

Sisters met for the first time after 56 years, recount family drama

WICHITA FALLS (AP) — After 56 years of separation, two sisters have finally found each other. While separated, they lived similar lives of torment and abuse, but together they plan to heal each other's soul.

Darlene Davis, 67, of Wichita Falls and Mary Ann Decker, 56, of Chickasha, Okla., are two of nine siblings who were separated from each other in a complicated story of parental abandonment.

"They met for the first time Jan. 30 after a month of phone conversations and have cemented a sisterly bond that both have craved for so long.

The story begins with their mother, Minnie Mae Seaman, 72, who died in 1984. From 1935 to 1942, she gave away her five oldest children.

Minnie Mae left Logan Kinnison when Darlene was 4, and moved to Billings, Mont., taking her two daughters with her. In Montana, Minnie Mae gave away Darlene to a family who lived on a farm. She then gave Imajean to the DeGraw family in Denver, Colo.

"I was not adopted," Darlene Davis said. "She gave me away."

In a letter written in 1970 to Darlene Davis, the DeGraws recounted how Minnie Mae and her then-husband, Al Pearce, visited the DeGraws and demanded they return Imajean. DeGraw wrote that the abandonment was burned into Imajean's memory, and had a pro-

found affect on her.

Decker said she was abused by a succession of step-fathers that Minnie Mae hooked up with after Dowler's death.

Decker and her brother Glen Dowler ran away, and Minnie Mae and the two youngest children moved to California.

The tale jumps to 1966, and a

wouldn't tell me."

Sue Dowler made contact with Darlene Davis, but it was too late.

Dowler was still living with Seaman, and Davis' bitter memory of meeting her father and other sister held her back.

"Mom wanted me to come out there," Davis said. "But I wouldn't do it."

Davis refused to take the relationship further, and when Seaman died she did not attend the funeral. Neither did Mary Ann Decker.

A couple of years ago, Diana Rachels, Davis' daughter, set out on a mission to find her mother's family. In December, Rachels sent Decker a Christmas card with Davis' phone number. It took a week for Decker to build up the courage to call her sister.

"I didn't know if I'd be able to relate to Mary Ann because I never had any siblings," Davis said. "I didn't know how to act, but it's come naturally. I feel like I have finally found a sister. Someone I can call my own."

The sisters found that they have much in common. They both like crafts and shopping and are admitted pack rats. But meeting each other has brought many painful memories to the surface.

"I was at peace with my past before I met Mary Ann," Davis said.

Decker said together the sisters will deal with the pain, and let go of the anger and resentment.

"I knew mom had five other children. But I didn't know what she did with them."

Mary Ann Decker Reunited with sister

surprise knock on Darlene Davis' front door. Her biological father, Logan Kinnison, was standing on her doorstep in Lubbock.

The reunion got a lot of attention and the story was carried in newspapers across the country, Davis said. The reunion was unpleasant, and Davis suspected that her father got in touch with her because of the publicity it generated.

"I knew mom had five other children," Decker said. "But I didn't know what she did with them. She

one juror to sleep. But his contention was that prices plummeted after Winfrey's April 1996 show, forcing him to sell his cattle at a loss.

Engler blamed what he claimed were "false statements" on Lyman.

Last week, Winfrey testified for most of three days, using her skills as a talk show host to turn questioning by cattlemen's attorneys into a chance to make her own case.

Large numbers of spectators had been waiting in line to get into the courthouse. But now that the star witness has spoken, those numbers are dropping off.

The cattlemen were expected to wrap up their case this week, clearing the way for Winfrey and Lyman to begin calling witnesses.

Oprah trial to be turned over to defense this week

AMARILLO (AP) — The lead plaintiff suing Oprah Winfrey for slander testified Monday that his cattle operation lost millions of dollars because of "false statements" made about the impact of mad cow disease on her talk show.

Paul Engler, chief executive officer of Cactus Feeders Inc., one of the largest cattle feeders in the world, took the stand as the civil trial against Winfrey, her production company and vegetarian activist Howard Lyman began its fourth week.

Engler explained the sale of cattle on the live market and on the futures market in enough detail to put at least

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Think you know what kissing is all about? Your better half thinks you could learn a few things? Come join us as our own anthropology professor, **Dr. Vaughn Bryant**, explores the beginnings of human smooching. **Origin of the Kiss** will take place on **Wednesday, February 10, at 7 PM** inside **MSC 212**. Free kisses will be given to everyone who comes through the door for this prelude to Valentine's Day.

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