

Summary from a Story written by Della Inez "Day" Keeney Harris

Leaving Texas for New Mexico, Settling "The Day Tank"

On the 7th day of May in 1913, the Day family left Texas loaded 3 wagons, a crate of chickens, one cow, and one extra horse they called "Billie" as well as a team of horses to pull each of the 3 wagons.

The oldest son Clarence drove the chuck wagon and did most of the cooking. The chuck wagon had a "big chuck box" in the back of the wagon and when you let the door on the chuck box down, it served as a cook table and an eating table. Clarence would cook using two big "dutch ovens" that he sat on the campfire to bake sour dough biscuits and stews.

They traveled about 18 miles a day. It was a long way across the plains, hot and dry. After a few days out, they met up with other wagons going West. Some would stop and homestead a place and others would join in the wagon train. Sometimes they had ten to twelve wagons in the train.

The girls would wear bonnets and long stockings and dresses. Their mother was carrying her ninth child. Their Papa and the boys would play their fiddles and guitars at night. Music was just better out on the hills.

The Days went over some rough trails, not many roads, lots of sand and wind. Sometimes they would have to double the teams to get across the rivers with no bridges. They would stop at some of the little towns and get groceries and rest the horses.

When they crossed through Roswell, NM there was a bridge across the river. No one told them that the wagons and the train crossed the same bridge. Just as the last of ten wagons crossed the bridge, a big freight train came around the bend and went across the same bridge. The good Lord was with them.

They landed in Magdalena, NM. Only 3 wagons left, which were the Days. It was a pretty place. Their Papa asked about land. The Day's homesteaded a place about 75 miles on top of the Datil Mtns. They called it Cebolla (onion in Spanish) Canyon, with the land being what is now "The Day Tank" and 180 acres.

The Days met some of the local ranchers, the Gatlins (a future story), the Greers (the Greers Cemetery across from Wild Horse Ranch sales office) and several Spanish families.

They lived in tents until they got the house built. (part of the log cabin was still there in late 1998. Rumors have many of the logs being taken by locals.)

Their Papa and the boys cut and hewed out enough logs for a 3 bedroom home, a big living space with a fire place, a hallway and a big kitchen. It was very warm because the winter

time brought a lot of snow. After they got the corrals built, you could walk over the fence when it snowed, as it drifted upon the fence.

After they moved into the new house, the tents were turned into a school room. The Days hired a teacher to come in and stay with them to teach just the Day family. They used boxes and trees stumps for seats.

Their Mother taught the girls to piece quilt tops. Della was only nine years old when she made her first quilt.

Groceries were purchased in Magdalena. It would take their Papa about a week to get there and back by wagon.

Their Papa and the Boys, along with a team of mules, dug what is now called “The Day Tank” on the maps.

There were also a lot of wild horses in the area. Their Papa would go out and round them up and bring a bunch into the old corrals at The Day Tank. Della remembers one was black with a white tail and mane. Pape tamed it and gave it to Della’s sister Hattie. She would ride it to the Gatlins and other neighbors.

On December 28, 1913, their Mother gave birth to her 9th child, a girl. A Spanish woman came to take care of their Mother. The oldest sister and her husband had come from Texas and she also had her first child at The Day Tank.

There were some Indians around. The Days became good friends with them.

The 2 oldest brothers enlisted into the 1st World War on June 1, 1917 and they went together and came back on May 2, 1919.

After living at The Day Tank for a number of years, the Days sold and moved to Blue Water, NM.