

# Limuel Family Tragedy

*An intriguing Email received in April 2010*

I am a direct descendant of this family. (See newspaper article) Lee and Celia Limuel were my great grandparents and Velma was my grandmother. Throughout my life my family and I have heard bits and pieces, and just recently we came across some concrete evidence (This Article). We as a family would like the story retold and possibly some sort of a Memorial on or near PINEY CREEK BRIDGE honoring their memory. So, I was wondering if you can help me with this or point me in the direction with someone who can. Any additional information on this story would be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance for any help or attention to our family's tragedy.

Ivy Limuel-Thomas  
Tampa, Florida

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## Eight Dead in Bridge Collaspe

*from the Bastrop Advertiser, April 27, 1938*

Eight colored people were drowned between sun-down and dark Tuesday evening when the bridge over Piney Creek, between Hills Prairie and Upton, collapsed and the car in which they were riding plunged headlong into the swollen water of the creek.

The dead include: Lee Lemuels and wife, Celia, and six of their children and grand children: Ernest Lemuels, age 22, and wife, Kennie, age 22, and their son, Ernest Jean, age 4; Vivian Evans, age 25; Velma Lemuels, age 28, and son, Jesse James, age 4.

Latest information received before going to press reported the finding of all bodies. They were removed to Smithville and placed in care of the colored undertaker there, by County Commissioner Rosanky.

It is supposed that the bridge was weakened by the considerable amount of rain fall during the week, and the middle span gave way beneath the weight of the car.

The Lemuels family have been tenants on the farm owned by W. R. Price near Hills Prairie, for a number of years.

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## Research on Limuel Family Tragedy

by Marian Nelson

My search began on the internet and after countless hours the only information I found was different spellings of Lemuels in Bastrop County. At one point Ivy questioned if her last name could be spelled differently. I decided to do research in Bastrop and my first stop was The Bastrop Historical Society Museum. Much to my surprise, Barbara Vana, Museum Director, had one of the documents I needed. The Lemuels were buried in Clearview Cemetery. Finding it just four miles from Bastrop on FM 304 was easy and a nice young man living near the cemetery gave me the phone number of Ms. DeShay, secretary of the Cemetery Association. She in turn gave me the name and phone number of President Esther Tolbert-Owens. The story climaxed with this remarkable lady. Ms. Owens, an extraordinary 88 year old, remembered the family and all the details. She pointed out the unmarked graves and described the burial.



photo by: Cyndi Wright, Bastrop Advertiser  
Marian Nelson, Ivy Limuel-Thomas & Esther Tolbert-Owens

Ivy and her husband came from Florida and met me at Clearview Cemetery on July 26, 2010. It was a happy meeting of friends who had been emailing for several months. Then Ms. Owen, young and spry at 88 joined us driving her own car. She

immediately pointed the way to the Lemuel burial plots. What a gracious lady! We delighted in her ability to remember so many details about the family and what their deaths meant to the community.

The happy occasion continued with Ms. Owens taking Ivy to Bastrop to meet some long lost cousins Ivy later said that she shed many happy tears and is forever grateful for finding closure to the family tragedy.

We thanked Cyndi Wright, editor of The Bastrop Advertiser and Smithville Times for covering this unusual story. A week later, the story was on the front page of both papers and the interest I've received is remarkable. Murray Callahan called to talk about his father, County Commissioner Earl Callahan's involvement with the road situation. Lucille Wilhelm Winkler remembered how it rained all day even though she was only four. Her parents, Philip and Annie were visiting Eddie and Matilda Wilhelm on the occasion of the birth of their sixth child, Cletus. The family got stranded in their Model A Ford and had to spend the night with Adolph and Clara Grohman. Lentz Branch flooded the road (now 535) a mile or two before Watterson Road. Two boys got caught in the water and Clarence Grohman rescued them on horseback. Lucille said her father borrowed a horse to check on her brother, Marvin, who went to Watterson School. It seems everyone has his/her own recollection of this day in history. What is your memory about floods, sicknesses, cotton picking, school, etc.? The Rockne Historical Association collects oral histories as well as written stories. You are invited to visit the interesting and informative Archives in the Rockne Museum.