

# MY GREAT GRANDMOTHER – LOUISA JANE ELLER FAULKNER

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Thoughts and facts:

Born January 6, 1859, in Fredericksburg, Gillespie County, Texas. Died November 6, 1956, in Douglas, Cochise County, Arizona.

Granny. When I look back with age and experience in so many things over so many years, I still stand in awe of the woman. She was born to German parentage who had immigrated to Texas in the early 1800's. She was the 32<sup>nd</sup> of 34 children (that tidbit from her own lips). Old great-great grandfather James McCarty Eller had had two wives – not a bigamist, but one after the other. Oh, there were three sets of twins so be aware, kids, that gene is dominant in our family – my son Dave was a twin. It could well happen to you, too.

Now, please know that I knew her very well and (really) sat at her feet and listened and asked of many things. A loving and tender lady, she was not at all loath to respond. She was aware of many things, events of the day and evinced a perspective and deep understanding of people that I have come to expect of very few folks. She bore nine children, one of whom died quite early, and survived all but one – Aunt Mattie. She suffered a broken hip at about age 60 when thrown by a horse – and walked with the use of a cane thereafter.

This seems to be the place where our question and answer sessions should be brought out. Now, I literally sat at her feet and listened to her stories and asked her questions. These may seem to be disjointed, guess it is my lack of ability to meld the info into a true story line. But, here goes... Grandma, what did you think of Pancho Villa, the Mexican hero? Answer: You know that he and his gang raided the town of Columbus, New Mexico, which resulted in General Pershing being brought into the area (another for your history studies). Well, Pancho Villa was a murdering thief! Even the locals, „tho of Mexican origin, felt the same way.

Granny, tell me about the gunmen – Billy the Kid and the like. Answer: Only a few people and the lawmen ever owned a handgun. I never saw a man like that. Those men were not welcome in the nice part of town. They stayed on the other side of the track where the bars were. Nice people did not associate with them at all and they did not try to talk to us.

Granny, how many guns did you and grandpa own? Answer: One. A rifle. It was used for hunting, only. It wasn't used much because ammunition was very expensive, although your grandpa was a good shot and taught all of us how to use it and how to take care of it. It was used for hunting big game.

Granny, was the weather like this when you were little? Paul, this is desert country. Very, very dry and we can go for many months at a time without rain. When the summer rains come out of the south, the rain stops at the pasture fence. It rains only on the neighbor's land. But, when I think about it, we all knew that the wet spells (good years of rain) go for 11-years followed by 11- years of drought.

My mom told this one: Granny used to take a walk every evening and we kids would go with her. She had two dogs, Punch and Crockett. They would range out in front of us and would often find a

rattlesnake – fun time for us to watch. The dogs would approach the snake from opposite sides, barking, of course. One would come from behind, grab it just behind the head, shake it vigorously and then throw it. They would alternate until the snake was dead. Well, one time the snake was thrown at grandma and it actually wrapped around her leg. You can imagine... Thank the Lord, it was dead. We laughed about it later.

In 1907 her son James Johnathan was working in the copper smelter in Nacozari, Chihuahua, Mexico. I don't know the cause, but he died there. Granny took a wagon down there – all by herself – and brought the body home for proper interment. Mind, now, a trek of more than 75 miles well down into Mexico. A tough lady, our Granny.

Back to my grandmother. She married Edward Wadsworth Faulkner on November 9, 1876, in Kerrville, Texas. He was a Texas Ranger at one time (this was confirmed by contacting the official Texas Ranger Association & Museum, whereon they provided documentation that I have). I think that the youngsters in the family might be interested in knowing that. Granny drew a \$30 per month pension from the state of Texas until her passing.

They were the first “white” people to homestead a ranch in the central-southern area of New Mexico. The 10-section spread is still in the distant-family ownership. The whole family was conversant in the Spanish language, if not fluent in the pure sense of the word. Sadly, to me, none of us offspring learned much of the language. Un poquito, no mas.

When I was growing up in Douglas, AZ, we spent about a month each summer at the ranch. At about the 10-12 age frame, I was put to work doing such chores as shoveling manure, stacking hay, feeding stock and the chicken. A true ranch hand works hard and long days. I learned a lot about stock, horses, coyotes and rabbits. Did you know that 12 jack rabbits eat about as much as one cow? When I got a 22-caliber gun, I was welcome to shoot rabbits at any time. All of the ranchers welcomed us teenagers and didn't even demand that we get permission to hunt their land because we knew how to conduct ourselves.

Grandma Faulkner later moved into Hachita – a tiny railroad stop of about 200-people about 5-miles from the ranch – in order to be near other people as she aged. She later moved to Douglas to be near Mom where she spent the last 12-15 years of her life. She is interred in Mountain View Cemetery in Deming, New Mexico.

In 1905 when my mother was but 5-months old, her mother passed during a diphtheria epidemic. Granny took her to raise on the ranch and the two enjoyed a mother-daughter relationship. Momsaw to her as you would expect a daughter to do.

Granny Faulkner was a memorable lady whom I am looking forward to seeing again.....I honestly feel that I am a better man for having known her.