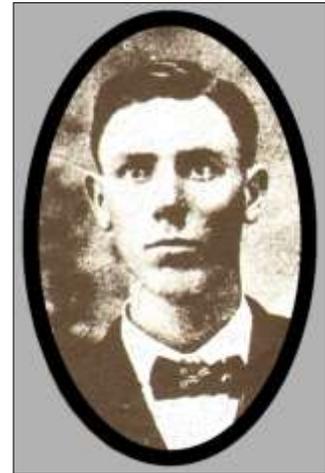


# Museum News: Dee Bosworth – Windmill Man

By C. W. (Bill) Smith

Dee Bosworth was a windmill man, a man worth his weight in gold. In the dry Chihuahua Desert of Far West Texas, the pursuit of water was critical for the opening of the country. The search for water below the ground was punctuated with dry holes...many of them...and when it was found, it was protected and cherished, like the Pearl of Great Price. Without water, a ranch could simply (and literally) dry up and blow away. A man who could set up and repair windmills could demand his price, and Dee Bosworth was that man. But beyond his physical and mechanical abilities, Bosworth was a good and dependable man. He came when he was called and stayed until the job was done. He saved many ranch operations in Terrell County by restoring their valuable and critical resource...water.



Bosworth's early life and upbringing was sad. He was the grandson of Henry C. and Martha Bounds Bosworth, Mississippi farmers who had migrated to Texas before the Civil War would leave their homeland in ruins. The land of the West was free for the taking, and with a lot of hard work and a little patience, a homestead could be turned into valuable property, if you had the fortitude to carry through to the end. But, that was the problem for Dee and his family.

Woodson Elliot Bosworth was the third child and second son of Henry and Martha Bosworth. He was born in Lavaca County in 1857 shortly after the family moved to Texas. He married Elizabeth Ivanhoe Rucker in 1879 and their first child was Dee Onidas Bosworth, born in Wharton County, Texas, on March 27, 1881. To that family nine brothers and sisters were also born.



Woody Bosworth was a dreamer. He liked to move to areas that were largely uninhabited, and when a few others followed in his footsteps he felt crowded and wanted to move on. Bettie put up with that for years and finally refused to go any farther. Woody moved into Brewster County and took up land. Dee and his younger brother, Jay, went with him, but even they got tired of the moving and went back home to Bettie in Ozona. Woody and Bettie parted ways and they never saw him again.

By 1910 Dee was back in Ozona with his mother and three siblings. Woody was boarding with a ranch family at Marathon, Texas, probably doing carpentry work for them. He was an accomplished carpenter, yet he never built a home for his own family.

In 1915, according to family sources, he was at Boquillas, Mexico, just across the Rio Grande from a homestead he had taken up, when Mexican bandits took him captive. In an attempt to escape, Woody Bosworth was killed by his captors.

In the early 1920s Dee moved his base of operations to Sanderson, to begin his long career in the windmill business. He fell in love with the place and soon moved his mother and his last sister to Sanderson, where they remained until their deaths.

In the early 1930s Dee Bosworth finally met someone he could love. His mother had taken on a long and grueling illness that required someone to take care of her. The lady he found was, by coincidence, named Dee, as well...Dee Trimble McConaughy, a young widow with three children. Two were grown but she still had one child at home who was attending Sanderson High School, Violet. Mr. Dee and Mrs. Dee married in Las Cruces, New Mexico in 1931. They moved into a house across the street and she continued to care for his mother. Bettie Bosworth passed away in 1949 and was laid to rest at Cedar Grove Cemetery.

With his family gathered at his side and giving him their full support, Dee was able to pursue his business. He gained a solid reputation and soon everyone was clamoring for his services. He was an outgoing man with lots of stories. People loved to talk to him, if they could get him to stop working long enough.

By the time the 1950s arrived Dee had to force a cut back on work. Age was catching up with him and he was having trouble performing like a twenty-year-old. He was, after all, in his 70s. In 1959, Dee Bosworth had to retire. His health was fairly good but his strength was failing and his working years had come to an end. In 1962 he took a turn for the worse and had to be moved to the hospital in Fort Stockton, then to a nursing facility in Uvalde, where he passed away on January 1, 1963 at the age of 81 years. He was brought home to Sanderson and laid to rest by his mother's side at Cedar Grove Cemetery.

Mrs. Dee continued in Sanderson, living with her daughter, Violet. But, in 1967 Violet passed away and Mrs. Dee moved to California to live with her other daughter, Mary. It was in Hermosa Beach, California, that Mrs. Dee passed away on May 18, 1972. She, too, was returned to Sanderson to lay by her mate at Cedar Grove.

Dee and Dee Bosworth were good people. They had the skills and abilities to do what needed to be done, but, better yet, they had the compassion, the will and the determination to make sure that it got done. We have had many bad people and bad things in our history, but Dee Bosworth, The Windmill Man, and his lovely wife, were far removed from that...they were the good guys.