

Atoka . . . Early Settlement

By Jack Shields,
Box 69,
Novice, Tx.

Solomon Parker, born 6-22-1832 in Fayette County, Ohio arrived in the Atoka area in the seventies. He was married to Cilia Parker who was born 10-25-1839 in Ohio. Solomon was older half-brother to D. A. Parker. The children of Solomon were Charlie Absolom, Marshall E., Iva L., Francis H., Deloss A., Ila M., Lou E., Dill D., Ora E. and Elva A. When the Parkers arrived in the Atoka area, by way of Abilene, Texas, Abilene was only a tent city. The courthouse was at Buffalo Gap.

At this time I would like to talk about Charlie Parker. Charlie worked for his father in ranching. They also did some farming so as to have food. Charlie said he worked as a cowboy for "Mart" Childress. At the time the Parkers arrived in the area the Childresses, H. M. Sr. and Elisha had arrived. A. L. Catlin had arrived in the area in 1871 and bought section No. 31. Solomon Parker bought part of section No. 31, in 1880 and later Charlie Parker bought the Solomon Parker land. At that time most of the land was open range and state owned. In the year 11-4-1880 Berry Barnett bought part of section No. 31, Solomon and Charlie bought land, several tracts in the hills just to the east and north of Jim Ned Spring. The land bought had spring water on it. There were some Indians still in the area at this time. Charlie said the Childresses lived in a one room log cabin on the west side of Jim Ned Creek and had a corn field between the cabin and creek. He said Mrs. Childress would go into the cabin, if men were not there, at sundown and lock the door. She said, often she could hear the Indians walking around the cabin. W. A. Stovall and E. H. Chastain arrived and bought section No. 14. Charlie Parker went to the Glen Cove area, met and married Flora June Ely. To that union were born (1) Cecil Leslie, (2) Elma Lee, (3) Vera Della Parker McCain, (4) Opal Parker Gorman. As the land was sold and people started to come there was a store, school, church and Masonic Lodge Hall built at Atoka. A cemetery had been started. Later a gin was built by D. A. Parker, half brother to Solomon Parker. The area, soon after gin was built, had a

lot of new people to come to the Atoka area. Charlie started farm operation after the gin was built and he bought more land. When a school was built, Old Oak Grove, on upper Jim Ned Creek, Charlie was elected trustee. He was first in area to own a wo seat surry and as the motor age

arrived, he owned a Bethlehem truck, which had rubber made to the wheels. He also owned a thrasher and a binder. When the railroad arrived and Novice was born, Charlie got into the mercantile business and banking, Novice State Bank. Charlie loved good mules and he had

a lot of large red mules to farm with. It was said if you hurt one of his mules, "Just go ahead and shoot Charlie Parker". Charlie was a good farmer and rancher. Charlie liked Dodge cars and he owned several.

Mrs. Parker lived in Novice part time so she could care for the children while in school there. Charlie spent his last years on the Childress farm and died in the log cabin part of the house. He and Flora are buried at Atoka. The Opal Parker Gorman children, Georgia,

J.D., June and Kelsie, own the old Solomon Parker place. J. D. has been a State Game Warden for many years and Loreta and Juanita McCain own the old Childress place. Nathan Parker, grandson, lives in Brownwood, Tx. and Polly Parker, granddaughter lives in Fort Worth, Tx.

Charlie was a close friend to the parents of Jack Shields and visited, many times in their home. Jack has heard Mr. Parker tell many

stories about early days on the Jim Ned and Atoka. He was one who helped to establish a good community.

Solomon and Cilia Parker are buried at Atoka. Della Parker McCain is buried at Atoka. Nathan and Polly are children of Cecil Parker. Loreta and Juanita McCain were daughters of Della Parker. Della had a daughter by name of Willie who married Vincent Shields. Willie is dead and buried at Atoka.