

JONATHAN HAZEL AND EVALEEN HADLEY IRWIN

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Rancher and stock breeder. An early rancher of the Indian Territory, and a man who won his way to fame, both in this section and in Texas, Jonathan Hazel gave his life to the development of the great empire of the South and West. He became an important breeder of stock, his holdings in land were vast, his herds of cattle, horses and hogs numerous. And in carrying out the activities of his daily career he worked consistently for the cause of advancement and progress. Strong in will and character, aristocratic in bearing, as in blood, he was one of those rare men who contribute to the working out of the nations destiny.

Mr. Hazel was born in Lavaca Co., Texas on 3 February 1852, a son of Seth Fields and Caroline (Buckholts) Hazel. The father, born in South Carolina in 1800, died on 3 February 1867, in Lavaca County, was a man of wide note in Texas, where he had come as a young man in 1833. He was a veteran of the Mexican War and for his distinguished service in this conflict he received large grants of land from Texas, within the borders of the Republic. The Hazel family is a very old one of South Carolina, and its members have won distinction in phases of the South's affairs. Seth Fields Hazel married Caroline Buckholts, whose mother was Elizabeth Brashears, daughter of Susan Vaughn who was the daughter of John Turnbull, a full blood Choctaw Indian. Thus in this family were combined the finest strains of European and of native American blood, and the children in later generations may well bear proudly this distinction of ancestry which few can boast.

Jonathan Hazel, subject of this record, received only a meager formal education. The schools of his day were few, and their quality not of the best. Consequently, the man who would be truly educated was forced to rely for the most part on his own resources. Lincoln did this, and many others of the nations leaders. Mr. Hazel, too, acquired his education solely through his own fine efforts and ability. He was both self educated, and, in the finest sense, self made. In the stirring period of the Civil War and Reconstruction days, he grew to young manhood. At the age of 17 he was on the famous cattle trails of the Southwest, helping to drive the great herds of cattle to the shipping points in Kansas, meeting life in the raw, and winning his way to mastery in spite of all the difficult conditions to be faced. Of such stuff were the pioneer founders of our nation made.

At the age of nineteen, Mr. Hazel began his independent career, starting out as a young stockbreeder in the Indian Territory. Beginning only on a small scale, he built up his resources proportions. His herds of cattle, his horses and hogs increased in numbers and soon he became recognized as one of the first ranchers and breeders of the times. His brand was the rafter 7 bar bar. The 7 had a v (upside down) over it and a long bar under it, with another bar at the end, running diagonally. It was almost 3 ft. long and went almost back to the tail. This was important because it would be difficult to change. In 1878, he transferred the center of his activities to Pontotac county, in the Indian Territory and there he developed large land holdings, until finally he owned a farm of thirty thousand acres, all of it under fence, and more than 3000 acres under cultivation. On his land he stocked the very finest breeds of cattle obtainable, and when these were not excellent enough for his purpose, he undertook the difficult task of raising the standards of the breed with the greatest of success. It was small wonder that his reputation spread through all the cattle country, and he was known to thousands not only in Indian Territory, but also through all the Southwest. In 1880 Jonathan went to Fayetteville, Arkansas to attend court with his brother, Darlin Augustus Hazel, (a batchelor). On the way home "Gus" took a congested chill and died. He covered him with a blanket and drove home in the wagon alone. He said that this was the longest 90 miles and the loneliest ride he ever made. In 1889 he was one of the first men across the line to stake off a claim in the Oklahoma land rush. He crossed the Canadian River and staked out near

Lexington, however he never did develop this land.

In the year 1904, he bought a 20,000 acre farm in Duval county, Texas, disposing of his holdings in the Indian Territory. Although he continued his breeding operations as heretofore, he now came to place more emphasis on the buying and selling of stock, and it was in this connection that Texas knew him best. Energetic and alert in all phases of his career, the passing years lay lightly upon him, and he continued actively in the direction of his affairs until 1917, when he retired and came to San Antonio to live. His were the finest cattle, horses and hogs obtainable in the Southwest. Always he made a point of securing the best, and the influence of his activities made inevitably for progress in the cattle industry.

While Mr. Hazel was still a young man, he was recognized by the Choctaws as a full citizen of that aristocratic and noble nation. The Choctaw blood which coursed through his veins was apparent in his regal bearing, and in the nobility of his life and character. Seldom have the traits of the Indian and white races been blended so happily as in Mr. Hazel's life. He was a man of the finest type, proud and independent in spirit, yet kind and generous toward others. Hazel hospitality became a famous and significant term in the Indian Territory and in Texas, rising far above the usual meaning of the word. The beautiful reaches of his farmlands were always open to those who travelled through his part of the world, and the thought of the royal welcome which waited there, spurred on many a weary traveler as he approached Mr. Hazel's home. Here the most lavish welcome awaited him, with table bountifully spread, and every consideration for the comfort of travelers assured. The entertainment of friends, the joys of home life and beautiful family relationships, and the life of the outdoors were the things which were always dearest to Mr. Hazel's heart. He was fond of hunting and fishing, and in these sports he found rest and relaxation from the cares and duties of life.

On January 18, 1876, at Boggy Depot, the stage and ammunition depot which was so named during the Civil War, situated in the Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory, Jonathan Hazel married Evaleen Hadley Irwin, daughter of Alexander Donahoe Irwin and Elizabeth Anderson who came from Indiana to the Choctaw Nation and later to Texas. He fought in both the Mexican and Civil Wars, and was a man of many talents. The Irwin family was active in affairs of early Texas and the Civil War period, and the members of this family have always been of strong character. Mrs. Hazel was born in Carthage, Texas. Seven children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Hazel-Carolina Matilda, Elizabeth Juanita Hazel Smith, Arthur Oscar, Alberta "Burd", Evaleen Hazel Blake, Lamar Irwin, Pearl Estelle, deceased, and George Jonathan.

Mr. Hazel died at his San Antonio home on 24 September 1926. His passing removed from Texas life a strong character, an honest and loyal friend, and a figure of one noble and appealing. Beyond the suspicion of reproach himself, he measured others by his own high standards, and sometimes the confidence which he reposed in the integrity of those with whom he dealt, was misplaced. He wanted to trust every man but through sad experience he found that there were some who could not be trusted. He lost a fortune in trusting mankind, but never lost his faith. On one occasion his faith cost him his entire fortune. Within the miraculously short period of four years, he entirely recovered his losses and went on to new honor and success. Through all his active career, Mr. Hazel was a leader, at first in Indian Territory, and later in Texas affairs. His were the finest pasture lands, the finest fields of alfalfa and corn, the finest cattle and stock in all the country round. And his was the noblest spirit, the most humanly, sympathetic heart. Clean and alert in mind and body, he was faithful always to the highest standards of thought and conduct, and never departed from the pursuit of those ideals, which he ever held most dear.