

Memories of the Bradford Family in Dawson, NM By descendant, Lee Bradford II (2011)

From time to time I would like to share with you some stories about life in Dawson, my Dad used to tell me. I am Lee Bradford II. I was born in Dawson and spent my first and third 3 months there. My Dad, Lee Bradford was born in Capitan, New Mexico on Feb. 7, 1904 and moved to Dawson (I guess) about 1906. His family had traveled by covered wagon and horse drawn buckboard. My grandmother owned the first car in Dawson, it was a big red 1913 Buick Touring Car. My Grandfather was one of the first postmasters. There were 6 boys and 1 girl in my grandparents family. Dawson provided a good life for them.

Dad told me, when the family first moved to Dawson, all the houses were new, they were so new the fences were not erected yet. One evening the family was just sitting down to dinner when a man burst into the front door yelling "Don't let them get me!! Don't let them get me!!" Just then he spit his chewing tobacco into my uncle's eye (boy did that sting). Grandpa assured him he would try to detain them. Just as the man ran out of the kitchen door, there came a loud knock on the front door. The leader of the posse asked Grandpa if he saw a man run this direction. Before he could answer, another man yelled, "There he goes, around the house in back". All the men ran after the first man. They took him to the nearest big tree strung him up and hanged him. He was caught cheating at cards.

A few years later, when my Uncle Claude was in school, he brought a friend home for dinner. Grandma asked Uncle Claude why did his friend have a backpack. He told her, his friend was running away from home, but didn't want anyone to know. Uncle Claude had talked him into coming home with him so his friend could have a good home cooked dinner before he started his trip. Grandma said she would take care of everything and not to mention him running away.

After a good dinner, the friend said he would have to go on his way. Grandma insisted he stay, just for a little while, and join the family by sitting around the living room, singing songs while she played the piano. She played a few songs then she played "Where is my wondering boy tonight?" Before the song ended, the friend started to cry, went into the bedroom, got his backpack and went home. He never tried to run away from home again.

One day an ore car jumped the track and ran out of the mine. As it was running down hill, it hit a man knocking him down and breaking most every bone in his body. It continued down hill hitting another man, knocking him down, knocking the wind out of him and only bruising him. The crowd of men who surrounded the first man told him that he was going to be fine. They probably didn't need to take him to the hospital they could probably just take him home, but thought it might be a good idea to let the doctor take a look at him. He said he hurts a lot, their reply was that that's really good, that means there is nothing seriously wrong and he will be well soon. If those injuries didn't hurt, that would mean something serious would be wrong and since they do hurt, that means he will make a full recovery. They took him to the hospital.

where the doctor took good care of him. The group of men that went to the second man told him they would try to take him to the hospital but they would be surprised if he lived until they got there. They said anyone who was hurt as bad as he was is sure lucky to be alive and probably won't live much longer. They would be surprised if he lived until the next morning.

The man with all the broken bones recovered, after a long stay in the hospital that lasted for several months. While the man with the wind knocked out of him and the bruises died that night in the hospital. I guess mind over matter does work.