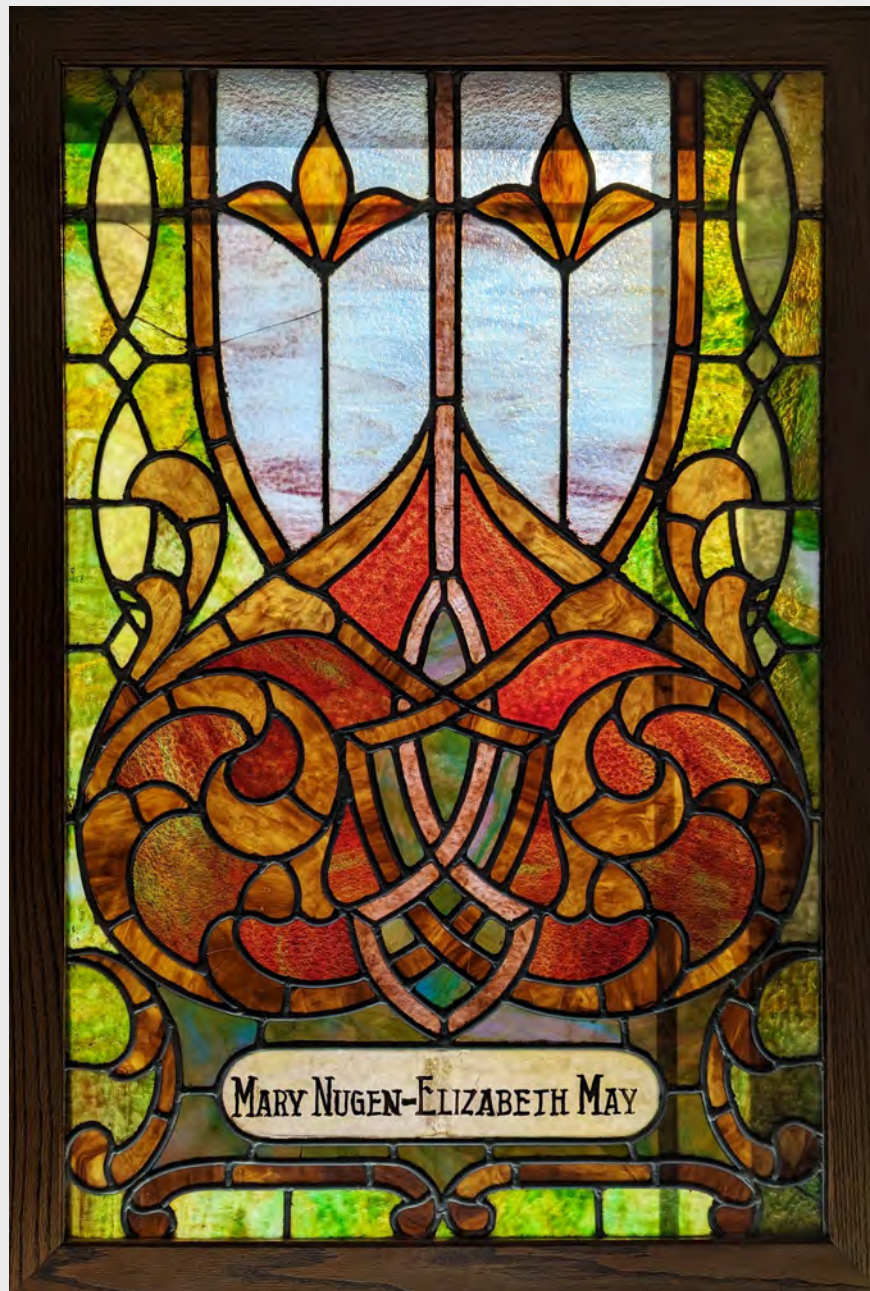


Kansas Kin

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Stained glass window from razed church in Lewisville, Indiana. Currently in home of Lowell and Janice May. Photo taken by Judy Regehr.



***Kansas Kin* is a semi-annual publication of Riley County Genealogical Society**

2005 Claflin Road

Manhattan, Kansas 66502-3415

Phone: (785) 565-6495

RCGS Website: www.rileycgs.com

RCGS General Email: info@rileycgs.com

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Dues: \$30 per calendar year. Join here:

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Kansas Kin is included with membership.

Kansas Kin Editor: Judy Regehr

Kansas Kin Email: KansasKin@rileycgs.com

Calendar of Upcoming RCGS Programs

Sunday, June 25, 2023, 2:30 pm

One Kansas Family: Stitched Together with
Memories by Terry Hubbard Stahl.
Manhattan Public Library, 629 Poyntz
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Genealogy and History Fair

Saturday, August 19, 2023, 10 am to 4 pm
Pottorf Hall, CICO Park
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***Kansas Kin* Mission Statement**

Collect, preserve and share information
for researching Kansas family histories.

A Message From the Editor

Dear Readers of *Kansas Kin*:

In this issue, we bring you stories of families in Kansas. We hope that some day a grandchild or a great-grandchild will wonder about the past — and discover these stories. The story of the stained glass window on the next page shows what can happen in the most surprising ways.

We offer an article from the Chapman Center on using social media to share your research. Did you ever wish that the younger members in your family would be interested in genealogy? Try sharing your finds on social media!

We also remember three long-time members of our society who have passed on. Cheryl Lewis and Dick Phillips were Riley County Genealogical Society Board members. Dick Phillips served as Treasurer for many years.

We remember Dick Towers, who is the spouse of Wann Towers. Wann was Director of the Re-



search Library for many years and is now a life member of our society.

We offer our deepest condolences to the families.

Judy Regehr, Editor

In Memoriam

Cheryl Lewis

Dick Phillips

Dick Towers



Methodist Church, Lewisville Indiana. Now torn down.
Photo: Courtesy of Lowell May. See next page for story of its stained glass windows.

History Captured in Stained Glass

Why would someone buy a huge 26 by 92 inch high stained glass window?

The story began when Janice and Lowell May heard that a small country church in Lewisville, Indiana, was being torn down. The church was built in 1888 with windows made from colored glass from the new (at the time) Kokomo Opalescent Glass Company, which is still in business today. The May family ancestors attended the church for years, so they felt a family connection to the building. However, after being closed for 10 years, the church had fallen into disrepair. The current owners made the decision to tear down the church.

In an effort to sell parts of the church, the contractor photographed the old stained glass windows and posted them for sale online. One of the windows included the names, “Mary Nugen - Elizabeth May.” The name “Elizabeth



Restoring the window. Friar Tuck Glass Company in Leavenworth, Kansas, did the restoration. Photo: Janice May.

May” sparked curiosity, because it happens to be the name of their oldest daughter.

Digging into family history revealed that Elizabeth May was born in 1841 and married Lowell’s paternal grandfather, William May. She died in 1875 at the age of 34 years old, 13 years before the church was built. Further research uncovered that her maiden name was Hendricks. Her father was Isaac Hendricks, who was Lowell’s maternal great-grandfather. This meant the mysterious Elizabeth May was related to Lowell through both his mother and his father’s family! Lowell and Janice decided to preserve some of this history by purchasing this family treasure.

Now, the 134-year old stained glass window from an abandoned building was not in the best condition. Weather, sunlight, and gravity had taken their toll. Lead holding the glass pieces together had oxidized and become brittle. Only a few pieces of glass had cracked, most of them in the lower sections due to the weight of the glass above them. At some point in time, the church had added metal supports every 12 inches from the top of the window to the bottom, which helped to preserve most of the glass pieces. It took five people to carefully crate the fragile window in preparation for Janice and Lowell to move it to their home in Manhattan, Kansas.

Restoration is often a tedious process that requires professional knowledge. Janice and Lowell were lucky to find an expert, the Friar Tuck Glass Company, only 86 miles away in Leavenworth, Kansas. Mike agreed to help them restore the window. Over a four month period, all of the old lead was removed from in between the pieces, while keeping all of the pieces in order. The window puzzle pieces were put back together with new lead and framing. Due to the long size of the window, Janice and Lowell decided to divide it into two smaller windows that would fit into their home.

Today, the sun shines through the windows, casting colorful stories from history over the walls of Janice and Lowell’s home.

By Elizabeth Martineau

150 Years of Existence...

The Walsburg Lutheran Church



Julotta: Fashioned after the Julotta service in their native homeland of Sweden, the first members of the Walsburg Lutheran Church were glad that this tradition was continued. The first Julotta service was held there in 1877 and it is a tradition that continues to this day. Members attend church services on Christmas morning bright and early. It is a way for them to pay homage to their ancestors who attended the Julotta services generations ahead of them. Photo: Amy Feigley.

Nestled on a hillside just a few miles northeast of Leonardville, Kansas, stands a church. This church is getting ready to celebrate 150 years of existence. 150 years of many milestones, some good, some bad. 150 years of memories of generations of people who attend every Sunday just as their ancestors did before them. This church, the Walsburg Lutheran Church, has an amazing history, one that is still celebrated to this day.

On January 12, 1873, 18 men gathered together

at the home of Frans Ekblad. The sole purpose of this meeting was to create a church where those who lived in the Walsburg vicinity could gather. At that time, the closest church was located at Mariadahl, which was 12 miles away. Although only 18 men gathered at the initial meeting, there were others that were responsible for the building of the church. As some of these men worked in other towns in jobs off the farm, they were not able to attend. But they did play a vital role, none the less.

Seven years prior, two brothers, Daniel August Ekblad and Frans Jonas Ekblad, found their way to what is now known as Walnut Creek. The brothers, who came from Sweden to Kansas in 1866, settled a mile north of the present-day church. Little by little, more Swedes followed the Ekblad brothers. By 1870, these eighteen men had claimed their land and began to make a name for themselves. Most of them were farmers, raising crops and cattle. Some of them made the long trek to work by walking to places like Manhattan and Junction City. The hardships that these men and women endured were not without struggle and grief. But through it all, they were tough, determined, and above it all, they persevered.

These eighteen men, August Ekblad, Frans Ekblad, Peter J. Nickelson, John Peter Johnson Rosell, Peter Nilsson, Nels John Peterson, Peter August Carlson, Nels Peter Nelson, Nils Peter Peterson, August Nylander, Charles Longren, Charles Goethe, Sven Carlson, Andrew P. Oman, Peter J. Nyman, J.P. Cyrene, Sven J. Cederberg, and Peter Magnus Edward Nelson, were the pioneers responsible for the formation of the Walsburg Lutheran Church. Along with their wives and children, they to-

taled 31 communicants and 17 children. Work in Manhattan, Junction City, and other distant places kept others from attending this initial meeting. Men such as Andrew Johnson, John Flohr, Carl Berggren, Charles Classon, John Sundgren, John Bellman and G.L. Ruthstrom, also played a distinctive role in the newly founded church.

For the first handful of years, the congregation met in various homes and eventually at the Walsburg school house, until a church was constructed. On June 5, 1873, the congregation of the newly founded Walsburg Lutheran Church called J. Seleen to serve as pastor. At that time, Seleen was serving as pastor at Mariadahl. It was in 1877 that the church finally had its own building, in thanks to G.L. Ruthstrom who donated the land for both the church and the cemetery, as well as a \$100 contribution for the building fund. Now the community had an actual place to worship. This project took about ten weeks to complete. A crew of about 25 men worked each day, bringing with them their trades. Some were stone masons, others were carpenters, each working to see that the completed church was given the strength to hold a houseful of worshippers who were ecstatic to be there. A sense

Continued on next page



The home where congregation was organized

On January 12, 1873, 18 men gathered at the home of Frans Ekblad, where they would create the Walsburg Lutheran Church. Until a church was built in 1877, services were held in the homes of members, as well as the Walsburg School. 150 years later, there are descendants of charter members that are members of the church. Photo: Courtesy of Amy Feigley.



First parsonage erected in 1884

In 1879, 40 acres of land northeast of the church was purchased. Five years later, the first parsonage was erected, giving the pastors of the church a place to live with their families. A barn, corn crib, and chicken house were erected near the parsonage. In 1955, Elton Nelson built the parsonage that now stands. Photo: Courtesy of Amy Feigley.



G.L. Ruthstrom Family. Mr. Ruthstrom donated the land for both the church and the cemetery, as well as a \$100 contribution for the building fund. Photo courtesy of Amy Feigley.

of accomplishment was felt by all who were involved in the building of this beautiful masterpiece. By 1879, two years after the building was completed, the church was finally incorporated. This was also the year that 40 acres of land northeast of the church was purchased. In 1884, a parsonage was built, with a barn, corn crib, and chicken house being erected near the parsonage the following year.

The charter members also played vital roles in the church once it was built. August Ekblad and Peter J. Nickelson served as two of the first deacons. Frans Ekblad and Andrew Oman served as two of the first trustees. Charles Goethe served as the first secretary of the Walsburg Lutheran Church. And now, 150 years and generations later, families of those men are present-day members of the church. Descendants of Carl Berggren, Peter Ekstrom, John Flohr, Charles Goethe, Andrew Johnson, Andrew Oman, Nels Johan Peterson, John Peter Rosell, G.L. Ruthstrom, and John Sundgren are current and active members of the church that their grandfathers saw fit to build.

In 1880, a reed organ was purchased for \$150. P.J. Nyman was chosen as organist, playing

every third Sunday. Another beautiful sound is one that comes from the bell. Three years later in 1883, a mellow-toned bell was purchased and was used to issue the call to worship. It was used until 1968 when a carillon was given to the church by Dr. and Mrs. B.W. Lafene in memory of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. S.J. Johnson, and her sister, Miss Lula Johnson. That carillon was replaced by the second in 1993 and it was

also given by memorial money from Mrs. Lafene, as well as others. Sadly, it was damaged by lightning and a new one was installed in April 2016.

On May 22, 1918, a severe thunderstorm bestowed its ugly face and by 3:00 a.m., a fire commenced on the roof of the church near the tower causing an explosion that would wake anyone from a deep sleep. Those who lived nearby braved the storm with much eagerness to save their church. Frustration set in because sadly, little could be done. Before the fire got more wicked, items were saved. The



Walburg Church in 1913.. Photo courtesy of Amy Feigley.

piano and the chairs from Luther League Hall were saved, as well dishes from the kitchen, which were carried out by the pastor's wife. Within two hours, the fire consumed all but the stone walls, which was where the starting point for the new building would begin. Sunday School and worship services were held outside in the nearby school yard. Planks were used as pews and the bandstand as the church front. The members of the church were ready to rebuild. Difficulties faced the church as it was at this time that World War I was underway, as well as an influenza epidemic that closed schools and churches for almost a month. By April 25, 1919, the new church was where the district pastors assembled for the mission meeting. 1919 was also the year in which all Sunday School classes were held in the English language and not in the traditional Swedish language as they had been since the conception of the church.

In 2020, with the COVID pandemic in full swing, this was the perfect time for the breathtaking stained-glass windows to be installed. Money from fundraisers, memorials, and donations from church members, was used for the repair of the windows. They are truly a staple of the 100-year-old building. The way that the light shines in through them is nothing short of spectacular.

While a few of the charter members packed up and made that boat ride back across the pond to their homeland of Sweden, the remainder of the men stayed in Riley County. They married, had children, and watched their grandchildren grow up. Some of them chose the Walsburg Cemetery as their eternal resting place, while others were buried elsewhere. But the one thing that these men mutually share is the desire to bring a church to their community. A desire to serve God. A desire to live in an area that has given them as much as they gave to it. And now, 150 years later, their names still live on not only as the men who initiated the church, but as the men who gave their blood, sweat, and tears to build something so precious. The men who will forever be a part of the history of the Walsburg Lutheran Church. And now, when you walk into the church on a

Sunday morning, you will see descendants of these men strewn throughout the pews carrying on the tradition. Generations before and generations after will continue making these men proud. Proud that they began something that, 150 years later, is still a staple in the community.

The date for the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Walsburg Lutheran Church has been set. Please mark Saturday and Sunday, October 7 and 8, 2023, on your calendars and continue to watch for more information as the committee works on the happenings for this event.

By Amy (Ruthstrom) Feigley

Endnote

Information collected for "Walsburg Lutheran Church 100th Anniversary, 1873-1973," Leonardville, Kansas.

About the Author

Amy Feigley lives with her husband, Gary, on their family farm, east of Abilene, Kansas. Her ties to the Walsburg Lutheran Church go back four generations, as two of her great-grandfathers played a vital role in the conception of the church.



Wahlsburg Lutheran Church today. Photo courtesy of Amy Feigley

The Enemy Was Here

Today not many people in Kansas know that during World War Two, German and Italian prisoners of war (POW) were kept at 17 different locations in Kansas. Why were they here? How were they treated? What did they do while here?

The first two questions are answered by the Geneva Convention of 1929. This document was ratified by the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany and other countries, but not by Japan and Russia. The Convention prescribed how prisoners of war were to be treated by the host (capturing) country. The captured soldier was to be removed from the battle zone as quickly as possible. They were to be fed, clothed, provided medical care and even paid the same as the host country's soldiers. They could be required to work, but the labor could not be dangerous or war related. They had to be paid for this labor. Officer POWs could not be required to work and NCOs could only be required to supervise, but could volunteer to work.

They were also allowed to send and receive mail, which was censored.

The United States agreed to take German and Italian prisoners because with the buildup of American troops in

Great Britain, they did not have room there for prisoners. Also, there was the logistical reason; If the POWs were in the United States all of the supplies sent to Europe could be used by the allies. The POWs could provide labor, particularly in agriculture where there was a labor shortage. Prisoner of war camps were to be constructed away from the coast and not near large cities. (This later changed.)

Three large, or main camps, were built in Kansas. In the spring of 1943, camps were constructed at Concordia and at Camp Phillips, near Salina. The third main camp was built at Fort Riley in January of 1944. The camp at Concordia received its first German POWs in July 1943 and by December had 4,000. Camp Phillips received Italian POWs in the summer of 1943, but they were discovered to be in poor health so they were relocated to camps in the southwest. Camp Phillips then received German POWs and by early 1944 had 3,000. Fort Riley opened its POW camp in December 1943

and by January 1944 had 1,000 German POWs. This camp expanded during the war and by 1945 was the largest camp in Kansas.

Since there was a shortage of Farm Labor, the POWs



A group of German POWs at Camp Concordia (Kansas). Photo from Helmut Rosenau.

were soon put to work on farms. Branch, or side camps, were established where there was a need and where billeting space was available. The community had to request POW labor and show that there were no civilians available to work. Branch camps were established at Cawker City, Council Grove, El Dorado, Elkhart, Eskridge, Hays, Hutchinson, Lawrence, Neodesha, Ottawa, and Peabody. Some of the camps were of long duration, while others such as Elkhart and Lawrence were only for one harvest.

Not all of the counties wanted POWs in their midst. There was some opposition to the camp at Cawker City, but it was based on rumor and those that wanted the camp won out. Shawnee county commissioners would not allow a branch camp in the county, but POWs were transported from the branch camp at Eskridge to work at the Sunflower Ordnance Depot. Leavenworth County did not want a POW camp, but the Veterans Administration wanted to remodel the Wadsworth VA Hospital (later Eisenhower VA Medical Center) and could not find civilians to do the work. Therefore, the VA brought in German POWs from Algona, Iowa, to do the work. At Hutchinson the unions were afraid that POWs would take jobs from civilians so it was agreed that the POWs could not work within the city limits. It was proven that most opposition to the POW labor was based on rumors and untruths.

When the POWs started working on farms they were escorted

Today not many people in Kansas know that during World War Two, German and Italian prisoners of war (POW) were kept at 17 different locations in Kansas.

by guards and had a sack lunch. The farmers did not think this was enough food and requested that they be allowed to feed the POWs. The government agreed, but said the meal had to contain the basic food groups and could not be served in the house. This did not last and soon the POWs and guards were seated around the dining room table enjoying a typical farm meal. The guards were, at times, lax in their duties and sometimes would go to sleep under a tree or even let the POWs hold their weapons. As the war went on and more men were needed overseas, the government said that the farmers could pick up the prisoners and bring them back at the end of the day. Farmers were told not to be friendly to the POWs but as one farmer said, "You can't work with someone eight hours a day and not get to know them."

The POWs liked working on the farms. It was a way to get out of the camp and see what life in America was really like. Besides, they earned

some extra money. They liked working the land and especially liked working with horses. Being around a family reminded them of home and they would often ask to hold



Camp Concordia (Kansas). National Archives Photo.

Cont. on next page



POWs working in a field near Peabody
National Archives photo

young children. Many would make things, such as paintings or carvings, for the farmer and his family. After the war some farmers corresponded with the POW that worked for them.

The POW labor was not free for the farmer. He paid the government whatever the going hourly wage was for the type of work plus a half cent per mile for transportation of the POW. The maximum per day was \$2.40 per POW. A credit was given the farmer for meals fed the POWs and for the transportation he provided. In turn the government paid the POW 80 cents per day of which half was paid in canteen script and half put in a savings account to be paid at the end of the war.

POWs that did not work on farms were paid \$3 to \$5 per month and officers were paid \$20 to \$40 per month depending on rank. Those that did not work outside the camp were put to work inside the camp. They performed camp maintenance, cooks, KPs, and other jobs. The POW officers performed some administration

work within the camp. At Concordia the medical personnel were put to work in the camp hospital. Concordia was the only POW camp in Kansas that had its own hospital. There were also educational opportunities for POWs, especially officers. At Concordia a POW University was established where the officer POWs could earn credits from Kansas University. These classes were taught by qualified POWs.

At Winter General Hospital, Topeka, Italian POWs were brought in to perform maintenance and some orderly tasks. The only incident

there was that they went on strike because they could not purchase ready made cigarettes in their canteen. They were put on bread and water and after one day went back to work.

Yes, there were some escapes. Given the number of POWs, escapes were few. Overall, there were only 14 escapes and all but one was caught within three days. In fact, most were caught within 24 hours. The one exception was a POW that escaped from Council Grove in November 1945. He went to Emporia where he worked until he was caught in November 1946. At Fort Riley one walked away from his work. That night there was a rain storm and he turned himself in the next morning. But most were happy to sit out the war in a POW camp. After all, they had a place to sleep, food to eat, medical care, and they were out of the war.

There were some deaths among the POWs. There was a total of 14 POW deaths in Kansas. One was shot at Concordia, at Eskridge one died in a farm accident, six suicides and six from other causes including old wounds and

illness. All, except for one, are buried in the Fort Riley Cemetery.

The last place there were POWs in Kansas was at the United States Disciplinary Barracks (USDB), Fort Leavenworth. POWs that committed offenses while in captivity could be court martialed and 120 German and 18 Italians were confined at the USDB. Most were unspectacular cases but 15 involved the murder of other POWs. These 15 Germans had been sentenced to death, but one case was commuted to 20 years. In July and August 1945, the remaining 14 Germans were executed by hanging. They are buried in the prisoner cemetery at Fort Leavenworth.

Once the war was over the POWs were required to be returned to their native country. Many did not want to leave because their homes had been destroyed and the fate of their families was unknown. Others wanted to stay because they saw that life was better in the United States. But they all had to leave. Some would later immigrate back to Kansas with their families.

Overall having the POWs here was a win for them and a win for us. The German and Italian

POWs saw what freedom was like. That there could be dissent without being imprisoned or shot. The Americans that were around the POWs learned that they were not all the hard-core Nazi or fascist that propaganda had made them out to be. They were mostly just like us.

By Lowell May

Lowell May, has written a book on the POWs in Kansas:

Prisoners of War in Kansas 1943-1946 by Lowell A. May & Mark P. Schrock. Manhattan, Kansas: KS Publishing Company Inc. 2007.

This book is a good source for further information on each individual camp that existed during the war in Kansas.

Another good source of information about the Prisoner of War Camps in Kansas is the POW Camp Concordia Museum, 2 miles north of Concordia, Kansas, on US 81 and 1 mile east on Union Road. Contact Cloud County Tourism office for more information (785-243-4303).



The barn at the KSU farm at Hays where the POWs from the near-by camp lived. Their barracks was the hay loft. Lowell May photo.

Tobias B. Neckelmann, Sailor, Navy Veteran, Grocer, Land Owner, Farmer, and Benefactor of Saint Patrick's Church and Cemetery on the Elbow in Blue Township of Pottawatomie County, Kansas

Tobias Neckelmann was born on 19 July, 1812, at Jutland, Denmark, the son of John F. Neckelman and Anna Christian Barry Neckelman. The "Neckelmann" name is spelled in various ways in the records; i. e. Neckelmann, Neckelman, Neekelman, Nickelman, and Nickhoman. The spelling on the tombstone in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Elbow Community, Kansas, is "Neckelmann." The spelling used in the various records is used in the articles that are referenced. Tobias was a descendant of a line of military men. His paternal grandfather was a general in the British Army and his father was a Captain in the Danish Army, during the Napoleonic Wars. Tobias also served three years in the U. S. Navy, under the command of Commodore Stockton. While in the Navy he visited many ports, among those were Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and New Orleans, Louisiana, when he was on the ship "Warren" when she received President Andrew Jackson on board.

In 1825 he was serving aboard a Danish merchantman the *St. Valeria* that was wrecked off the coast of France. The *St. Valeria* was carrying a cargo of wine to Hamburg after having landed a cargo of sheep pelts in Bordeaux. Tobias escaped with others of the crew and in 1827 decided to immigrate to America and landed in Boston, Massachusetts.

In America he served on the seas as a member of the merchant marine until 1841, when he became a mate on a Mississippi River steamboat. From 1845 to 1856, he was in the grocery business in New Orleans, Louisiana. He came to Kansas in 1856. He preempted the Southeast Quarter of Section 3 of Township 10 South and Range 8 East. (See the map on page 16.) This tract of 160 acres is northeast of Manhattan as the crow flies about 3 miles. Elbow Creek flows southward through this tract of land and about a half of a mile south turns to the west and joins the Blue River. It is thought

that from this "Elbow" change of direction from south to west is the change, from which the community of Elbow in Blue Township gets its name. The Elbow area was also in the early days known as the *Devil's Elbow*. Tobias established a farm on the 160 acres he preempted and there built a two-story home, barn and other out buildings associated with a farm, as well as established an orchard (1). In 1873, Tobias' home was described as a "most convenient" frame residence, among his modern conveniences is an airy fireplace (19). Then in 1881, he added several rooms to what was described as his "mansion" (20). In 1895, the farm was described as being 155 acres in size of which 100 acres were cultivated. All the acreage was fenced with wire. The value of the farm was \$6,000 and his machinery was valued at \$50. In 1894, he planted 35 acres of winter wheat. In 1895, he planned to plant 30 acres of corn, 25 acres of oats, 4 acres of millet and ¼ acre of Irish potatoes. He had 10 acres of bluegrass and 6 acres of alfalfa and he harvested 15 tons of hay. He sold eggs and poultry having a value of \$10 and he made 300 pounds of butter. He owned 4 horses, 4 milch cows and 4 other cattle and 18 swine. He sold or slaughtered animals having a value of \$75 and he sold horticultural products having a value of \$20 (21).

Tobias was married to Elizabeth who was born on 12 May, 1822, in Ireland. She died on 28 January 1899. Elizabeth's maiden name is identified in one record as Dempsey; the town or city of her birth is not known (8). The Blue Township map of 1905 is attached. Records show that Tobias' adopted daughter Nora A. and grandson B. J. (Bernard) Dempsey were owners of the land preempted in 1856 by Tobias.

On 31 May, 1832, Tobias was admitted to the Naval Hospital and discharged on 4 June 1832

having served aboard the *USS Monongahela*, *USS Warren* and the *USS Lexington* (8).

In 1847, on 24 June at New Orleans, Orleans Parish, Louisiana, Tobias Neckelman was naturalized as an American citizen. No port of entry into the United States was listed. The witnesses were Isaac Leeper and John C. Smith (9).

In 1850, Tobias age 35 and Elizabeth Neckelman were living in Representative District 3 in Orleans, Louisiana. Tobias is identified as a grocer (10).

In 1857 on 5 October, Tobias was one of the 56 men who voted at the Samuel J. Dyer log cabin at Juniata Crossing on the Blue River north of his home (2).

In 1860 on 3 August, Tobias was issued title to the Southeast 1/4 of Section 3 in Township 10 South of Range 8 East (12).

Also in 1860, Tobias was identified as being a resident of Blue Township, Pottawatomie County, Kansas Territory. The value of his real estate was \$1200 and that of his personal estate was \$800. He is living with his wife Marinda (Elizabeth) (13).

In 1864, on 8 March, Tobias and Elizabeth Neckelmann sold 5 acres in the southeast corner of their property to the Reverend John B. Miede, Bishop of Leavenworth, Kansas, for the amount of one dollar. In the agreement of sale, it was required to erect the walls of a church and residence for a clergyman. The land was to be used exclusively for church and education purposes. The land was to revert to the Neckelmanns, if the requirement of church walls and residence were not met within eighteen months. A stone church was built on the site, later burned, was rebuilt, and then discontinued in 1928. Today the five acres is the site of St. Patrick's Church Cemetery, also known as the Elbow Catholic Cemetery.

In 1865, Tobias and Elizabeth Neckelmann adopted Nora Mooney who was born on 21 May 1861, at St. George, Kansas, and also took to raise Ellen Mooney, the daughters of Michael and Mary Mooney who were 1856 set-

Tobias Neckelmann's story begins with his birth in Denmark and continues to Blue Township, Pottawottamie County Kansas

tlers at St. George. Nora had two brothers: Michael T. who was taken in by Daniel McCoy and who later lived in St. Louis, Missouri, and William who was adopted and used the name Ham. William Mooney Ham is buried in the St. George, Kansas, Cemetery (2) (3) (4).

In 1867, Tobias and Elizabeth Neckelmann took to support a young man by the name of William Gray who arrived in the community aboard the New York orphans train (5).

In 1873 in late May, Tobias took his first train ride since coming to Kansas in 1856 (7).

In 1876, W. Marlatt recalled that the winter of 1867/8 was very severe. The young men around Manhattan were taking the girls out sleighing and among those fortunate young men was Tobias Neckelmann, most familiarly known as "Uncle Toby". The young ladies, married or single, enjoyed the innocent amusement and there was no distinction between upper or lower groups (23).

In 1883, Tobias is described as an ardent Democrat. He stated that "he had seen a Democratic Governor for Kansas, and he would die happy if he could see a Democrat President of the U. S." (22).

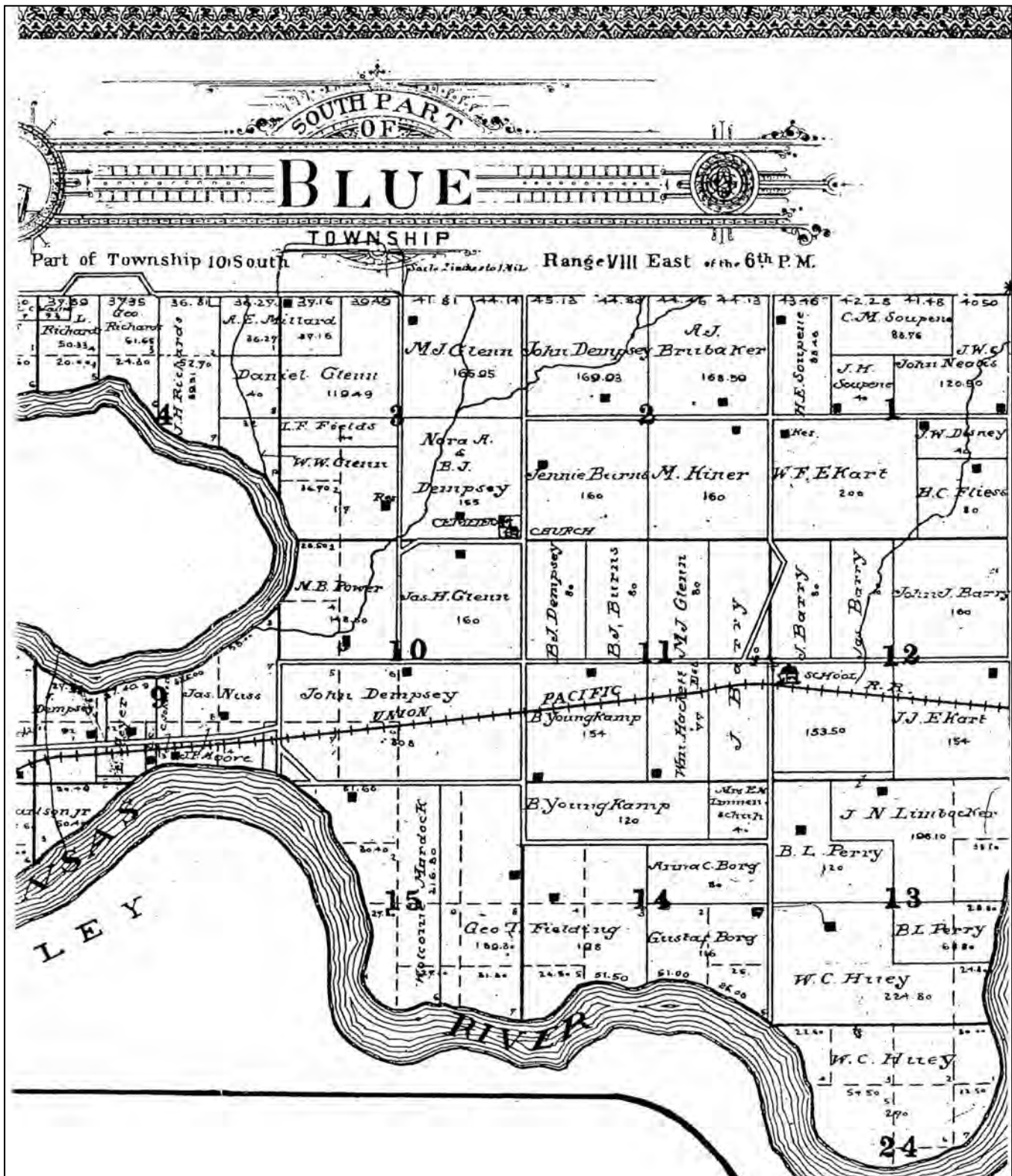
In 1884, Tobias went to St. Louis to have surgery on his eyes. He said the city was very pleased about the election of President Cleveland (18).

In 1892, on the 27th of July it was reported that Tobias Neckelmann celebrated his 80th birthday on July 19. Misses Jennie Dempsey and Maggie Sheehan were the organizers of the party (17).

In 1897, J. P. Johnson, who came from Denmark 5 years earlier, learned that Tobias Neckelmann came from his homeland. J. P. had known a family of Neckelmann's in the vicinity

of Randers, Denmark, and noted Tobias' resemblance to the Denmark Neckelmann family. He wrote to his mother back home telling of his having met Tobias. J. P's mother wrote back that she had contacted

two of Tobias' sisters who were 88 and 78 years of age. There were also a number of other of Tobias' sisters and brother living in the area. The Denmark Neckelmanns had not heard of Tobias in 60 years after he had left for the



Map of Blue Township, Pottawatomie County, Kansas. Tobias Neckelmann's 160 acres was in Section 3. Records show that Tobias' adopted daughter Nora A. and grandson B. J. (Bernard) Dempsey were owners of the land preempted in 1856 by Tobias. Map and drawing of St. Patrick Church (next page) courtesy of Sy Ekart.

West India Islands, 70 years ago. Tobias being 86 years of age had a desire to visit his family in the Denmark homeland, however no record exists of his having done so (6).

In 1899 in January, Tobias and Elizabeth were ill and being cared for by Elizabeth Peak. On the 24th of January Tobias died and on the 28th Elizabeth died at their home in the Elbow Community. They are both buried in St. Patrick's Cemetery on the Elbow (14) (15) (16).

On November 10, 1881, in St. Patrick's Church, Elbow, Tobias and Elizabeth's adopted daughter Nora Neckelmann, nee Mooney, married Charles Dempsey who was born in March 1857 in the Elbow community, and who died on 18 March, 1927, at Manhattan. At the time of Nora's death, it was reported that she had a brother Michael Mooney who lived in St. Louis and a half-brother Wm. Ham (William or Wm was a full brother) who lived in St. George, Kansas, and a sister Ellen (Mrs. Lawrence Peak). Charles Dempsey was the son of Bernard Dempsey and Mary Moran Dempsey.

Charles and Nora Mooney Neckelmann Dempsey had four children. They were Bernard J. Dempsey 1882-1906, Cecelia (Mrs. Remy Ronsse) 1887-1914, William J. 1889-1969 and Stella (Mrs. Robert E. Glenn) 1895-1952. Charles, Nora, Bernard and William Dempsey are buried in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Elbow Community (15). Stella is buried in Sunset

Cemetery, Manhattan and, Cecelia is buried in Mt. Calvary Cemetery, St. Marys, Kansas.

By Sylvester C. Ekart

This article was written with research help from Marcia Schuley and suggestions by Mary McCoy Siegle. Ancestry.com, (library edition) and Find-a-grave.com were used extensively gathering information

End Notes

- (1) Biographies of Jefferson, Jackson and Pottawatomie Counties, Chapman Brothers, Chicago, 1890.
- (2) *History of Pottawatomie County*, by W. F. Hill, Editor, Westmoreland Recorder, 1906/7.
- (3) 1865 Kansas State Census of Pottawatomie Co., KS.
- (4) 1880 U. S. Census of Pottawatomie Co., KS, Blue Township.
- (5) *Kansas Radical* of 12 January 1867.
- (6) *Manhattan Mercury*, 10 November 1897.
- (7) *Kansas Reporter*, Louisville, Kansas, 5 June 1873.
- (8) Register of Patients in the Naval Hospital.
- (9) U.S. Naturalization Records.
- (10) 1850 United States Census.
- (11) U. S. Land Records.
- (12) 1860 U. S. Census of Kansas Territory.
- (13) *Saint Patrick's on the Elbo*, Pottawatomie Co., KS.
- (14) *Manhattan Mercury*, 25 January 1899.
- (15) *Manhattan Nationalist*, 27 January 1899.
- (16) *Westmoreland Signal*, 10 February 1899.
- (17) *Manhattan Mercury*, 27 July 1892.
- (18) *Manhattan Mercury*, 10 December 1884.
- (19) *Manhattan Nationalist*, 29 August 1873.
- (20) *Manhattan Nationalist*, 18 August 1881.
- (21) Kansas Agricultural Census of Blue Township, Pottawatomie County, Kansas.
- (22) *Manhattan Republic*, 22 June 1883.
- (23) *Manhattan Enterprise*, 21 February 1876.



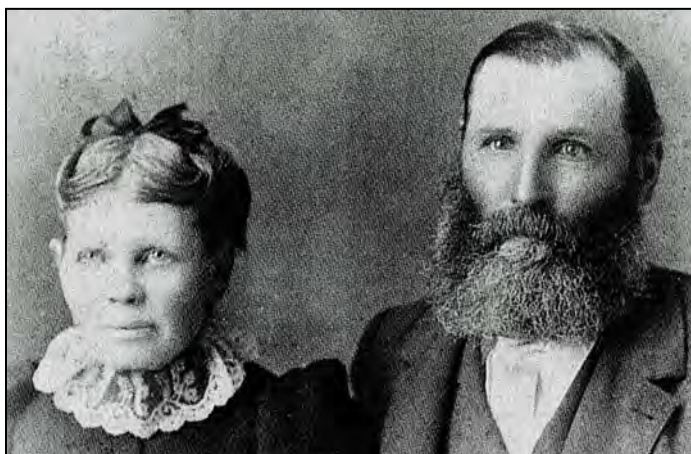
SAINT PATRICK CATHOLIC CHURCH, ON THE ELBOW

Insight from Agricultural Schedules: A Farmer's Life in Pottawatomie County, Kansas

Most family researchers use census records to gain sights into their ancestors. Unique records known as “non-population schedules,” sometimes called “agricultural schedules,” can afford additional details about your family's lives. Kansas researchers can find a treasure trove of information about their Kansas farming ancestors. These records can provide extensive details about the farms and the farmers who worked on the land. Often included in the enumerated details are the size or acreage of the farm, the variety of crops grown, and the types of animals raised.

Farming has always been a difficult yet inspiring occupation. Planting seeds and hoping the weather would cooperate could lead to bountiful yields. At the same time, nature's fury could leave nothing behind but the tilled soil. Raising livestock lets the farmer enjoy both the miracle of birth and the devastation experienced from losing an animal. With the challenges farmers face, it is remarkable that our ancestors embarked on such a life for themselves and their families. We can experience some of their tribulations by examining the agricultural censuses of our ancestors. Through these records, I better understood the life of a Pottawatomie County, Kansas, ancestor Vincent Umscheid.

Vincent was nine years old when he arrived at the port of New Orleans in March 1861.¹ His father, Johan Lorenz (John Lawrence) Umscheid, and three older sisters accompanied him.



Vincent and Anna Umscheid, farmers in Pottawatomie County, Kansas. Photo courtesy of John Manning.

Johan's wife, Marie Anna Schmitt, died in November 1853. After seven years of raising his family without his wife and trying to survive as a small farmer (Kleinbauer) in Northern Bavaria, Johan made the fateful decision to leave Großheubach to emigrate to the United States. Other immigrants from the same small Bavarian village had made the same trip, ultimately settling in the Rock Creek Valley in what is now Pottawatomie County, Kansas. The fertile, tillable soil, temperate climate, and availability of farmland made the decision easy for the family, who settled into their new life in Kansas soon after arriving.

The oldest daughter, Augusta, married Christian Getz on 20 October 1861.³ In the Fall of 1863, tragedy struck as Vincent's father died at 49. Vincent (12) and his sisters Magdalena (21) and Maria (14) moved in with their sister, Augusta, and their brother-in-law, Christian.

Magdalena married Charles B. Mayer on 24 July 1864 in Rock Creek, Kansas.⁴ Maria married Emil Ebert on 08 July 1866 in Rock Creek, Kansas.⁵ All of the families farmed in Pottawatomie County. While living with the Getz family, Vincent helped Christian on the Pottawatomie County farm.

Vincent and Christian were both recorded as farmers on the 1870 US Census.⁶ The Christian Getz farm was comprised of one hundred sixty acres, of which thirty were considered "improved" or tillable, with the remaining land being woodlands or for other use. The land was valued at three thousand dollars,

with the buildings at seventy-five dollars.

They raised one hundred bushels of wheat, five hundred bushels of corn, and one hundred fifty bushels of oats from the tillable acreage. Regarding livestock, they had four horses, four milk cows, six head of cattle, and four hogs. Based on the farm's productivity, it is easy to understand why Christian needed Vincent to help support the farming operation.

On 10 January 1875, Vincent Umscheid, 23, married Anna Louisa Riffel, 19, at Rock Creek Valley, Pottawatomie, Kansas.⁷ When the 1875 Kansas State Census was enumerated on 01 March 1875, It shows that Vincent's occupation was recorded as a farmer. Vincent's property of eighty acres had an estimated value of nine hundred dollars.⁸ He had planted five acres of spring wheat, thirty-five acres of corn, and fifteen acres of oats.⁹ He owned two horses, one milk cow, and two other cattle.

By 1880, Vincent and Anna had three children living with them on their farm.¹⁰ He had not increased the size of his farm since 1875 but had managed to be highly productive in its use.¹¹ In 1879, he raised eight hundred bushels of corn on twenty-five acres, produced ten gallons of molasses from one-quarter acre of sorghum, and ten bushels of potatoes from another quarter acre. He also raised ten bushels of wheat on five acres of land. This low wheat yield may have been due to poor weather conditions or other environmental issues.

Vincent and Anna lived on their Pottawatomie County farm with their four children in 1885.¹² It is likely that the children, Rosa (8), Mary (6), Monica (2), and Julia (1), would not have been able to help on the farm. He owned two hundred eighty acres of land, upon which he planted forty acres of corn, twelve acres of oats, and three acres of millet.¹³ 1884 was a productive year, as the agriculture census indicated that Vincent had four hundred bushels of corn on hand and thirty tons of prairie hay that he harvested. He needed that much feed for his livestock: five horses, twelve milk cows, ten head of cattle, and some hogs and poultry. He made approximately fifty dollars in 1884 selling eggs and poultry. One of the most astonish-

Non-population schedules sometimes called “agricultural schedules” can uncover a treasure trove of information about your ancestors’ farming practices.

ing facts was that the Umscheid family produced two hundred pounds of butter in 1884. With four children under the age of eight years and the work required to manage a farm, one can imagine every waking moment may have involved churning butter. Part of their farming income also included the sale of three-hundred dollars of horticultural products. This may be attributed to the farm's seventy-five apple and four pear trees.

The 1895 Kansas State census provides limited information on Vincent's farming operation.¹⁴ This may have resulted from information not being collected by the enumerator or the person providing the information did not have the details seen in previous reports. By 1895, Vincent was farming 310 acres. Of particular interest is that most of his land had barbed wire fences, replacing the stone, rail, and hedges found on his property just a few years before.

In 1905, Vincent, 54, owned five hundred (500) acres in Pottawatomie County, with all but twenty-five acres being cultivated.¹⁵ His farm was now valued at approximately five thousand dollars. Eight children were in the family, ranging in age from twenty-one to seven, and they certainly could help provide some of the needed labor to run the farm. The census indicates that Vincent may have shifted his farming practices, as he only planted sixty acres of corn, thirty acres of oats, ten acres of millet, and ten acres of alfalfa. Three hundred acres of his land were being used as pasture or meadows. With eight horses, ten milk cows, and twenty-seven head of other cattle, he may have used grazing as a means to reduce costs for his farming operations. He also was feeding forty hogs, which would have been labor-intensive. The family continued to churn but-

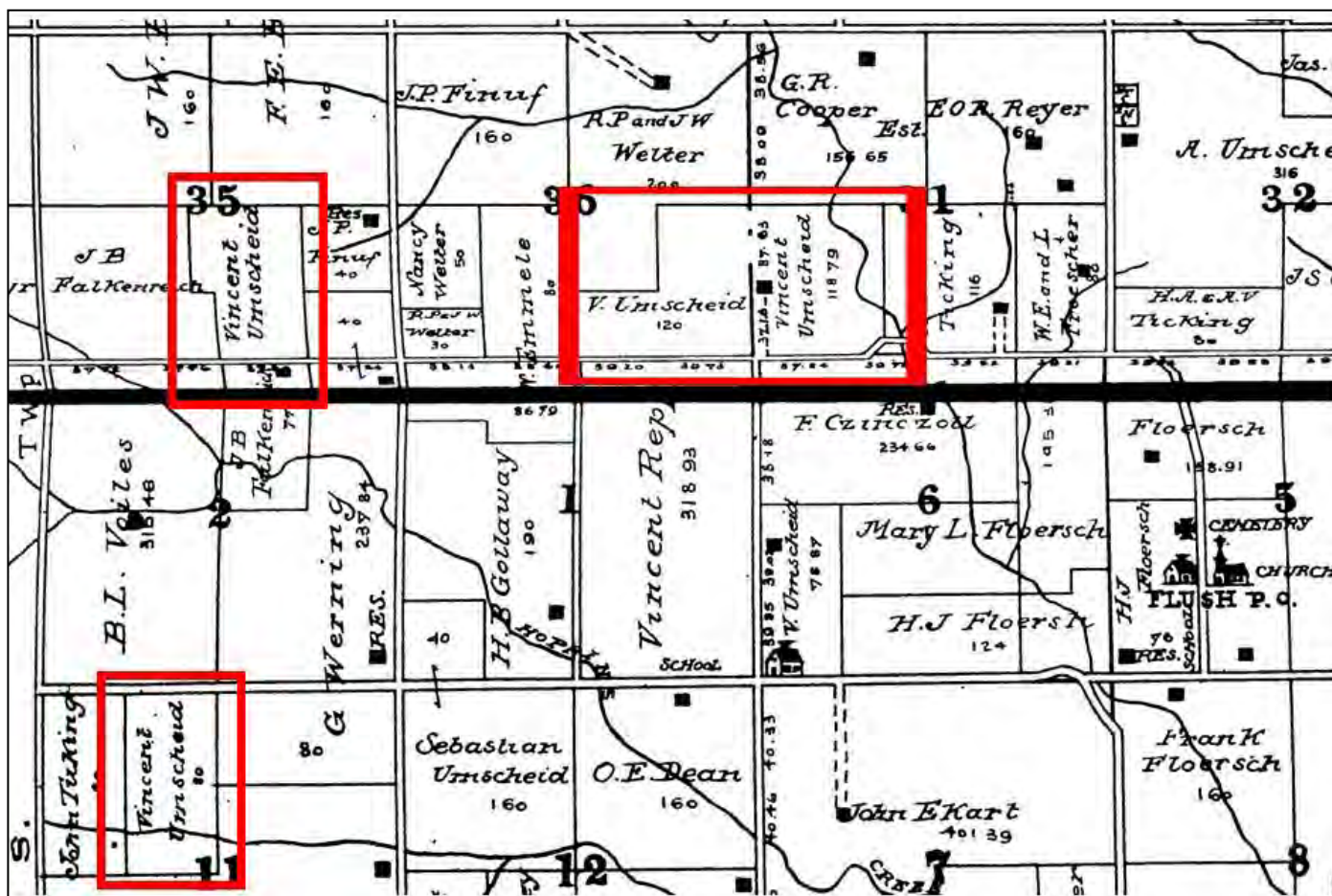
Continued on next page.

ter, producing one hundred fifty pounds in 1904. Poultry and egg sales of one hundred dollars also contributed to their income. In 1904, the family slaughtered or sold animals for slaughter valued at four hundred dollars. Vincent was clearly prospering as a farmer. In fact, a local newspaper noted that he was "...one of the largest landowners in the town-ship...".¹⁶

The 1910 US Census indicates that Vincent was still farming in Pottawatomie County, with Anna, two daughters, and three sons living in the home with him.¹⁷ He needed their help as he had a stroke in 1908 and was limited in what he could do on the farm afterward.¹⁸ He died on 27 November 1913 in Flush, Pottawatomie, Kansas. Through the agricultural censuses, his farming accomplishments provided insights into his diligence, work ethic, and family relationships. The evolution of his farming practic-

es is detailed in these records as to how he used his land and livestock to provide for his family.

Agricultural censuses or non-population schedules can provide the family historian with significant insight into the lives of our ancestors. While the schedules were intended to capture the farmers' agricultural productivity for state and Federal reporting requirements, they also provide an understanding of farming as an economic engine in the 19th and early 20th centuries. These records detail land, livestock, orchards, grasses, bees and honey, wine production, how many dogs the family owned, and much more. Crops like sorghum were grown to make molasses since cane sugar was rarely available for use as a sweetener. Grains like millet were grown to supplement dietary needs. Our farming ancestors were horticulturalists, arborists, vintners, butchers, and ac-



1905 Vincent Umscheid Property (highlighted in red). Source: 1905 County Atlas and Plat Book, Pottawatomie County, Kansas., p. 24. Digital Image available at: <http://wamego.advantage-preservation.com>. Accessed 26 January 2023 by John Manning.

complished agrarians. The records give us a glimpse into our ancestors' lives that we may not have seen before and should be used as a resource for successful rural family research.

By John Manning

Endnotes:

¹ "Louisiana, New Orleans Passenger Lists, 1820-1945," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/> : 17 January 2023); passenger manifest, Nuremberg, 23 March 1861, image 311 of 449; citing National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) microfilm publication M259, roll 50.

² J. E. Biehler, *One Hundred Years in Rock Creek Valley* (Manhattan, Kansas: Ag Press, Inc., 1985), page 21.

³ "Iowa, U.S., Select Marriages Index, 1758-1996," database, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/47609:60284> : accessed 17 January 2023), FHL Film Number 590422.

⁴ "Kansas, U.S., County Marriage Records, 1811-1911," database and images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/61371/>: accessed 17 January 2023), Film Number 001672625.

⁵ "Kansas, U.S., County Marriage Records, 1811-1911," database and images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/61371/>: accessed 17 January 2023), Film Number 001672625.

⁶ "1870 US Census, Pottawatomie," Pottawatomie, Kansas, Manhattan Post Office, page 13, dwelling 96, family 95, Viermmus Umshied [Vincent Umscheid] in the household of Christian Getz; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 19 January 2023) citing NARA microfilm publication T9, M593_441.

⁷ "Kansas County Marriages, 1855-1911," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/>: accessed 05 January 2023), Vincent Umscheid and Annie Riffel, 10 Jan 1875; citing Pottawatomie County, Kansas, United States, county courthouses, Kansas; Certificate Number: Page 147; image 687 of 749, FHL microfilm 004665196.

⁸ "Kansas State Census, 1875," Pottawatomie Township, Pottawatomie County, Kansas, p. 8, dwelling 55, family 54, household of Vincent Um-

scheid, digital image, *FamilySearch* (<http://www.familysearch.org>: accessed 19 January 2023) citing Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

⁹ "Kansas State Census, 1875," Pottawatomie Township, Pottawatomie County, Kansas, Agriculture Schedule 2, p. 33, line 31, Vincent Umschied [Umscheid], digital image, *FamilySearch* (<http://www.familysearch.org>: accessed 19 January 2023) citing Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

¹⁰ "1880 US Census," Pottawatomie, Pottawatomie, Kansas, Enumeration District (ED) 244, page 288A, dwelling 136, family 135, household of Vincen [Vincent] Umscheid; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 19 January 2023) citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 393, Record Group 29.

¹¹ "1880 US Census, Agriculture Schedule", Pottawatomie Township, Pottawatomie County, Kansas, Agriculture Schedule 2, p. 33, line 31, Vincent Umschied [Umscheid], digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 19 January 2023) citing Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka; T1130, roll 30; page 15; Line: 2.

¹² "1885 Kansas State Census," Pottawatomie, Pottawatomie, Kansas, page 15, dwelling 52, family 53, household of Vincent Umscheid; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 21 January 2023) citing Kansas State Historical Society; Topeka, Kansas; 1885 Kansas Territory Census; roll: KS1885_108; line 18..

¹³ "Kansas State Census, 1885," Pottawatomie Township, Pottawatomie County, Kansas, Agriculture Schedule 2, unknown page, line 11, Vincent Umscheid, digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 19 January 2023) citing Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

¹⁴ "1895 Kansas State Census," Pottawatomie Township, Pottawatomie County, Kansas, Agriculture Schedule 2, unknown page, line 23, Vincent Umscheid, digital image, *FamilySearch* (<http://www.familysearch.org>: accessed 01 January 2023) citing Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

¹⁵ "Kansas State Census, 1905," Pottawatomie Township, Pottawatomie County, Kansas, Agriculture Schedule 2, p. 29, line 1, Vincent Umscheid, digital image, *FamilySearch* (<http://www.familysearch.org>: accessed 23 January 2023) citing Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

Continued on page 25.

Tips on Preserving History

Starting with Your Family Heirlooms

Installment 2: Sharing your findings

Are you looking for ways to share family photos and other historical documents with your family, friends, and the broader community online? The Chapman Center for Rural Studies at Kansas State University is committed to preserving the stories and history of the Great Plains and would like to offer some strategies to get your unique stories “out there.”

1. Social Media & Hashtags (#) for your posts

Online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter offer the public a chance to engage in topics that interest them and share information around the world. Though this format can be overwhelming, it is perhaps the easiest way to share information with your extended family and friends. Presentation is vital not only for preservation but for searchability. If tagged correctly, your posts can reach untold amounts of people; they may even go viral. While a picture may be



Figure 1: A Facebook post containing hashtags

worth a thousand words, using hashtags to highlight people, places, things, and themes relevant to your post will allow the online search function to get new eyes on your family history. You may find that through the comments of others, your knowledge of a particular subject may grow exponentially! But how do you write a hashtag?

The first step is to find a word or phrase that is both easily recognizable and memorable. For example, two popular hashtags the Center uses are #SunflowerStamps for our historic postcard collection and #AutographedByKansas for our autograph book collection. Be sure to remove all spaces between words as the search function is extremely sensitive. Next, do a quick search to make sure your hashtag isn't too common. A unique hashtag will keep your post from getting buried by similar posts. For example, #cats will return hundreds of thousands of cat photos, so it may not be the best for sharing photos of the Katz family. #Katzfamily or #Kansaskatz would likely be more useful tags. Once you've found a hashtag you're happy with, start tagging by adding your hashtag to relevant posts. You can share your hashtag with your family and friends who can use it as well! Anyone who clicks on or searches for your hashtag will find all posts containing this hashtag. (See Figure 1 at bottom of previous page.)

2. How to “tag” family, friends, and other commentators (to get their attention)

Conversations online can get stressful if multiple folks comment on a post. “Tagging” the person you want to reply makes the process simpler. On any online platform, use the @ symbol and then type the handle (online name) of the commentor to create an alert that will be sent to the person you tagged. This allows you to have a discussion with a single partner rather than the entire comment section. If you have a family member or friend you would like to see a post, you can also use tags to get their attention. For example, if you post a photo of an ancestor and would like to get the Chapman Center's attention, tag us by using the @ symbol and beginning to type out our name in the comments section. Notice in Figure 2 how your platform will try to guess the handle, or the name, that you are trying to select by finding names that match among your contacts. (See Figure 2.)

It is important to make sure you tag the correct person using the right handle. Some folks choose to use their full name, a nickname, or other descriptors to identify online and they can change from website to website. For instance, on Facebook, the Chapman Center for Rural Studies' handle is @chapmancenter, but on Instagram our handle is @ksuchapmancenter. You can find the handle for any organization visible on the top of their page on Instagram or following facebook.com/ in the address bar. (See Figure 3 on next page.)

The more you type of someone's name or organization, the more likely it is to popu-

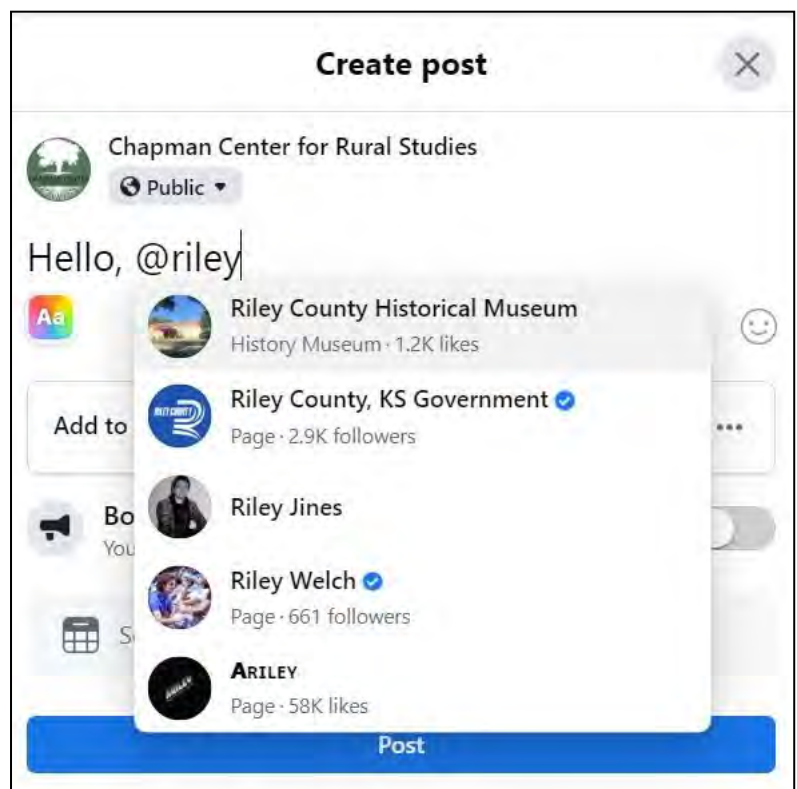
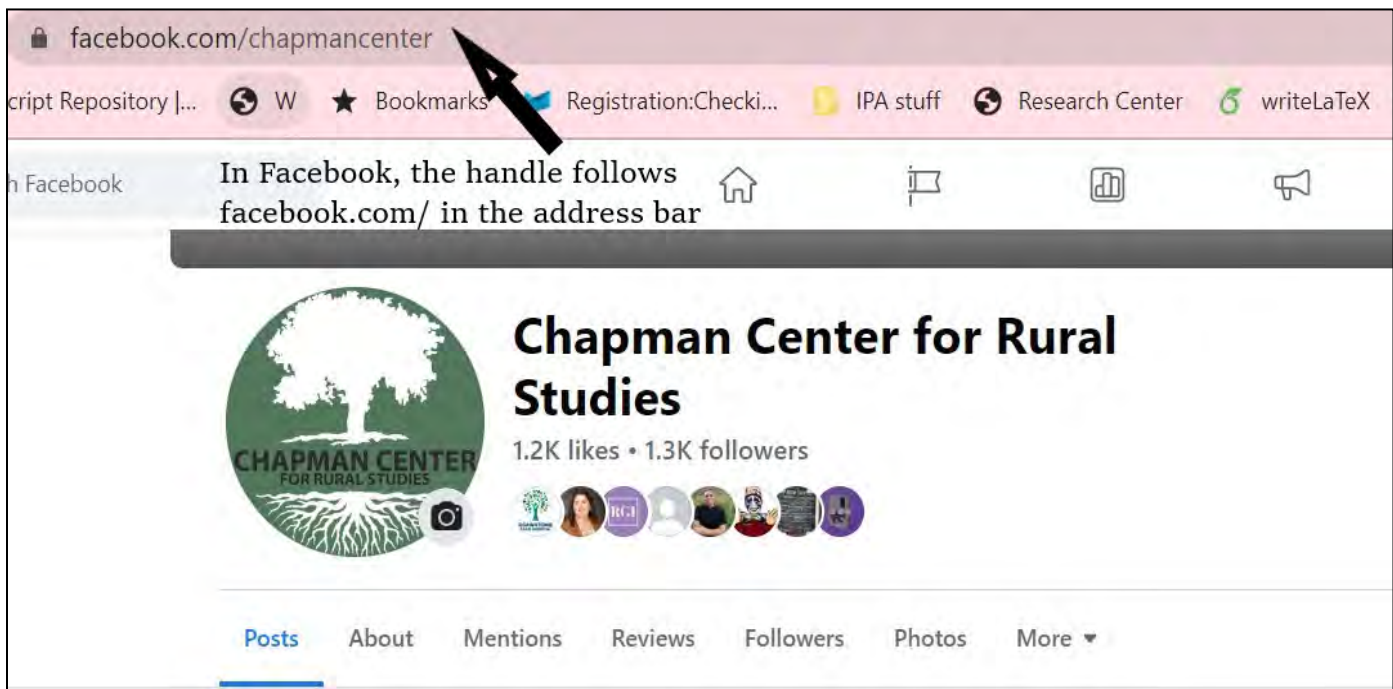


Figure 2: How to tag an organization on social media using the @ symbol (the “at” sign)

Sharing Your Findings on Social Media, continued



Example of Facebook Handles



Example of Instagram Handles

Figure 3: The location of handles, or user names, on Facebook and Instagram

late as the first name on the list to tag. Once the right person has been tagged, begin typing your comment.

After posting your comment, the Chapman Center should receive a notification that you have tagged them in a post or comment.

3. Local historical and genealogical societies

You may want to see if your local historical and genealogical societies have an online presence. If they do, you can tag them in posts relevant to their pages! This is a great way to get connected to other people who care about history and build a community dialogue. Tags can be added to images either during the upload process or at a later date if the website offers the ability to edit posts.



Example of an individual alerting the Chapman Center for Rural Studies about a story she thinks will be interesting to them.

While social media is always changing, we can count on hashtags and handles to connect and share on social media. Stay tuned for more tips and tricks! Check out our most recent projects at @chapmancenter on Facebook or @ksuchapmancenter on Instagram to learn more about us!

By Melanie Highsmith, Riley County Historical Society, and Chapman Center for Rural Studies.

This article is the second in the series on preserving your family heirlooms and history. The first article in the series is “Preserving Your Family Heirlooms,” by Dustin Vann and Melanie Highsmith and can be found in the November 2022 issue of *Kansas Kin*.

Endnotes, continued from page 21

¹⁶ "Flush Rural Route," *Kansas Agriculturalist* (Wamego, Kansas), 13 December 1906, p. 8, col. 4; digital image (<http://wamego.advantage-preservation.com>) : accessed 26 January 2023).

¹⁷ "1910 US Census," Pottawatomie, Pottawatomie, Kansas, Enumeration District (ED) 0122, page 6B, dwelling 100, family 102, household of Vincent

Umscheid; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>): accessed 19 January 2023) citing NARA microfilm publication T624_450.

¹⁸ "Flush," *Louisville (Kansas) Lyre*, 10 January 1908, p. 1, col. 4; digital image (<http://wamego.advantage-preservation.com>) : accessed 26 January 2023).

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Kansas Kin submission guidelines

We are pleased you are considering submitting an article to the Riley County Genealogical Society for possible publication. *Kansas Kin* focuses on articles ranging from useful genealogical strategies and sources, to interesting accounts of personal research, to family stories, to local histories as they relate to Kansas. We strive to bring your ancestors to life through their stories.

MANUSCRIPTS

500 to 2,000 words, including reference notes, is the suggested length of submissions. Submit your document in Word format via email. Topical headings are preferred for longer pieces. All manuscripts and references should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*. End notes are recommended, especially for books, articles, and websites.

IMAGES

Whenever possible, please provide images to accompany your submission. The image must be over 1MB in size, with good quality resolution. Please include a caption for each picture which includes a photo credit or source. All images must be sent as separate files. We prefer jpg format.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Please provide a few sentences about the author(s) to accompany the manuscript.

DEADLINES

Submissions are due the first of the month in April and October. Address submissions to the editor at KansasKin@rileycgs.com

All submissions to *Kansas Kin* are subject to review by the RCGS Editorial Board and revisions may be made, by the editor.

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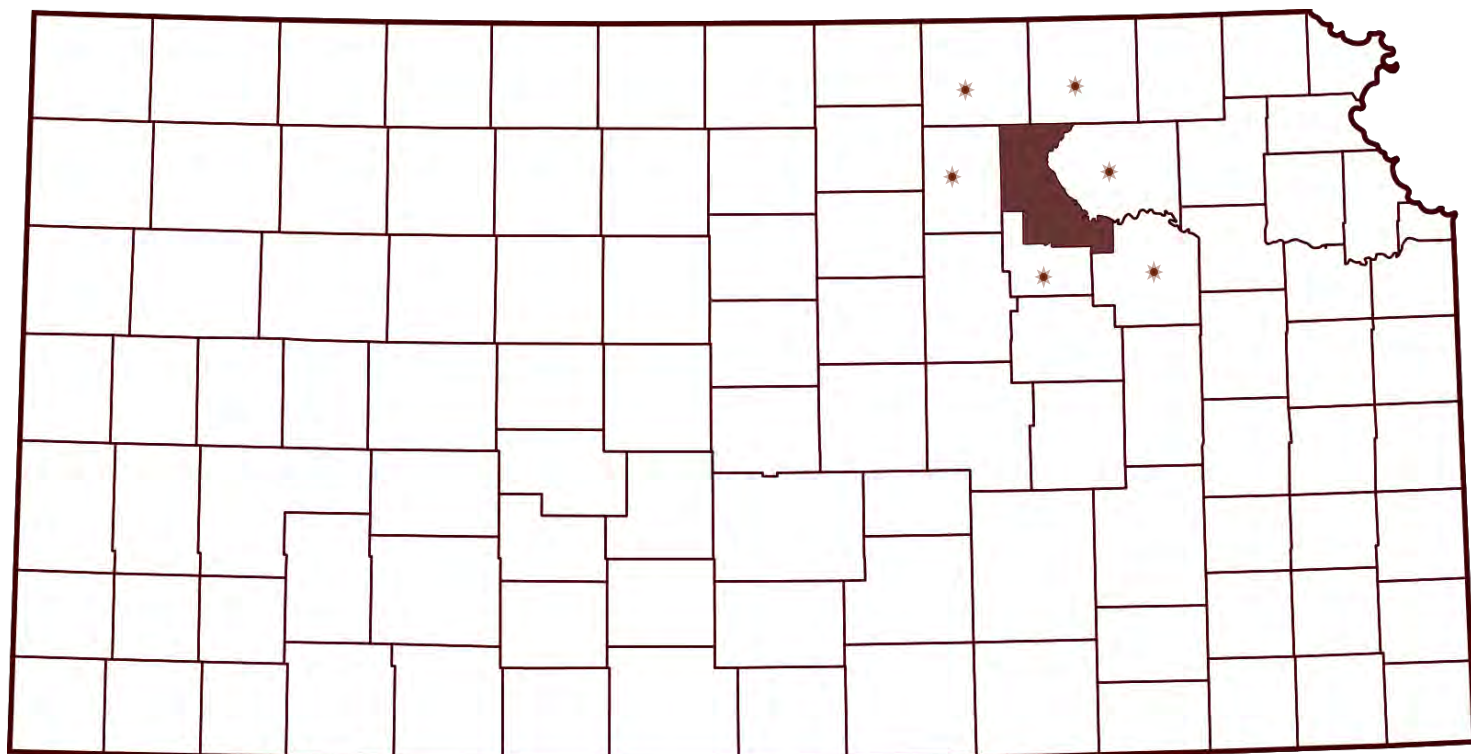




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Kansas Kin

A semi-annual publication of Riley County Genealogical Society
November 2023 Vol. 61, No. 2



Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kansas

Members brought church records
from Prussia
to The Russian Empire to Kansas



***Kansas Kin* is a semi-annual publication
of Riley County Genealogical Society**

2005 Claflin Road

Manhattan, Kansas 66502-3415

Phone: (785) 565-6495

RCGS Website: www.rileycgs.com

RCGS General Email: info@rileycgs.com

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***Kansas Kin* Mission Statement**

Collect, preserve and share information
for researching Kansas family histories.

A Message From the Editor

Dear Readers of *Kansas Kin*:

The feature article in this issue is dear to my heart. The Alexanderwohl Congregation is where I grew up — as did most of my ancestors back to the 1600's. We, as a congregation, have kept our church records of births, deaths, marriages, etc. intact over the generations.

"We" were unique in that we migrated as a congregation, not just a family or two at a time. And we carried our church records with us! This is a "gold mine" for genealogical research.

In this issue of *Kansas Kin*, we are also expanding our horizons to cultures beyond the mainstream. Holly Hill from Wichita tells the story of her family coming to Kansas from Laos.

Ron Wilson tells the story of Chief Standing Bear as it relates to us locally. His story is an important piece of our history as a nation: Chief Standing Bear was the first Native American Indian to be recognized as a legal citizen of the United States in a U.S. Court of Law.

As always, we are interested in your family



stories, your heirlooms, your view of the past. We think it is the stories that make your family tree come alive!

Judy Regehr, Editor

2023 RCGS Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 12, 2023 RCGS Annual Meeting. Manhattan Public Library Auditorium, 629 Poyntz, Manhattan, Kansas.

2:00 Annual Business Meeting: Election of Officers and Annual Reports

2:30 Program: "The Life of Mai DeKonza" presented by James R. Beck.

Heirlooms Don't Have to Be Old

Belying it's rather young age, my heirloom is a treasure because it is a reminder of a life's journey and a philosophy that was central to my father's life and therefore of mine and my siblings.

My father, Leo Smith, came from humble beginnings. An Iowa farm boy, his father Frank worked as a janitor and elevator operator at the county courthouse and his mother Catherine took care of the home and children. Neither had a high school education. My father, the eldest of four, would likely have settled in Iowa except for world events shortly after his high school graduation in May of 1941.

Opting for the U.S. Navy, dad was stationed in French Morocco where he and his fellow sailors ensured that critical communication equipment had a reliable power supply. Recognizing his aptitude working with electrical generators, dad's superior officer recommended him to the Naval Technical School. Following his discharge, dad worked briefly at a local Iowa appliance store before following his younger brother, Joe, to Denver, Colorado. There, dad and his brother began working for International Business Machines as janitors. Joe returned to Iowa but dad stayed on, progressing from janitor to timeclock repairman, typewriter repairman and eventually as a cardpunch and computer serviceman (these machines were more likely to go 'kachunk, kachunk' than 'beep'.)

My memories of dad in-

clude a man who during the work week wore the IBM uniform of a dark suit, tie, and dress shoes and carried his very heavy briefcase of tools. After work and on the weekend, he put his knowledge to work repairing any and everything around the house. During his 30+ years at IBM, dad had three possessions that were synonymous with his work: his toolkit briefcase now kept by his grandson, and two IBM THINK plaques. My brother has one THINK plaque and I have the other.

My THINK plaque evokes multitude thoughts: gratitude for my father's patience, awe for his journey from farm boy to computer technician and a reminder to THINK.

Sidenote: According to the National Museum of American History, the slogan THINK was developed by Thomas Watson when he was a sales manager for the National Cash Register Company. When Watson became the CEO of IBM in the 1920s, he instituted THINK as a reminder for employees to use their heads, not their feet. THINK became a ubiquitous slogan within IBM and appeared in their internal supplies, company magazine and even in their products (IBM ThinkPad).

Margaret Kline



Margaret Kline's IBM THINK Plaque from her father

The Remarkable Genealogical Story of Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kansas

By Rod Ratzlaff

Driving along Kansas Highway 15 one comes to a large, white church on the east side of the road 13 miles north from Newton. The church is hard to miss because of its very large size. Despite modern-day additions to the basic structure, it still retains a distinctive Dutch style that may seem out of place on the Kansas plains. This building has been the home to the Alexanderwohl Mennonite congregation for just short of 140 years now. Low German Mennonite¹ congregations and church buildings are plentiful in Marion, McPherson, and Harvey Counties, but this particular congregation holds an exceptional and unique place among an already distinctive religious community. The Alexanderwohl Mennonite congregation is steeped in extraordinary historic traditions and many in the community can easily trace their ancestry well back into the 17th century.

The Alexanderwohl group arrived in USA in the late summer of 1874.² These Mennonites held their worship services in immigrant houses until a church building was erected in 1886. The building was updated in the 1920s and further revisions were made in the 1960s, 1980s, and 2000s. Through all the revisions and additions, the building has retained something of its original architectural style which can be traced back many centuries right along with the congregation's adherents.³

Low German-speaking Anabaptists flourished in the Dutch lowlands by the early 16th century. Those following the leader named Menno Simons soon began to be called Mennists or Mennonites. These Anabaptists, or Mennonites, were at the time persecuted by Catholic overlords in the Dutch lowlands and even before the Dutch Revolt began (c1566) started looking for a new homeland where they could live and practice their religion in peace.

Royal Prussia, basically the lands on the west

side of the Vistula River south from Gdańsk (Danzig), were controlled by the Crown of Poland at that time. The Vistula River notoriously flooded its banks every spring, thwarting the Poles' attempts to transform the area into productive farmland. The Poles were close trading partners with the Dutch, and they also maintained a degree of religious liberty in their kingdom. The Low German Mennonites, eager to escape religious repression and at the same time commanding skills in draining swampy lowlands, eagerly took the opportunity to move into the Vistula River delta and valley. Already by the turn of the 17th century, fourteen Low German Mennonite congregations had been established along the lower 90 miles of the Vistula. The Mennonites controlled a great deal of the land in the floodplain and they busied themselves building dikes, dams, and canals, in an effort to transform the marshes into efficient farmland.

These Low German Mennonites did well for themselves along the banks of the Vistula River; their culture flourished there for over 200 years. Their innovative farming techniques, the industrious ways in which they tamed the Vistula floods, as well as laws and customs brought from their native Dutch lands, generally helped elevate them above the economic status of the ordinary Polish peasants. Their religious and legal beliefs, however, held them back, as did their refusal to intermingle with the locals.

They paid additional taxes in lieu of military service, they were prohibited from building church structures, at times they were stopped from buying additional farmland, and they were always in danger of being abused, extorted, or exploited by aggressive church or civic officials.

New opportunities came for these Mennonites by the late 18th century. Leaders in the neigh-

boring Russian Empire extended invitations for German colonists and soon a great many Low German Mennonites were on the migration trail, this time headed for the Russian Empire (now Ukraine). Large Mennonite colonies were established in Imperial Russia, in an area called New Russia, beginning in the very late 18th century.⁴ Further, the Napoleonic Wars of the early 19th century helped create very poor conditions in areas of the Vistula River valley. Mennonites who still lived there were eager to move away from the area.

After migration, it was the same story in New Russia as it had been along the Vistula: the industrious Mennonites did well for themselves but were separate from the native population. They established their own colonies, the largest of which was called Molotschna. They administered themselves, they had unique religious beliefs, and they clung to their Low German language, customs, and traditions which held them apart from the native Ukrainians in New Russia. The government began attempts to Russify these Low Germans, a course of action which for many Mennonites was unacceptable. Again, some looked

The Alexanderwohl Mennonite congregation is steeped in extraordinary historic traditions and many in the community can easily trace their ancestry well back into the 17th century.

for a new homeland and in 1874 large groups were on the move to North America. A great many of these settled in south central Kansas.

This is the basic historical template for Low German Mennonites coming to central North America from the Russian Empire in the last quarter of the 19th century. Specifically, this is the historical context upon which the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Congregation's history is built.

The mother congregation to Alexanderwohl was Przechówko. Przechówko was a congregation – one of fourteen – established by Low German Mennonites in the Vistula River valley in Polish-controlled Royal Prussia around the year 1600.⁵ Mennonite Przechówko congregants lived in their village for about 200 years and their lives fit the template given

Continued on next page



Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Molotschna Colony, Empire of Russia. Photo courtesy of Mennonite Archival Image Database ID NP011-03-09

What these centuries of continuity mean is that modern-day congregants at Alexanderwohl have a truly remarkable ancestral record, documented and right at their fingertips.

above. They persevered through flooding from the Vistula River and developed means to control those floods. Over the years, they flourished by implementing innovative agricultural techniques. They could have been more prosperous in their village if they had not been required to pay extra taxes, endure government extortions, or suffer through devastating wars and epidemics. Due to these hardships, adherents began moving abroad seeking new opportunities already by mid-18th century. The original congregation persisted until 1820-21 when the great majority followed the pattern outlined above, moving to the Molotschna Mennonite Colony in New Russia to establish the village of Alexanderwohl.⁶

Przechówko congregants picked up and moved to New Russia after Germans received invitations from the *tsars* to colonize the southern steppes and after their home area was devastated by the Napoleonic Wars. The group moved to the Molotschna Colony and founded the village of Alexanderwohl. The dry Ukrainian steppes were completely different to the marshy Prussian floodplains but now the group was free for a time from meddling church and civic officials, and they did indeed thrive. The good times were short-lived, however, and when the government began to adopt policies towards Russifying the Low German colonists, and required universal military service, the Alexanderwohl group decided once again to move. After living for little more than 50 years in the Russian Empire, the whole body picked up and moved, this time to Kansas, in 1874. Near Goessel, Kansas, they established a new community and congregation originally called *Neu Alexanderwohl*.

This group has been in Kansas since then. Their lives in Kansas have been fairly similar

to any number of immigrant communities of the Great Plains. The pioneers built the foundation for the successive generations. They suffered through tight times during the depression and the World Wars. Little by little they assimilated to American culture, giving up some of their own traditions. But a great number of them still live in the Marion-McPherson-Harvey County area and are still associated with the large, old, Alexanderwohl Church.

Although the history of the Alexanderwohl congregation generally follows the same template of other Low German Mennonite groups, there are several qualities which make Alexanderwohl unique. Most notable is the way this group can trace its roots back to its mother congregation in Polish Prussia – and it can do that not only through oral traditions or anecdotal histories, but also through written documentation. Low German Mennonite groups abound in south-central Kansas. Some congregations can roughly trace their roots back into the Russian Empire. Some families or small groups can even trace their roots beyond Imperial Russia, back into Polish Prussia. The Alexanderwohl congregation can easily trace its roots, as a cohesive body, back to Polish Prussia.

And this is where we get to the heart of the matter – the notion that this church is so unique. There are two particular aspects to the Przechówko-Alexanderwohl story that bear further explanation. The first is the Przechówko Church's unique proclivity towards spawning daughter congregations. The second is the Przechówko Church's documented history.

First, the Przechówko congregation along the Vistula River in Polish Prussia suffered specific hardships which prevented it from prospering. The group had large families from the very beginning but lived on generally poor farmland. Government policies made it very difficult for them to obtain new land.

Therefore, they quickly became overcrowded and needed to expand into outlying areas. When they were able to move into a new area,

they would form a new congregation in that new village. The Przechówko Church spawned daughter congregations again and again over the years and maintained ties with all of them. Further, the daughter congregations maintained ties with one another. And what's more, the daughter congregations even spawned further daughter congregations. At the same time, the main church – Przechówko – left from Polish Prussia in a few large groups in 1820-21 and moved to form Alexanderwohl in New Russia. And then again, the Alexanderwohl group left *en masse* in 1874 and moved to Kansas to form *Neu Alexanderwohl*. Even in Kansas, *Neu Alexanderwohl* has continued to spawn daughter congregations.⁷ This sequence of spawning daughter congregations is almost completely unique among Low German Mennonite communities, but it means that people at Alexanderwohl can easily trace their ancestry back to the Przechówko Church. And in this case, they can do that through written documentation.

The Partitions of Poland (1772-95) handed control of Royal Prussia from Poland over to the Kingdom of Prussia. As a result, the new Prussian administration directed the Low German Mennonite congregations to compile their record books primarily for taxation purposes. All fourteen congregations presumably did so but only three of those records books have come down to us in the modern day. The history of the Przechówko congregation is one of those. The original compiler went to each of the church families and document-

ed their histories back to the earliest days. When the Przechówko congregation moved to New Russia in 1820-21, this record book came with them and the congregants continued it as the Alexanderwohl record. When the group left Imperial Russia, they again took this record book to North America – one of only a couple Mennonite record books to leave Russia. The group in Kansas, post-1874, has continued the record to this very day. Thus, we have an unbroken chain of records stretching back to the earliest days at Przechówko. With the Przechówko-Alexanderwohl church records, we have an account of the congregation bridging three different countries and two migrations, extending now over 400 years, right back into the 17th century.

What these centuries of continuity mean is that modern-day congregants at Alexanderwohl have a remarkable ancestral record, documented and right at their fingertips. The ability to trace ancestry is also aided by the group's historically endogamous and isolated nature. Surnames common to the Przechówko Church in, say, 1660 are very similar to those found in Alexanderwohl in the Moltoschna in 1860, which again are very similar to those found in Alexanderwohl by

Goessel in 1960. One congregant at modern-day Alexanderwohl could easily trace his/her ancestors back to the same ancestors as his/her fellow congregants. As of the late 1980s, more than 85% of the congregation could still trace its roots right back to the original group at Przechówko in the 17th century.



Przechówko Village Cemetery, original cemetery of the precursor of Alexanderwohl Church in Poland, recently rediscovered and being restored by a group of Polish, Dutch, and American historians. Photos via Facebook Pamięć Przechówka (<https://www.facebook.com/przechowkomemory>) accessed 27 September 2023.

Cont. next page

ry.⁸ Truly the church's history is an astonishing tale.

If you're driving through Marion County and you come to the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, you can stop and read the Kansas Historical Marker located outside the building. You can wander around the structure and pick out architectural clues that may be Dutch in nature. You can go back to the *Friedhof* and see gravestones that date back to the 19th century. All the while, keep in mind that the congregation housed in the church building is exceptional among Mennonite groups for its remarkably well-documented history as well as for its amazing longevity.

Endnotes: Story of Alexanderwohl

¹ Low German Mennonites have alternately been called Dutch Mennonites, Prussian Mennonites, or Vistula Mennonites. The term "Low German" is a reference to the unique language spoken by the group. These Mennonites are also sometimes called Russian Mennonites, but this term seems extremely inadequate given the Alexanderwohl group's short-lived stay in the Empire of Russia. These terms contrast with High German or Swiss Mennonites, both of which can be found in central Kansas.

² This large group left Europe aboard two ships: the S.S. Cimbria carrying 597 Mennonites, and the S.S. Teutonia carrying 992 Mennonites. Some from the Teutonia settled near Inman, KS, to establish the Hoffnungsau congregation. Not all 1,589 Mennonites aboard these ships were from Alexanderwohl Village. Rather, many were from neighboring Molotschna villages.

³ The original interior of the church bore a striking resemblance to the Singel Mennonite Church in Amsterdam, NL.

⁴ New Russia included areas that came under the control of the Empire of Russia in the second half of the 18th century. Today, most of these areas are located in Ukraine. Additional small Mennonite colonies were established in other areas of Imperial Russia.

⁵ The village was located outside the town of Świecie, 70 miles due south from Gdańsk.

⁶ Low German Mennonites established several large colonies in New Russia. The village of Alexanderwohl was located in the largest colony, the Molotschna, and was named after Tsar Alexander I. The Przechówko people in 1821 also established the Molotschna village of Franzthal.

⁷ Przechówko spawned daughter congregations such as Jeziorki, Deutsch Wymyśle, Brenkenhofswalde, and Karolswalde. Alexanderwohl, the successor to Przechówko, has spawned daughter congregations such as Hoffnungsau, Tabor, Goessel, and Lehigh.

⁸ Author's personal research via Alexanderwohl churchbooks and GRandMA OnLine Website (<https://grandmaOnline.org>): GMOL v7.4-40.

Postscript: Story of Alexanderwohl

The cemetery at Przechówko in Poland (~53° 23'26.1"N 18°23'17.2"E) has long stood abandoned. For years, descendants in North America believed the cemetery had been destroyed or no longer existed. However, through the work of an international partnership involving Polish, Dutch, and American sponsors, the cemetery is now being restored. It lies in a heavily wooded spot where it was forgotten for decades and thus its maintenance was neglected. That neglect was a blessing, however, since the trees and undergrowth hid the grave markers from vandalism or other destruction.

More than 400 individuals were interred in the Przechówko Village cemetery, most of them Mennonites related to present-day Alexanderwohl congregants. Today, the cemetery is revealing its secrets as the grave markers are uncovered beneath the dense foliage. Another claim toward historical uniqueness will soon be staked by Przechówko Village. The cemetery now appears to be among the very oldest surviving Christian cemeteries in the entire country of Poland. Simply put, the Przechówko Village cemetery appears to be home to more 18th and even 17th century grave markers than any other Christian cemetery in the whole of Poland.



Gravestone, newly uncovered in Przechowko Village Cemetery Poland. Ancke Sparling died in 1782. Inscription: ANNO 1782 DEN 7, IANNVARI IST HANS VNRAV SEINE FRAV ANCKE SPARLIG GESTORBEN VND SIE LIEH GEFAL HIR BEGRABEN VND SIE IST ALT GEWESEN 56 IAHR 9 MONT 8 TAHGE. Photo via Facebook Pamięć Przechówka (<https://www.facebook.com/przechowkomemory>) accessed 27/9/23

From the Homeland to the Heartland: The Kayarath Family and Wichita's Lao Diaspora

By Holly Hill



Holly Hill and her mother at the Wichita temple in 2014. We were attending dak bat.

Growing up, I always knew my mother was from Laos. This was something that made me different in my predominantly white neighborhood, a difference I was keenly aware of as a child—sometimes embarrassed by, sometimes proud of. But what I didn't understand was that my mother was not merely an immigrant who came here by choice—she was a refugee of the Vietnam War. I remember I was in the second grade when she told me, in a hushed voice like she was telling me an important secret, that she came here because “someone wanted to kill her family.” As a seven-year-old, I didn't really know anything about the war yet, so the significance of her words didn't hit me until over a decade later.

I learned about the Vietnam War in school as I got older, but Laos was mostly left out of the conversation. We briefly touched on the Viet Cong in Vietnam and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. Outside of class, people also sometimes knew of the Hmong of northern Laos, who aided the US in its Secret War. But, without fail, I've always had to explain that Laos was also part of this conflict, embroiled in a civil war and fighting its own brand of communists: the Pathet Lao.

My mother, Nith Hill (nee Phitsamay Kayarath) was born in Pakse, Laos in 1968, right in the middle of the War. The years bracketing her birth saw 2 million tons of or-

Continued on next page

dinance dropped on Laos in the United States's bombing campaign. Pakse, quieter during the war than many other cities, was a colonial town on the southwestern border with Thailand, near the intersection of the mighty Mekong River and Xe Don River.

My family's refugee story began in 1974 as the war came to a close and communist victory was imminent. My grandfather Bounlop, a soldier in the Royal Lao Army who had fought against the communist Pathet Lao, had fled the country in fear for his life. He left without his pregnant wife and two children (one of whom was my 7-year-old mother). It wasn't until I learned this story as a teenager that I realized, besides being the kindest woman I've ever known, my grandmother was also the bravest. In response to my grandfather's flight, she bundled her two small children onto their boat. With nothing but the clothes on their backs, she crossed the Mekong to Thai-

land. When asked by soldiers her business, she simply told them they were "visiting family."

In Thailand's Ubon Refugee Camp, my family was finally reunited. There, they waited for 5 years to be sponsored to come to the United States. Finally, in late 1979, they boarded a plane, although it wasn't a direct flight to the US. They stopped first in Paris and were put up in a hotel room. Looking out the window of the bathroom, my 11-year-old mother saw snow for the first time and declared it the most beautiful thing she'd ever seen. Their last destination was Buffalo, New York, so she saw a lot more snow after Paris—and she still loves to watch it fall.

Though this experience of escaping, living in refugee camps, and finally coming to the United States was harrowing, it was nevertheless a common story among Lao refugees. When my family entered the country, they came along-



My grandmother in her garden, which she is extremely proud of. When I took this picture, she asked me to show all of my friends.

...what I didn't understand was that my mother was not merely an immigrant who came here by choice—she was a refugee of the Vietnam War.

side the other 360,000 Southeast Asian refugees from Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia arriving in the five years after Saigon's fall. Another 590,000 came between 1980 and 1990.

This tends to be where the typical refugee tale ends. They have made it to the United States, and their stories are forever frozen in those worst moments of their lives. However, this was only the beginning. Once here, they began creating their own communities. Though the most well-known communities exist on the West Coast, the largest being Sacramento, countless overlooked cities in the Midwest are also home to sizable populations. This includes Kansas, which began as a popular destination for refugees due to the meatpacking plants out in the western part of the state.

My family eventually ended up in Wichita, Kansas, in 1988, after living briefly in cities such as Buffalo, Sacramento, and Chico. Like many other refugees, my family sought work, and they found it in Wichita's booming aircraft industry. Working in these factories is how my parents met: my father, a native white Wichitan, worked with my Uncle Phet and was eventually introduced to my mother. They worked at Boeing together, and later Spirit AeroSystems.

Southeast Asians were not the first Asians to live in Wichita; by 1880, there were already a small number of Chinese. Nearly one hundred years later, the newly-arrived Southeast Asian refugees mostly lived in South Wichita, in the low-income Oaklawn-Sunview community, which is home to many other ethnic minorities. The Wichita community was booming, and by 1990, Southeast Asians were one of Wichita's largest ethnic minorities. Roughly 500 were Lao.

My family bounced around the neighborhood for a few years until finding their current



My grandfather's identification card from Laos.

home – it was pink, with 3 bedrooms and 1 bathroom for my 6-person family. My grandparents continue living there today, though it is no longer pink. From the front, it is a small, unassuming house, but the backyard holds a magical secret: my grandmother's garden, filled with produce usually grown only on the other side of the world. Back then, there weren't as many Asian markets as today, so this was a crucial resource to feed the family. Now, there are plenty of markets, but her garden remains our family's most reliable resource for important produce such as Thai chilis, Asian mint, and long beans.

My family's fellow displaced Lao people sought to practice their faith with others, as they had back home. In 1988, the Lao Buddhist Associates of Kansas was officially founded. However, for the first couple decades of its existence, there was no physical temple, forcing members to meet in various locations such as homes and once a barn! It was not until 2003 that the group were finally able to open a permanent temple. The temple's current home is out on Greenwich Road, and the journey is a long one to the middle of nowhere, with green fields and open expanses until the brightly colored Asian architecture suddenly pops up.

An important event at the temple, which I have participated in throughout my childhood, is *dak bat*. *Dak bat* is the traditional alms-giving ceremony where community members give monks their allotment of cooked sticky

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The front entrance of the Wichita temple.

rice. Here in the United States, it is no longer possible for this to happen daily. Instead, it has been adapted to fit American life, happening on Sundays not unlike Christian churches. To nearly 500 Lao families in south-central Kansas, the temple is the spiritual heart of their community, since it cannot be the physical one. My family is included in this, though we were never able to go as often as we'd have liked—especially my grandma, who loves to go

with us. Instead, my mother's religious devotion shows itself in our home. We have two shrines to Buddha, reverently maintained by my mother, who keeps the statues fed and watered. Every Buddhist holiday on our calendar is carefully observed.

Nevertheless, the temple is still at the heart of so many of my core memories: I can still remember my cousin Samantha competing in Miss Lao New Year. I can still taste the sugar-

cane juice my mom would buy in giant soup cups, not as sickly sweet as you'd expect from pure sugar, but earthy and fresh. I can smell the rich, pungent food my mom's best friend would cook up in her vendor's booth, such as meatballs, sausages, and soup—plus the fried banana I would receive for being good (and still receive to this day).

These experiences with the temple and the Lao community came alongside my life in the white suburbs, surrounded by “American” culture that occasionally dismays my more traditional mother. Though now as an adult I am proud of my family history, how does the balancing act work, when the scales are tipped so heavily in favor of my white heritage? How do I make sense of who I am and the rich Lao cultural heritage I belong to? My answer: I'm a history student. Studying history helps me understand why and how I am here now, and I want to tell other people as well. It's been nearly 50 years since Southeast Asians first came to the United States, and the number of first-generation refugees is declining. Preserving these memories is important—not just to me personally, but to understanding Kansas's rich multicultural history.

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Khamphou (monk) in discussion with the author, 2020.

In Memoriam: Jim Olson

Jim Olson was born in Clay Center in 1949. He was a computer programmer at Kansas State University. Earlier, he owned and operated the *Riley Countian* newspaper and worked at the *K-State Collegian*. He also served on the Leonardville City Council, Leonardville Library Board and U.S.D. 378 Riley County School Board. (Information from Anderes-Pfeifley obituary, Riley, Kansas)

Jim will be remembered for his love of local history. He served on the Board of the Riley County Historical Society and recently became a member of the Riley County Genealogical Society.

In Memoriam: Jim Bradley

Jim Bradley (James Elwood) was born in 1935 in Goltry, Oklahoma. Jim served 20 years in the United States Air Force, retiring with the rank of Lt. Colonel. After retiring, he worked at the Boeing Aircraft Company in Wichita. After 15 years with Boeing, Jim joined his wife Marian on the Kansas farm near Westmoreland where she grew up. They did extensive genealogy work together. Jim was active in the Rock Creek Valley Historical Society. (Information from Campanella & Stewart Funeral Home obituary, Wamego, Kansas.)

Jim was President of the Riley County Genealogical Society from 2007 to 2009.

Journey for Justice: Chief Standing Bear and Riley County

By Ron Wilson, Huck Boyd Institute for Rural
Development, Kansas State University

What are the most significant U.S. legal civil rights cases of all time? *Brown v. Board of Education*? The Dred Scott decision? Add another to the list: A case involving a Native American Indian chief named Standing Bear, who once camped here in Riley County.

Standing Bear was born into the Ponca tribe in northeast Nebraska in approximately 1829. The Poncas were an agricultural society, producing maize (corn), squash, and beans. Their territory was pressured by settlement from the east and the Brule Sioux tribe to the west. In 1868, the U.S. Government mistakenly included the Ponca territory in the boundaries of the Great Sioux Reservation. There were lots of conflicts.

In 1876, the government offered to relocate the Poncas to northeast Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) if they agreed. Standing Bear and other tribal leaders made the trip to view the

proposed new tribal land, but found it undesirable compared to their fertile Nebraska farmland to the north. The chiefs expressed their preference to remain in their villages in Nebraska. Their request was denied by the local Indian agent who proceeded to implement a forced relocation of the Poncas to Indian territory.

On May 16,

1877, a forced march of the Poncas began. It became a Ponca trail of tears. Standing Bear's daughter Prairie Flower died in Nebraska, and several others died along the way.

Their route took them south across eastern Nebraska and eastern Kansas to the Quapaw Indian Agency near Baxter Springs and then into Oklahoma. The daily travel was documented by the accompanying Indian agent, Mr. E. A. Howard. His daily journal, which was included in the U.S. Department of the Interior official report, chronicles their travels. As reported by Agent Howard, the tribe procured supplies at Marysville and Blue Rapids. The tribe's subsequent travel through Riley County was described as follows:

June 21 - Broke camp at six o'clock, marched 12 miles and went into camp at Fancy Creek.

June 22 - Broke camp at seven o'clock, marched 15 miles and went into camp at a fine spring about eight miles from Manhattan.

June 23 - Broke camp at six o'clock. Marched 11 miles and went into camp three miles southeast of Manhattan. Purchased supplies and got general repairing done at Manhattan. Secured the services of a physician to visit the camp and prescribe for the sick.

June 24 - The forenoon was exhausted in getting repairs, settling bills and having a physician attend to the sick. Broke camp at one o'clock. Marched six miles and went into camp on Deep Creek."

The tribe proceeded south and east from there. The local newspaper at the time, the *Manhattan Nationalist*, reported on the passage by the Poncas as well. Here is an excerpt:

"The remnant of the Ponca Tribe of Indians passed through here Saturday last and camped across the Kansas (River) near E. Colburn's.....One thing we saw which surprised us



greatly: An Indian mother giving her three-year old a Sunday morning bath in a wash tub. A regular scrubbing and the little lad kicked and screamed just like a white young one. He came to the front door of the tent a few moments after in a clean calico slip, with eyes shining like beads; we thought he deserved some sugar plums, gave him some and received the brightest of Indian smiles as thanks.”

(Thanks to the staff at the Riley County Genealogical Society, E. Colburn was identified as Everett Colburn, a farmer who lived south of Manhattan. A search of an 1884 plat map shows E. Colburn’s property at the approximate location of the intersection of Deep Creek Road and Highway 177 today. While the Poncas’ exact campsite cannot be determined, it must have been in this vicinity.)

The Poncas proceeded to travel south to their final destination, arriving too late in the season to plant corn. Promised government supplies were late or arrived spoiled. Illness and malnutrition were rampant. Ultimately, a third of the tribe would perish.

In December 1878, Chief Standing Bear’s 16 year old son Bear Shield died of malaria. His dying wish was to be buried in the homeland of his ancestors back in Nebraska. In January of 1879, Chief Standing Bear and a small party



Chief Standing Bear in Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol, Washington, D.C. (Photo from Wikipedia)

of Poncas began the trip back north with his son’s remains. In Nebraska, they joined their friends of the Omaha tribe.

Having left the reservation without permission, the Poncas were apprehended by the Army and imprisoned at Fort Omaha. But Brigadier General George Crook was sympathetic to Standing Bear’s situation. He contacted a newspaperman who got in touch with two attorneys who agreed to represent Chief Standing Bear in court.

On May 1, 1879, the trial began. After the lawyers presented the legal arguments, the judge announced that one additional speaker had requested permission to address the court. Chief Standing Bear rose to speak, in his flannel

leggings and deerskin moccasins, bear claw necklace, and an eagle feather in his braided hair wrapped in otter fur. He extended a hand and, through an interpreter, spoke these words to the judge: *“My hand is not the color of yours, but if I pierce it, I shall feel pain. If you pierce your hand, you also feel pain. The blood that will flow from mine will be the same color as yours. I am a man. The same God made us both.”*

Ultimately the judge found in favor of Chief Standing Bear. It was the first time that a Native American Indian was recognized to have

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It was the first time that a Native American Indian was recognized to have legal standing in a U.S. court of law.

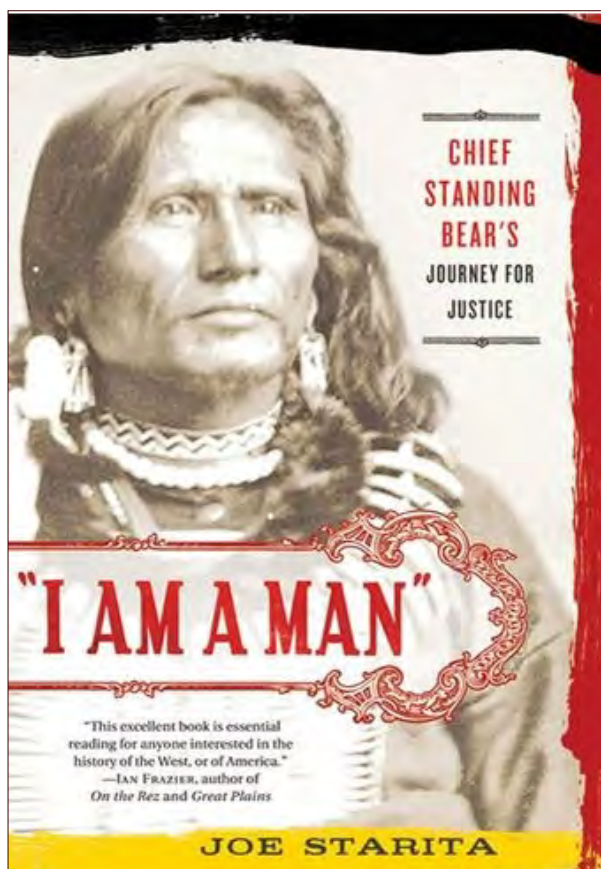
legal standing in a U.S. court of law. Chief Standing Bear and the Poncas were released. They made their home in Nebraska where Bear Shield was buried.

Legal scholars state that this was a landmark civil rights case, even on a par with *Brown v. Board of Education*. In 2019, a statue of Chief Standing Bear was placed to represent Nebraska in Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol at Washington DC. In 2022, Nebraska renamed one of its state office buildings as the Chief Standing Bear Justice Administration Building. In 2023, Lincoln, Nebraska honored Chief Standing Bear by opening Standing Bear High School. The United States Postal Service

issued a postage stamp honoring Chief Standing Bear for his role in civil rights and American history.

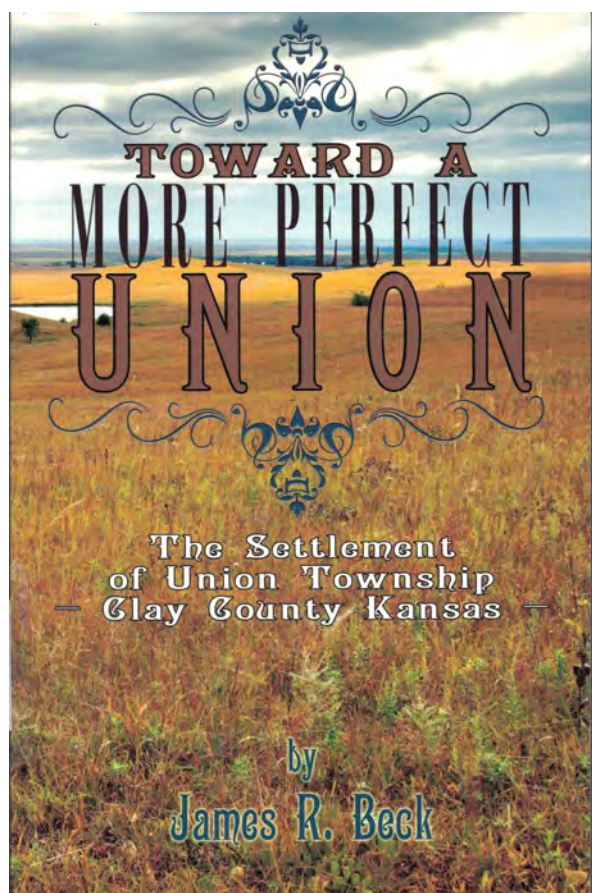
Because of Chief Standing Bear's brief presence in Riley County, there has been interest in honoring him with a privately-funded marker or informational signage, perhaps at the scenic overlook along Highway 177 near where the Poncas camped. Donations to support the project are being gathered by the Polly Ogden Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. To contribute, send checks payable to "Polly Ogden Chapter DAR" with "Chief Standing Bear marker" in the memo line to Polly Ogden treasurer Carol Regehr at 1001 Colorado St, Manhattan, KS 66502. A tax deductible receipt will be sent after the first of the year.

On September 6, 1908, it was reported that Chief Standing Bear had passed away. After 78 years and a trailblazing role in history, Chief Standing Bear's inspiring journey for justice had come to an end – but his legacy lives on.



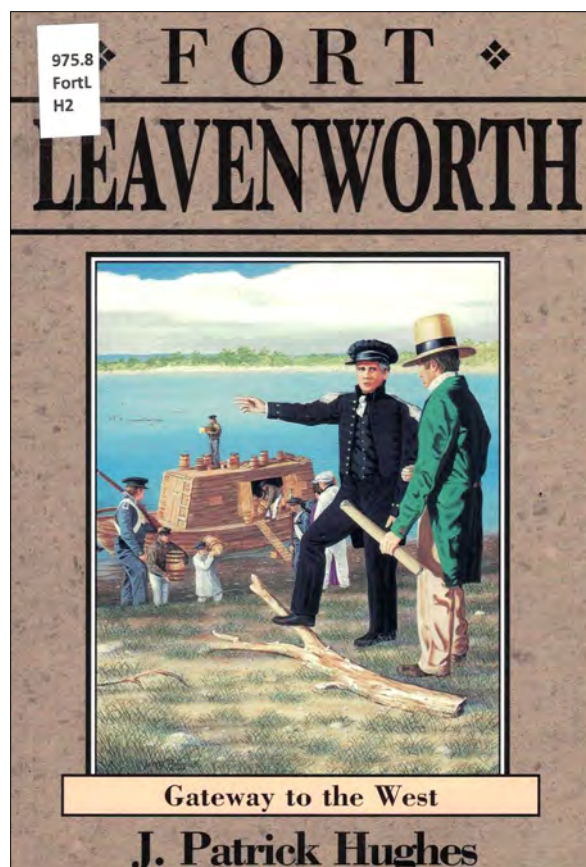
New Books at the Research Library

By Virginia Beddow and Theresa Wilson



Toward a More Perfect Union: The Settlement of Union Township, Clay County, Kansas. James R. Beck. Newton, Kansas: The Mennonite Press. 2012.

In 1854 all of Union Township, Clay County, Kansas was part of the Public Domain. By 1894, every parcel had moved from the government into private ownership. Beck's book explores how a group of 155 settlers obtained their land, examining how the settlers met the various federal programs for ownership. Reading this book will provide a picture for researchers of how their ancestors may have settled their land. 291 pages with illustrations, a list of settler families, endnotes, and an index.

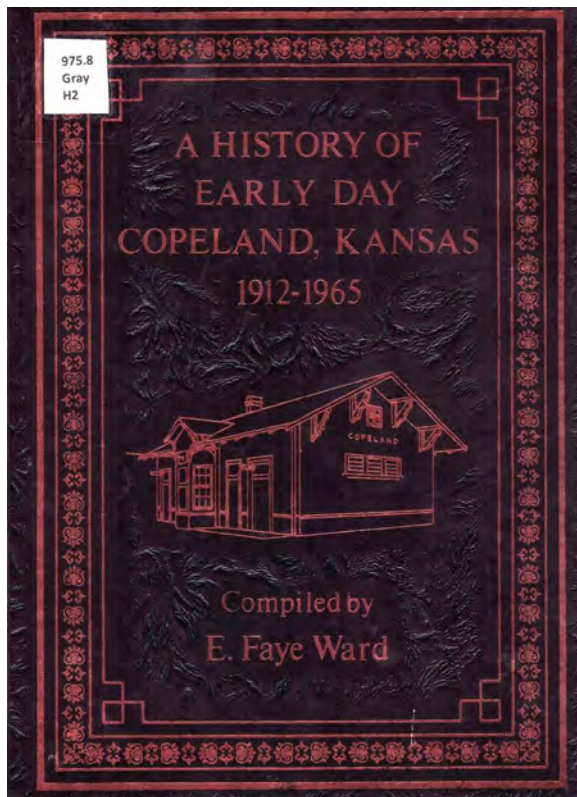


Fort Leavenworth: Gateway to the West. J. Patrick Hughes. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society. 2000.

Fort Leavenworth was built in 1827 on the Missouri River as a frontier post to protect immigrant Indian tribes and white traders. It played critical roles during the Mexican and Civil Wars and early expansion of the West. Today it is home to the prestigious U. S. Army Command and General Staff College. 122 pages with photographs.

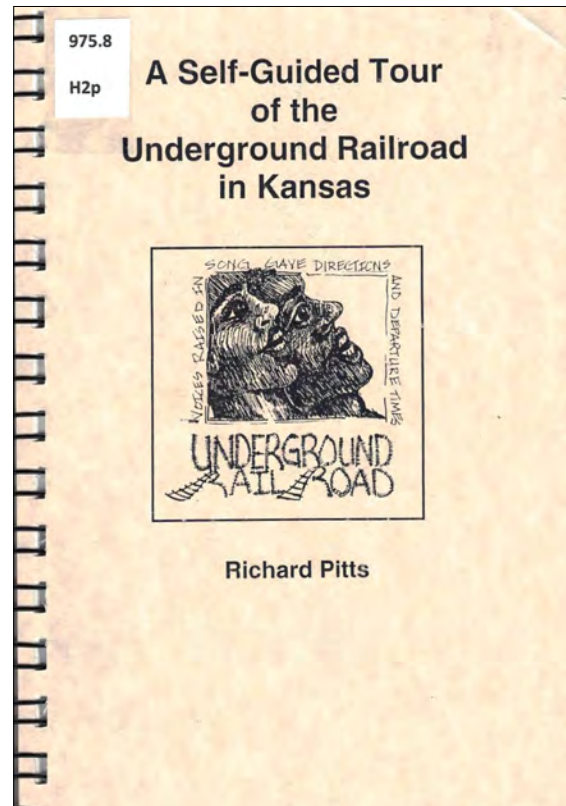
Visit the RCGS Research Library

2005 Claflin Road, Manhattan, Kansas



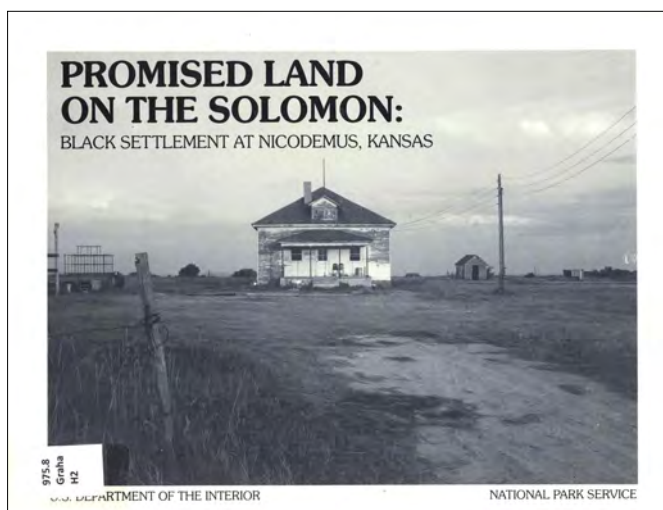
A History of Early Day Copeland, Kansas: 1912-1965. Compiled by E. Faye Ward. Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company. 1977.

This book, printed posthumously, is a compilation of many years of research by Ward. It includes articles written by Ward, articles written by others for the newspaper, photographs with captions, and family histories within its 147 pages.



A Self-Guided Tour of the Underground Railroad in Kansas. Richard Pitts. 2003.

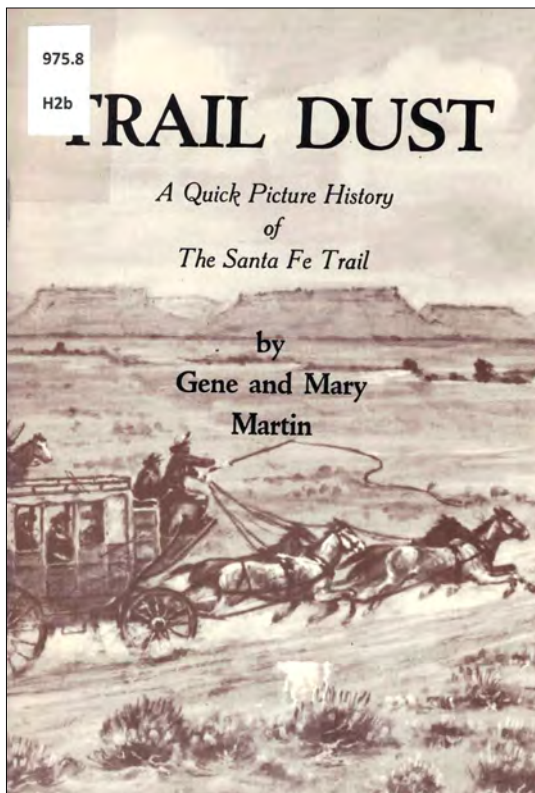
This book was designed by Pitts to shed light on the ethnically diverse individuals who did extraordinary things. The tour covers a section of the complete Underground Railroad in Kansas. Pitts begins the trip outside Manhattan on highway K-18 East. He describes places and tells the stories of the people. 64 pages include photographs.



Promised Land on the Solomon: Black Settlement at Nicodemus, Kansas. National

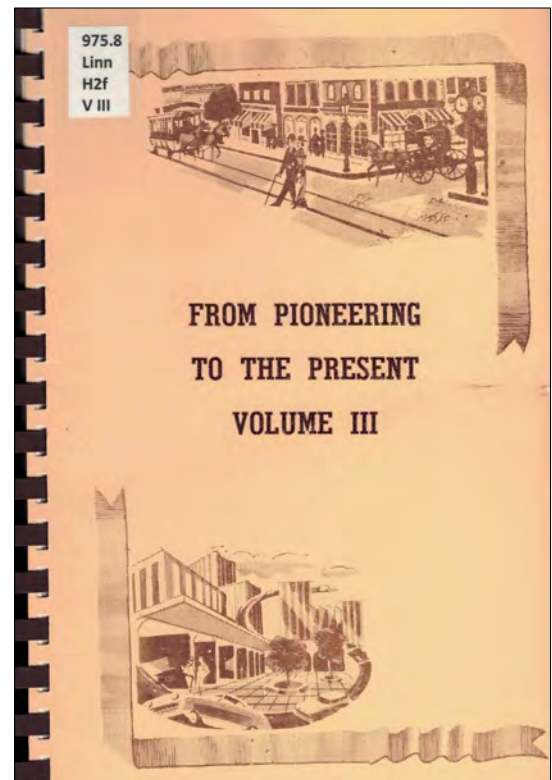
Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, Rocky Mountain Region.

In September 1877, 350 weary black emigrants, recruited from Lexington, Kentucky, arrived at a preselected destination in northwestern Kansas—a treeless stretch along the Solomon River. Immediately 60 disheartened families returned eastward in search of more familiar surroundings and better economic prospects. The rest of the families stayed to establish Nicodemus, Kansas, the oldest and most famous black town in the Middle West. Many black and white photographs illustrate the book. An appendix of 25 site plans is included.



Trail Dust: A Quick Picture History of the Santa Fe Trail, Sixth Edition. Gene and Mary Martin. Boulder: Johnson Publishing Company. 1972.

A 15-page timeline provides an overview of the history of the trail. Fifty-seven pages of maps, illustrations, and photographs.



From Pioneering to the Present, Volume III: A Collection of Newspaper Articles From the Scrapbooks of Hannah Worden Wickhame. Pleasanton, Kansas: Linn County Historical Society. 1982.

For 63 years Mrs. Hannah Wickham prepared twelve to fifteen scrapbooks of articles from the Mound City newspapers. She prepared them carefully by themes: marriages, deaths public schools, etc.

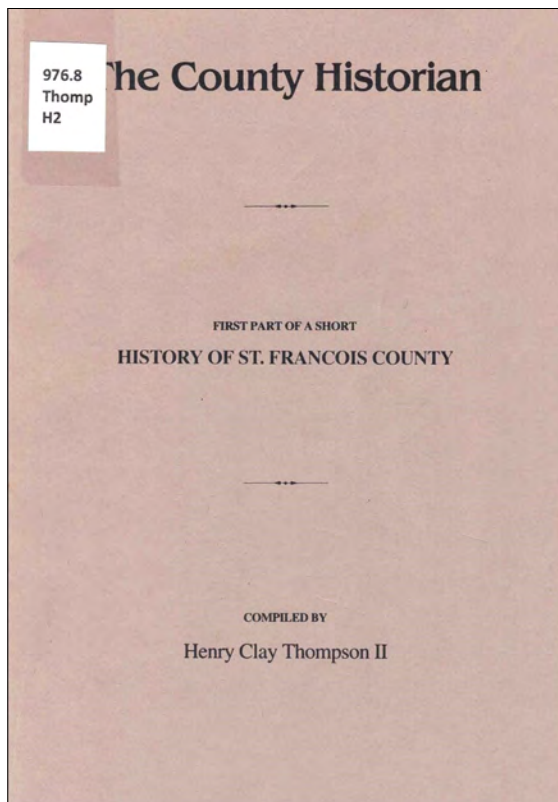
This third compilation of articles joins the first two volumes on our shelves at RCGS. Included in the 200 pages are an index and some photographs.



Leavenworth: First City of Kansas. Bob Spears. Leavenworth: Spear's Mint Editions. 2005.

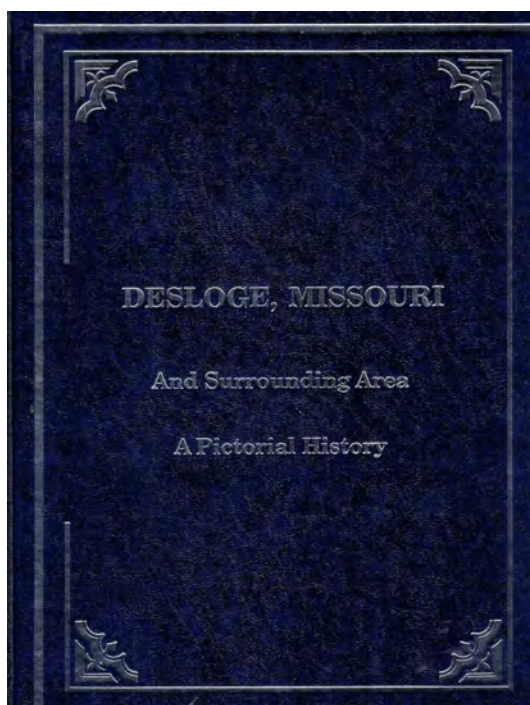
Professional storyteller Bob Spears traces the history of the area from the Hopewell Indians through today.

Photographs illustrate the history and a final chapter suggests "things to do today." 192 pages include a calendar of events and an Index.



The County Historian: First Part of a Short History of St. Francois County. Compiled and rewritten by Henry Clay Thompson II. 1937. Reprinted by Walsworth Publishing Co. 1992.

This booklet was originally written by Thompson to correct errors that had appeared in Judge Louis Houck's book, *History of Missouri*. 92 pages. St. Francois County is in Missouri.

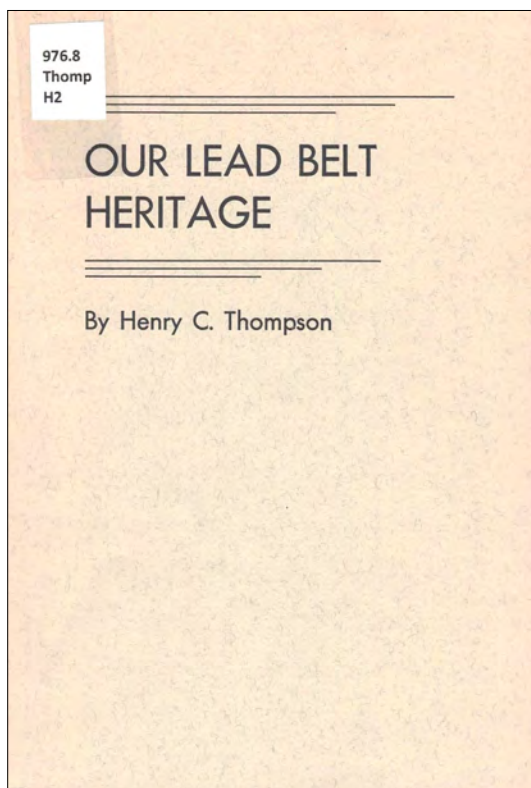


Along the Old Trail, Volume I: Pioneer Sketches of Arrow Rock and Vicinity. T. C. Rainey. Marshall, Missouri: The Walsworth Publishing Company. 1914. Reprint in 1971 by Friends of Arrow Rock, Inc.

The work of the Daughters of the American Revolution on the old Santa Fe Trail as the National Trail stimulated interest in Missouri history. In fact, leaders encouraged Mr. T. C. Rainey to write a series of reminiscences which were first published in the *Democrat-News* of Marshall County. Now they appear in this volume. 94 pages describe many people, but there is no index to guide the researcher.

Desloge, Missouri and Surrounding Area: A Pictorial History. Dave Darnell. Marcelline, Missouri: Walsworth Publishing Company. 1990.

A post card collection of the lead belt area led to conversations with residents who suggested that Mr. Darnell publish a pictorial book. An illustrated history of the Desloge business district and churches introduces the book. 128 pages.



Our Lead Belt Heritage. Henry C. Thompson. Walsworth Publishing Company. 1955. Reprint, 1992.

This book is a reprint of a series of articles by Thompson. It is a look at the early exploration and mining development of east central Missouri (Ste. Genevieve, Madison, Washington, Jefferson, and St. Francois counties). 187 pages.

More New Books in the Research Library

God's People in a New Land: Memorial Volume of Manuscripts. Pihl, Johan Augustin. Holm, Vernon C. F., Translator and Editor. Lindsborg: The Smoky Valley Historical Association. 1984.

This memorial book is dedicated to early pioneer pastors who labored to provide physical needs of their families as they labored to provide spiritual needs of their communities. Several black and white photographs illustrate the book.

Annals of Emporia and Lyon County 1857-1882. Jacob Stotler. Emporia, Kansas. 1898.

Stotler attempted to record incidents and people of the earlier days of the settlers. Photographs of people and buildings are included in the 100 pages.

The History of the Strong School: Manhattan, Kansas. 1867-1995. Margaret Parker and Doreen Towne. Manhattan: Riley County Genealogical Society. 2023.

The Strong School was one of the first rural school districts in Riley County. Parker and Towne have compiled documents and newspaper articles that include photographs and enrollment lists. The enrollment lists and photograph captions will be valuable for researchers.

A New History of Nodaway County, Missouri: Indian Lands to 1859: Volume I. Martha L. Cooper. Maryville, Missouri: Accent Publishing, 1992.

A general history begins with the land as it was prior to Plate Purchase and ends with the period just before the Civil War. Cooper gathered unpublished materials written by many authors. A complete table of contents outlines information and people, plus an index of names will guide your research. 148 pages with some illustrations.

A New History of Nodaway County, Missouri: 1845-1869: Volume II: Sesquicentennial Edition. Martha L. Cooper. Maryville, Missouri: Accent Publishing, 1992.

This second volume returns to the first days of Nodaway County and moves forward to 1869, or the coming of the first railroad. Cooper used the stories and tales of old settlers as recorded in early newspapers. 170 pages with notes of explanation, a full name index, a site index, and photographs.

History and Families of Howard County, Missouri: The Mother of Counties. The Members of the Howard County Missouri Genealogical Society. 2012.

The book begins with a history of the forty-year old Howard County Genealogical Society.

Continued on next page

New books, continued

The county's history follows. The rest of the book traces family histories written for the most part by descendants. 272 pages with maps and photographs.

Oregon County's Three Flags: Six County Seats Via the Horse and Buggy. Third Edition. Lewis A. W. Simpson. Thayer: Missouri. The Thayer News. 1971.

Simpson compiled documents, photographs, maps, and articles. A complete index provides good research clues. 100 pages.

Reflections of yester-years: Centennial Purdin, Missouri: 1873-1973. Historical Committee. 1973.

This history of Purdin, its people, their lives, and activities was prepared for the enjoyment of the readers. 148 pages with many photographs.

Missouri Obituaries 1880-1881-1882. Abstracts of Obituaries Published Weekly in the St. Louis Christian Advocate: A Publication of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Compiled and Published by Miss Nadine Hodges. Reprinted in 1975 by Mrs. Howard W. Woodruff.

The compilation contains abstracts of the obituaries published in the weekly St. Louis Christian Advocate. It was the official publication of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; it contained obituaries of people of other churches. Many of the subjects were born in the late 1790s or early 1800s, mostly in southern states and moved to Missouri. Death records were not registered in Missouri until after 1909, so these abstracts may help locate an elusive Missouri relative. 115 pages include an index of surnames and an index of writers of obituaries.

Arrow Rock: Where Wheels Started West. Compiled for Friends of Arrow Rock by Jean Tyree Hamilton. Centralia, Missouri: Guard Printing & Publishing Co. 1963. Revised 1972.

Interest in Arrow Rock area history continued. In 1963 Jean Hamilton wrote a history

and included more reminiscences. She included photographs and illustrations in her 63 pages.

FAMILY HISTORIES

Searching American Land and Deed Records. Fran Carter. American Genealogical Lending Library. 1993

Holdeman Descendants Volume 2: Compilations of Descendants of Christian Holdeman 17888-1846, Ella Holdeman.

The Genealogical and Biographical Records of the Descendants of David S. Holdeman Mr. and Mrs. Johnson and Mr. and Mrs. Orville E. Wiggers.

Lind Family: Two Volumes. Compiled by Reuben C. Lind in 1980. Updated by James A. Lind in 2021.

Genealogy of the Loucks Family Beginning with Peter Loucks (1805-1895) and Anna Barkey (1808-1890) of Harrison Township, Elkhart Co, Indiana, and their 12 Children. Compiler, Ginger Loucks.

Peter Loucks (1760-1845) and Anna Overholt Loucks (1770-1845) Scottdale, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, with Some of Their Ancestors, Siblings and Numerous Descendants 1670-2005. Compiler, Edna M. Lewis Loux.

Loucks' Family Tree: Jesse and Carrie Loucks Family Gathering, 1991. Jacqueline J. Dunham.

Jesse and Carrie Loucks Family Tree: 2000 Family Reunion. Jacqueline J. Dunham.

Loucks' Family Tree. Jesse and Carrie Loucks Family Gathering 2005. Johan Peter Laux and Catharine (Henzs) Haines Laux Family History: Immigrant Ancestors of the Laux, Loux, Loucks Families of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, 1724-1996. Edna Mae (Lewis) Loux.

Peter Loucks and Some of His Descendants 1805-2003.

Continued on bottom of next page



Pie Party. On September 17, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. Riley County Genealogical Society hosted the 3rd annual pie party. The Barefoot Dixieland Jazz Band (pictured here) provided music. RCGS members furnished pie and ice cream. Approximately 65 people attended the event on the lawn of the Platt House. It was a lovely, sunny, Sunday afternoon.



Sources and Footnotes for “Pioneering on Route 66 and Beyond). Bonnie Jean Hoerner.

The Rothstromm Family History (Volumes 1 and 2). Jim Lind.

Biography and Memories of Tobias A. and Susie (Becker) Schmidt 1863-1936. Louise Schmidt, Compiler.

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Menonite Genealogical Database (GRanDMA) Contains a Million and a Half Entries

Menonites, including the Alexanderwohl Congregation, have entered their church records into a database called GRanDMA. The database consolidates all the church records into a single, searchable source, valuable for genealogical research.

“Genealogical Registry and Database of Menonite Ancestry.

GRanDMA contains genealogical information on Menonite and Hutterite individuals, (currently 1,534,334) most of whose ancestral lines can be traced to Menonite and Hutterite communities in Prussia (now Poland) and South Russia (now Ukraine). It is the product of collecting and merging data from thousands of family histories, church records, obituaries, government records and other contributions.

Records of individuals include dates and places and are linked by relationship to parents and to children. With genealogical software, these linkages lead to ancestry charts and descendants' charts and from there to data mining for all sorts of reports...

GRanDMA continues to expand through the addition of new information submitted by both regular users contributing family information and skilled researchers who translate and research original documents. The data are reviewed and entered into the database with the oversight of the *GRanDMA* Committee. ***“**

*https://grandmaonline.org/gmol-7/GWHelp/whatsGRanDMA_help.asp accessed 30 October 2023.

Kansas Kin submission guidelines

We are pleased you are considering submitting an article to the Riley County Genealogical Society for possible publication. *Kansas Kin* focuses on articles ranging from useful genealogical strategies and sources, to interesting accounts of personal research, to family stories, to local histories as they relate to Kansas. We strive to bring your ancestors to life through their stories.

MANUSCRIPTS

500 to 2,000 words, including reference notes, is the suggested length of submissions. Submit your document in Word format via email. Topical headings are preferred for longer pieces. All manuscripts and references should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*. End notes are recommended, especially for books, articles, and websites.

IMAGES

Whenever possible, please provide images to accompany your submission. The image must be over 1MB in size, with good quality resolution. Please include a caption for each picture which includes a photo credit or source. All images must be sent as separate files. We prefer jpg format.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Please provide a few sentences about the author(s) to accompany the manuscript.

DEADLINES

Submissions are due the first of the month in April and October. Address submissions to the editor at KansasKin@rileycgs.com

All submissions to *Kansas Kin* are subject to review by the RCGS Editorial Board and revisions may be made, by the editor.

Editor: Judy Regehr

Assistant Editor: Margaret Parker

Editorial Board: Barry Michie, Sherry Butler, Virginia Beddow





Riley County Genealogical Society
2005 Claflin Road
Manhattan, KS 66502-3415

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