

I found this article on June 7, 2010, in the Texas Spur newspaper by Bessie Martin. It is dated April 25, 1991.

Edna Garrett Johnson was my grandmother's, Annie Garrett Stephenson, older sister.

At the end of the article there is a picture of Livingston Garrett. He was my great grandfather's (William Clinton Garrett) uncle.



by Bessie Lee Martin

Eva Pendleton Henderson, a member of the Chisum family, recounts the life of the windy border country of Southern New Mexico. The title of her book is called "Wild Horses" and one of the chapters is a story about a family from Dickens County: Lee Johnson, his wife, Edna, and two little girls, Maudie and Rachel.

Edna was the daughter of Clint and Melinda Garret of Red Mud in Dickens County. Edna contracted tuberculosis and they left home by wagon, heading west for her health. They arrived on the Locklear Ranch in the Guadalupe Mountains. Eva Pendleton was a teacher and lived with the Locklears. Here is her story:

One late afternoon when the Locklear children and I rode home from school, we noticed a tent stretched near the teacher's room. This tent was furnished with a bed only. We noticed several horses saddled and tied to the hitching rock. The doctor's horse was among them. A black, branded F.

Earlier that day, Mr. Locklear had saddled his horse and had ridden out among his cattle, to find settled in a lonely canyon, a covered wagon. Nearby, a man was cooking over a campfire and his two children were playing next to him.

Mr. Locklear rode up to the man and stepping down from his horse, he said, "Howdy stranger, aren't you new on the mountain top."

"I hope you don't mind our camping on your range," the man said. "I needed a camp near water. My wife is sick. Been sick for over a year. The doctor advised me to come west with her. He said the high, dry air would heal her lungs. We followed the stock and found this spring."

Mr. Locklear walked to the wagon and put his head inside. The lady, Mrs. Johnson, lay back in the wagon. Mr. Johnson had propped her up with pillows. She was very pale and her voice was low and weak. There was an unnatural bright color in her cheeks. With her black hair and large blue eyes, she was a beautiful lady. However, Mr. Locklear realized she was dangerously ill.

"Load the wagon and the children, I'll get the team and hitch up," he said when he got back to the fire. Mr. Johnson was ladling breakfast onto some tin plates. He looked startled.

## Dickens County



1891-1991

"I'm not a claim jumper. Are you putting me off your land?" His Winchester leaned against a nearby tree, he walked over to it and said, "I have a very sick wife."

Mr. Locklear laughing answered: "Hold your fire friend, I'm taking you people to my home. We can take care of your wife better there. Now lets get going."

That afternoon they hurriedly moved my things out of the teachers room, and put Mrs. Johnson in my bed. I'm to stay in a tent. I have a bed with my suitcase underneath, a little stand in the corner for my comb and brush. Mr. Locklear changes saddle horses and rides a fine gaited horse to Queen to fetch the doctor.

Late in the night I'm awakened by a noise, I sit up in bed. The moonlight is very bright, shining through the tent walls so I can clearly make out the doctor, undressed and climbing into bed with me. I jump up and grab my clothes and start for the front of the tent. The doctor growls with exhaustion. "What the hell are you doing sleeping in this tent!" Then he grabs his clothes and charges for the entrance, running into the center pole on the way out and collapsing the tent on both of us. We are on our knees, bumping heads, struggling to find an opening.

When the doctor and I crawl forth, my long sleeved nightgown trails in the dust. He is crawling around in a pair of long underwear, muttering to himself and dragging his clothes, while an assembled audience from the house is roaring at the spectacle we are both making.

"Somebody find my britches," the doctor bellows. Mr. Locklear, laughing with the best of them, takes me by the arm.

"Go on to the dugout and sleep with

my wife. Doc and I will sleep in the camp bed."

Five days pass and although the doctor gives Mrs. Johnson the best of care he can and everyone prays for her recovery, she just gets worse and worse, and one day when the doctor goes into Her room, to check on her, she was found sleeping peacefully, out of harm, finally free of suffering.

The cowboys from all around pass the hat for Mrs. Johnson's funeral. With this money, Mr. Johnson can afford a proper burial and what is left over, he will be able to return to Texas with his two children.

Rachel is still alive and lives in California. She has visited her aunt, Mamie Martin, many times. Lee Johnson is buried in California.



When Livingston Garrett died in Spur in 1919 this picture was found among his possessions. He was a great uncle of Harry Martin. He lived in Arkansas but in his later years he moved to Spur to be near his family. He and his wife Ollie had a home on Hill Street in Spur and are both buried in the Red Mud Cemetery. He was a Veteran and is the one in the uniform in the picture. The other men in the picture are Frank and Jesse James. Frank on the left and Jesse on the right. The girls are Frank and Jesse's two sisters and Livingston's sister. The picture was made somewhere in Arkansas. Bessie Lee Martin.