



**DRAFT** as of  
July 9, 2016

## Chapter One

# Introduction and Overview

## Pat & Annie (Evans) Neal, Their Children, Relatives and Friends

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*Nenon "Pat" Neal, in ca 1908 Born in 1878 in Texas, grew up in southwest Arkansas and died in 1958 in Pemiscot County, MO*

*by Joy Neal Brown*

“When Daddy took us to the store, Lois and me might get a Coca-Cola or a candy bar; if he took us to Hope or Washington (Arkansas) where he sold things out of his truck garden, we would get a nickel and buy us an ice cream,” my oldest sister, Ina (Neal) Bryeans, reminisced. It was May 2001 and sat in the back seat of her brother Wesley’s car parked on the side of the road leading into a little ghost town called Crossroads, Arkansas. Ina described these simple things in life as if they were very special to her—treats during a time when people had very little but were happy nonetheless.

On that day back in 2001, Ina was with several of the Neal family who had traveled to southwest Arkansas for a reunion of the family of our Grandma Jamima (Adams) Neal in Ouachita County, and then to visit places and people related to our Grandma Georgia (Blake) Evans, in Hempstead County. Still living and in the area at that time were several of our older cousins who Ina remembered from when they were young. Without Ina, we would have had a lot more difficulty finding our relatives and locating the sites and cem-



*Annie Evans in 1917 at the age of 16 in Hempstead County, AR*



*Above, Hempstead County’s Crossroads community in 1997 looking south. The old store (long closed) is left center and the cotton gin on the far right. Annie’s childhood Evans family home was south of the gin a couple of miles, and Pat and Annie’s home was back to the north about a mile.*



*Ina Neal Bryeans on her 90th birthday in 2009. She was born in Ouachita County AR in 1919*



*Lois Neal Barry in 1974 at her Lamont CA home. She was born in Crossroads in 1921 and passed away in Bakersfield CA in 2003*

eteries necessary for us to uncover our parents' past.

Through the years, Ina and our sister, Lois, shared all their memories with us younger kids either through their writings or orally. An obsessive note-taker and the youngest of the family, I endeavored to document all the bits of information that my older siblings shared but none more than those of sister Ina.

Ina is now 97 years old and is still lives in Gosnell AR in northeast Arkansas, 300 miles away from the area in which she was born and lived the first 13 years of her life. Ina's memory isn't as good as it was 15 years ago, so it's with some urgency that this family book be finished with the hope she would have a chance to read it before the lights dim in her life.

The 1929 photo on the opposite page shows the four youngest children at their Grandma Neal's home place near Bluff City in Nevada County. Daddy's mother, Jamima (Adams) Neal lived at this place on which Daddy grew up and the last few years of her life. Visits to Grandma Neal weren't often because Daddy, Mama and the kids lived a good 25 miles to the west near all of Mama's Evans kin. But near to Grandma Neal's place lived Daddy's three brothers: Uncle Dude, Uncle Mac and Uncle Crow. And Aunt Mary lived just a little farther east near the Ouachita County town of Chidester (pronounced chid-uster).

With their wide range of ages, Pat and Annie's children have different perspectives on the history of our family. The eldest child was a teenager when her family moved in 1932 from Crossroads all the way across Arkansas to the opposite corner. I, as the youngest child, would not be born until 1945—I remember best the last place Pat and Annie lived—the village of Pascola, in the Missouri Bootheel. They died in that village; Daddy in 1958 and Mama in 1962. So, in this book we've tried to capture all my siblings' memories related to the different places they lived from 1919 until 1962 when our mother died.

Through the years, the Neal children (of whom five are still living) have remained close, with frequent family gatherings. They would spend hours visiting about the family's early days. The letters, phone conversations, and the interview notes I collected from my older siblings form most of the background material for this book except for period between 1936 and 1951 when our father acquired an 80-acre farm north of Pascola, Missouri. That's a period that my brother, Wayne Neal, remembers best, and it is his writing that covers that time period.

Also, various family members have kept decades of old photos, and the best and most descriptive of these are used in this book.

After chapters on our paternal and maternal ancestors, I've



*The children of Pat & Annie Neal in 1929 at their Grandma Jamima Neal's place near Bluff City AR. Lois and Ina are behind; Margaret and Wesley are in front. They are standing in front of their father's Model T Ford.*



*Grandma Jamima "Mime" Adams Neal, age 84, in 1934 in the Ouachita County AR home of her son, Crow Neal. She died in 1936. Ina and Lois remembered Grandma Neal giving them 50 cent pieces when they visited.*

included a chapter on the first 14 years of our parent's marriage. So much of the contents is filled with memories of my oldest sisters and from their years in southwest Arkansas. That is followed by chapters on the four-year period the family lived in northeast Arkansas followed by the 15 years that my family was on their farm in Pemiscot County north of Pascola, Missouri.

Summary of the chapters that follow:

### **The Ancestors of Our Neal Family (Chapter 2-4)**

Through the years, a few members of my family sought out and shared what they knew about the ancestors of our parents, Pat and Annie (Evans) Neal. My sister, Lois, who died in 2003 at the age of 82, corresponded with our many cousins in southwest Arkansas or where ever they lived at the time. For our Neal family, she corresponded with Jesse Wood, a second cousin who lived all his life near Chidester, Arkansas. Before his death, Jesse researched the Neal line extensively and shared what he found. For our Evans family, Lois was always in touch with our first cousin, Edith (Neal) Hill Kniffin, who before her death researched our mother's Evans line.

### ***Our Ancestors Came from the Carolinas Before Civil War (Chapter 2)***

Without exception, all of Pat and Annie's ancestors were southerners from the Carolinas. They were rural people who farmed and lived off the land. While many descendants have now been spread like seeds in the wind across the country, others remain in the southwest Arkansas area to this very day clustered mostly in Hempstead, Ouachita or Nevada Counties.

All of the family's ancestors have been traced back to North and South Carolina in the early 1800s. The ethnicity of our family is strongly Scotch-Irish. In the winter of 2015, I submitted my DNA to an ethnicity test. The results were that my ancestors were 51% Great Britain (includes Scotland), 31% Ireland, and 8% Western Europe. Regardless, we know through genealogy that our ancestral heritage in America is almost totally southern.

In every case, our families migrated from the Carolinas through either Tennessee or Mississippi into southwestern Arkansas before the start of the Civil War of 1861-65.

### ***Paternal Ancestors—the Neal and Adams Lines (Chapter 3)***

My paternal grandparents were Samuel J. Neal from Nevada County, Arkansas, and Margaret Jamima Adams from neighboring

*Hundreds of old family photos were perused and the best included to tell the family's story*



county Ouachita County, Arkansas. Samuel's parents came from South Carolina before the Civil War and homesteaded in present-day Nevada County several miles southwest of the village of Bluff City. Jamima's father, James Stepto Adams, came to Ouachita County from South Carolina just as the Civil War was starting, and homesteaded west of Camden.

#### ***Maternal Ancestors—the Evans and Blake Lines (Chapter 4)***

My maternal grandparents were James Benjamin Evans of Hempstead County AR and Margaret Georgia Blake of Lafayette County AR. While the Blakes were some of the earliest to arrive in southwest Arkansas, the Evans family came into the area after the Civil War.

#### **Where the Family Lived Through the Years (Chapter 5-7)**

My parents, Pat and Annie Neal, lived out there married lives in basically three places—after only a year near Camden in Ouachita County, Arkansas, the couple were located for 13 years in nearby Hempstead County, Arkansas. Personal health and the nation's economic depression caused the couple to leave the area of their ancestors in 1932 and move to northeast Arkansas for four years. Then in a final move in 1936, they moved just a few miles north of there into the Bootheel of Missouri where they would continue raising their family and living out their lives. These three distinct periods form the central themes of this book. An overview of each period is as follows:

#### ***The Hempstead County Period – 1918-1932 (Chapter 5).***

Almost 100 years ago, in 1918, a wiry little 40-year-old man married a 16-year old girl in the historic old town of Washington, Arkansas, about 120 southwest of Little Rock. The couple, Nenon Wesley "Pat" Neal (born. 1878 - died 1958) and Annie (Evans) Neal (born 1901 - died 1962) were the parents of my siblings and me.

Pat and Annie met at a little village called Crossroads that my sister Ina remembers so well; Crossroads is located a few miles southwest of Washington on the historic Southwest Trail used by pioneers going to Texas. During the 26 years that followed their marriage, the Neal family would grow to include five daughters and two sons. While Ina was born in Ouachita County in 1919, the next three children were born on the Neal farm at Crossroads—Lois in 1921, Margaret in 1924, and Wesley in 1927.

Pat's primary livelihood was always cotton farming. He would raise cotton at the couple's 40-acre farm at Crossroads until 1932; then they moved across the state to northeast Arkansas with the hopes that our mother's health might improve in that area.



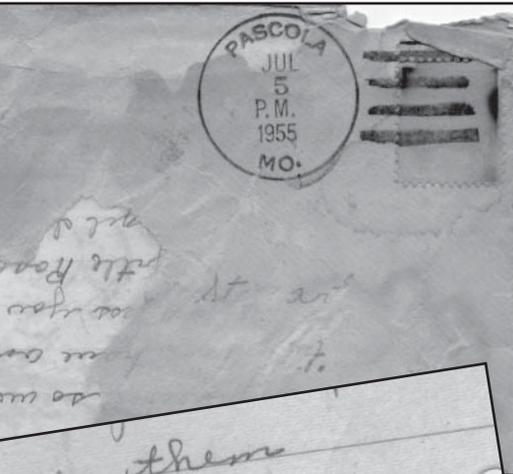
*Above: Since before the Civil War, the families of Nennon “Pat” Neal and Annie Evans lived in a five-county area of southwest Arkansas--Hempstead, Nevada, Ouachita, Lafayette and Columbus. Pat and Annie started their married life together in Hempstead County until 1932 when they moved to Mississippi County (see upper right hand corner). They lived there until 1936 and then moved north into Missouri’s Pemiscot County.*

***The Mississippi County Period—1932-1936 (Chapter 6).***

In northeast Arkansas, Pat and Annie, and all the children old enough, picked cotton for a local farmer—this was called “sharecropping.” They sharecropped near a store and cotton gin called New Liberty Arkansas.

Pat Neal was really too qualified to be just a sharecropper. Through the years our father had become an experienced cotton farmer, and there was lots of land that the owners wanted to rent out to qualified “land tenants” like Pat. They needed people who would plant and bring a crop to harvest and then share the profits on the crop. After one year as a sharecropper, our father rented out land a few miles away at Gosnell Arkansas. It was at this place that our brother, Wayne, was born in 1936. More opportunity presented itself in the Bootheel to the north, and the family moved on.

Old letters among relatives provided lots of information on our family's past.



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Neal

### *The Pemiscot County Missouri Period—1936-1958 (Chapter 7)*

In 1936, the Missouri Bootheel had thousands of acres of land that had once been swampland along the Mississippi River. The owners of the land needed people who could rent parcels of land clear the parcel of trees and grow crops. Through an arrangement with the R.B. Oliver Family, our father and mother moved the family of five children to an 80-acre parcel three miles north of the village of Pascola, Missouri. Our father tamed this land that had never been cleared of timber nor tilled before. Through hard work, he created and operated a successful cotton farm there. He was able to purchase the farm out-right in 1945, and operated it there until 1951, when he sold it and retired from farming.

On the Pemiscot County farm, two more children were born—me, in 1945, and Patricia three years earlier. By the time the farm was sold in 1951, the older children had all married and moved away from the area. My parents and the three remaining children at home—Wayne, Patricia and me—moved into “town”, the village of Pascola. My father died there in 1958 and mother in 1962. I was the only one still living at home when Mama died; At that time, I moved to Kansas City to live with my brother, Wesley. With my leaving, there were no more Neals living in Pemiscot County.

### **Closing Chapters**

In summary, this family book focuses first on the ancestors



*Pat and Annie Neal's Children at Thanksgiving, 1986 in Kansas City KS  
L-R: Joy, Wayne, Margaret, Lois, Patricia, Ina and Wesley*

of my parents—who were they and how did they arrive in southwest Arkansas before or around the time of the Civil War. Then the book on Pat and Annie during their years in (1) southwest Arkansas years, (2) northeast Arkansas, and finally (3) southeast Missouri—the Bootheel.

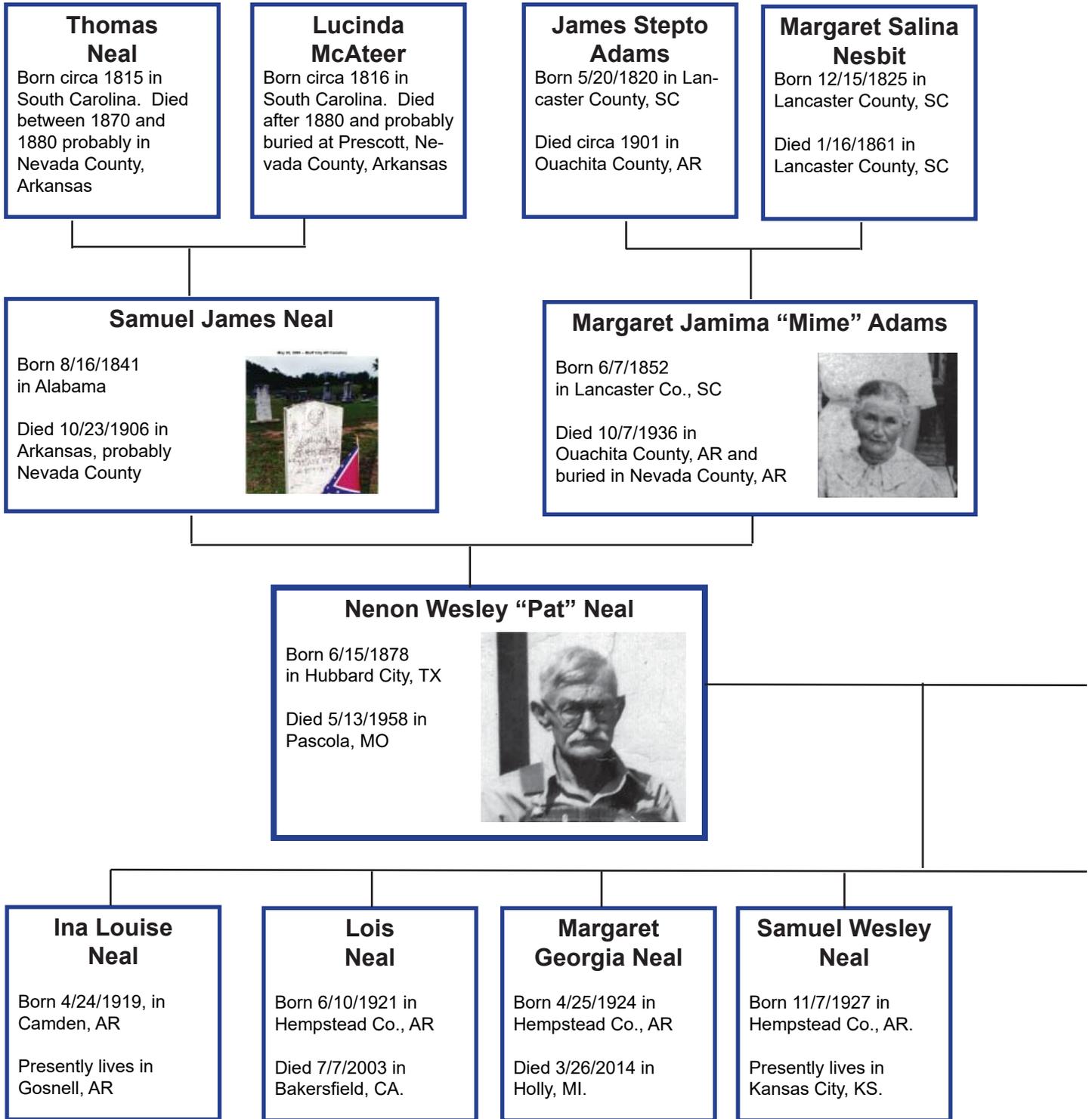
With all of my siblings launching their adult lives from southeast Missouri, the book contains considerable material about that area up until Annie's death in 1962. By that time, all of my siblings had moved on to other parts of the country.

Finally, the book closes with individual chapters for each of my siblings in which his/her personal story is told including a description of their marriages and own families.

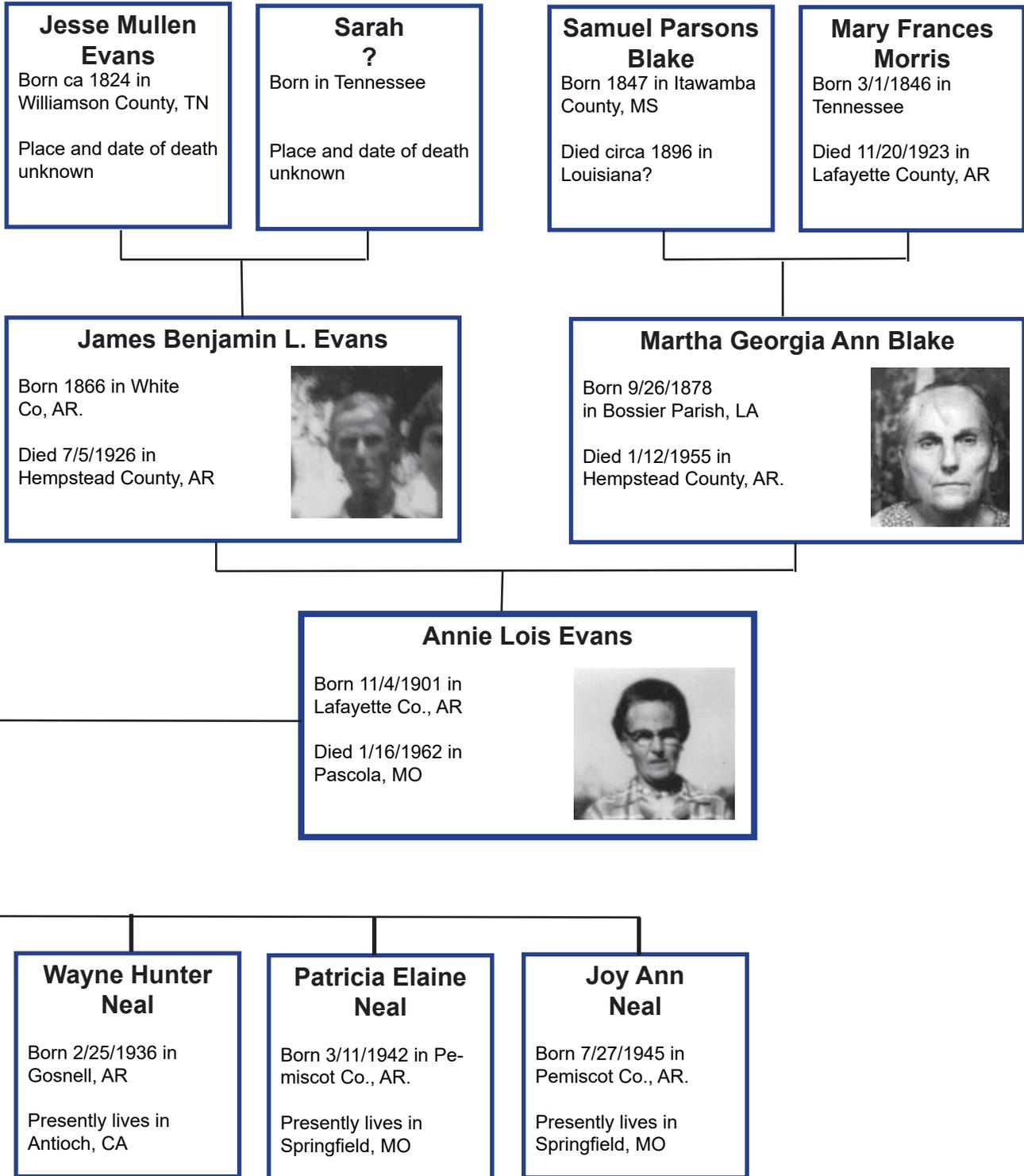
## **Pat and Annie Neal's Children**

- **Ina Louise NEAL** was born April 24, 1919, in or near Camden, Arkansas. She married Patrick Lacy Bryeans on December 21, 1940 in Blytheville, Arkansas. She lives in Gosnell, Arkansas
- **Lois NEAL** was born June 10, 1921 near Crossroads, Arkansas. She married Charles Clifton Barry on January 15, 1940 in Wardell, Missouri. She died July 7, 2003, in Bakersfield, California.
- **Margaret Georgia NEAL** was born April 25, 1924, near Crossroads, Arkansas. She married Rex Hanson Stewart on August 3, 1946, in Piggott, Arkansas. She died March 26, 2014, in Holly, Michigan.
- **Samuel Wesley NEAL** was born November 7, 1927, near Crossroads, Arkansas. He married Mazie Lee Dunn, October 23, 1947, in Pascola, Missouri. He lives in Kansas City, Kansas.
- **Wayne Hunter NEAL** was born February 25, 1936, near Gosnell, Arkansas. He married DeLois Jean Curd on May 23, 1957, in Barstow, California. He married Deanna Cappel, May 27, 1968. Now divorced, Wayne lives in Antioch, California.
- **Patricia Elaine NEAL** was born on March 11, 1942, near Pascola, Missouri. She married Ollis Dale HARP on July 6, 1963, in Bakersfield, California. She lives in Springfield, Missouri.
- **Joy Ann NEAL** was born July 27, 1945, near Pascola, Missouri. She married Kenneth Wayne BROWN on June 5, 1965, in Kansas City, Kansas. She lives in Springfield, Missouri.

# Pat Neal's Family Tree



# Annie Evans' Family Tree



## From the Neal Family Photo Album



*At left, Uncle Crow Neal's Children -- ca 1943 (L-R) Joe, Billy (in front), Maurice, Margaret, Frank and Boyd*



*L-R: Uncle Dude Neal's daughter, Fay; Aunt Mary Yarbrough's daughter, Lula Jewell, and Uncle Mac Neal's daughter, Catherine in the early 1940s*

## From the Neal Family Photo Album



*Above: Neal cousins in May 2000 at Bluff City AR. Pat & Annie Neal's children, Joy Brown and Ina Bryeans; Uncle Dude's daughter Margie Adams Knight and Aunt Mary Yarbrough's daughter, Lula Jewell Stinnett Tribble*

*At right, Neal cousins in October 2002 at Bluff City AR: Uncle Dude Neal's daughter, Margie Adams Knight; Uncle Crow's children: Boyd Neal and Meral House; Annie Mae (Barlow) Greer and Aunt Mary (Neal) Yarbrough's daughter, Lula Jewell Stinnett Tribble.*



## From the Evans Family Photo Album

*At right, January, 1962 in Pascola, MO after Annie's funeral -- Three of her siblings. L-R: sisters, Polly (Evans) Gilbert and Gladys Fay (Evans) Hendrix; Lorene (Warren) & Berlin Evans (Annie's brother)*



*At left, July 2003 near Mena AR -- Standing: Charles & Betty (Springs) Willis and Joy (Neal) Brown. Seated: Wilson and Wilma (Neal) Springs. Wilma was the daughter of Annie (Evans) Neal's sister, Eva (Evans) Neal. Wilma passed away a few months after this picture was taken.*



*At right, 1960 at West Point, California -- L-R: Maggie (Evans) Neal Ellis, Annie (Evans) Neal, and Joy Ann Brown*

## From the Evans Family Photo Album

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*At left, May 1998 in Mountain View, AR at the home of Edith (Neal) Hill Kniffin. L-R: Neal Hill, Edith (Neal) Hill Kniffin, Joy (Neal) Brown and Ina (Neal) Bryeans.*



*Above, Thanksgiving, 2000, at the home of Patricia (Neal) Harp in Bakersfield CA. L-R: Lois (Neal) Barry with her cousins, Lena (Neal) Gozdun, Magdalene (Neal) Collums, and Edith (Neal) Hill Kniffin's daughter, June (Hill) Hamlow.*

## Thanks to Our Family History Researchers

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Emilia (Burgess) Linder & her husband, Art, of West Monroe LA. Emilia is a great-great grand-daughter of James Stepto Adams. A tenacious genealogist, Emilia (with her husband by her side all the time) dug out the Adams family line and inspired others to tell the old stories and to attend the annual Adams Reunion near Chidester AR which she organized in 1997.



Jesse Wood & wife Emma Jean of Chidester AR. Jesse, who passed away in 2011, was the great-great grandson of Thomas Neal, and he's credited with much of the genealogy work on the Neal line. Jesse was the grandson of Robert S. Neal (brother) to our Samuel J. Neal.



Edith (Neal) Hill Kniffin with her first cousin, Joy (Neal) Brown at Edith's home in Mountain View AR, a short time before Edith's death. Edith was the daughter of "Aunt Mag" (Evans) Neal. It is through her genealogy research and that of her sister, Magdalene (Neal) Collums that we know much of the Evans family history.



Maurice Adams of Chidester AR & his nephew, Melvin Adams, of Houston TX. Inspired by Emilia (Burgess) Linder, Maurice unleashed a treasure chest of Adams family stories and information about James Stepto Adams and his children in Ouachita County AR. Until his death in 2011, Maurice was a favorite of all who attended the annual reunions at Adams Chapel next to his home.



## Thanks to Our Family History Researchers

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Other contributors of information to this project will be acknowledged here and on the following pages. Let's fill up this page--contribute stuff you think will help tell the story.