

**... Cousins**

(Continued from page 10)  
and his family of Robert Lee, were out of town.

Earlier, Betty and Jane visited cousins Annabelle Fletcher Dunn, and her sister Shirley Fletcher Gavit in San Angelo.

Jane and Betty, with her daughters, toured Robert Lee, the Austin Ranch and Sanco Cemetery where Jane and Betty's grandparents, Jordan and Arminta DeLong Austin are buried.

**... County's oldest business**

(Continued from page 2)  
Commissioners to call an election to vote off the incorporation, Putt published a list of petitioners giving the amount of city taxes that each had paid, showing that some of the petitioners had paid no tax. He fairly "roasted" the people who went away from home to trade with "chain stores" in near-by cities.

A list of editors and publishers who at one time or another were connected with the Robert Lee Observer includes:

J.S. Brady, Sam Wilkins, Gray Reed, Tom Durham, Irvan and Pritchard, Merchant and Reed, Hubert Pearce, J.C. Newton, G.A. Beeman, M.H. Davis, J.T. Rankin, George Cowan, J.G. Berryman, Berryman and Lamb, A.W. Puett, F.W. Puett Bob Hall, S.R. Young, Mr. Hunter, A.J. Kirkpatrick, Ulmer Bird, Ben & Pat Oglesby, Rick Styles, Hal Spain and current owner/publisher Melinda McCutchen.

Little is known of the very first newspaper serving Bronte. In researching the September 3, 1964 Diamond Jubilee edition, Ben Oglesby discovered a copy of the first Bronte Herald. It was dated September 6, 1902 and listed a Mr. Howell as editor and publisher. It is unknown how long this newspaper was published. The Bronte

Enterprise was first published at Bronte in 1907, by C.H. Bentley, who came to Bronte from Tennessee. Bentley owned the Bronte Enterprise from 1907 to 1910, when he sold to D.M. West, who sold to T.R. Butler in 1912.

The plant which Mr. Bentley installed was fairly modern. Mr. West used the same plant, but he brought in an experienced newspaper man, C.W. Goff, to edit the paper. The Enterprise had done well under Mr. Goff, and he was retained by Mr. Butler and the next owner, A.J. Nelson.

The Bronte Enterprise suspended publication in 1915, and resumed publication in 1918, with J.D. Scott as editor and publisher. Mr. Scott sold to W.C. Redmond, who resold to D.M. West.

Mr. West published the paper until November 1944. He was succeeded by J.H. Mulvane, Exton Talley, and Ed Nunnally Jr.

Ben Oglesby, Jr. bought The Bronte Enterprise on July 1, 1948 and in 1965 added to it the Robert Lee Observer, and for the first time in history, both the Observer and the Enterprise were published by the same owner. Mr. Oglesby published both papers until his death in 1982. Thereafter, for over a year, his widow, Pat Oglesby, assisted by Eddie Alexander, kept the presses rolling until August, 1983, when both publications were sold to Rick and Kay Styles.

A year later, another monumental change lay ahead, as both papers were purchased by Hal Spain. On August 17, 1984, the first issue of the Observer/Enterprise was published, and both papers were combined to serve all of Coke County. This change in format, which combined the papers of the two major communities in the county, received the enthusiastic support



**Round-up Time!** John Saul helping his neighbors on the old Arnett place during the Bass Arnett ranch's round-up.

of most, and was met with apprehension by others. The combined paper prompted one well-known older businessman to remark, "we take the good news with the bad", referring to the "bad" news as that which originated from the other side of the county.

As a marketing tool, the

combined product has definitely made an impact on the local economy. "The Coke County Hunting & Fishing Guide", published annually by the Observer/Enterprise, is recognized as one of the premier publications of its kind in West Texas.

The Observer/Enterprise has

followed this combined format for the last thirty years. Over the last 125 years, Coke County residents have had a variety of publishers and editors keeping the abreast of local activity. The Observer/Enterprise looks forward to many more years of dedicated service to the residents of Coke County.

**Happy Birthday  
Coke County!**

**Designs by Toni**  
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