

June 20, 1941

NAMKEN FAMILY REUNION

A pleasant day was spent last Sunday at the Namken picnic grounds one mile south-east of Giddings by a crowd of several hundred persons at a reunion of the Namken family.

Ample preparations had been made and notwithstanding the weather being somewhat threatening that morning the members of the different family groups began to arrive early from far and near. When the call went out at noontime to "Come and get it" the tables were laden with an abundance of good things to eat, supplemented with barbecued beef and pork expertly prepared by Mr. Chas. Vahrenkamp (who really knows how).

The reunion spirit prevailed throughout the day and the time was spent in conversation, retracing the family history, and also bringing to light many happy incidents of days gone by. Lunch and refreshments were served during the afternoon. The grounds proved to be ideal for a gathering of this kind, with plenty of shade under the pretty postoaks. Mr. O. W. Symmank was kept busy as the "skipper" on the Namken lake and always had his motorboat filled to capacity with the young as well as the old.

One of the highlights of the day was an address by Hon. John S. Symmank in which he paid respects to the pioneer spirit of the forebears of the different family groups present, when they came over from the Old Country to make this their home. He lauded their accomplishments in taking leading places in business and civic activities for the betterment of their respective communities and urged the descendants to keep on in the work of their fathers and mothers in the upbuilding and preserving to posterity this Land of the Free.

Honor guests for the occasion were Mrs. Sophie (Vahrenkamp) Toepper, 87, of Killeen, Mr. Hy. Namken, Sr., 75, of Giddings, and Mr. Otto Harms, Sr., 82, of Houston, the only surviving members (daughter, son, and son-in-law) of the immediate family of Johann B. Namken and wife (Helene C. Menke) who came to this country from Bockhorn, Oldenburg, Germany, and passed away at Giddings about 35 years ago at the age of 77 and 83 years respectively. Three daughters and one son have also passed on: Helene, Mrs. Otto Harms, Sr.; Johanne, Mrs. (Duisberg) Hoeschel; Anna, Mrs. Gerh. Volkers; and John Namken, (the last two in Germany).

Of the different family groups present more than thirty families were from in and about Giddings. Among those from a distance were:

Mrs. Sophie Toepper, Mr. and Mrs. T. W. Vahrenkamp and children Ophelia, Elvera and Gilbert, of Killeen, Herbert of Ft. Sam Houston and Andrew of Chanute Field, Rantoul, Ill.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Vahrenkamp and children Edna and Eleanor of Killeen and Gertrude of Belton; Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Vahrenkamp and Bobbie Karolene of Beeville.

Mr. and Mrs. Willie Vahrenkamp and daughter Mildred, Mr. and Mrs. Alex Weiss and daughter Sylvia, of Killeen; Mr. and Mrs. John Weiss and children Ethel Mae and August of Copperas Cove; Mr. and Mrs. Ad. Vahrenkamp, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Vahrenkamp and children June and Shirley, Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Vahrenkamp and daughter Joyce, of Killeen.

Mr. and Mrs. August Fischer, Lexington; Mr. and Mrs. C. J.

Krezer, San Angelo; Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Huse and children Victor, Ruby Mae and Floyd Gene, and Mrs. Edwin Huse and son Kenneth Edwin, of Lamesa.

Mr. and Mrs. John Namken, Mrs. Herbert Namken and daughter Barabara Ann, of Vernon; Mr. and Mrs. Will Namken, Mrs. Ad. Krempin and son Myron, of Rowena; Miss Olga Namken, and Geo. Aschenbeck, of Houston.

Mr. Otto Harms, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Herm. Harms and daughter Helen, Mrs. Lena Pennywell, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Pennywell and Clarence, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Erwin Harms, of Houston; Mrs. David Pennywell of Stonewall, La.

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Berger and children, Moulton; Mr. and Mrs. Carl Volkers and baby, Hempstead; Miss Norma Bloh, San Marcos.