

## **Sutton Family History**

For Grand Prairie Historical Society

Durwood Anderson Sutton (28 Dec 1917 – 7 Mar 1998) was a long-time banker and civic leader in Grand Prairie until his death in 1998. He and Josephine (23 Dec 1922 – 3 Dec 2006) raised five children, three of whom live in the community today, Angela Giessner, Marshall Sutton and Virginia Dell. The other two, Craig Sutton and Larry Sutton, do not live far away in Dallas and Arlington, respectively. This is a brief story of the Sutton family history.

Durwood Sutton was raised on a farm in Ellis County and was the first in his family to leave the farm. Graduating from Ferris High School in 1935, because the Rockett community school only went through the ninth grade, he came to Dallas to attend Byrne College before moving to Grand Prairie in 1938 when Grand Prairie had a rural population of just 1,600 (people, that is). In October 1938 at 20 years old, he joined the Grand Prairie State Bank, owned primarily by G.H. Turner and W.N. Gilbert. I seem to recall him saying that the bank had only three employees at the time, so he became the chief cook and bottle washer, and jack of all trades.

In April 1941 Durwood Sutton enlisted in the Army as a private and quickly rose to the rank of Master Sergeant in the Army Medical Corps. While stationed at Camp Grant in Illinois, he met a beautiful Italian girl Josephine Louise Barbera, from Beloit, Wisconsin and married her in Rockford, Illinois in February 1942. After being discharged from the Army in 1945, he brought Josephine and his first born Craig back to Grand Prairie from Ft. Lewis, Washington, and resumed his career at Grand Prairie State Bank, where he retired over 50 years later.

Durwood Anderson Sutton was the son of Samuel Anderson Sutton (27 Aug 1891 – 30 Jan 1983) and Willie Everett Eatman (22 June 1894 – 25 Feb 1934), both raised near Rockett, Texas, between Ferris and Waxahachie in Ellis County. Sam and Willie had three sons, a small family by historical family standards, but probably impacted somewhat by the early death of Willie from a brain tumor. As so many boomer children, we often heard the stories of his three mile walk to and from school each day, working the family farm after school and studying by kerosene light. The four room farm house he grew up in had no indoor plumbing, and we remember visiting the outhouse next to the chicken coup after waiting as long as we could. The whole family took baths in a wash tub on Saturday night, whether they needed one or not. We will always remember the peach tree next to the house, since the homemade peach pies were such a delight.

Samuel Anderson Sutton was the son of Samuel Franklin Sutton (23 Dec 1866 – 12 Dec 1936) and Viola Hunsucker (8 Apr 1875 – 29 Jan 1956). Both were born in Tennessee and moved to Texas as children. "Ola" Hunsucker actually moved first in 1885 with her family. She had a half-brother named Sidney R. Ross (1863 – 1940). Sid's father James L. Ross

(1840 – 1864) died in the Civil War, and his mother Louisa Angeline Arrington Ross (1844 – 1925) married Archibald Anderson Hunsucker (1820 – 1899) in March 1869. Frank Sutton's parents (Bartley Johnson Sutton and Martha Eva Hampton) both died from typhoid in 1882, so Frank joined his neighbor Sid Ross when Sid came to Texas in 1886 to join his mother and the Hunsucker family in Ellis County. Frank and Ola married in 1890 when she was 15, probably as early as father Archie would permit. Sam Sutton was the first of their twelve children, a more normal family size for that time.

Willie Eatman was one of ten children, nine of whom were daughters, of a prominent farmer in Palmer, Texas just south of Rockett and Ferris. Joseph Seth Eatman (1849 – 1912) also raised two nieces in the household. He was the son of William Labon Eatman and Temperance Hogg, both of North Carolina. Temperance Hogg may be the only famous family name in the Sutton family tree, since her relative James Stephen Hogg became the first Texas born Governor in 1890.

If we look any further into the Sutton Family Tree, we likely will find the same assortment black sheep common to many early Tennessee and Texas families, so I think I will stop here.

Craig A. Sutton

For more information on Sutton Family Tree

<http://www.bellschapelcemetery.org/familytree>

Listen to interview with Samuel Anderson Sutton approx. 1980

<https://www.suttonco.com/sam-sutton-interview>