

The sheriff of Ft. Bend County knew that John Steel Gowen was a member of an outlaw gang that roamed through the area in the turbulent days that followed the Civil War and sought an opportunity to arrest him.. He had fled to Texas riding a horse stolen in Arkansas and with the knowledge that he had killed a man there. In a Fulshear saloon, he quickly joined up with the bushwhackers. While still in his teens, Gowen was labeled a horsethief, a cattle rustler and a desperado. He lived the life of a nightrider with the lawless group for six years, robbing and stealing--and did it successfully, according to some. He was never caught.

Then came word from Arkansas that he was not a murderer, that the victim, his uncle, had survived and that he was not charged with any crime--either in Arkansas or in Texas!. Just as quickly as he had turned to a life of crime, he became respectable and law-abiding. He moved to Houston, got a job with a large grocery concern and became a model member of the community, at the age of 21.

John Steel Gowen was born in a room in Kellum's Hotel in Searcy, Arkansas in August 1859, according to Glen Atmar Gowen, a grandson of Houston. Having been abandoned by his father, they were enumerated there alone in the hotel in the 1860 census of White County:

"Gowen,	Mrs. M.	25, born in Arkansas, female
	J.	1/12, born in Arkansas, male"

They were the only members of the Gowen family to appear in White County in 1860. The father, name unknown, born in Ireland, was orphaned and worked as a cabinboy to pay for his passage to the United States. Faced with the responsibility of a new baby and a sickly wife, he "went west." When his mother died, a reluctant uncle took John Steel Gowen in and loaded him with farm chores "to make a man out of him."

At 15, in an argument with the overbearing uncle, Gowen struck him on the temple with a large rock and left him in a pool of blood. Convinced that he had killed his uncle instantly, he stole a horse from the lot and lit out for Texas, in his mind a fugitive from justice. There he fell in with other desperadoes and became proficient in a life of crime, until it became apparent that he could quit and start over with a second chance.

"John S. Gowen," was listed in the 1881 city directory of Houston as a salesman for J. A. McKee Company which advertised "drygoods, groceries and beer." He became a model citizen and lived in a respectable part of town "on the west side of Brewster Street, two blocks north of Sewell Street." He was married in 1883 to Marion Jane Johnston, age 14, born in Texas in August 1869.

In the 1889-1890 city directory John Steel Gowen was a representative of Browne & Bollfross, Grocers and lived at 30 Spruce Street. In 1891, John Steel Gowen went into business with William F. Ludtke as "Ludtke & Gowen, Butchers, on the west side of Liberty Street between Chestnut & Chapman." He owned a home "at the northeast corner of Donley & Gregg Streets." In 1897, he removed his family to nearby Wharton County.

John Steel Gowen appeared as the head of the household in the 1900 census of Wharton County, Enumeration District 58, page 7, precinct 4:

"Gowen,John	40, born in Arkansas in August 1859
Marion	30, born in Texas in August 1869
Marie L.	15, born in Texas in October 1884
Mattie	13, born in Texas October 1886
John	9, born in Texas in November 1890
Ed	2, born in Texas in August 1897
Irene	10/12, born in Texas in July 1899"

In 1902 they lived at Hallettsville, Texas. In 1913 they again lived in Houston. Until his death May 31, 1919 in Harris County, John Steel Gowen was engaged in farming and stockraising. Marion Jane Johnston Gowen died October 12, 1926 and was buried at Eagle Lake, Texas. Children born to John Steel Gowen and Marion Jane Johnston Gowen include:

May Belle Gowen	born about 1883
Marie L. Gowen	born in October 1884
Mattie Gowen	born in October 1886
John Linder Gowen	born in November 1890
Eddie Steel Gowen	born August 22, 1897
Irene Redding Gowen	born in July 1899
Jesse Eugene Gowen	born January 31, 1902
Florence Adella Gowen	born May 5, 1905

Mrs. M. Gowen was born in Arkansas in 1835, according to her enumeration in the 1860 census of White County. Apparently she was married about 1858, husband's name unknown. In 1860 she appeared in Searcy, Arkansas living with her son at Kellum's Hotel.

John Steel Gowen was born in August 1859 in Arkansas, according to his enumeration in the 1900 census of Wharton County, Texas. Glen Atmar Gowen, a grandson, stated in an interview that his grandfather was born in Ireland, was orphaned and worked as a cabinboy to pay for his passage to the United States, however it is likely that this family legend applies to the father of John Steel Gowen. Following the death of his parents John Steel Gowen went to live with an unnamed uncle.

Shortly afterwards John Steel Gowen, in a dispute with his uncle over a disciplinary matter, threw a rock at his uncle and caught him on the temple. The rock felled the uncle, and the wound produced a large pool of blood. Thinking that he had killed his uncle, John Steel Gowen fled to Texas and considered himself a fugitive from justice.

Arriving in Texas he fell in with a gang of desperadoes and lived the life of an outlaw near Fulshear, Texas for the next six years. At that time he learned that his uncle had survived the rock assault and came out of hiding.

May Belle Gowen, daughter of John Steel Gowen and Marion Jane Johnston Gowen, was born about 1883 and died in infancy.

Marie L. Gowen, daughter of John Steel Gowen and Marion Jane Johnston Gowen, was born in October 1884. About 1904 she was married to Arthur Caylor, rice farmer and poultry farmer of Notawa, Texas. After the death of Arthur Caylor about 1940, Marie L. Gowen Caylor (G2/1.2) was remarried to Vance Readdick who died about 1960. Three children were born to the first union and none to the second. Marie L. Gowen Caylor Readdick died June 18, 1970, at the age 84, at the home of her daughter, Grace Caylor McElmurry at Eagle Lake, Texas.

Children born to Arthur Caylor and Marie L. Gowen Caylor include:

Grace Caylor	born about 1903
Thomas Lee Caylor	born about 1905
Eddie Caylor	born about 1908

Grace Caylor, daughter of Arthur Caylor and Marie L. Gowen Caylor, was born about 1903 at Notawa, Texas. About 1923 she was married, husband's name McElmurry and the couple was later divorced. In January 1972 Grace Caylor McElmurry made her home on Cemetery Street, Eagle Lake.

Children born to Grace Caylor McElmurry include:

Betty McElmurry	born about 1924
Jack McElmurry	born about 1926

Thomas Lee Caylor, son of Arthur Caylor and Marie L. Gowen Caylor, was born about 1905 at Notawa. About 1926 he was married, wife's name Ethel. To this union a son and daughter were born.

Eddie Caylor, son of Arthur Caylor and Marie L. Gowen Caylor, was born about 1908 at Notawa. About 1930 he was married, wife's name Bessie. No children were born to this union.

Mattie Gowen, daughter of John Steel Gowen and Marion Jane Johnston Gowen, was born in October 1886. About 1910 she was married to Jasper Weaver. Both were deceased before January 1972.

Children born to Jasper Weaver and Mattie Gowen Weaver include:

Floyd Weaver	born about 1912
Bessie Mae Weaver	born about 1915

Floyd Weaver, son of Jasper Weaver and Mattie Gowen Weaver, was born about 1912. About 1935 he was married, wife's name unknown.

Bessie Mae Weaver, daughter of Jasper Weaver and Mattie Gowen Weaver, was born about 1915. She was married twice and had a son and daughter. In January 1972 she was living at New Waverly, Texas.

1) John Linder Gowen, son of John Steel Gowen and Marion Jane Johnston Gowen, was born in November 1890. He was married about 1907, wife's name Dot. John Linder Gowen, appeared in the 1907 directory of Houston living at 1817 State Street. He was employed as a yardman by Houston Show Case Factory. In the 1910-1911 edition he was listed as a woodworker for Myers Spalti Manufacturing Company, living at 2710 Loraine. His household consisted of two people. He was accidentally killed by his wife who shot him in the heart with a .22 calibre rifle as he lay in bed. His death is recorded in Harris County, death records on October 9, 1910.

In the 1911 and 1912 city directories of Houston Dot Gowen was listed as the night chief operator for Southwestern Telephone & Telegraph Company living at 1913 Moffitt. In 1915 Dot Gowen, "widow of John Gowen" was living at 2311 Jarrell, according to the city directory.

To this union one son was born:

Glenn Atmar Gowen	born December 21, 1908
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2) Glenn Atmar Gowen, only son of John Linder Gowen and Dot Gowen, was born December 21, 1908 in Harris County, according to BVS File 837464. He was married about 1930, wife's name Leta B. Later the couple was divorced, and Glenn Atmar Gowen was remarried, wife's name Maxine Gowen.

Leta B. Gowen in 1960 lived at 1419 Munger, Houston with Loretta Gowen, unidentified. In January 1972 Leta B. Gowen, a legal secretary lived at 1518 Lawson Street in Houston.

Glenn Atmar Gowen and Maxine Gowen lived at 927 Eastlake Street in Houston where he was employed as a salesman for Cargill Printing and Stationery in 1972.

Children born to Glenn Atmar Gowen and Leta Gowen include:

George Allen Gowen	born September 10, 1933
Glenn Atmar Gowen, Jr.	born April 2, 1937
John Linder Gowen	born March 17, 1942

George Allen Gowen, son of Glenn Atmar Gowen and Leta Gowen, was born September 10, 1933 in Harris County, according to BVS File 71781. In March 1972 he continued to live in Houston.

Glenn Atmar Gowen, Jr, son of Glenn Atmar Gowen and Leta Gowen, was born April 2, 1937 in Harris County, according to the BVS File 29840. It is believed that he died young.

John Linder Gowen, son of Glenn Atmar Gowen and Leta Gowen, was born March 17, 1942 in Harris County, according to BVS File No. 45843. He was married about 1962, wife's name unknown. In 1963 they lived in Harris County, and in March 1972 they lived in League City, Texas.

Children born to John Linder Gowen include:

John Linder Gowen, Jr.

born December 20, 1963

John Linder Gowen, Jr. son of John Linder Gowen, was born December 20, 1963 in Harris County, according to BVS File No. 222806.

Eddie Steel Gowen, son of John Steel Gowen and Marion Jane Johnston Gowen, was born August 22, 1897 in Wharton County, according to BVS File No. 443743. About 1915 he was married to Johnnie Crenshaw, who was born at Shreveport, Louisiana January 25, 1898.

Eddie Steel Gowen died in Harris County, Texas June 27, 1957, according to BVS File No. 31966. At that time Johnnie Crenshaw Gowen was reported living at 4828 Oak Street in Houston.

Children born to Eddie Steel Gowen and Johnnie Crenshaw Gowen include:

John Edward Gowen

born June 6, 1928

John Edward Gowen, son of Eddie Steel Gowen and Johnnie Crenshaw Gowen, was born June 6, 1928. About 1948 he was married, wife's name Mary E. Two sons were born to this union.

John Edward Gowen was employed for many years by Sinclair Refining Company. In 1962 John Edward Gowen and Mary E. Gowen lived at 2110 Raymond Avenue, Pasadena, Texas. In 1972 they lived at 1207 Avenue J, Pasadena.

Irene Redding Gowen, daughter of John Steel Gowen and Marion Jane Johnston Gowen, was born in July 1899, probably at Hallettsville. She went to school at Wallis, Notawa and Houston. About 1918 she was married to Ted Swindon. Two sons were born to this union. Later she married Fred Miller as her second husband, and no children were born to this union. She and her two husbands were deceased by January 1972.

Children born to Ted Swindon and Irene Redding Gowen Swindon include:

Jesse Swindon

born about 1920

Tommy Swindon

born about 1923

Jesse Swindon, son of Ted Swindon and Irene Redding Gowen Swindon, was born about 1920. In 1972 he was living at Houston.

Tommie Swindon, son of Ted Swindon and Irene Redding Gowen Swindon, was born about 1923. In 1972 he was a metalsmith residing at Warrenville, Illinois.

Jesse Eugene Gowen, son of John Steel Gowen and Marion Jane Johnston Gowen, was born January 31, 1902 at Hallettsville in Lavaca County, according to BVS File No. 100730. He attending schools at Wallis, Notawa and Houston. In 1913 his family moved to Houston.

On May 23, 1925, according to Madison County, Texas Marriage Book H, page 512 he was married to Essie Mae McGrew, who was born March 11, 1895 at Cushman, Arkansas. The couple was divorced in 1941. They were remarried December 5, 1952, according to Lamar County, Texas Marriage Book 48, page 572.

Jesse Eugene Gowen and his wife, "Mae Mayo Gowen," contracted with Hubert Harold Yancy on July 30, 1956 for the payment of \$4,249.04, according to Lamar County, Texas Deed Book 344, page 555. On April 27, 1958 they made a deed to Horace F. Wharton, according to Deed Book 387, page 254.

In January 1972 Jesse Eugene Gowen and Essie Mae McGrew Gowen were living on a farm at Paris, Texas where they were visited by Arlee Claud Gowen January 7, 1972. No children were born to this union.

Florence Adella Gowen, daughter of John Steel Gowen and Marion Jane Johnston Gowen, was born May 5, 1905 at Hallettsville. About 1925 she was married to Fred Miller, half brother to Dee Pittman.

Children born to Dee Pittman and Florence Adella Gowen Pittman include:

Donald Pittman	born about 1927
Lorraine Pittman	born about 1930

Donald Pittman, son of Dee Pittman and Florence Adella Gowen Pittman, was born about 1927. He was married and divorced after fathering two children. In 1972 he lived in Houston.

Lorraine Pittman, daughter of Dee Pittman and Florence Adella Pittman, was born about 1930. In February 1972 she lived in Houston.

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