

THE MYSTERY OF THE PAST

FOR YOUTHFUL READERS



THE LANDSEEKERS

Source: The Story of the Great American West
by Random House Series

THE BIRD CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.
All rights reserved

Volume I May 2012

Issue VIII

The Mystery of the Past (for Youthful Readers)

Introduction

- Out of the Past -Dorothy L. Mast PP·1- 3
- The Craft Corner -Dorothy L. Mast & Wanda Dowdy pp. 4 - 5
- The Photo Place -Wanda Dowdy p. 6
- Reflections -Connie Rooney pp. 7 - 16
- TheMystery Sleuth-Linda (Beeson)Carroll pp.17 - 19
- The Keepsake -Linda (Beeson) Carroll pp. 20
- The Map Quest -Helene Landenberger pp. 21 - 22
- Poetry of the Land - Helene Landenberger p. 23
- The Book Corner -Marsha Magley and Shirley Watson pp. 24 - 25
- Pieces of History -Hollis DaPron pp. 26 - 29
- Items of Historical Interest -Rosemary Powell pp. 30 - 31
- Historical Link p. 32 - 33

The Bird City Historical Association, Inc. Officers and Members

OUT OF THE PAST

The Reality

The settlers of different origins to Cheyenne County in Northwestern Kansas, coming with high expectations, were soon faced with the harsh reality of the plains. As they attempted to stake a claim they met with conflict by the early cattlemen who had already laid claim to miles of grassland on both sides of the Republican River used to graze their large herds of cattle. This sometimes led to gunplay, but mostly harassment.

The problem was to provide an equitable method of distributing land to private owners. The government was faced with the issue of administering the land law of the public domain originally passed during Washington's administration. The first policy allowed large tracts of land to go to big interests. A second policy was also adopted that allowed the purchase of land for low prices by the sworn-in settler. There were two main methods of securing land in the 1850's.

- 1) One was by means of Soldier's Military Act - Bounty Land Warrant. Since 1776 land warrants had been given as a reward to the nation's soldiers.
- 2) The second was by means of the land law of 1841 known as the Preemption Act. The act provided that the head of a family, a widow, or a single man over 21 years of age could file for 160 acres of public domain. The claimant by law was required to erect a dwelling on the claim making proof of his settlement to the registrar and having been received at the land office for which that official received fifty cents from each claimant. The applicant in accord with the specifications laid down was required to swear that:
 - He had never before preempted
 - He was not the owner of 320 acres in any state or territory
 - He had not settled on the land for the purpose of selling
 - He had no agreement or contract with anyone directly or indirectly to turn the land over to anyone else.

Persons swearing falsely were guilty of perjury according to the law and the perjurer was penalized by both the loss of the land and the money.

In order to understand Homestead Patents, one has to have an understanding of the types of patents available. There were 6 original types

that all eventually governed the Homestead Law that came into effect in 1862 including the Preemption Act of 1841.

The six original Homestead Patents were:

- 1) The Preemption Act
- 2) Cash Entry Patent
- 3) The Homestead Act
- 4) The Timber Culture Act
- 5) The Veteran Act
- 6) The Railroad Act

1) Preemption Act - was the right to purchase before others.

2) Cash Entry Patent - was an entry that covered public lands for which the individual paid cash or its equivalent. Credits – these patents were issued to anyone who paid by cash at the time of sale and received a discount or paid installments over a period of four years. If full payment was not received, title to the land would revert back to the Federal Government.

3) The Homestead Act of 1862 – A person could stake a claim to 160 acres of unoccupied public land by living on it and cultivating it for five years, at which time it was proven up.

4) The Timber Culture Act of 1873 – this act granted tracts of public lands to settlers who planted and cared for trees on the plains. This was the first legislation intended to encourage reforestation as a means of conservation. The act was less than an unqualified success. It provided that a settler could file on 160 acres, provided he planted at least 10 acres of trees, cultivated and kept them growing for 8 years. The fee was the same as for a homestead. Few who "proved up" under this law fulfilled its conditions. Cottonwoods, ash, elm, hackberry and some walnut were planted in groves. Cottonwoods were often chosen because they would grow from a cutting.

5) The Veteran Act – 1788 to 1885. By this Act, the U. S. granted military Bounty Land Warrants as the reward for military service. These warrants were issued in various denominations and based upon the rank and length of service. Railroad grants of 160 acres of land were especially sought once these became available. After the Homestead Act, the thoughts of many of the soldiers turned to the West. Many of the Union and Confederate soldiers migrated with some of their comrades together to the west for a new start.

6) The Railroad Act of 1850 – This Act granted to the states alternate sections of public land on either side of the railroad line and branches to aid

in the construction of certain railroads. An amendment under the Homestead Act allowed an ex-soldier of the civil war who had served nine months to take 160 acres of land within the limits of a railroad grant, whereas all the other settlers could take only 80 acres.

* * * * *

Now then, by this time you have begun to see some of the dilemma the settlers face. Cheyenne County, Kansas, was later in attracting settlers (late 1870's, early 1880's) because it had been considered a part of the Great American Desert. The closest land office during that time was at Oberlin, Kansas – over 50 miles away. Settlers had to travel there by wagon, horseback or foot to make application for a homestead, then file and pay a filing fee.

The settler had to choose the type of homestead he was applying for considering his or her own eligibility. The settlers were unprepared for the plains with very few trees, which meant that there was a large lack of lumber available to use in building homes, barn or corrals. On top of all that, there was also a language barrier, as some of them could not read or write English.

By the mid 1880's the number of settlers who had filed on homestead claims had increased in the eastern part of Cheyenne County. The early cattlemen realized that they had to either file on the land under the requirement of the Homestead law or relinquish their claim on the open range.

During this time, Dennis Cave had acquired 160 acres in the center of Section 36, Township 3, Range 38, with a cash entry homestead patent.

Realizing the need for a more centrally located place where they would be able to purchase supplies and receive mail than in Collinsville, Nebraska (later Benkelman, Nebraska), a group of early cattlemen, homesteaders and businesses formed the North West Townsite Company to establish a town, with seven founders, Benjamin Bird (an early cattlemen), President.

The Townsite Company purchased the Homestead Patent from Dennis Cave for a town site that became the original town of Bird City. The original name of the seven founders still mark our streets today – 2012. The seven founders were: Benjamin Bird, Dennis Cave, Max Rich, A. L. Burr, W. H. Demmick, R. L. Pendarvis and Hilan B. Ketcham.

Note: Have you ever looked at an old abstract of a piece of land? It may interest you to learn that the first entry on an abstract will probably be a Homestead Patent.

Sources: The Great American West by Reader's Digest
The Early Bird City Book by Dorothy L. Mast and Marsha Magley

Dorothy L. Mast

Making a Sod House a Home

In the beginning, the sod house was crudely furnished with nail kegs and soap boxes that did duty as chairs. Often a dry goods box made a table and a crude bed made of boards threaded with cords covered with a mattress stuffed with prairie grass and placed in a corner. The cupboard was an open box by the stove or fireplace. The table was covered with an oilcloth or a feed sack cloth. Tin plates, case knives and earthen bowls graced the top of the table. A Dutch oven and a frying pan were kept by the stove. Rag rugs and homemade quilts were common. A rag rug was often laid over prairie hay on the floor and nearly every Saturday the lady of the house took up the old hay, swept the ground clean and put down fresh hay so that things would be "spick and span" for Sunday. A limited amount of furnishings was brought with them in a covered wagon. However, sometimes coveted pieces were brought from the old home such as a Bible, spinning wheel, trunk, stove, a small chest filled with dishes or clothing and sometimes a fiddle or an organ. Many times other possessions had to be left along the way.

Many households did not have a clock, although the man carried a pocket watch. Unless the lady was fortunate enough to have brought a hand mirror with her from the old home she had to see her reflection in the water bucket or creek.

A few utensils were whittled out of wood, but wood was very scarce. Pails and small tubs called "piggins" and "noggins" were made of staves at home if the wood was available. Rough brooms were made of brush that sometimes grew near the creek beds. Scrubbing brooms were made of sticks by splitting the ends. Later on a bunch of broom com was tied together to form a broom for house use.

Scissors were a coveted item and were often shared with others. The patchwork quilt and the "make do" quilts were a part of the household. For the very early homesteaders the light from the fireplace was the only light they had. Soon, necessity became the master of invention, skunks and other animals fell prey to homemade lamps and candles. The skunk oil made an excellent odorless light when used in a crude wick lamp. Such a lamp, popularly known as an "old hussy," was made by filling a bowl or cup half full of sand and placing a stick upright in the center. A wick was wound

around the stick and enough animal oil poured over the sand to fill the cup. The wick was lighted at the top and made a fairly good blaze.

Seeds that were carried with the homesteaders from the old home were given primary care in order to plant crops and gardens.

An axe, a wagon, a team of oxen and an ox yoke were the principal needs of the head of the household. The sod cutter and the walking plow soon became a part of the homesteader's tools.

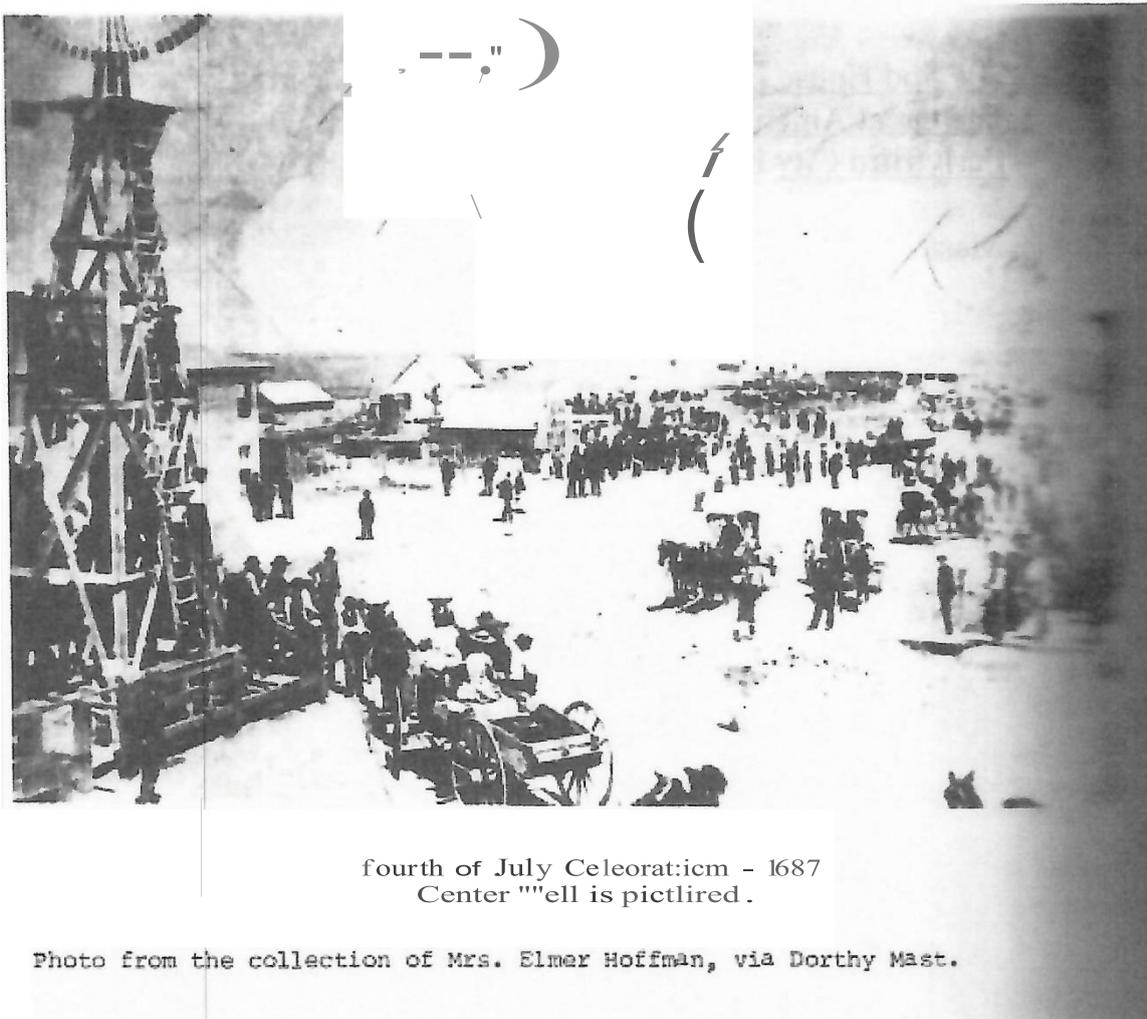
Sources: The Sod House Frontier by Everett Dick
The Great American West by Readers' Digest
Early Bird City by Dorothy L. Mast and Marsha Magley

Dorothy L. Mast

THE PHOTO PLACE

p.6

July 4th Celebration -



fourth of July Celeoraticm - 1687
Center ""ell is pictlired.

Photo from the collection of Mrs. Elmer Hoffman, via Dorothy Mast.

Source: Early Bird City by Dorothy L. Mast and Marsha Magley

Wanda Dowdy

REFLECTIONS

p.7

Beginning the Life of a Homesteader

Frederick Hutchinson was born in Hutchinsonville, Ontario, Canada, which was a stagecoach stop on the old road between Montreal, Quebec and Toronto, Ontario. Hutchinsonville was a short distance north of Grafton, where Frederick's wife, Emma Coleman, was born. Both Frederick and Emma were born in Northumberland County.

Fred, as he was called, was an Orangeman and went to meetings. An Orangeman was a member of a secret society organized in the north of Ireland (formerly Ulster) in 1795 to defend the British sovereign and to support the protestant religion; the society took its name from William III of England, Prince of Orange.

Fred was a carpenter by trade. He also was a postmaster of Monteagle Valley. The post office was located in his and Emma's home. Their home also housed a small store which Emma operated. It was always an exciting time when the people of the valley came once a week for their mail and stayed for dinner.

The Hutchinson family lived in a land where snow fell abundantly in winter and rain fell generously the rest of the year. It was a land of babbling brooks, fast flowing rivers and crystal clear lakes. Forests predominated this rolling land, trees were both deciduous and evergreen. There were meadows of lush green grasses and other places where berries grew wild and ripened just for picking. In the bounteous land, the wildflowers and ferns grew very tall.

Near a wood the Hutchinsons had a crudely cleared garden plot that Fred plowed each spring. It was a job he detested for he would often hit a tree stump or a hidden root. When he did he would make the woods ring with his profane outbursts. Of course this happened over and over again...

It was one of these hectic plowing days in 1885, that Fred began to seriously ponder the information he had acquired from the USA. In a brochure he had read that western Kansas was opened for Homesteading: there a head of family or anyone who reached 21 years of age could get a quarter section of land (160 acres) free just by living on it for five years and making substantial improvements. The brochure stated that the land was rich and level and clear. The thought that went round and round in Fred's

mind was the statement that one could plow a furrow a mile long without hitting a tree stump. He firmly decided he would like to go there.

When Fred first broached the idea of Homesteading in western Kansas to Emma, she was not at all in favor of it. She did not want to leave her relatives or her friends. But Fred had made up his mind. Early that summer news reached them that their friends William and Betsy LeBow had already left their home in Maynooth Ontario, Canada, to homestead at Bird City, Kansas. When Fred suggested that they too head for Bird City to be near their friends, Emma relented. Plans were undertaken for the family to leave the next spring.

During Lent of 1886, the Hutchinsons finalized their plans. Adventurous Fred (43) was ready to take his wife Emma (36) and their daughters Ella (16), and Alice (11) and son Harry, about 9 years of age, on the long journey to Bird City, Kansas. The night before they left, relatives and neighbors gathered to give them a happy send-off. The party began with dancing to the tune of Fred's fiddle. Then there was the singing of old familiar songs led by Emma's blind sister Josephine, nicknamed "Jote."

When the farewells were exchanged, many tears were shed. Afterwards, Ella remarked to Alice, "It would have been a nice party if they hadn't made a funeral of it." Perhaps it was only the adults who felt that the farewells were final. Fred would leave behind his brother Syrus, and Emma would leave her brothers, James and Frank, and her sister "Jote." Never would Fred or Emma or their children see any of the Canadian relatives again.

The next morning the wagon was loaded. It is unknown what personal belongings or household goods had been packed to take to Kansas except for two items, namely Fred's fiddle and his chest of carpenter tools. After the family got comfortable seated in the wagon they left Montegale Valley, Quebec, Canada, and headed for Haliburton, a little settlement located in the heart of the Haliburton Highlands, reckoned to be forty or more miles to the west. Unknown is the teamster who took the Hutchinson family on the first leg of their journey. At Haliburton, they boarded the Canadian National Railway which carried them south to Toronto, and then westward to Windsor, Ontario.

From Windsor, the family crossed the Detroit River by ferry to reach Detroit, Michigan, in the United States of America. At Detroit they boarded the Michigan Central Railroad which took them west across southern Michigan, then through the northwest edge of Indiana and on into Chicago, Illinois. By the time the Hutchinsons reached Chicago, Alice was beside

herself with excitement. When they changed trains again, this time to the Burlington Route, the sisters sat together. To contain her lively sister Ella took the aisle seat. After the train got underway, Alice stuck her head out the open window to see as much of Chicago as she could. But this action brought embarrassment to her big sister. To Ella it was an improper act, for she shamed Alice into withdrawing her head to sit in her seat like a lady.

Leaving Chicago behind, the train carried the Hutchinsons over the level land of northern Illinois before it crossed the mighty Mississippi River to Burlington, Iowa. Continuing westward it traversed the hilly ground of southern Iowa until it came to the Missouri River. Here again, to cross a great river, the train slowed to a crawl as it went over the mile long bridge to Omaha, Nebraska. From Omaha the train rolled west by southwest across southern Nebraska. Near the southern edge of the state it began to follow the Republican River, the only place where any trees at all were seen now. Carcasses of cattle littered the prairie which the Hutchinsons were told had been frozen to death during the blizzard in January when temperatures dropped to 30 degrees below zero. Benkelman, Nebraska, lay ahead. It was a little cow town about 30 miles from the Colorado state line and the jumping off place for Bird City, Kansas. Benkelman was the terminus of the Hutchinsons' long railroad journey. When they got off the train Henry LeBow, age 24, oldest son of their friends William and Betsy LeBow, was there to meet them with team and wagon to take them to Bird City. Henry told them that last year when the LeBow family arrived in Benkelman there was no conveyance to take them to Bird City, so they tried to buy a team and wagon but there was none to be had. All that was available was a two wheeled cart, an ox and a mule. They bought the three to begin their journey to Bird City. Before leaving they were warned about quicksand in the two rivers to ford just south of town. Henry said that thankfully they crossed the rivers safely.

It was early morning when Henry helped the Hutchinson family get settled in his wagon. Then taking the reins in hand he spoke to the horses and the wheels began to roll. Turning south they crossed the railroad tracks and soon came to the first river to ford. Quietness reigned in the wagon as Henry explained that this was the North Fork of the Republican River. It was wide and shallow and running quite slowly. Henry gently urged the horses into the water and onward, fording the river without incident. After plodding along in sandy soil for a couple of miles they approached the second river which Henry said was the South Fork of the Republican. It

looked no different from the other. It, too, was forded without incident to the relief of everyone in the wagon.

Benkelman was 5 miles behind them after they had forded the two forks of the river and climbed out of the valley onto the high windy prairie. Henry explained that they were now in the State of Kansas where the elevation was over 3000 feet above sea level. Bird City was 20 miles to the south. The road followed a section line all the way. It ran straight as a string into the distant horizon. And just how far away was that horizon? The farther south they traveled the more level and barren the land became until there was nothing to see but prairie and sky.

But once the Hutchinsons got accustomed to detecting "something on nothing" there were many new things for them to see. The first thing to catch their eyes was a smoking stovepipe rising straight up out of the brown prairie. "What's that?" Fred thundered in surprise with Henry answering, "A dugout. We live in one." Yes, for a whole year the LeBow family lived in their home in the ground. It had been scooped out of the very prairie and roofed with wood which in turn was covered with turf. When a sod house was sighted Henry remarked that theirs was nearly ready to move in. To build a "Soddy" as these houses were called, one needed a breasting plow, locally dubbed a "sodbuster" which had been especially designed to penetrate the virgin prairie. The firm sod was plowed into 16 inch wide strips, peeled off the prairie, cut in symmetrical lengths and used like bricks. Not until the Hutchinsons saw a settler's shack made of wood did they see a house to which they could relate.

It was the strange new animals that broke the monotony of the trip for the Hutchinsons. Surely the innumerable jackrabbits brought hearty laughter to their weary bodies. Invisible while lying snugly on the ground, one would pop up most anywhere to bound erratically across the prairie in leaps from 10 to 15 feet in length. Unlike the familiar cottontail, the jackrabbit was about 24 inches long with huge ears that rose nearly 6 inches above its head. Because of these jackass-like ears the early explorers had named the animals jackrabbits. And the Hutchinsons saw bands of graceful antelope which were similar to deer in size and color. No doubt the animals studied the team and wagon in curiosity before loping across the prairie with their white rump patches exposed. And several prairie dog towns were seen. These short tailed ground squirrels, about the size of woodchucks, had been named prairie dogs because of their bark-like cry. The lookout sensing danger gave a warning yap. This in turn set the whole colony to yapping and diving into

their burrows only to poke their heads out quickly to see if it was safe to come out again.

At last, on the distant southern horizon the tired Hutchinsons saw some dim forms which they eventually recognized as buildings, Henry exclaimed with pride that it was Bird City. Henry said that when they had arrived last year there were only a handful of buildings. Now it was the County Seat. Yes, this county located in the extreme northwest corner of Kansas and named after the Cheyenne Indians, who once lived here, was organized just last December! In the late afternoon light, the Hutchinsons could see that Bird City consisted of but a dozen or two buildings spread out on the treeless plains. Coming into the city they observed that some of the buildings were made of sod and some were of wood. All were quite small except a two story one which dominated all the others. This structure Henry identified as Kemdt's Store. Some dugouts were also nestled round about in this city which definitely was the end of the Benkelman Road. Looking in all directions, they could see no other road other than the one they had just come.

Somewhere here in Bird City, the Hutchison family must have lived for a period of time while Fred looked for a homestead. After much inquiry and scouting about, he found one that he could buy under the Preemption Plan. It already had a settler's shack on it. Apparently the man had purchased the 160 acres outright at the standing price of \$1.25 per acre when the county had been opened to homesteading a year ago. But now he was eager to sell out and be gone by offering to knock off \$50 from the original price of \$200 that he had paid. Shrewd Fred, recognizing a bargain, closed the deal by paying the man \$150 and securing the deed. The homestead was located about four miles southwest of Bird City.

During Holy Week the Hutchinsons moved their belongings to the homestead by making their own wagon trail across the native prairie. They were "settled in" by Good Friday and were thankful that they would celebrate Easter Sunday, April 25, 1886, in their new home. They were quite crowded in their 8 foot by 10 foot shack, but felt fortunate to have found a place to live without having to build. Saturday evening it began to rain, and it rained very hard. The family was shocked to see how badly their wooden shack leaked. Any available container was put under a drip. By early morning the rain turned to a beautiful soft wet snow that fell gently until a wild wind came up to turn it into a raging blizzard. By Monday morning the snow had stopped but not the wind. It continued to blow fiercely, taking all the moisture from the snow which it packed in hard drifts,

leaving the prairie practically as bare as it had been before the storm. This first experience of the Hutchinsons to a typical western blizzard in their flimsy settler's shack made them decide to build a two room sod house, 18 by 24 feet. They had been told that a "soddy" was warmer in winter and cooler in summer than a settler's shack. Now they were ready to accept the advice.

On the first nice day, Fred stepped off an acre of his sod. He had been told that it would take at least that much to build a soddy. It was near their shack and they would use the cleared land for a garden. After hitching the team to the "sodbuster" he pointed the plowshare into the buffalo grass prairie. Then, starting the horses he guided them to his distant marker as he struggled with all his might to hold the "sodbuster" to the course. This was devilishly hard work and swearing came quickly to his lips.

One sunny afternoon in early spring Emma decided to walk to town. Alice was eager to accompany her mother so the two of them took off across lots for Bird City. They quickly discovered that it was difficult to walk the virgin prairie because of the numerous prickly pear cactus plants. Thankfully their high topped shoes helped protect their ankles from the plants' long treacherous thorns. But they still had to keep their eyes on their feet as they plodded along. Stopping occasionally they checked their direction to Kemdts' Store and Post Office where the local homesteaders bought all their needs and got their mail. Alice had fun exploring the store while her mother bought some items and checked for mail. While they were in the store, the sky had clouded over and after they started home they became lost. In Canada they had thought nothing of going walking as there were landmarks to follow. But here the only thing to guide them was the sun, and it was hidden. If it were shining they knew it should be shining in their eyes on their way home. Eventually they spied a settler's shack and headed for it. The lady who lived there told them that they had been walking southeast instead of southwest. She helped them get their bearings and directed them as to which way to walk to their place. When finally in the distance they recognized their own little house, they were very relieved.

After Fred got the sod plowed, he needed some strong men to help him build the house. Undoubtedly Henry LeBow and his brother Tom, age 23, walked over to help as they didn't live too far away. There were many bachelors holding down claims and perhaps some of them were willing to help in return for a good noonday meal cooked by Fred's womenfolk. And especially when his womenfolk included two young daughters, Ella, who was sweet sixteen, and Alice, an eleven year old mischievous mimic.

The homesteaders faced many problems. One of the greatest of these was water. It is unknown if the Hutchinson homestead had a well on it when Fred bought it. If it did not, they undoubtedly did as others did; hauled the water from lagoons or from Bird City or from a generous neighbor who already had a well. If the Hutchinsons had a well, then they were popular neighbors indeed as all homesteaders were willing to help and share with one another no matter how far apart they lived.

Fuel was also a concern. The Hutchinsons began using coal as some of the other homesteaders did. But with Benkelman being the nearest railhead, all supplies had to be transported from there to Kemdt's store by wagon, which made everything, including coal, very costly. The Hutchinsons joined other homesteaders in resorting to cow chips for fuel. The cattle from the several big ranches that became established in Cheyenne County as early as 1876 grazed far and wide to drop their manure wherever they wanted. Ella and Alice, along with other family members, dragged their gunny sacks to pick up the free fuel. In time after the chips near at hand were gone, Fred used horses and wagon to go far out on unclaimed portions of the prairie as others did to collect a load. The dry chips made a hot fire but burned up very quickly. Surprisingly, neither their smell nor smoke was offensive. It can be imagined though that the family at times yearned for the aromatic smell of wood smoke, although they were adapting readily to all phases of homestead life.

In the latter part of May, when the days were warmer and the buffalo grass turned the prairie to a delicate shade of green, the Hutchinsons planted their garden. Then Fred planted as much of his land to com as he had gotten plowed. But that would not be enough. So he did what other homesteaders did, planted com in the sod. By wielding an axe, he whacked a slit in the earth and perhaps it was Alice, or Ella, who accompanied him with a container of com to drop the kernels into the opening. They planted as much of the sod to com as they could until Fred said the remaining land must be reserved for pasture for their two horses and their cow.

It was always a delight when the flowers on the prairie began to bloom. First was the soap-weed (*yucca glauca*). Its lovely greenish white flowers grew on stalks three to four feet tall. Alice's keen curiosity soon found out why it was called soap-weed. It was because the Indians had discovered that its roots would make a soapy lather. Much as Alice liked the soap-weed flowers she noted that their cow liked them even better – she ate them! |

Alice and Ella admired the gorgeous big yellow blossoms of the prickly pear cactus plants. More rare was the tiny ball cactus or "pincushion" as it was locally called. There were both white and yellow primroses in bloom and countless other early flowers. Later in June, bright yellow wild sunflowers began to bloom. Kansas would name this Sunflower (*Helianthus scaberrimus*) its State Flower in 1903.

When prowling the prairie in search of new plants and flowers, the girls had to be on constant lookout for rattlesnakes as they were coming out of their hibernation now that the weather was warm. The snakes especially liked to live in the prairie dog holes, so they were doubly careful as they walked among those comical yapping animals. And jackrabbits seemed to erupt most anywhere but especially from beside a soap-weed plant. Seldom was a coyote seen in the daytime but at night as the Hutchinsons lay in bed, they heard the coyote yelps and cries which were sometimes mournful and other times very musical.

The birds that the family began to see were not as colorful nor as numerous as those they had seen in Monteagle Valley. In time they would learn their names. Some of the birds of the area were the burrowing owls, lark buntings, grasshopper sparrows and homed larks. When they saw a meadowlark they thought they were seeing a friend from Canada, but it surprised them with a different song. It did not sing the slow musical "you can't see me" that the Canadian bird seemed to say. This bird uttered a loud trill, almost a whistle that told everyone within hearing range that it was a western meadowlark.

Kansas would name the Western Meadowlark its State Bird in 1937. When Alice saw her first magpie she thought it was the most unusual bird she had ever seen. It was as big as a crow but its body was both black and white with the black turning into iridescent green on its wing and extremely long tail. Overhead there were hawks, vultures and golden eagles to watch until they disappeared in the endless sky.

When the Hutchinsons heard there was going to be a celebration in Bird City on the 4th of July, they made plans to go. They dressed in their best, packed a picnic basket, Fred took his fiddle and they were off. As they jostled across the prairie in their wagon, they saw others heading for Bird City also. All the homesteaders from miles around came on foot, on horseback and in two-wheeled carts and wagons pulled by either horses or even oxen until there was quite a crowd. The celebration began with some musicians playing patriotic music. When the audience was asked to sing, the musicians began playing "God Save the King," but the people were

singing different words to it. Curious Alice found out that the song was called "America." She could hum the tune, but would want to learn the words. "The Star Spangled Banner" was another song that she would want to learn. After singing, a man with a strong voice stood up and talked about the "Declaration of Independence." On July 4, 1776, the United States of America had declared its freedom from the British Crown and ever since then the 4th of July became a national holiday known as "Independence Day." So that is what the celebration is all about, mused Alice.

At noontime everybody shared the food they brought. They spread it out onto a long makeshift table that the Kemdt brothers, who owned the store, had made with sawhorses and planks. The picnic lunch was attacked with gusto and the fellowship was exuberant. Everyone tried to get acquainted with those they did not know. The Kemdts served good old American coffee, though the Hutchinsons would have preferred tea. And there was also ice water. Ice water to drink on a hot July day on the dry prairie, surely there was no one who did not appreciate that drink.

After the picnic there was a parade. It was led by a dignified gentleman carrying a United States flag. Following him were the musicians playing a good marching tune and then came the floats. After the parade there were games for the children which Alice and Harry entered without reservation. And foot races! With her brown braids flying, what fun it was for Alice to dash down the dusty street without the danger of stepping on a cactus plant. And her legs being long and limber there is no doubt that she won a race or two. And there were prizes! Oh, such fun she and Harry had!

In the meantime dancing had begun in the Kemdt brothers store. This is why Fred had brought his fiddle. Someone had said that there were only three ladies at the dance last year. This year there were many more than three, but even so, they were greatly outnumbered by men because of all the bachelors. Both Emma and Ella liked to dance, so naturally they were popular on the floor. Without a doubt, handsome Ella, with her beautiful dark hair piled atop her head, was a favorite with the bachelors. And in tum Fred laid down his fiddle and bow to dance a round each with his comely wife and daughters, Ella and gangly Alice.

On their way home each of the Hutchinsons was pondering different thoughts in their minds, except for little Harry, who soon fell asleep in his mother's arms. Alice thought it was the most exciting day she had ever had. Why, celebrating the 4th of July was more fun than the Queens' birthday! Ella had a dreamy expression on her face. Was she thinking of all the bachelors she had danced with, and especially of Tom LeBow who had paid

her the most attention? Alice observed an expression of satisfaction on her mother's face. Her mother loved to visit with other women and Alice knew that she had been pining for such visiting for a long time. Today her mother's longing had been fulfilled. Alice's father sat proudly on the wagon seat as he drove his family home. If Alice had been able to read his thoughts she would have been proud too, because he was deciding to become a citizen of the United States of America. When he became a citizen, Fred knew his wife and his children would automatically become citizens too. He would apply for his papers one day soon, and this he did.

Source: A family story written about the Hutchinsons. Fred and Emma Hutchinson are Pat Rooney's great-grandparents. Alice and Abe was written by Louise Moser Mitchell. Louise Moser Mitchell writes: "Sources for this narrative, 'Alice and Abe' are too numerous to acknowledge. History is its background but even it may be vague in some instances, for I have primarily written a story of family memories. Some relatives who had told me memories are deceased. To the living relatives who have given me family information, help and encouragement, I wish to extend my deepest gratitude. This story is written for living relatives as well as for future generations who may never visit Cheyenne County, Kansas, USA, or County Hastings, Ontario, Canada, but who might some day become interested in family history."

Connie Rooney

THE MYSTERY SLEUTH

p. 17

From the book, History of Cheyenne County, Kansas, 1987, Volume 1, pages 165 and 166, I sleuthed these three interesting stories:

GRASSHOPPER CATCHER, T211, by Tobe Zwegardt

The summers of 1933-37 were the worst years for grasshoppers in Cheyenne County. They were so bad the fence posts were yellow with them. This grasshopper catcher was made in 1937, by Jacob (J. E.) and Tobe Zwegardt. It was constructed from three half barrels with a wood frame around it and bolted to the bumper of the car. The metal shield roped on behind helped catch the grasshoppers, which then fell into the water mixed with diesel oil, and soon died. This pile of 33 bushels of grasshoppers was picked up during the week, and was burned later.

Making this catcher helped saved the Zwegardt alfalfa crop. They had 300 turkeys at this time, but they couldn't keep up with the grasshoppers.



GRASSHOPPER CATCHER

RADISH PLANTER - T212 by Merlyn Murren

In the year 1948-49 Orval Murren of St. Francis invented this three-row radish planter, and with the help of Leslie Goodell of the Goodell Welding Shop assembled it, and made it ready for use. Mr. Murren used this planter until 1969 when ill health, at the age of 91, forced his retirement. He

planted and raised radishes and supplied the merchants of St. Francis with beautiful radishes for many years. This planter is on display at the Bird City Museum given them by Orval's son, Merlyn Murren, many years ago.



BARN RAISING T210 by Milton Lampe and Eric Lampe

This picture shows a common scene in St. Francis during the early 1900's when a farmer wanted to build a house or a barn. He, along with his neighbors, their teams and wagons, could go to town to buy lumber and building materials. When loaded, they returned home traveling like a small caravan. If anyone had horse or wagon trouble, the other men would help with the load. Neighbors all helped each other without watching their clocks or counting the hours of work traded.

There are eleven wagons on this picture in the Spring of 1914, when Ernest Lampe, his father, Wilhelm, brothers, Fred, Bill, Carl and Henry, along with his neighbors built Ernest's barn.

This scene was witnessed a year earlier when Carl built his barn. Ernest had a block and brick machine he used on his building and others in the neighborhood.

BARN RAISING

T210



The book *History of Cheyenne County, Kansas, Volume I* has many, many interesting stories. You may find stories about your family members and/or about people you know in this big, thick, black bound book as you set yourself on a history mystery quest of your own. Check the library for the book. It offers great reading!

Source: *The History of Cheyenne County, Kansas*, by The Cheyenne County Historical Society – 1987.

Photos: *The History of Cheyenne County, Kansas*, by the Cheyenne County Historical Society – 1987 -pp. 165-166

Linda Beeson Carroll

KEEPSAKES

p. 20

Key Chains with Beads representing the water cycle.



The colors in this key chain all represent the things in the water cycle. The first bead is yellow and it stands for the sun's energy. The clear bead is for evaporation of water from the earth's surface. The white is for clouds where water vapor gathers. Light blue is for the condensation of water vapor back into liquid form. The dark blue is for precipitation that comes to us in the form of rain, sleet, snow etc. The brown color is for the runoff/infiltration of water into the ground. And the green is for the gathering and use of water and vapor by trees and plants.

The McDonald Town and Country Garden Club began their April meeting with a tree-planting ceremony to celebrate McDonald's Arbor Day April 11th.

Club members observed as Tammi Carmichael's 4th grade class assisted in planting an Indian Magic crabapple tree near the McDonald sign and fireworks stand.

After the ceremony, Mrs. Carmichael presented a video of the class's chicken-hatching project and garden project pictures. The students read a theatre script, the Water Cycle Adventure, for the program. The 4th graders created their own signs on the school computer. They read a poem about the water cycle and club members built a crafty key chain during the poem's recitation.

Source: Rawlins County Square Deal, Atwood, KS, written by Mary Holle

Thursday, April 19, 2012, page 8 and page 1.

Linda Beeson Carroll.

THE MAP QUEST

p. 21

Magley Family, Homesteaders

My Grandpa, Fred Magley, was born in Switzerland in 1881. The family came to the United States in 1883. By 1885 they had come to Kansas and he was raised in the Atwood area of Rawlins County. They had heard of another Swiss family living in Cheyenne County by the name of Shield. The families visited each other when they were growing up. Then when he was 19, he came a-courting. He would ride the train to Bird City, rent a "Hack" as he called it, (a horse and buggy), and would travel to the Shield's place about 12 miles southwest of Bird City. This was in 1900. Hattie was a beautiful, dark-eyed daughter of Vincent and Rosalie Shield, and after a long courtship, the couple were married at the frame Cheyenne County courthouse in St. Francis, in 1905. She was the sweetest, softest spoken, loving person I ever knew and she could do the Swiss Yodel like no one I have heard since. I was so lucky to have her for my Grandmother, and Grandpa Fred, too, he was just "the best".

They lived southwest of Atwood for a time, that's where my dad, Arnold Magley, was born in 1906. They soon came to Cheyenne County (1907) to homestead as better land could be attained here. He was baptized in the St. Paul Lutheran Congregation, which was new and was being held in the North Star School House, District #29, (located 1/2 mile south of present day Rd 1 on Rd 25) and that is the only record of his birth, as records were not being kept yet in Rawlins County. Later that year, the St. Paul Lutheran Church was built southwest of there out in the beautiful Cheyenne Valley in south central Cheyenne County.

The Magleys built and lived in a sod house which was the general practice in those times. Sod was utilized since the prairie was virtually treeless. Of course people in wooded areas could build log cabins, but log cabins were not to be seen in the extreme northwest corner of Kansas. Some people in those times lived in "dugouts" but that was usually in a steep hillside or a small creek bank and the Magley land was gently rolling with no creek nearby. Grandpa broke out the sod with a horse and walking plow and his crops did well. Of course dry years would come along at times, but they were hardy pioneers and worked through them. Then a fine two-story frame house was built in 1916. My dad, as a boy of 10 years, recalled hauling lumber across the prairie from Bird City, where it had been brought

in on the railroad. He said, "It was lots of loads -I began to think I'd never get it all hauled." Of course, that was with a team of horses and a wagon with steel rimmed wooden wheels. No rubber tires as yet in those days. Thus the saying, "Rides like a lumber wagon." Buggies had springs and rode a little better, but not lumber wagons.

Then the following year, 1917, they built their big barn. My dad, as a young boy would be in the barn before daylight, harnessing horses for the day's farming, and having to stand on a small bench type stool to get all the leather straps, rings and buckles, over their backs. That way, they'd be all ready to go right after breakfast, for the day's work in the fields. He said if they were working the soil deep, they'd only work a team a half a day, then after dinner (the noon meal), they'd take out a fresh team. He said he was "turned loose" with his first team in the field at 7 or 8 years of age and was a little scared, but he soon grew to love working the soil, and walking barefoot in the cool soft dirt. Some of the implements had steel seats on them, then the driver could sit and ride as he farmed.

In 1918, the Pilgrim Holiness Church was built, and that's where the family attended church from then on. It was located *Yi* mile north of the school house mentioned earlier, east side of the road on the northwest corner of the intersection.

In 1929, Dad married my mother, Vera Tippie, at that church, and they lived in a basement house about a half mile south of Grandpa and Grandma's place. That is where my two older brothers and I were born and grew up - Fred D, II, in 1932, Arnold Junior, in 1934, and myself (Helene) in 1938.

By Helene Landenberger
4/20/2012

POETRY OF THE LAND

p.23

Takin' 'em Home (Magley Cattle Drive, 1953)

In the fifties, the Arnold Magley family, pastured the Herefords up-north,
Then in the fall we drove 'em back home and I tell you, it was worth,
All the time and effort we put into it, 'cause the grass in those sagebrush hills,
Beat anything on the flatlands of home, and sure helped to pay the bills.

Well, this one time, we arrived down at Wheeler, about the middle of the day,
And just as the herd was crossing the highway, a greyhound bus came along the way.
Now it kind of rattled the cows and calves, and some *just froze* in their tracks.
And others went a little crazy, for excitement we didn't lack! !!

Now Dad was riding Ole Spot, and they both really knew their stuff,
So they went to work and I tell you, they started playing rough.
To the young girl that I was, it was a fearsome sight.
But for my dad and his horse, things were a workin' just right.

The bus load of astounded tourists, were hangin' and a wavin' out the windows,
As the pinto cowboy jumped onto the blacktop, it even scared the crows.
The metal of horseshoes began to clatter and Dad? His whip went into a swing,
In front of that bus it was crackin' and poppin', like it was on the wing.

The cattle scattered pretty _____ good, because the sound of the whip they knew,
But one "Old Scalawag" was a runnin' head-long, and that just wouldn't do.
"Ole Spot" lunged and bit 'er on the tail bone, she decided to make a tum,
Then Dad gave her a lick with the whip, and that had to kind of burn!

As for the bus load of people, it was a scene straight out of the "Old West,"
They whooped and cheered and hollered, the time they were a havin' was-the-best! !!
The bus driver looked quite perturbed, because he had a schedule to keep,
But I bet they talked about it for miles, anyway his horn, it sure did beep.

It's a picture that remains in my mind to this day, and I hope to put it on canvas,
The scent of the day, the feel of the air, the movement of the cattle.
But most of all that *stretched out* cow-horse a leadin' that bus to the east.
And my dad a doin' his cowboy job, for the memory – *it is a feast*.

As for the rest of the drive, I don't recall a hitch,
I think we let them rest a while, once we got 'em in the same ditch.
Being kind of a warm fall day, some of their tongues began to hang out,
So when they filed into the home corral, ten miles later, I gave out a joyous shout!

Helene Landenberger

WHERE DID THEY GO?

Bird, Burr, Cave, Dimmick, Ketcham, Pendarvis, Rich – members of the Northwest Townsite Company, founders of Bird City – Where did they go??? Each man had one seventh interest in the Northwest Townsite Company co-partnership, but none of them are buried in Cheyenne County.

Benjamin Bird, president, joined the Land Rush into Oklahoma Territory, dying at Enid, Oklahoma.

Atwell L. Burr and wife, Mary S., were from Alma, Nebraska, as were Rufus M. and wife, Elizabeth S. Pendarvis. Pendarvis died in 1933 at Hutchinson, Kansas.

Dennis W. Cave came from Paris, Jennings County, Indiana, and became a speculator in land and the establishment of new towns everywhere he went. It was his good fortune to have taken homestead lands in Cheyenne County that proved to be important. Bird City was platted on his first homestead, and Wano was platted on his second homestead. He had a good life of community service here in Cheyenne County, then moved on to Boone County, Arkansas, where he died in September, 1923. (See more details of his life in the book, History of Cheyenne County, Kansas.)

Concerning William H. Dimmick and wife, Angie L., Ruth (Kelley) Hayden, in The Time That Was, wrote: "In April, 1875, August C. Blume came up the Beaver Creek from Crete, Nebraska to Cedar Bluffs, Kansas. Here he was met by a Mr. Dimmick who located him on land (Section 25, Township 2, Range 33) in the wide open, unoccupied and unorganized Rawlins County."

Later, W. H. Dimmick taught the Blume children in his home...

In 1880, the Prag/Kelso post office, established in Rawlins County in 1876, was moved to the NW 114 of Section 32, Township 2, Range 32, Rawlins County, and was renamed Danube. William H. Dimmick owned this quarter section and laid out a town-site on it. Deciding to honor his daughter, he exchanged the name Danube for Luella. For some reason this name was not acceptable to the postal department. Mr. Dimmick then took the first syllable of his daughter's name, added dell to it and Ludell it has been since that time.

William H. Dimmick, was Clerk of the Rawlins County District Court for many years. On May 5, 1885, the Bird City Charter was signed by the founders and on June 20, 1885, "W. H. Dimmick, signed his name to the City Constitution and by-laws." In time he moved to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, where he died in January, 1904.

Max Rich and wife, Johanna, came from Lincoln, Nebraska. He opened a Notary Public Office in Lormor's Store, Bird City, in November, 1886. In the fall of 1886, Mr. Rich was a part of the committee for determining the true property holders of the area, planning for town incorporation. In 1887, he was one of the board of canvassers for the election of city officers. It appears that he later returned to Lincoln, Nebraska, and continued in business as an attorney.

Hilan Belden Ketcham, born in 1826 at Dutchess County, New York, was a wealthy man. For 29 years he made his residence in St. Joseph, Missouri; however, his contributions to the founding of Bird City, Kansas, are well documented. He was one of the most noteworthy businessmen of the west. For many years he was identified with the Queensware trade, first at Omaha, Nebraska, and later in St. Joseph, Missouri. Subsequently, he engaged in the cattle business in eastern Colorado and western Kansas, with cattle numbering in the thousands. The history of Hugo, Colorado, records him as one of that town's founders also.

Mr. Ketcham died at his home in St. Joseph on May, 21, 1887. The news account of his death was reported thus: "This morning Mr. Ketcham was in the garden in the rear of his palatial residence on Eighth Street. He had been directing the gardener in some of the work, and was finally asked by that personage for something that was in the house. Mr. Ketcham started for the house in a great hurry. There are two doors at the rear of the house, one opening into a large room or hallway, and the other into the cellar. In his haste, Mr. Ketcham must have made a mistake, as he opened the cellar door and stepped blindly forward; he fell to the foot of the stairs, and when the inmates reached him he was insensible. Medical aid was summoned but death had surely marked the millionaire for his victim. The dissolution occurred at one o'clock this afternoon, the man never having recovered from the shock."

"He had very few friends, and even fewer confidants. His wealth is estimated at \$3,000,000 by many." (Preceding him in death was his wife, Lucy W., who died in Buchanan, Missouri.) "Surviving him were his four daughters: Mary K. (Mrs. R. W.) Hocker, Sara W. (Mrs.) Wallace, Lizzie Pearle and Helen L., the youngest child, born in 1872; a brother, J. J. and a nephew, Joseph, both of Cheyenne County, Kansas."

Have you ever heard of the Ketcham Ranch north of Bird City? Are you wondering where they went?

Compiled from previously written Dimmick and Ketcham articles by the writer, in the Cheyenne County History Book and from additional research notes, May 1, 2012.

Marsha C. SQUIRES Magley

PIECES OF HISTORY

p.26

George Joseph Kohler came to America in 1874. He was born February 9, 1850 in Lauda-Baden, Germany, which was 15 kilometers or 9 miles from Bad Mergentheim. He died April 16, 1935 at O'Neill, Nebraska, and was buried at Catholic Cemetery in O'Neill, Nebraska.

Effie Norris was born November 27, 1854 in Clyde, Sandusky County, Ohio. She died December 26, 1925 in Page, Nebraska.

George Kohler and Effie Norris were married on May 10, 1887 in Sandusky County, Ohio. The Kohler family lived in Johnson County, Nebraska, for a number of years. They didn't move to Page, Nebraska, until after their daughter Mary Elizabeth married. They paid \$1,000.00 in April 1886 for an 80 acre farm. Their son, Leo, was killed in a cyclone that hit the schoolhouse. They had 2 daughters, Emma and Inez.

Effie (Norris) Kohler was a sister to Senator George Norris of Nebraska. George was a Senator for Nebraska for over 40 years. George and his brother, William, served in the Franco-Prussian war in 1870 (Germany against France over Alsolo and Lorraine Territory). It is told "that George carried a prayer book over his heart during the war. A bullet went through the center of the prayer book saving his life." After having glowing reports from their brother Martin, who came to America to escape having to go to war, they came to America. In 1874, after they settled here, they sent for their mother, and she came and also settled here.

George and Effie Kohler were Eva Ann (Pyle) Murray's grandpa and grandma on her mother's side, Mary Elizabeth (Kohler) Pyle.

Joel Pyle was born at Carlton County, Missouri, on March 13, 1855. He died at Bird City, Kansas, on May 4, 1913. He was buried at Evergreen Cemetery north of Bird City, Kansas.

Susanp.ah Burkhart and Joel Pyle were married on October 22, 1878. In 1906, Joel Pyle moved from Missouri to Sherman County, Kansas, where he lived 3 yars and then he moved to Cheyenne County, Kansas, where he lived the rest of his life.

Susannah (Tote) Burkhart was born in Pittman County, Ohio, on January 1, 1847. Susannah and Joel Pyle had 5 sons and 4 daughters. She was totally blind. She was one-fourth Indian. She was buried in the St. Francis, Kansas, Cemetery. Susannah and Joel Pyle were George William Pyle's folks and Eva Ann (Pyle) Murray's Grandma and Grandpa on her father's side, George William Pyle.

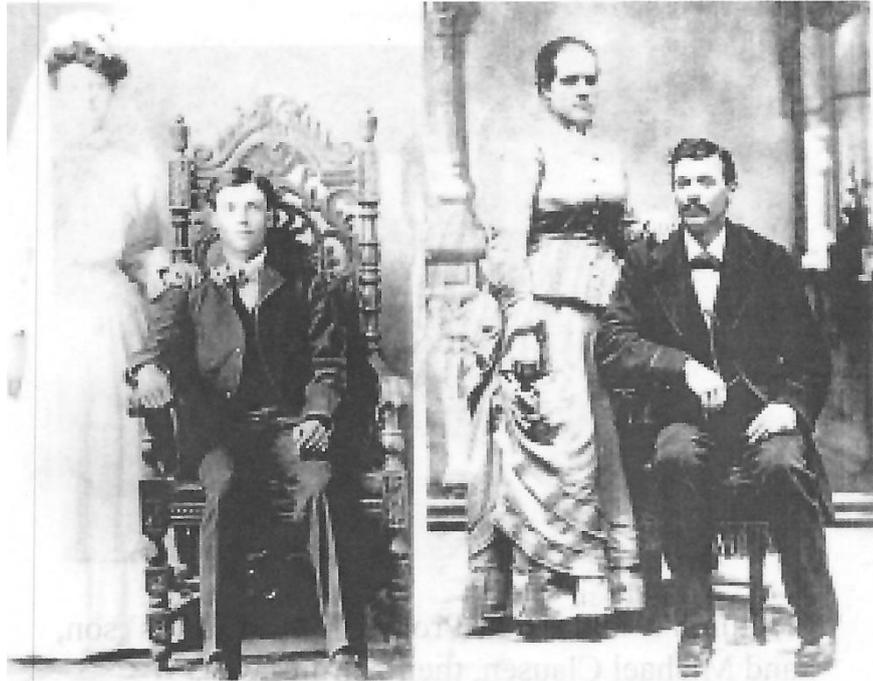
Mary Elizabeth Kohler was born September 4, 1880 near Tecumseh, Johnson County, Nebraska. She died on December 5, 1925 in Big Timber Community, Cheyenne County, Kansas, and was buried at Benkelman, Nebraska, Cemetery. She was married to George W. Pyle on September 10, 1903. She was the mother of nine children – Velta, Eva, Norris, Olen, Mildred, Floyd and an infant son Dale, and 2 sons, Leroy and Robert, who preceded her in death.

George William Pyle was born on April 25, 1885, at Pawnee City, Nebraska. He died on January 9, 1943 and was buried at the Evergreen Cemetery north of Bird City, Kansas. Mary and George Pyle moved to Kansas in 1906 and worked several years for farmers. In 1910 they took up a homestead in the Big Timber Community. He lived in this county until 1939, when he moved to Ft. Morgan, Colorado. Mary Elizabeth and George William Pyle were Eva Ann (Pyle) Murray's parents.

Eva Ann (Pyle) Murray was born on February 6, 1909 in a sod house on a farm north of St. Francis, Kansas. She died on November 15, 2007. Eva Ann Pyl and Eleanor Eva Bredholft were named after their Grandma Effie Ann (Eva) Norris. Eva Ann Pyle's brother, Norris Pyle, was named after Senator George Norris. Eva Ann Pyle met John Murray in the year of 1929. They were married on March 15, 1930. They began their married life on a farm owned by John's father, living with his folks that summer until they had the basement completed in October and set up housekeeping. That winter they built four rooms in the basement, finishing the house in the spring of 1931. They farmed. Their oldest daughter, Hollis Ilene (Murray) DaPron was born on March 6, 1935. Both girls were born and grew up on that farm. They bought the farm from John's father in 1945 and continued farming with the help of two grandson's, Duane and Darwin DaPron, until 1980. That year they decided to move to town, Bird City, Kansas. They bought the Earl Leach place in town. They moved to town and really enjoyed living in town. Eva Ann's husband, John, died in 1987. Eva Ann really enjoyed cooking, quilting and raising a garden.

Eva Ann and John Murray are buried in the Bird City, Kansas Cemetery.

HollisDaPron



Mary Elizabeth (Kohler) Pyle, mother of Eva Ann (Pyle) Murray.
George William Pyle, father of Eva Ann (Pyle) Murray.

Effie Norris - Grandmother of Eva Ann (Pyle) Murray.
George Joseph Kohler - Grandfather of Eva Ann (Pyle) Murray



From left to right are: Hollis Ilene (Murray) DaPron -Daughter of Eva Ann and John Murray, next is John Murray, Eva Ann (Pyle) Murray and the last on is Elaine Lucille (Murray) Kohl, Daughter of Eva Ann and John Murray.



Pictured is Darwin DaPron, John and Hollis' son,
and Michael Clausen, their son-in-law.

Darwin is the 4th generation from George and William Pyle's
line to farm this land.

This is the DaPron family.



From left to right: Donita (DaPron) Clausen; Duane DaPron
John DaPron, Hollis DaPron, Darwin DaPron

ITEMS OF HISTORICAL INTEREST

The Sod House

Did the idea of the sod house come from the Indian earth lodge? There are enough similarities to suggest that the idea was borrowed from them. Wisely, the early settlers borrowed objects or words from the Indians.

Industrious, strong hearted men and women saw a door opened to them when the West became open to conquest.

Perhaps the most important incentive for settlement was the Homestead Act of 1862. Prior to this bill, 160 acres of public land could be acquired by paying \$1.25 per acre under the provisions of the Preemption Law of 1841, or land could be claimed with the use of military bounty land warrants earned as a part of the reward for military service, or it could simply be purchased from another owner. Under the 1862 law, however, the aspiring land owner could claim a quarter section of public land, pay a \$10.00 filing fee and then earn it with his sweat and courage; he had only to live on it for five years after filing his claim. Later, additional land could be acquired in return for the promise to plant 40 acres of timber. The railroads also sold their lands and, although it was slightly more expensive, it was also better land. They imported workers, provided free passage to the free lands, and generally encouraged settlement. It was obviously to the advantage of the railroad to have customers spaced out along its full length.

Note: Taken from Sod Walls by Roger Welsch

Imagine traveling thousands of miles to make a new start. At last the pioneer reached the selected land on the plains. He had a wagon pulled by two horses, a few supplies, an ax, a plow, a shovel, a barrel or two, maybe a canary, a wife and three kids. With this he had to build a home. There was not a tree to be seen. He may not have seen any for three days. There were no rocks, no stone outcroppings. There was absolutely nothing but sky and grass.

The lumber needed for framing and shingles was far away and hauled in or brought from larger settlements by rail to distant towns. This farmer could scarcely afford to pay the necessary filing fees. He probably had to mortgage everything he owned to buy the basic equipment for farming.

Even heating and cooking had to be provided by burning twisted grass, or buffalo chips and cow wood as it was called by more polite pioneers.

On the vast, treeless expanse of the 19th century American Midwest, pioneers built their homes of "prairie marble," that came readily to hand. The venerable sod house was said to be cheap, cool in summer and warm in winter. It was made without mortar, square, plumb or greenbacks. The sod house laughed at hard times and keeps alive old traditions.

"Honor the Sod House dweller, for he has helped build a nation."

(Anonymous)

Source: Taken in part from Sod Walls by Roger Welsch

Rosemary Powell

John W. Shrader

The following article was written in 1919 when John W Shrader was living.

Some people take an interest in the selling of goods, others in art and literature, some in one thing, some in another, but all perforce are compelled to acknowledge a vital interest in the production of the meat which supplies their table. It is therefore for his enterprise in establishing and maintaining some of the finest herds of White Face beef cattle in Westem Kansas that John W. Shrader's career became a matter of interest to thousands of people outside his immediate community. Among Hereford cattle growers and cattle men generally Mr. Shrader has indeed a national reputation. His home is at Bird City, and he has been ranching in that comer of Kansas for a great many years.

Mr. Shrader was born at Jacksonville, Illinois, May 12, 1863. A number of generations ago his forefathers emigrated from Germany to Maryland. His great-grandfather sealed his devotion to the cause of America by service in the War of 1812. His grandfather, Conrad Shrader, was born in Maryland in 1785, pioneered in Kentucky, later moved to the vicinity of Moberly, Missouri, and finally retired to Jacksonville, Illinois, where he died in 1865. He was a farmer all his active career. He married Catherine Smjth, who was born and died in Kentucky.

The father of John W. Shrader was Jacob A. Shrader. He was born in Kentucky in 1829, and was taken as a small boy to Moberly, Missouri. At the age of sixteen he went to Jacksonville, Illinois, was married there and in 1865 established a home in Marion County, Iowa. From 1904-1908 his home was at Krimlin, Oklahoma, and he died at Helena in that state in 1908. He was a farmer all his life, was a democrat in politics and a member of the Christian Church. Jacob A. Shrader married first, Jane McKerley, who died in Jacksonville, Illinois. Of their six children the only one now living is the second in age, Martha Jane, a resident of Dallas, Iowa, widow of Frank Clingman, a farmer. The other children were Mary, Emma, Jacob, Alice and Mary, second of the name. For his second wife, Jacob A. Shrader married Nancy Jane Smith. She was born in Kirksville, Iowa, in 1848 and died at Dallas in that state in 1879. John W. Shrader was the first child of this marriage. His brother Jacob Albert died at the age of seventeen years. Alphonso and the next two in age all died in infancy. James Franklin was

with his father until the latter's death and he died in Helena, Oklahoma, in September, 1916. The youngest, Edward, died at the age of six months.

John W. Shrader was two years old when his parents moved to Iowa. He grew up on his father's farm, getting an experience as a boy that has been the groundwork and foundation of all his subsequent effort. He was educated in the rural schools of Iowa. After reaching the age of twenty-one he farmed for himself one year, and in December, 1885, pioneered into Northwest Kansas, locating near Bird City in Cheyenne County. He filed on a homestead and commuted it by the payment of \$1.25 an acre. He later sold the homestead, but from time to time has accumulated lands until he now has 1,720 acres in Cheyenne County, comprising one of the best equipped ranches on the western line of the state. He has always done more or less grain farming, but his real specialty is Hereford cattle. Years ago he recognized the superior merits of the White Face as beef cattle and has spared neither time nor expense to the best herds of Hereford cattle in Kansas, finally selling it to Thad Mendenhal of Nebraska. For twenty years, Mr. Shrader has been one of the largest stock dealers and for four years of that time a large grain buyer in Western Kansas. Recently he and his son re-entered the White Face business on the Shrader ranch. He is one of the well known members of the National Hereford Association. Since 1910 he lived in Bird City.¹ In politics he exercised an independent franchise and is a past master workman of Bird City Lodge No. 210, Ancient Order United Workmen.

In 1892, at St. Francis, Kansas, Mr. Shrader married Miss Mary Hartley, daughter of G. W. and Susan (Williams) Hartley, both now deceased. Mr. Hartley was a farmer and came originally from Fulton County, Illinois. Mrs. Shrader died at Bird City in 1904, and of six children the five youngest, George, Everett, Alice, Floyd and an infant son, died in early age, none of them reaching school age. Mr. Shrader's only son is Roy A., who has followed in the footsteps of his father and already has a reputation as one of the leading growers of Hereford cattle in Western Kansas. He lives on and manages his father's ranch thirteen miles south of Bird City. He finished his education in an academy at Franklin, Nebraska.

Roy A. Shrader married Lulu Taylor. Their three children are Lloyd, Marvin and John Woodrow.

Transcribed from A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, written and compiled by William E. Connelley, Secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka. [Revised ed.] Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1919, c1918. 5 v. (xlviii, 2530 p., [155] leaves of plates): ill., maps (some fold.), ports.; 27 cm.

Contributed by Edna (Shrader) Roesener