

Culpepper Watkins Deese  
From Stanley County, N. C.  
Born - May 2, 1842  
Died Feb or Mar? 1932

Family Stories and notes  
by C W "C-dub" Deese 1909-1995

No one to my knowledge has ever gone to the trouble of running down the facts about Grandpa Deese and his ancestry. I don't know how far we could go if we tried. I guess I was as close to him as any of his grandchildren and yet I learned <sup>little</sup> or nothing about his early life or his family background. Guess I thought he would live forever, so I wrote down nothing and never questioned him about his mother and father. He was an old man near 70 when I was born. I know he had one sister and I think a couple of yrs. older than he. Her name was Harriet ~~Taylor~~ <sup>Deese</sup> Taylor and the only member of his generation I ever knew. Grandpa spoke of a brother called Alf. His name was probably Allen <sup>or</sup> Alfred because he named one of his sons Allen. My Dad, Uncle Bill to you, told me about Al who died at 16. Grandpa's brother Alf. was drafted and had to go into service and fight with the south in the Civil War. Since Gpa. was too young to be drafted he volunteered in order to go fight for the south with brother Alf. Alf lost his life in the war but Gpa came through without being wounded. I remember him saying slavery was not right and that it ought to have been abolished. He never owned a slave.

grandchildren and now thereafter I was writing of

over



After the war he probably returned to North Carolina, and I can only guess, he found nothing but void and sadness for that part of The south was over-run by war quite badly. We know he went to the area near Grenada, Miss. and probably worked a yr. or 2 as a farm hand for a land owner and then married Mary Sanders. She could have been a girl he came to know while he was a soldier in The Confederate army. He was in The deep south in The war yrs. I recall him speaking of Pensacola and Mobile and The Gulf waters. He and Mary had 4 Children that survived. They were Jim, Joe, Mag and Mary. I knew all 4. Others died at birth or very young and graves are in the Wattensaw Cemetery 8 mis. north of Lonoke, Ark. A number of Deeses are buried there and at Oakgrove. The family of 4 Children was Grandpas first family and they left Grenada with all they could load on a wagon box driving a pair of <sup>horses</sup> mules or oxens and probably a couple of milk cows led at the back of the wagon all headed west. They crossed The Miss. river on a ferry about 1875. He told about seeing buffalo by the thousands on Ark. prairies early in The morning before it got hot and again late in The day. <sup>The best part of the day was used to graze on the lush prairie grass.</sup> They would recede into the bush and remain in The shade in heat of The day to avoid the flies. Prairie Chickens were seen and taken for a little variety to that which they had to prepare <sup>for</sup> meals around a campfire. This was probably the first Deese family to appear west of the Miss. River.

Decided that they were not going on to Texas and Okla,



as ~~so~~ ~~many~~ did, they turned north from Lenoire toward a green and lush looking timber line to settle and build a home. They had crossed the Miss River, the flat delta lands and the open prairie <sup>of Eastern Ark.</sup> Anything green and tall enough to make a shade must have seemed like heaven and a beautiful place to carve out a home <sup>after</sup> this 200 mi. trek... Grandpa's wife Mary passed away here and he was left with at least 4 children. After the customary year from her date of death he married Nan T. Bryant and started his second family. She was my own grandmother. They had 9 children, Charlie, Bill, Al, Josh, Grover, Dewie, Blanche, Emma + Hannah. With the two wives he said he had 17 children. Only one short of two complete base ball teams. Evidently half of the children with his first wife did not survive. Back in those days there were a lot of still births and infant deaths.

Charlie is the only one who is living today. He is 97 and because of deterioration is unable to tell you anything about Gr. P. Gr. P. loved children as you can see but was a strict disciplinarian and taught them to respect their elders. He was in command of his house, his barn, <sup>his blacksmith shop</sup> and his farm. His family was <sup>expanding</sup> growing ~~growing~~ here at Wattensaw (or Pigeon Roost it was called in early days) and so was his house. All were never home at one time because the older ones were marrying and striking out on their own while young ones were still being born at the home base.

Gr. P. had visions of his family expanding and early on made arrangements to homestead many acres of farm and timber land. As each son and daughter married he gave them 40 acres of land.



Culpepper Watkins Deese, my own grandfather (and I have his initials but not his name) was many things - a farmer, blacksmith, breeder of live stock, particularly horses which he loved. He shod them at the black smith shop where he hammered, shaped the red hot iron and fit them to the hoof. He could pinch-hit as a veterinarian and would saddle his horse in the middle of the night, go to treat a sick horse or save a cow and her calf at calving time. Licenses were not required in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and he had as good an average as the pros. He was endeared by all who knew him and was known throughout the community for at least a 10 mi. radius. He was a handsome man of 5 ft. 8 in. about 160 lbs at 70. Handsome particular astride his special saddle horse. He wore a becoming white beard - a Robert E. Lee type that looked as good on him as it did on General Lee. In my earliest memory of him as he would be going into his 70<sup>s</sup> nearly all who knew him called him Uncle Cull. He died in 1932 shortly before his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.



One time I was back home visiting my parents on the farm for a few days during the winter season. As usual we read and enjoyed reminiscing around the fire side after dinner. Since dad religiously turned in at 9 o'clock we all went to bed at the same time.

The lights were out and we were all settling down for a long winter nap when mother got up in the dark to adjust a window or make sure the door was locked and stumbled over something. I heard her say I'm going to fall over your Big old shoes sometime and break my neck. Then Dad half asleep answered, - I'm sorry dear but I couldn't wear 'em any smaller.



FAMILY MEMORIES PRIOR TO 1938 BY C.W. DEESE, 1965

Aunt Hannah and Emma Deese were the most beautiful young women in Lenoire County. Their complexion was perfect and the envy of every other girl. They were slender and little over average height. As a matter of fact I have never seen a Deese girl that wasn't pretty and all have the most beautiful complexion as young women.

Naturally A. H. and E. attracted a good many boys but one that stands out mostly in my mind (while I was only 5 or 6) is one A. Emma dated. A local boy, Sport Briens, who was thought of highly by all who knew him. He had a physical handicap, a crippled left leg, but was good looking and very alert mentally. He worked hard at up grading his education. Their first dating was by use of horse and buggy. Then Sport bought a model T Ford car.

About this same time Buddy King was dating A. Hannah. He wanted to marry and they discussed marriage although he was several years younger. They decided there was a little too much difference in <sup>their</sup> ages and dropped the idea.

Also about this same time A. Emma and Nolan Dees met (How and where I don't remember). Nolan lived with his family in L.R. and worked at the R.R. Shop in N. L.R. He discarded an old car he was driving and bought a new one (Dodge I think). It was real sporty, an "eye catcher" for that time. It was obvious he was trying to win A. Emma from Sport Briens and did, so they were married.

U. Nolan was quite wild in those days and



wrecked his car and then another one as I recall. He was a big man 6 ft. 4 or 5 in. and well over 200 lbs. Was like a bull in a China shop. He was never hurt so badly in the wrecks of his cars that after a few days or weeks with his mechanical ability would have them rolling again. Fortunately A. Emma was not in these wrecks I've mentioned. He was a very likable man and could see the fun in most everything and even laugh about his bad luck with Autos.

Grandpa Deese's comment, "because he knew the elder Dees in L.R." Same family they dropped the last e the former spelling was the same as ours." No one questioned Grandpa Deese and there was a little family talk that Cousins had married. So what of it, Cousins have married for years. It happened many times if you go back a few hundred years.

Anyway, A. Emma and U. Nolan now live in L.R. near his work and their first born was Nolan Jr., then Evelyn Aileen about 1925.

They would come to Grandpa Deese's house <sup>usually</sup> on Sunday and U. Nolan would bring a basket of fruit or food of some kind. He was a very generous individual. I recall one time he brought a box full of fish <sup>on ice</sup> and we had an old time fish fry. He (U. Nolan) rounded up all the Deeses he could find and ask all to come join in the fish fry. I must say there were quite a lot of Deeses out there in the country at that time. I would say this event took place about 1925. At 15 or 16 I was the eldest grandchild and shortly thereafter I was driving Grandpa's old <sup>trans in</sup> auto.



They visited in the country quite often, always making Grandpa and Grandma Beebe's home their headquarters. Grandma was an excellent cook and there was an interesting house and they were interesting people. Always something going on there. Some one or more were always dropping in. They were called Uncle Cull and Aunt Nola by most everyone throughout the rural area.

By this time 1925 and 26 I was a big boy becoming interested in Athletics and Socials and would not always see A. Emma's family when they visited the country because I was on the go. I do know she had another son, Richard, whom I have never seen. I was away from home more than ever after Sept. 1928 when I went to Beebe for two yrs. to finish high school. In 1930 I went away to College (C. of O.) for 4 yrs. Then to Del. in 1934 where I have made my home ever since.

I almost lost track of A. Emma's family only hearing a little of them when I would return home for a week or 10 days once a year. And what made it more difficult was they had moved to Texas. The best contact was correspondence between A. Emma + Grandma. I was told Nolon had left his family and A. Emma was trying to work and keep the children together. They were all school age now and word came that A. Emma was ill. Dad (Uncle Bill) told me he and A. Lela decided to bring her to their house and tears came to my eyes as he told the story of going to El Paso to move her weak and failing 1000 miles back home.



How he made her a bed in the back seat of the car and drove by the school where her children were. Said he ask the school Principal if they could be excused to go to the car to see their mother and tell her good-bye probably for the last time. The Principal complied and quickly released the children and they all had a "hell of a good time" for several minutes in the back seat of the car as my father told the story to me.

The three men that made the trip to bring Aunt Emma home were Dad (Uncle Bill), Otis Simmons and would you believe Sport Brians. Dad ask Sport to go because he had a modern car and now with a family <sup>at home</sup> of his own. Otis was related by marriage and a neighbor. The three men rode all the way back in the front seat in order that A. Emma could have all the room possible in the back seat.

I happened to be home on <sup>a spring</sup> vacation (April 1938) and saw A. Emma and visited with her on the screened-in part of the front porch Dad had provided for her. She passed away a few months after I saw her. I was back in Del. working and didn't make it home to the funeral. But I often wondered what happened to Aunt Emma's children and that question was even heavier when we had little ones of our own in Delaware where we still live and where I work for the duPont Co. until retirement in 1970.

Clarence 1965