

Boyhood and Early Adulthood Recollections of

**ROBERT STOCKTON**

Son of Charles Wesley, Grandson of Levi Madison Stockton



Donald DeWees Stockton    William Weldon Stockton

Robert James Stockton    Charles Wesley Stockton

Madison Lindsay Stockton

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(With editing and additions by my brother William)

### PREFACE

This is a collection of somewhat disconnected experiences I remember about my family and the neighbors who lived around the area where I grew up as a young person. I recall these early life experiences and the items described to be a broad description of the times and conditions that occurred in the period discussed. The included pictures were collected from various family and friend's family albums and illustrate the subjects discussed herein.

In some ways, those may have been the good old days. But it is my observation that the lives most of us live in this modern time period has improved in many ways, although some may believe otherwise. It is difficult to predict from our past history whether life will tend to grow more pleasant for forthcoming generations or possibly life in general will tend toward future unhappiness. We can only hope that the increases in knowledge and technology will lead civilization to better lives for the World's masses. In God we trust and I trust he will watch over us.

I was born on January 31, 1927, in a farmhouse Northeast of Arapaho Oklahoma, near Custer City, Oklahoma. My sister Chloe and possibly other women were midwives (assisting Mom) during the home birth, which was the common way of birthing children at the time.

**M**en were usually nearby but they had very little to do with the new child birthing process. My younger brothers, Jack, (who died at age 6), Donald and Kelley were born in the family house at Arapaho. Brother William was born on January 11, 1921. I believe we were living at the time in the Custer City farmhouse. I do not know where my older brothers and sisters were born but it is almost certain they were also born at home.

**O**ur Charles Stockton family, my Uncle Levi's family and my Uncle Jess DeWees and Aunt Nadine's family were in close contact and we met together occasionally on Sunday afternoons during my childhood days. We visited, played dominoes, the children played games, and we usually shared stories, information and local gossip. I learned a lot of family information during our family 'get togethers' and I will share these memories with others to the extent that I can remember them. I have a problem that others before me have had. I should have kept a better history record but I never thought to do it at the time.

**P**op's brother Levi and family (we called him Uncle Bub) lived 4 miles east of Arapaho. Most of the younger generations of his family continue to live around the Clinton and western Oklahoma area. During my childhood years, I usually spent several weeks each summer staying with Levi's family. Two of Levi's boys, Bob and Bill were my age. I truly enjoyed their company and had plenty of fun learning new things that my cousins were proud to teach me, such as smoking grapevines down by the creek and riding on the backs of cows. This new knowledge came in handy back home in Arapaho. I had to walk our gentle old milk cow from our house on highway 183 to our previously located 10-acre station site property about ¼ mile away near the high school. It was very convenient to ride her on the trip.

I have had sporadic but long-term contact with Bob and Bill. Levi's Bob Stockton and I graduated from high school the same year and we were both drafted into the U.S. Army on the same date. The first time we met as new soldiers was at Fort Smith, Arkansas. After receiving our military physical exams, we were in a staging compound being assigned to our respective training camps, along with 100 or so other similar new soldiers. The Sargent in charge was calling out each new soldier's name and telling them to fall in line for transferring to one of several training camps. When the Sargent called out "Robert Stockton", I answered "here" and I heard an echo like sound from across the group that also said "here". This didn't please the Sargent who thought someone was being a "smart-alec" and he commented "Cut out the nonsense you jokers" and again called "Robert Stockton" and he heard two replies again. But the third time he called "Robert James Stockton" and he only heard one "here" answer. That was when the Sargent, cousin Robert and I first learned there were two Robert Stockton's to be assigned. Cousin Robert was assigned to a California camp and I was assigned to a Texas camp. We did not meet again until several years later.

Levi Junior, Darlene, Belle, Kenneth and Eldon were a few years younger than we three boys. I do not recall that I spent much time with them. Some of Pop's other siblings lived nearby but did not have children my age so I didn't spend as much time with them. Uncle Levi was a farmer and lived on Grandpa Stockton's original homestead 4 miles from Arapaho during my boyhood days. Grandpa Levi Madison was an elderly fellow and although he got around by himself he required assistance at times. Grandpa Stockton stayed with Levi's family part time and with our family (Charles's) the rest of the time. Grandpa Stockton died while I was a

teenager. I enjoyed having him live at our house. He was a jolly old fellow and he sometimes gave me a nickel for helping him.

**U**ncle Jesse DeWees (most people called him Jess) also lived on his father's homestead, which was about 6 miles from Arapaho.

Grandpa DeWees lived with Jess and Nadine. Grandpa DeWees died while I was young and I do not recall much about him. Both Grandma DeWees and Grandma Stockton died before I was born. Uncle Jess and Aunt Nadine did not have children of their own, but they enjoyed having my family's children stay with them. They could keep us busy since there was always plenty of children's type work to be done while we were at Uncle Jesse's farm. My older brothers Lein, Lindsey and Charles were strong young men and often worked for Uncle Jess on his farm whenever there was grownup work to be done.

**M**ost of the local farmers used horses to plow, plant and harvest their crops and do other farm work. Uncle Jess preferred to use mules for his farm work. Mules are a crossbreed as a result of mating a big male donkey and a female horse. The male offspring were called Jacks and



the female offspring were called Jennies. The mules were strong and hard working, but occasionally very temperamental. My older brothers told stories about the times when the mules became 'spooked'

and could not be easily brought under control after they ran away. The mules ran and ran until they were too tired to run any further. This was said to happen quite often but did not seem to duly alarm anyone.

Uncle Jess was a part time employee of the U.S. Soil Conservation Agency. He believed strongly in soil conservation methodology and was very serious about saving the land for future generations. My older brothers drove his mules for pay during the period when Uncle Jess terraced his fields and performed much of the work constructing his ponds. The terraces were continuous contoured mounds of dirt arranged to hold back rainwater and prevent soil erosion. The ponds were used to store runoff rainwater and were great for watering the farm's domestic and wild animals. We also enjoyed fishing for catfish and perch in the ponds.



Uncle Jess was also a purebred Hereford cow enthusiast and had a prize herd of purebred cattle. Jess and Nadine also raised several hundred turkeys each summer. The operation began with the hatching of chicks from eggs in a brooder that kept the eggs at the correct temperature for hatching. The eggs were turned by hand each day until the chicks had hatched. The young turkeys were fed chicken mash (finely milled damp grain) until the turkeys had grown to market size. Then the mature turkeys were butchered and delivered to the Swift Company processing plant in Clinton. One of the summer jobs



William, Lillian and I had (during different summers) was herding turkeys. It was our children's job to take the turkeys out into the pasture and fields each

day and let the young turkeys catch bugs, such as grasshoppers, for food. It was also our job to keep the turkeys close together and to protect them from hawks and other varmints who would enjoy having them for their dinner.

Uncle Jess also had an old tractor but I don't remember him using it very much except to provide power for a companion machine, such as a grain threshing machine or a corn sheller. His tractor had a power-take-off pulley, which could be connected by way of a flexible foot-wide



belt to supply operating power to turn a drive pulley on a second machine. Farmers of this time period usually had several pieces of equipment, which did

not have engines and were powered this way. As an example, threshing machines of the 1930's were powered by the tractor and belt-drive method. Almost all items of farm equipment in modern times have self-contained engines but almost none of the machinery of those days had engines. The farmer's muscles and draft animals of older days supplied the power most of the time.

I remember being around the threshing machine when the men were busy processing the grain bundles and separating the grain from the chaff. It was quite a neighborhood operation. They gathered bundles of grain stalks that included the heads of grain and hauled them by horse and wagon from the field to the threshing machine. The men all wore shirts, straw hats and overalls but us young boys were usually shirtless, without hats and barefoot. Our bodies were tanned dark brown and the soles of our feet grew

so thick even most sticker weeds would not penetrate them. We must have been tough, it is a wonder that our younger generation survived our childhood days so well.

**B**ack at the farmhouse, Aunt Nadine, her neighboring housewives, my sister Lillian and any other available female help were cooking all sorts of food to feed the working men for dinner. You can imagine the logistics of feeding and watering the working crews. The horses also needed feeding and watering. Talk about teamwork, plenty was surely needed to make everything work our satisfactorily.

**S**pecial times worth remembering were family gardening and harvesting periods. Pop (and probably most other families) always planted a large garden to supply vegetables for our family. Pop used a team of horses when we lived on the farm or hired a neighbor (after we moved to Arapaho) who had a team of horses and a plow to prepare the ground for planting.



**A**fter the garden planting grew to proper size, the younger children hoed weeds that grew among the new plants and picked potato and tomato bugs, which grew in abundance on the plants. It was a daily chore to keep the bugs from devouring our potato crop, which covered about 1/2 acre. We did not have chemicals to spray. We also wormed the tomatoes and other plants by hand. Each bug picker carried a can that contained kerosene to drown the worms and bugs in.

When the harvest was mature, the whole family followed the horses and plow to pick up the vegetables when the turnips and potatoes were being dug up. We bagged the harvest in 'toe-sacks' (or gunnysacks) which were woven from loosely woven string, much like the produce sacks used today. Harvest was a festive occasion because we needed the fruits and vegetables for survival throughout the year. We also picked wild berries and plums in season. Mom and the girls did a lot of canning during the growing season to preserve fruits and vegetables for future use during the winter.

When Robert was 3 years old, his Pop took him to work in the fields. Robert rode on the planter and harrow (which leveled and smoothed the soil) while this work was being accomplished. Pop also pulled Robert on his cottonsack while he was picking cotton. Many people, black



and white, men and women, took care of their young children, while working in the fields. This was the normal way of life for country folks during the 1930's. Robert also picked cotton along side Pop as a teenager. It was

almost a necessity for everyone to work when the occasion arose because extra money was not easily earned during the years following the Great Depression of the 1930's.

Picking cotton was a good chore for small and larger children as well as grownups. People who lived on a farm used the many children that a family usually had to help in the daily work (called chores). The children's work contributed greatly to family success. On weekends and

during the summer months, town kids went to nearby farms to earn a little money and assist with the harvest. The jobs usually performed were picking cotton, shucking corn, planting wheat, harvesting grain, baling hay, milking the cows, etc. Town kids were a part of the system and were appreciated by the farmers that needed temporary help. The farm family treated these town



the cows, etc. Town kids were a part of the system and were appreciated by the farmers that needed temporary help. The farm family treated these town

kids like part of their family while they were working for them.

**W**e had wood and coal burning stoves to provide for our cooking and heating.

came in the fall, Pop and down to the river and and bring home wood to wood was cut into stove-neat piles called cords convenience. Pop would to smoke when we were threatened to spank us for around home (and Mom). Mom did not approve of allowing us boys to smoke.



When dry-cold weather several of his boys went worked long hours to cut last through the winter. This sized pieces and stacked in near the house for let the boys have tobacco out cutting wood, but he smoking when we were

**D**aily boyhood chores included milking the cows, both morning and evening, and feeding and watering the chickens. It was also our occasional job to catch and wring the neck of a chicken or two, which Mom later cooked for dinner.

It was common during this time period that the women ran the household and the men ran most of the world outside the household environment. Of course, Mom and the girls had the womanly type outdoor jobs like cooking soap (using lye, left over cooking fat, ashes and salt). The soap they made was very strong but the materials required were low-cost and the soap was efficient. The women grew flowers, picked garden vegetables, gathered eggs, and other womanly type things. The woman of the house also had the primary responsibility for raising and watching over the chickens.

When we lived on the farm, one Saturday chore that Robert and William can remember is helping Mom wash the family clothing in a hand-powered washing machine. We considered ourselves fortunate to have such a modern washer. It was a great improvement in comparison to the commonly used galvanized steel tub and wash board. Nearly every helpful accessory we had was either animal-powered or hand-powered because electric power had not been distributed to rural areas at the time. We used kerosene lanterns for nighttime illumination. Our clothes washing operations required fetching buckets of water from the water tank located near the windmill, which pumped water from a well. We had two tanks near the windmill. The first tank was elevated to keep the animals from having access to the water. The overflow from this drinking water tank spilled over to the lower tank where the animals could drink. Our



household wash water was heated on the wood-burning cook stove.

**A**fter the water and clothes were loaded into the machine, we had to push the washing machine's broomstick-like handle back and forth to make the wash tank rock from side to side. The tank movement would slosh the clothing across an internal wash board arrangement. When the clothes were presumed to be clean, the washing machine operating person would rotate the wringer crank and guide the washed clothing between the wringer's rollers. This squeezed the clothes together to extract excess water. Next we had to give the clothes a cold water rinse in a separate tub to remove the homemade soap residue and any leftover loose dirt. Then it was time to hang the clothes on the clothesline. After the first load of clothes was processed, there were several more loads waiting to be washed and rinsed. Our family generated half a dozen or more washer loads each week. This was not woman's work in our family. There just were not enough women to do all the dirty household jobs that had to be done to clean up the mess made by us boys. Mom and Pop were parents to 8 boys and 3 girls. Most families during this period had 4 or more children.

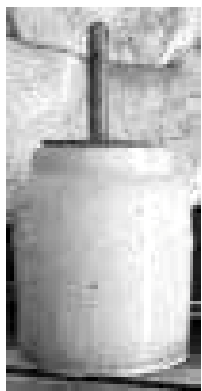


**O**n many hot afternoons during the hot summers when Robert was a teen-ager, he and his boyhood friends often rode their bicycles to a pond about 2 miles west of Arapaho to go swimming. The pond held runoff water from the nearby pastures and the water was always murky enough to hide anyone who was submerged. The boys



played a game of "tag" whereby the boy who was "it" would try to touch one of the other boys who would dive under the surface and swim away to keep from being caught. Anyone who was caught would then become "it" and would try to catch someone else. We usually spent a couple of hours swimming this way and then would return back to Arapaho to do our chores for the evening. I also had a basketball and an old hoop that was fastened to the back end of our house and I spent many hours shooting baskets.

**W**e always had one or more milk cows, which provided us with milk and butter. Before we moved to town, we had several milk cows. We saved some of the whole milk for cooking and drinking but we ran most of the milk through a cream-separating machine. One of the boys would crank a handle that rotated internal discs in a process that somehow separated the cream from the whole milk. A small portion of the cream was churned into butter. To operate the churn, the churner would pump the broom-stick-like handle attached to a paddle at the bottom, up and down



until the cream separated into butter globules and whey. The whey was hung up on the clothesline in a cloth sack to drip-dry and made into farmer's cheese. Anything left over was either fed to the chickens or hogs. We butchered the hogs, and a steer or two each fall, to provide us with meat.

**A**fter we moved to Arapaho we only kept one milk cow. The one cow was adequate (most of the time) to supply us with milk and butter. The family drank most of the whole milk and the leftover portion was saved until the cream rose to the surface to be skimmed off and used for making butter. One of the boys was designated each Saturday to do the churning.

Another regular Saturday job was cleaning the manure out of the barn and chicken house. This required scraping the chicken manure from the chicken roosts and cleaning the chicken house and barn floor. A not-too-

desirable part of cleaning the chicken house was the involuntary process of becoming hosts to the chicken



mites that inhabited the roosts and nests. These little critters would crawl into your clothes and cause a tickling and itching sensation. This never seemed to cause serious infections to either the chickens or humans. Another unusual feature of the chicken house was that Pop always had several one and half-inch diameter holes drilled into the walls of the egg laying nest divider boards. We would occasionally find a captured bull snake, which had eaten an egg and was trapped because the egg in its body was larger than the hole and the snake could not escape. It would take several days for the snake to digest the swallowed egg and the snake would be a prisoner until then. Pop's orders were to keep the bull snake trapped as long as possible because it would only eat one egg and it's presence kept mice and other vermin away. The snake vanished after a few days and everything returned to normal with little harm done.

**W**hen I was a boy, we seldom had any “store bought” candy. When we had a hankering for a sweet tooth, our main homemade treat was a slice of home-baked bread or a piece of piecrust, amply spread with butter and generously sprinkled with sugar. Sometimes occasionally when available, powdered cinnamon was substituted for the sugar. The result was an adequate snack when accompanied by a glass of fresh milk.

**W**e seldom had any “store bought” medicines either. When we came down with a case of the sniffles, the remedy was a spoon full of sugar flavored by a few drops of kerosene (ugh!) Another remedy for a cold and stopped up head was a mustard plaster compress applied to the chest so that the fumes would be breathed in by the wearer (and anyone else in the vicinity). I’m not sure how well this worked but we seemed to get well after a few days.

**S**tockton kids, and most other kids, wore numerous patches on their clothing during the great depression of 1929 through 1933. We never noticed we were poor since the neighbors around us had the same problems making everything work out the same way as our family did. The bad times were usually not apparent to children. The Stockton children were never without food and always had adequate and comfortable surroundings, usually equal to or better than most other families. Times were trying and certain of our children stayed with relatives at least part of the time, during the most adverse periods. The Stockton family survived without serious harm, with the exception that it was almost impossible for Pop to keep paying interest on the money he owed on the farm. The debt mounted up and the Banker demanded payment. Pop eventually had to sell his farm

and livestock and we 'down-sized' to the filling station in Arapaho. But Pop



was one of many similar farmers and we survived with our spirits unbroken, as did most families. It is indeed a credit to the Stockton family's efforts and our Mother's DeWees' family that we survived as well as we did through the Great Depression. Our sisters, Chloe and Clara, were old enough to

work at reasonably good paying jobs through part of this time period and it goes without saying that part of their paychecks helped the family considerably.

**A**fter we moved to Arapaho, and after Pop and his friends moved the station a half-mile east to highway 183, we dug a cistern. Cisterns are a way to store rainwater underground. The area's well water was very hard and gyp tasting (it tasted a little like Epsom salts). Our cistern was built by digging a 15 foot deep hole about 10 feet in diameter at the bottom and which narrowed to a smaller two-foot diameter neck at the top. The boys took turns at the bottom of the hole, digging and loading the dirt into a bucket, which another boy pulled up with a rope and emptied. The finished cistern bottom and interior was coated with a layer of mixed cement and sand. A raised 4-inch deep concrete slab covered the neck at ground level. It was a great accomplishment when the Stockton family had their own cistern. It took several months, working part time when we could, to accomplish this task.

**W**henever it rained, water was collected from the roof of the house. We would let the first several minutes of water wash down the roof and spill out on the ground. After the washdown period, the water was rerouted by repositioning a divider switch to fill the cistern. The roof washing helped some but the cistern had to be cleaned out every few years to get rid of the sediment collection deposited by the incomplete washing of the dusty roof.

**W**e initially drew water from the cistern by lowering a bucket, but Pop later installed a continuous chain and cup mechanism, which was turned by a hand crank. The rotating cups lifted water from below, which was delivered out of a spout into our water buckets. Water was carried into the kitchen and was dipped out of the bucket with a long handled 'dipper' for drinking or use in cooking. Looking back, this was not the most sanitary source of a water supply. But during the contemporary time period it was great to have our own soft water.

**P**rior to completion of the cistern, the boys took turns carrying water from Mrs. Townsend's cistern across the street. We usually carried two buckets at a time. Mrs. Townsend was well known around Arapaho since she taught school for many different classes of Arapaho's children.

**T**he second probable non-sanitary feature we lived with most of our family's life in Arapaho was the plumbing system, or rather, the lack of such a system. Every Saturday night was bathing time. We used a galvanized steel laundry tub about 2 ½ feet in diameter and filled it a third full of cold water. A kettle of water was heated on the



cook stove and poured into the laundry tub until the water was lukewarm. Then the youngest child was bathed first, then the second youngest in turn until several had bathed. The smaller children were all bathed in the same water. I don't recall how the older children and grownups handled their baths. They didn't let us smaller kids watch!

The third less than sanitary system we had during early days was the plumbing system. We didn't have such a thing. We threw the dishwater out the back door or carried it down to the chicken yard fence and threw it over, as we did the left over food scraps. The chickens really enjoyed this. We made an improvement after a few years by adding a kitchen sink with a wastewater drainage pipe to the ditch located east of the house.

The toilet during this period was down by the barn. This consisted of a hole dug into the ground with an out-house built over it. It had a bench seat with an oblong 8-inch diameter hole cut through it for you to sit on to do your business. A person would finish up with a page from an old Ward's catalog or corncobs which were rejected from the corn sheller (a machine which shelled the kernels from the cob). The cobs were really ideal for this purpose. This arrangement served us adequately for several years. Of course, we had to dig new holes when the old hole became filled and move the out-house building occasionally.



We males in the family slept in the boy's room in the back part of the house, several to a bed. We had an advantage over the females. Our room had a back door to the outside and this door had a 3-foot wide concrete stepping stone covering the ground outside the door.

During the night when we had the urge to unload our bladders, we simply opened the back door and let fly. It was usually dark outside and it is doubtful that any of the neighbors ever noticed us.

**A**s long as I was living at Arapaho, the above-described plumbing system was the best our family had. After I came back from the Army, Arapaho had grown a lot and the town fathers had piped the gyp water from the town well to most houses around town. An outside faucet that was located near the front door connected our house. At this time, my brother Charles and I were working as plumbers in Boise City, OK. and Lein was working as a plumber in Springfield, CO. On one trip to Arapaho, our sister Clara said she would have the local workers build a septic tank system near the house to receive the wastewater and sewage if we boys would install a plumbing system for our parents. We agreed. Our Uncle Joe DeWees, (nicknamed Booch) had a plumbing business and volunteered to furnish plumbing materials and fixtures. We boys came to Arapaho and put in a plumbing system. This was quite an improvement for those at Arapaho. The year was about 1950.

**W**hen I was a teenager, my Uncle Joe bought me a used guitar and taught me how to pick out a few tunes and play a few cords. I never advanced my guitar talent very much but my younger brother Donald practiced while he was a teenager and still practices almost daily to the present time. Donald is well accomplished and plays for audiences such as the VFW, American Legion and old Soldiers Homes. Four of my brothers and I are honorable discharged military personnel and have lasting attachments for others who have served our country in that capacity.

**W**hen Robert was in high school, he and a friend worked at the Clinton brick plant during weekends and holidays, earning non-union wages of 25 cents per hour. Union workers were requesting 50 cents per hour. Robert also helped bale hay at age 16-17. This required adequate stamina to lift 60-100 pound bales for 12 hours per day. The pay was good for strong men with muscle, \$3.00 to \$4.00 per day. The pay usually included a mid-morning and mid-afternoon break with a bottle of home-brew (homemade beer) and a large meat sandwich. On one occasion, Robert could not collect his pay and his brother-in-law, Albert Lacy, came to Robert's aid, making the farmer pay the agreed wage. Many young people were cheated and had little recourse for collecting the agreed wages from an unsavory employer in those days.

**W**hen Robert's brother William was in high school, he and several friends plucked turkeys at a Clinton meat processing plant on weekends during the winter. That is when William signed up and received his Social Security card. He also worked after school, sweeping classrooms one year, delivering coal one year, and milking cows one year. Any after school job was a most welcome method of earning a few bucks during the school year.

**R**obert received his Social Security card so he could take a temporary clerking job at the Custer County Courthouse in Arapaho for a few weeks one summer. Robert also swept classrooms for a couple years and drove a school bus as a relief driver for his brother-in-law, Albert Lacy one year.

**D**uring the summer, Robert, William, and their brothers, worked on farms in some capacity while they were attending high school. During one summer of farm employment when William was about 15 or 16,

he drove a team of horses working in the wheat harvest, loading bundles of wheat onto a hay wagon with a pitchfork, then unloading them at the threshing machine. The horses were trained to stop for loading the bundles on a voice command of "whoa" when the bundle wagon was along side a shock of bundles. After the bundles were loaded, the bundle loader would give the voice command of "giddyup" and the horses would pull the wagon until they were told to "whoa" again. This cooperation between horses and man kept the bundle loader from physically controlling the horses reins between stops to load bundles. This greatly improved the amount of work a single man could do.

**W**illiam's arms ached so bad at night that sleeping was very difficult. And this type of work was for \$1.00 per day, 75 cents a day for a kid if the farmer could get him to take less. There was never any thought of quitting in those days, one just buckled down and tried harder. Later, William worked on the John Lacy - Leo Lacy (father and son) farm several summers helping Leo harvest wheat. William would drive the tractor, which pulled the header machine, and Leo would operate the header machine that cut and bound the wheat plants into bundles. The bundles



would be hauled in wagons to the threshing machine to separate the grain from the stalks and chaff. Neighbors from the local farming area joined together as a group of about 25- 50 to travel to each other's farms where they worked as a unit to complete each other's harvest. Farmers now have one-man self-propelled combines and many farmers hire custom combining groups consisting of 6 or more units to harvest their crops. The grain growing area of the U.S. is also the tornado prone area. This prompts farmers to ensure their crops are gathered as soon as the grain is adequately matured and ready for harvest to prevent losing large portions to damaging storms. A bad storm can wipe out a year's worth of work for the farmer and his dreams about prosperity can quickly turn to more debt and despair. After the grain is separated, it is hauled to the farmer's private storage building or to commercial storage. Hand shoveling was necessary to transfer the grain much of the time because grain augurs with electric motors had not yet been invented, nor was electrical power usually available on the farm. Robert was too small to do the heavy work during the grain harvest period but was put to work delivering drinking water to the grown working men. Everyone had some kind of job, even small boys.

**B**ack in the older days, and even during our present time, the farmer must work many long, hard days throughout the year to make enough profit to cover his expenses, buy modern equipment, raise a family and have money left over for living.

**D**uring plowing season, after harvest was finished, it was time to prepare the ground for next year's crop planting. William returned again to the John Lacy – Leo Lacy farm to help with the plowing. Leo would drive the tractor, which pulled the plow at night, and William would take over during daytime operations. They could plow a lot of ground in short order.

**R**obert also drove tractors and plowed fields for farmers when he was in high school. He also drove a tractor with a small 2-wheel wagon attached to cut and haul corn silage to feed and fatten a farmer's steers. This required using a machete to cut partially mature corn stalks with immature corn ears attached, fill the wagon and haul the load to the feed lot. It took a while before Robert learned to back up the wagon as required. This is a talent that continues to be useful in maneuvering his Motorhome today. The work was well appreciated by the farmer and was a good way to make money for school clothes, shoes and books.

**T**he young adults created most of their own entertainment in those days. One of the most enjoyable gatherings was the Saturday night dance in someone's country home. Almost everybody was invited to attend at no cost, except maybe to chip in a dollar or two for the fiddler and guitar picker. This was almost as much fun as attending the youth services at Church on Sunday evening. It often ended with a boy walking a young girl home after the meeting.

**A**t the original station in Arapaho, there was the old magneto trick, which was inherited from the previous station owners. The station building had wood benches with nails driven with their heads flat into the board seat. These nails were connected below the seat with wires to a magneto (which generated low voltage electrical current). The floor was dirt so it was conductive to electrical current. When some unsuspecting man (or woman) sat on the benches, a person hidden from view of these men would turn the magneto crank which would generate current and shock the unsuspecting bench sitters. The current was not strong enough to harm them but it certainly got their attention. After the startled man jumped up, everybody would have a good laugh (ha-ha). You can imagine that the

benches were not a favorite place for sitting down for those who knew of the magneto trick.

I hope everyone enjoys learning about a few selected portions of our life during my younger years. I know there were many other interesting happenings people would enjoy hearing about during the 1930's time period. Many other old timers have similar stories to tell. I and many others of the younger generation would certainly like to hear some of them.

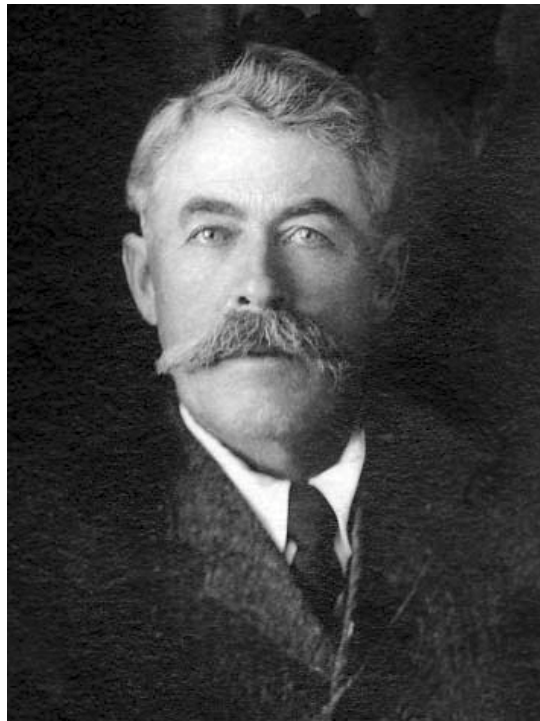
Written by Robert (with editing and many supporting additions by now deceased brother William)

*Robert*



The Robert Stockton Family - - - 1998

Sue Arlene Stockton Manley, John Jeffrey Stockton,  
Sally Ann Stockton Leonard, Jack Joseph Stockton  
Inez Joyce Thiebolt Stockton, Robert James Stockton



**Grandpa Levi Madison (Matt) Stockton**



**Father (Pop) Charles Wesley Stockton  
and Mother (Mom) Ida Mae DeWees Stockton**