I have pretty good family stories about my paternal grandfather (who I am named for) and his father and mother (my great grandparents thru the paternal legs). I know nothing about my mother's parents or her grandparents. Unless you are associated with a family enclave (families who congregate and live together and share together and meet and tell stories about other family members), you rarely have stories (aka legacy) from more than 2 or 3 generations ago. In my case, on my mother's side, it went only one generation. On my father's side, it went 3 generations. For most families, legacy is fairly short lived.

It is even shorter lived between friends. It is rare that a friend will pass along a legacy story about you to their heirs. With friends, legacy stops in one generation.

About McMurtry and his Pulitzer winning book; Lonesome Dove. All great books are about great character development via their personal conflict. This book is one of my favorites because every time I read it, I find a new nuisance about a character or their conflict. All the characters have become my close, if ugly, friends. I highly recommend that you read it. I have already read it 5 times and will wait a year or two to read it again.

It contains the absolutely best, one-line, cowboy statement I have ever heard. An old girlfriend of one of the major characters (Gus McCrae, who has died) confronts his partner, Capt Woodrow Call. Call is taking the body of McCrae back

to Texas from Montana to bury him. The old girlfriend is terribly jealous of Call, who always had an unreasonable impact on McCrea and she resents that Call had more impact on McCrea than she did. She is berating Call about everything she can think of and finally hits him with a zinger. She tells him he is not a man because he will not admit the boy of a whore is his son. That is the last straw for Call, and he says to her, ***“I gave him my horse.”*** That summarizes the character named Call; the ultimate cowboy. By giving the boy his horse, while not even acknowledging him as his son, he was handing him the most important thing in his life: his lifestyle; his legacy; and his story. What makes it the most classic cowboy line ever written or spoken is, within the context of the storyline, those five words summarizes the cowboy legacy.

My paternal great grandparents were named Jesse Blue and Mittie Lou Paschall. Just those names, by themselves, are legacy. What a melodically named couple were ol’ Jesse Blue and Mittie Lou. The family stories told about him and his wife would fit well into the Lonesome Dove story. In fact, they lived the same life, at the same time, as described in the book

Jesse Blue made his living trading cattle in the late 1800s in Texas, so he was a genuine cowboy. I have an old newspaper clipping, from 1927, where Jesse Blue is telling his cowboy story including how a group of armed citizens cleaned up Fort Griffin, Texas. They hung and shot a few and had no more problems after that.

Mittie Lou was a character. Family lore says that Mittie Lou told Jesse Blue, late in life, “You love that damn horse so much you go out and live with it in the barn.” So, at over 60 years of age, he left the bliss of a marriage bed and lived a couple years in the barn with his horse. Mittie Lou died when she caught on fire while dry cleaning a rug. She was only wearing a night gown and money belt when she caught on fire. The night gown burnt off her but she still had the money belt on her when she died. (See attached article).

Strong stories, retold by family members, are the only way most of us are going to leave a legacy that lasts past one generation. That means most of us will have to have at least two things for any hope of a legacy:

1. Children and grandchildren
2. Heirlooms; in the form of beliefs or stories, that impact our children and grandchildren.

I just read a small book named “The Richest Man in Town” (VJ Smith, Simple Truths/Sourcebooks, Naperville, IL, no date on title page). Smith is a pastor who also gives inspirational speeches in his home state of South Dakota. His book is about a Wall Mart check-out clerk in Brookings, SD, named Marty Martinson who became famous in his town and within Wall Mart because he would always personally greet and shake hands with all the customers who went thru his line. People would wait in his line, even though other lines were empty, just to talk to him for a few moments. The book was a testimonial to how, if you treated others as individuals, with respect, and really listened to them, you could impact their lives. A quote from the book, about interfacing with others: *“In one or two minutes of time we have the opportunity to define ourselves as human beings. There isn’t much room for error..... In a precious few moments, what we say and what we do can be lasting.”*

Marty Martinson had children and grandchildren. He had thousands of “friends” from his Wall Mart checkout line. He hit the one-in-a-million jackpot by having a book written about him. (No movie or true national recognition so he did not make the one-in-ten million jackpot like Nick Saint. The book will probably only be read by a few thousand people, and probably will not be read after one generation.) VJ Smith is still probably traveling the Dakota’s making speeches about Marty. Even by having a large impact in South Dakota, Marty’s legacy is the same as the rest of us; legacy with friends

will last one generation until they die; legacy with family will last three generations until the new ones have no contact with family members who knew him.

Proverbs Take on Legacy

A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children,... - Proverbs 13:22 (not talking about money, here)

Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, and the glory of children is their fathers. - Proverbs 17:6

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. - Proverbs 22:6

I am going to talk about a couple of families. I hold them both up as families to emulate since I feel the parents are leaving their families a legacy. In St Albans, we lived next to a large family. In Lima, I met a co-worker whose family was not as large, but they had several children. Both set of parents raised their children up with Christ in their lives as a daily experience. The children in both families eventually left the home to start their own families. No big drama. No big stories that outsider's knew about. Just solid, Christian families, raising solid, Christian kids. The St Albans family now has almost a dozen grandchildren. The Lima pair now has about a half dozen. Both sets of Grandparents are in their low-to-mid sixties and certainly do not consider themselves "aged". I can assure you that, for them, *Grandchildren are the crown of the aged.....*

I recently asked a friend, "what do you want to be your legacy". He answered, without any thought, "I am a first generation Christian. My parents were not Christians. I want my grandchildren and great grandchildren to be Christians because I led my family." His legacy goal is clear. It also recognizes the dependence on family for legacy and that it will probably not last more than three generations.

Fred's Take on Legacy

You must leave something important to your family. Not wealth, not land, but a lesson they will remember. – Fred Paschall

Most of us raise or kids and deal with our siblings, nieces, cousins, and family, with love. Our children depend on us for the majority of their learnings. Sure, they get educated in schools, but, they learn their beliefs and corresponding behaviors from us, their parents. That gets passed down (along with our genes) to the next generations. Passing along the beliefs and behaviors is more important than passing the genes. Much more important than their height or color of eyes, is their beliefs and behaviors.

There is nothing special about dying. What is special is how important you are to others while you are alive.

There isn't much room for error.....

Fred Paschall, 2017 Essay

From: <http://www.wjpetty.com/family/paschal/fam1916.html>

Jesse Blue Paschall, son of [Patman Freeman Paschall and Rebecca Brinkley Kendrick](#), was born June 03, 1849 in Weakley, TN. He married N B Moore April 16, 1871 in Kaufman, TX. He died aft. 1924 in Step, TX. (In the newspaper article, during the spring of 1872, he states "I had lost my wife and babies". Dates might be wrong, but, his first marriage did not last long. He then married Mittie Norris.). Children of Jesse Blue Paschall are:

1. Maud Paschall, b. in November, 1880 (before marrying Mittie Lou? Date?)
2. Mary Belle Paschall, b. in August, 1884
3. Roy Fred Paschall, b. in July, 1886 (My grandfather, the first RF Paschall.)
4. Ruth Paschall, b. in May, 1893

Jesse and Mittie lived in McClean, Tx. From sometime in 1907. Mittie Lou lived there until she died in the early 1950s.

- Jesse Blue: Born 6/3/1849. Died 1924, 75 years old.
- 1st Wife: NB Moore died 1981? Article says he had children by 1st wife that also died.
- 2nd wife: Mittie Lou Morris, Born 2/3/1863 Died 12/26/1950. 87 years old. Married Jesse Blue in 1881 at 18 years old while Jesse Blue was 32 so he was much older.
- RF Paschall Sr Born 1886 died 1/5/1921.

From <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/63692239/mittie-paschall>

McLean News - November 30, 1950

Two Pioneer Women Claimed by Death

Death claimed two pioneer women of this community during the weekend. The first was Mrs. Joe Beasley, 75 years of age, who had lived in the Panhandle since 1904; and the second was Mrs. J.B. Paschall, 87, resident of McLean since 1907.

Mrs. Paschall

Injuries received last Thursday when she was fighting a fire in her home, where she lived alone proved fatal to Mrs. Mittie Paschall when she died in the Worley hospital in Pampa at about 5.

Funeral services for Mrs. Paschall were held Monday afternoon at the First Presbyterian Church in McLean, with S.R. Jones officiating. Burial was in Hillcrest Cemetery under the direction of the Claborn Funeral Home.

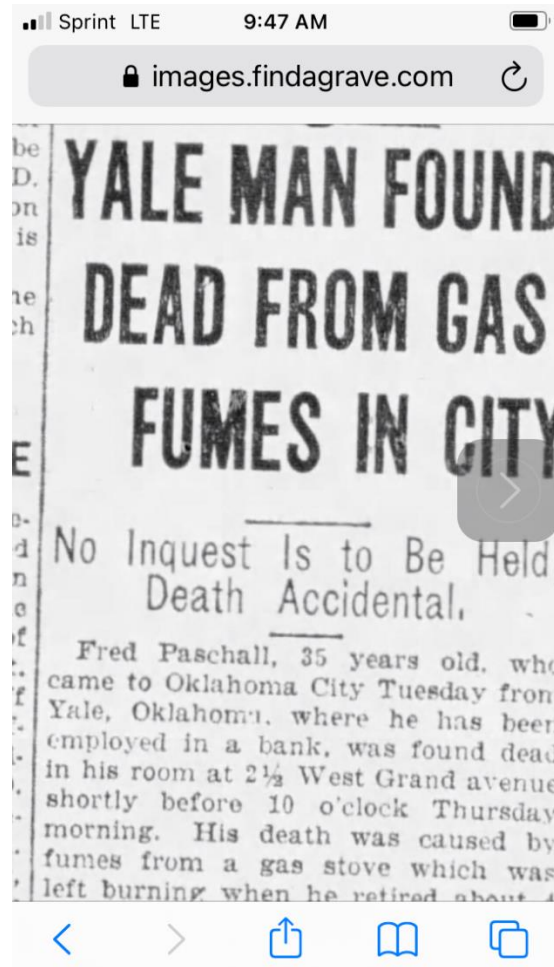
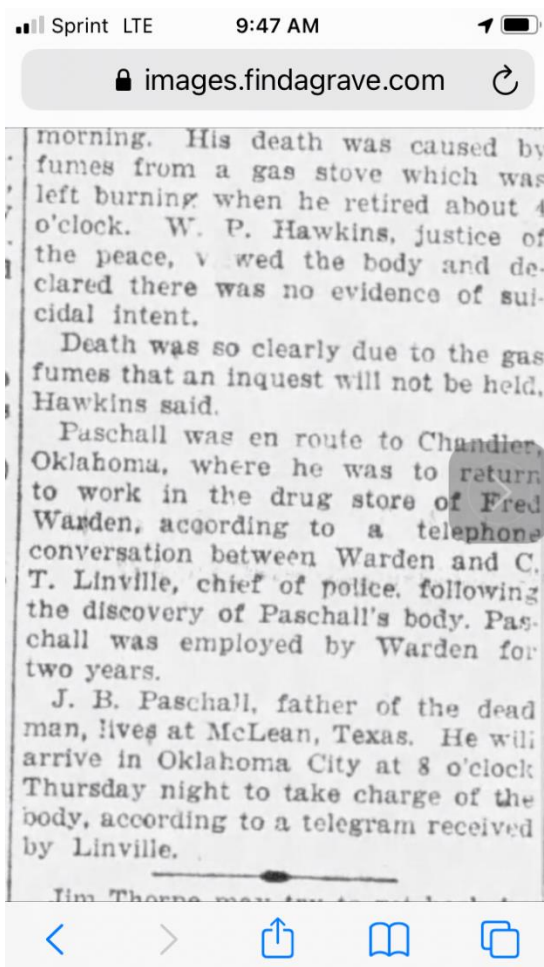
Mrs. Paschall suffered severe burns when a fire started in her bathroom Thursday. She managed to extinguish the blaze without calling for help, and then discovered that her clothing was flaming. She stepped into her bath tub to extinguish the fire in her clothing, and later called a neighbor to tell her of her injuries. Practically all of her clothing was burned from her, and she was rushed to the Pampa hospital. Death came early Sunday morning.

Mrs. Paschall was born in Georgia February 3, 1863, and spent her early life in Fort Worth and Breckenridge. She was united in marriage to J.B. Paschall in 1881, lived in Breckenridge until 1904, and then moved to Granite, Okla. They moved to McLean in 1907. She was a member of the Presbyterian church.

Survivors include three daughters, Mrs. Jessie Veale of Houston, Mrs. J.B. Hood of Norman, Okla., and Mrs. Roy Rice of Salina, Kans; 13 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren, and 4 great-great-grandchildren. **One son, Fred, died in January, 1921.** (my grandfather). Her husband preceded her in death in December, 1928.

(Fred's note: In the late 1800s, there were a lot of Paschalls in Denton, Texas. Brothers, uncles? All out of or related to Patman Paschall. It is ironic that Patman Freeman Paschall and Benjamin Franklin Paschall (Denton, TX) have names close to my sons: Patrick Raymond and Benjamin Alexander Paschall.)

Jesse Blue and Mittie Lou had a son they named **Roy Fred Paschall**. He served in the US Navy, on a gunboat, as a Pharmacies Mate, during the Opium Wars in very early 1900s. (Think of the movie: "Sand Pebbles"). He died by asphyxiation by natural gas, in an Oklahoma City hotel room, at about age 35, in 1921. (He was using a stove in the room for heat while he slept. Gas pressure went down and flame went out. Gas pressure came back up and filled the room with gas). He left behind a wife (Reba) and four children with the oldest being my father (Roy Fred Paschall Jr), 12, in Yale, Oklahoma. Mittie Lou would not allow her son to be buried in Yale. She had him buried in McClean, Texas (where she and Jesse Blue lived at the time). There was an empty spot between his and his mother's tombstone which I assumed had been reserved for Jesse Blue but he was buried elsewhere. His tombstone was inscribed with "Fred" on its top edge and with "**Went away from us the night of Jan 5th, 1921. He must know how much we love him and miss him. Keep him in thy care Holy and Merciful Father is the prayer of us all.**" No last name. No date of birth.



The following is a transcription of an interview of Jesse Blue published by the Breckenridge Daily American in its May 1, 2027 edition. (Breckenridge, Texas, daily newspaper). A link to a web-based version of the article is: <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph123323/m1/6/?q=May%201%201927>. I have an original version of the newspaper version. It is so old and creased that I had to refer to the web version to clarify words.

Indians and Bad Men Made Early Life in This County a Strenuous Adventure

(There is, if one is inclined to search for it, a great deal of romantic interest contained in the history of the events that took place during old Fort Griffin and during the early days of this section of the west. The following story by J.B. Paschall, one of the number still alive who in youth pioneered this great section, can be little more than a synopsis of the experiences he underwent during these early years, but the narrative is full of essential interest, and brings out sharply the seriousness of the task that confronted these pioneers of another and past generation.)

It was in the spring of 1872, while I was living in Denton, That I became interested in this section of West Texas. DA Nance, known as "Dutch" Nance, approached me at this time with an offer to come west and help him buy beef cattle and drive them to Denison. He offered me \$50 a month, I to furnish my own mount.

A short time before then, I had lost my wife and babies and the offer struck me as a good opportunity to change my location and activity. Most of my growing years had been spent on horseback and I had worked with cattle to a great extent and altogether was not unfitted for the work I was asked to do. According to his offer I was to take charge of the trail work as foreman. I accepted because not only was \$50 a month a good wage in that day but because I wanted to get out and stir around a bit.

So in the spring of '72 we got our mounts ready, packed a pony with supplies to last us during the trip, and struck out for the wild and wooly west. We took the most direct route from Denton to Fort Griffin. The trip on the whole was rather uneventful. Being a cattleman the first thing that struck me were the cattle and range conditions in this section. The fattest beeves and horses and the best grass I had ever seen were here.

The grass was so thick that it resembled a mattress. Dutch delighted in jumping from his horse and rolling over and over in it like a kid.

Dutch bought his first herd from Judge Lynch. One of the roundup grounds of this old cattleman was located on the spot where Albany now stands and there it was that we cut our first herd from his roundup.

For most of that year Dutch and I did all the trail work, the two of us driving from two to four hundred head of big fat steers from Fort Griffin to Denison. It would take us on the average one month to make the trip. After arriving at Denison, we would turn the cattle over to George Loving, Nance's partner, who would ship them on to St Louis. Then we would go back after more. We kept this up until about the first of January following.

Later on, in 1873, a boy by the name of Lon Neal, a good cowboy who was raised in Tarrant County at Birdville, worked with me. He left in December of that year, however.

All of this time the Indians were out in most every moon, and woe betide the poor devil they caught without the advantage. His scalp was sure to be danced about later on.

Well do I remember an incident where I came near losing my own scalp. It happened when, after taking a bunch of cattle to Denison, I had to go back to Fort Griffin all alone with our horses and the pack mule. The pack mule was a small mouse colored animal which we had acquired and which carried our pack for two years. This mule certainly knew his job.

In going from old Jacksboro to Fort Belknap, one left the timber at what was known as Salt Creek Prairie. It was conceded the most dangerous place in the west as far as the Indian menace was concerned. I sure dreaded to tackle it. But somehow or the other I kept on going and at length came upon a sight that certainly was not capable of putting any fresh courage in my veins. Little pens had been built around a number of fresh graves where a wagon train, enroute to Fort Griffin with supplies, had been attacked by Indians, the men all killed, the wagons and goods burned, and the teams carried off. The bodies had been buried by white men who came upon the scene a little while afterwards.

When I got to the graves my scare somehow went from me. I got off my buckskin, my favorite mount which I always kept saddled in times of danger, and stayed there long enough to smoke a couple of cigarettes made of Bull Durham rolled in corn shucks.

Later I rode on into Fort Griffin. A few days afterwards I saw some Rangers with small bits of Indian scalps attached to the headstalls of their bridles. I learned from them that while I was smoking those two cigarettes at those graves, seven Indians were coming straight to the place thru Loving Valley. The Rangers, who were camped on the valley, discovered the party of Indians, attacked and killing them all. So the happy intervention of those Rangers saved Buckskin a good run.

On another occasion, Dutch, myself and a boy, who was with us, camped on the Clear Fork of the Brazos about three miles above John Larren's ranch house when we came into a closer contact with a band of marauding savages. Our camp was located about two hundred yards from the river under a small elm. We had hobbled all of our horses except those saddled a camp. We had spread our blanket and stacked our guns against the tree and prepared for the night. Dutch, in the meantime, had taken our slickers and buttoned them around some bunches of brush that stood there, and placed our hats on them, explaining that the Indians, by that ruse, would think there were more of us than really were.

The hobbled horses during the night grazed off towards the river. All at once there came a bunch of horses blundering right over the blankets we had spread, knocking down any guns, and cluttering things up in general.

Some Indians had discovered our camp, sneaking down under the bank of the river past the horses then making a run to cut them off from the camp. Since the horses had beaten them to the camp the Indians turned and ran for it and before we could get our guns they were out of sight.

When it was all over there was the boy we had with us, lying flat on the stomach with his head against the elm tree.

We rounded the horses back, packed the mule and went to John Larren's ranch house where he had a good rock corral. There we shouted and kept shouting until John came to the door with a gun in each hand. When he learned who we were, he said "turn in boys" and went back to bed. We accepted his hospitality without further ado, unpacked the mule and were soon in dreamland.

So, I suspect that Dutch's "scarecrows" saved Buckskin of another hard run.

For a long time, Dutch kept buying beef cattle for Sam Ellis, the Boyington boys and myself to drive to Denison. Ellis worked with me for the most part of two years and was considered a mighty good cowboy.

In those days storms would come from the northwest soon after night and when such a storm hit a herd of cattle they would certainly run. We both had to be with them at such times. Most of the times we drove herds there were but two of us to do the work and guard them every night. I always had first guard by staying on until one o'clock in the morning.

At another time another fellow, Ellis was not with me then, were going thru with a herd, when such a storm came up while I was on guard and pretty much cost me my life. Just after the cattle had bedded and we had eaten supper I could see a storm coming that looked bad to me. When it finally struck, the cattle began running. I urged Buckskin to the head of the running herd but the cattle were running faster than the horse. The animals in front encircled us and before I knew it they were about us, clashing and bellowing and rubbing about my legs until I could see sparks of lightning flying from their horns as they struck together. If Buckskin had fallen, it would have been the end of me.

When it was over and I had drifted the cattle back to the bedding ground a mile away seeing nothing of the man that was with me and thinking perhaps the lightning had struck him I went to our camp. There he was, sitting humped up on a pack with his slicker about him. He said he was keeping the chuck dry. I knew what I wanted to say but kept my mouth shut as it was my tie to sleep.

Very often when coming back from Denison we would stop at uncle Joe Matthews who lived about six miles below Griffin on the Clear Fork. I was there enough to learn that they were fine people. Two finer people than uncle Joe and aunt Caroline could never have been found. In fact, all the ranch people were good honorable people and brave ones, too. Otherwise, they would not have been there.

Fort Griffin was located in Shackelford County on the Clear Fork of the Brazos. The fort itself was situated on a rather high hill and between the hill and the river laid the pretty slope of a valley. A number of officers and a

company of soldiers garrisoned the fort.

As far as I remember there were three stores in the little village below, the supply store in the fort being operate by a Mr. Conrad.

But along in 1874 and 1875 that valley became almost covered with shacks, saloons, and all sorts on institutions of vice imaginable. The larger percentage of the population were outlaws, moral reprobates, and wild women. There was virtually no law. The outlaw element had full sway and it was no uncommon thing for one or two men to be killed regularly, while cattle and property were stolen in large amounts.

I have read and heard about the "bad ones" at Borger those fellow didn't know how compared with the Fort Griffin bad ones.

One evening just after dark a couple very popular gentlemen of the west, with pompous "handles to their names" such as "Judge so-and-so" were walking leisurely along the street when an epidemic of shooting broke out as usual in the vicinity.

It was the most comical sight I have ever seen to watch those white gentlemen put a goodly portion of west Texas between themselves and that spot. Dignity was forgotten in pell-mell flight. As they passed one of the shacks a woman stuck her head out of the door and yelled: "Watch those d__n fellers run!"

One day a road show came into the little town and scattered notices announcing about a show they intended to put on that night. They persuaded the officers to send a squad of soldiers from the fort to stand guard during the show.

The performance had hardly started when a fight began. Did those soldier stay there? I should say not. They sounded retreat in double quick time and the next morning there was scattered from the show ground to the fort evidence of that retreat in the caps and carbines they had thrown away in their haste to get back to shelter.

Lon Neal, the young man I spoke of above, was shot thru his arm in that fight.

But this condition did not exist always. The long suffering something finally decided to put a stop to it and when they finished it was stopped sure enough. I rode into the flat one morning and the first thing that struck my eyes om entering it were the bodies of three men hanging to tree limbs, dead and very much so. I don't know how many more such spectacles were hanging about. These were all that were close to the trail.

On the backs of the hanging corpses were a card bearing a long list of names. The same proscription were posted upon boards under drawings of skull and cross bones all about the flat warning for the persons named to leave or pay the penalty. In less than a week, the flat was entirely and effectively depopulated of undesirables. From then on, peace reigned supreme.

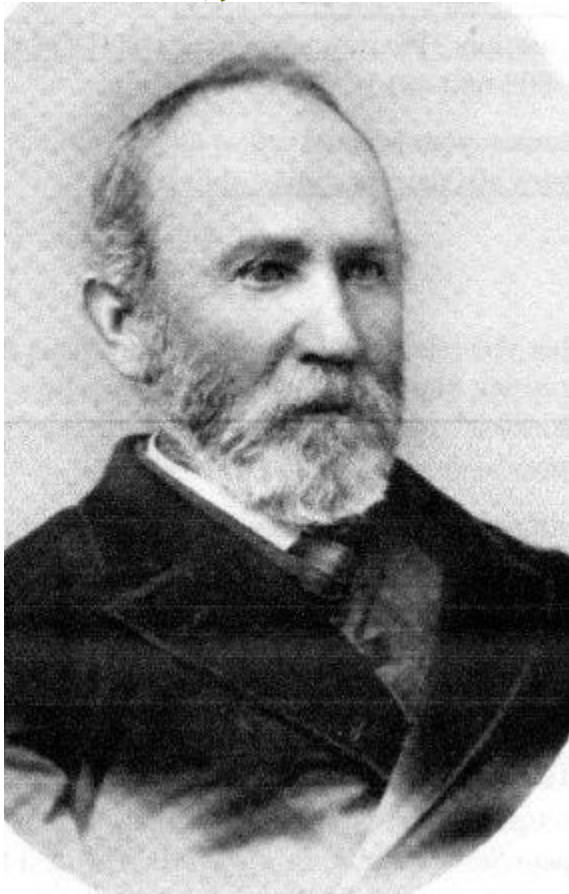
Leon Neal, who had worked with me from early spring until the last of November, 1872, finally came to a bad end. When we started with the last herd for that year we intended to drive them to Denison and then come back to Denison and remain there until the first of March when we would go back to Griffin for more cattle. We tried to get him to go and stay with us at Denison, but he refused saying he would stay at Griffin until we returned in March and then would go back to work for us.

When we returned to Griffin the next spring we found him running a dance business in a little doby shack covered with mud. We tried to get him to join us but he refused. Finally, when he saw his name with the others on the boards posted about the town he left Griffin and went to New Mexico. Onne day he went into a saloon and while there refused to drink with some negro soldiers and a lieutenant and trouble ensued in which he and the lieutenant were both killed, I am told although I can't vouch for the truth of the report.

A quick Google search found nothing about Leon Neal mentioned in the article.

Located at <http://genealogytrails.com/tex/panhandle2/shackelford/bios1.html> there is an article titled "Shackelford County, Texas, Biographies." In those, I found the following about "Uncle Joe Matthews" who is mentioned by Jesse Blue in his article, above;

MATTHEWS, JOSEPH B.



J. B. Matthews is one of the oldest settlers of Shackelford County. He located his ranch upon the Clear Fork of the Brazos when white residents in that region were few and far between, and Indians too abundant to be considered picturesque or otherwise interesting or desirable. Game was plentiful and Mr. Matthews and his neighbors were never at a loss for a supply of venison or antelope steaks; but the trail leading to the nearest supply point was a long one, and in consequence there was a scarcity at times of the other necessities of life. Thirty-five years have worked wonders in the development of this region. Railroads now surround Shackelford County on every side and pierce its very center. The Indians have all vanished and game is now little more than a memory, but many of the old time frontier dwellers still remain and among them the subject of this sketch.

John Matthews, the father of J. B., was a native of Georgia, as was also his wife, Elizabeth Harris. The greater portion of their married life was spent in Alabama, where they reared and educated a family of twelve children, a thirteenth dying in infancy. They were named according to age as follows: Nancy, Sallie, Winnie, Mary, Martha, Annie, Benjamin, John, Joseph B., James, Thomas, Andrew and Baker. Mr. Matthews died in Louisiana in 1859.

Born in Lowndes County, Alabama, August 24, 1824, Joseph B. Matthews was yet young when his father removed to Louisiana. He was married at Spearsville, in that State, to Miss Caroline Spears, and remained there for a few years, engaged in farming, with his father. Subsequently he crossed the Texas boundary and located for a time in Rusk County, then moved to Freestone County, and in 1859 located in Shackelford County, where he engaged actively in the cattle business. The Indians on the border were then quiet and peaceable, but in the first year of the civil war they became very troublesome. Horse stealing was their principal and favorite pursuit, and they feasted upon stolen beef in preference to game. Making their raids during moonlight nights, and in the most unexpected quarters, they generally got away with the stock undetected. Mr. Matthews suffered as did also all of his neighbors, but never had any serious trouble with the Indians, though on several occasions he was attacked by them while serving as scout. However, danger from Indians always threatened the settlers along the upper Brazos, and the need of protecting his home from their attack prevented Mr. Matthews from entering the army. The country was generally unsettled and perfect safety was a thing unknown. Tragedies were of frequent occurrence. In Palo Pinto County, about the time of Mr. Matthews' arrival, a man named Ko was killed while standing in his doorway. His assassin was never known. At Hubbard a man named Holden was killed by the Indians about 1859. About 1868 organized bands of cow thieves and desperadoes became such a nuisance that the citizens were compelled to take the law into their own hands, and a band of regulators around Fort Griffin took effective and positive methods to keep down crime. Wrong doers who fell in their hands were troublesome no longer. On one occasion they hung a lawyer, then the only one in the county, for defending a woman accused of poisoning her husband.

In 1863 or 1864, while Mr. Matthews was living on his ranch six miles below Fort Griffin, the Indians raided the settlement below him. The Lee ranch was attached, Mr. and Mrs. Lee and one of their daughters massacred, and the rest of the family carried into captivity. Two years later they were reduced through the instrumentality of an old negro named Britt, who possessed considerable influence with the Indians, and often visited their camps. They usually held their captives for the hopes of obtaining ransom, and would take coffee and sugar or ponies in exchange.

They seemed to know how much ransom the friends of each prisoner could afford to pay, and always demanded as much as they could possibly hope to receive. Such is a brief description of Shackelford County twenty years ago, and of the hardships and dangers its citizens were then forced to contend with. But those troublous times soon ended, and with nothing to disturb him in the pursuit of his business of stock raising, Mr. Matthews soon became notedly successful. He is still busied in the cattle industry. Of the seven children that were born to him six are still living, have married and are living in and around Albany. His only son, J. A. Matthews, married Miss Sallie Reynolds, sister of G. T. and W. D. Reynolds, bankers and stockmen of the county, and whose biographies appear elsewhere in this volume. He is following his father's footsteps and devoting his time and energies to the cattle business. The five daughters have married well and their husbands are counted among the most successful business men of the county. Bettie, the eldest, married G. T. Reynolds; Mary married John Lam; Martha, Mart Hoover; Susan, W. D. Reynolds, and Ella, F. E. Conrad, Mr. Matthews is justly proud of the family he has reared. They are worthy children of a worthy sire, and true types of that gentle, yet energetic, class of men and women to whom the new West is so largely indebted for its prosperity and social progress. Mr. Matthews has never shown any inclination for a political career, though his popularity would doubtless insure him recognition in case he should aspire to an office. So far his public services have been limited to holding the County Commissioner's office for a number of terms. He is a prominent Freemason and a strict member of the Presbyterian church. *(Source: Historical and Biographical Record of the Cattle Industry and the Cattlemen of Texas by James Cox, Published by Woodward & Tiernan Printing Co, St Louis, 1895 - Transcribed by Veneta McKinney)*

A couple of other interesting articles:

At <https://lynchingintexas.org/cashion>, there is an article titled "The Fort Griffin Vigilante Movement" by Robert "Ty" Cashion. It describes the hangings that Jesse Blue talks about that includes a very short reference to Judge Lynch that Dutch Nance bought his first herd from for Jesse to drive to Denison.

At <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=ethj>, there is an article titled "The Katy's Ladies: Prostitution in Early Denison, Texas, 1872-1880" by Jennifer Bridges that describes how Denison became a boom town when the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad, known as "the Katy", came to the town.