



## Wisdom of the Elders

In 2000 I began researching the Crayton genealogy in a quest for personal knowledge and to help reunite our family. I found many relatives were eager to help and expressed an interest in coming together. I travelled across Texas visiting different relatives, and perhaps the most interesting person I met was Lewis Nichols.

Born in 1908 to Richard Nichols Jr. and Rhoda [Crayton] Nichols, Lewis was a wealth of knowledge and history. When we first met, he was 92 (four times my age) and told me more in 30 minutes about the Crayton family than I had found from anyone, Texas courthouse or library in the past six months. It was amazing how much information he had retained over the years. Lewis could recall the best family stories including names and even some important dates. It was truly amazing.

He spoke specifically of the story of John Crayton Sr. and Grandma Riley. He said that John Crayton originated from Tennessee and traveled to Texas. Along the way he met an American Indian lady called Riley. This was the beginning of our family

John and Riley had one son named James Crayton, affectionately known as Jim Crayton Sr. Jim was reportedly of both white and Tonkawa Indian heritage from his parents. Jim later met Jane Bell Allen (Grandma Jane) and that is where the family began to grow. Together they were said to have 18 children. Many died at an early age but those that survived we have to honor for bringing us here today.

Lewis Nichols departed this life on February 15, 2004. He was 95 years old. Although he is gone we continue to celebrate the life of Lewis and the moments he shared with us will live on in the memories of all whom new him when he was alive.