An Historical Record of Lane County

Founded June 3, 1886

Published July 1961

in commemoration of the

Seventy--Fifth Anniversary

of Lane County

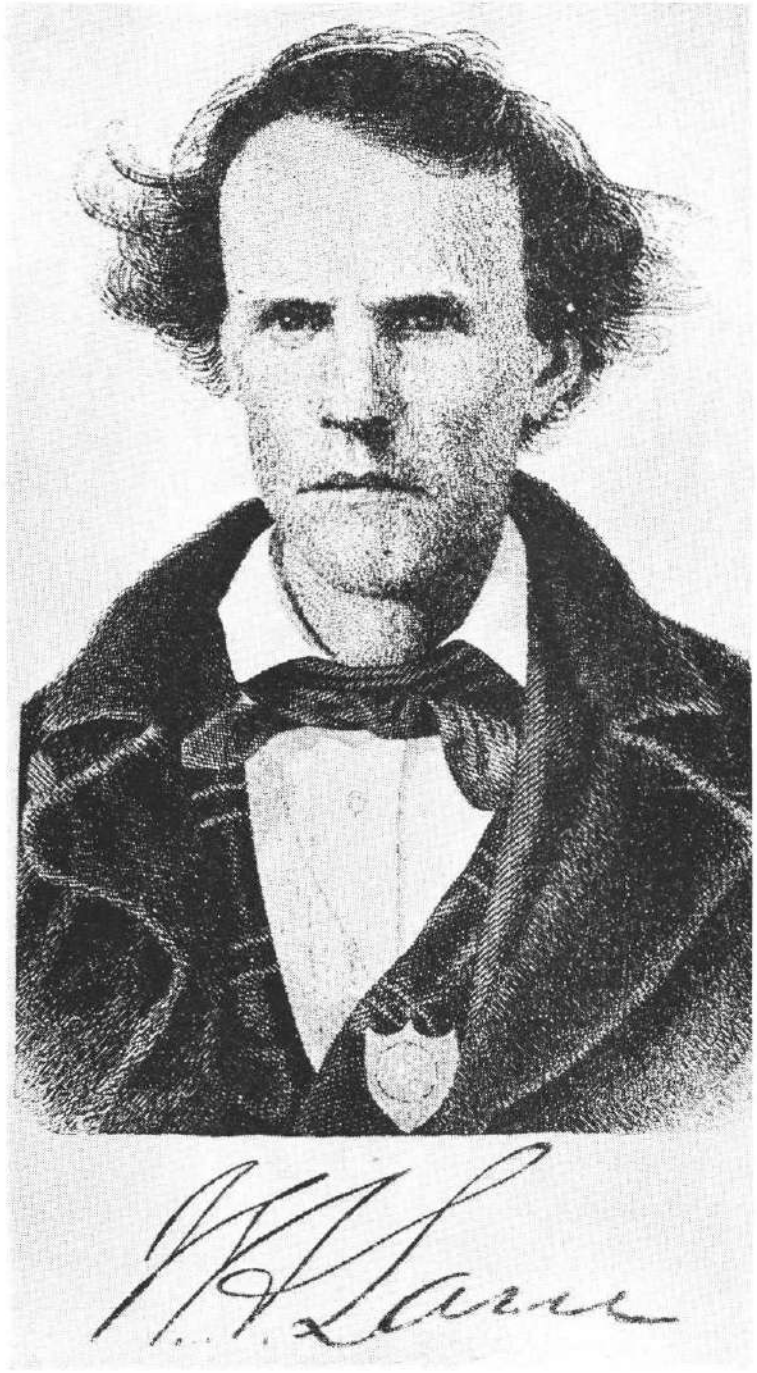
Published by The Dighton Herald

Lane county was created by the Kansas legislature in 1873.

Pictured at the right is Senator James H. Lane, 1814—1866, free state partisan, for whom Lane county was named.

"The steel-plate engraving of General Lane represents him in the heydey of his glory in the struggles of Kansas for freedom, in his old seal-skin coat and calf-skin vest, worn in his warfare in Kansas in 1855-57. The emblem on his watch-chain is a Masonic emblem worn by his father."

—U. S. Biographical Dictionary



A C K N O W L E D G M E N T

It would be impossible to publish a booklet of this type without the assistance of pioneers and those interested in preserving the history of Lane county.

Credit should be given to the Lane County Historical Society, Dighton chamber of commerce, and the merchants listed in the back of this booklet.

No doubt there will be those who will find minor discrepancies in the county history as recorded here. However, it has been the aim of the publishers of this booklet to use information as given to us by those now living in Lane county.

Much of the information in this booklet also was obtained from former residents of Lane county, now living in other parts of the United States. These persons also deserve a note of credit.

History of Lane County, Kansas

1886 —— 1961

Lane county, Kansas, is situated in the center of the western half of Kansas, in what is known as the short grass country. This county was organized in 1886, and previous to that time was joined to Ness county for municipal purposes.

The county is 24 miles by 30 miles and contains 720 sections of good land. More than nine-tenths of this land can be cultivated.

Lane county is located about one-half way between the Missouri river and the Rocky mountains. There are nine townships in the county—Alamota, Blaine, Cheyenne, Cleveland, Dighton, Spring Creek, Sutton, White Rock and Wilson.

Lane county was first settled in 1879 by a few settlers who generally located along the creeks and engaged in raising cattle for a living. Railroads were 40 miles distant and vast stretches of uninhabited country was in every direction.

The real settlement was in 1885-1886 when three settlers came for each section, the other quarter being a tree claim and with these immigrants came the boom and the real estate men. Many of these settlers proved up their claims as soon as they could, got a loan from $500 to $900 and went back east.

The Homestead Law, 1862, shortly after the admission of Kansas to the Union, was passed by Congress to encourage settlement in the west. This measure provided that any person who was the head of a family, or who was 21 years of age, and a citizen of the United States or declared his intention to become such, may acquire a tract of 160 acres of public land on condition of settlement, cultivation and occupancy as a home for a period of five years, and on payment of certain moderate fees. Finally he was required to pay the government $1.25 an acre. Such a settler was called a squatter; his tract of land, covering 160 acres, was called a claim; and the method of taking possession was called pre-emption.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COUNTY

Lane county was created by the Legislature in 1873 and named for Senator James H. Lane, freestate partisan from Kansas.

The first change in the boundaries was made in 1879, when the county was enlarged by township 15 in ranges 26 to 30. In 1881 it was diminished on the north by one tier of townships and increased on the south by a strip taken from Buffalo county. In 1883 townships 21 of ranges 27 to 30 were detached, the first two being given to Hodgeman and the last two attached to Finney.

In February, 1886, in response to a petition from the residents of Lane county for organization Governor Martin appointed G. T. Sutton census taker. His report, made on June 3, showed that there were 2,726 inhabitants, of whom 924 were householders. Dighton was the choice of the majority of the voters for temporary

SOD HOUSE

According to information available, this is a photo of the first house in Dighton. The sod house was built in 1879.

In the photo, from left to right, are 1—William A. Watson, with gray beard; 2—Jennie Walker at Watson's knee. She was four years of age when the picture was taken. She is a daughter of William Walker. 3—John Schiereck, Sr., with legs crossed. He was the father of John Schiereck, Jr. 4—L. Wolf, standing by the door. 5—Eugene Walker, age five, sitting on the ground. He was a son of William Walker. 6—Charles S. Lee, sitting at the right of the door. He was a brother of W. E. Lee and an uncle of the late Ed Lee. W. E. Lee operated a newspaper in Dighton for several years. 7—Lew Wolf is on the horse in the background. Wolf's operated a general store here for several years Jennie Walker, is the only living person in the picture. She now lives at Lewis.

This picture was taken four years after the sod house was built. The house was located on the back of the lot where the Mrs. Lou King residence is located.

Lane county was organized June 3, 1886 by Governor Martin. At the time of county organization the population was 2,726. This compares with the March 1, 1960 census of 3,148. First commissioners, appointed by Governor Martin were Joshua Wheatcroft, T. T. Shaffer and G. H. Steeley. First county clerk was T. J. Smith. G. T. Sutton was appointed Jan. 28, 1886 by Gov. Martin to take the Lane county census.

county seat. The governor's proclamation, made the same day that this report was returned, declared Dighton the temporary county seat and appointed the following officers: County clerk, T. J. Smith; county commissioners, Joshua Wheatcroft, J. J. Shaffer and G. H. Steeley.

The first settlements were made in 1878 and were in or about Alamota, where the first postoffice was established in that year, a pioneer character known as "Wild Horse Johnson" being the first postmaster. Dighton must have been founded in 1879, as a newspaper the Dighton Progress, was established in February 1880, by Robert Mitchell. The first school was taught at Dighton in 1879. The first birth was that of Grace Lane Dow in 1879. The Dighton Republican in 1887 gave a list of 129 people who came into the county in 1879. The first United States census was taken in 1880 and showed a population of 619. At that time Lane was attached to Ness county for political purposes. A number of towns were founded about this time, among which were Waterloo, by. R. W. Hey; Gold City, Watson, California and Belltown. Lane Center was at the geographical center of the county. The first newspaper was established one month prior to the Dighton progress. In 1881 Lane was organized as a municipal township and held its first election. The first marriage occurred in March, 1881 between William D. Larkin and Margaret A. Sprague, the ceremony being performed by the Rev. N. R. VanDerran. In 1882 there were but 3 sections of land deeded, 1,198 head of cattle and 2,304 sheep. The real estate and personal property was worth $45,000. Five years later there were 180 sections of land deeded, the livestock numbered 6,326, of which one-half was cattle. The railroad had been built and Dighton had attained a population of 2,000 accordng to the newspapers. The hard-time of 1892-93, which caused a great deal of suffering in western Kansas was especially disasterous to Lane county people. In the winter of 1893, many of the farmers finding themselves unable to buy coal and fuel, sent a request to Governor Lewelling that they be supplied from the state mines at Leavenworth. This could not be done under law, but they were helped by private contributors. Ten years later the section had practically recovered from these hardships, land prices in Lane county had gone up and permanent prosperity had been established.

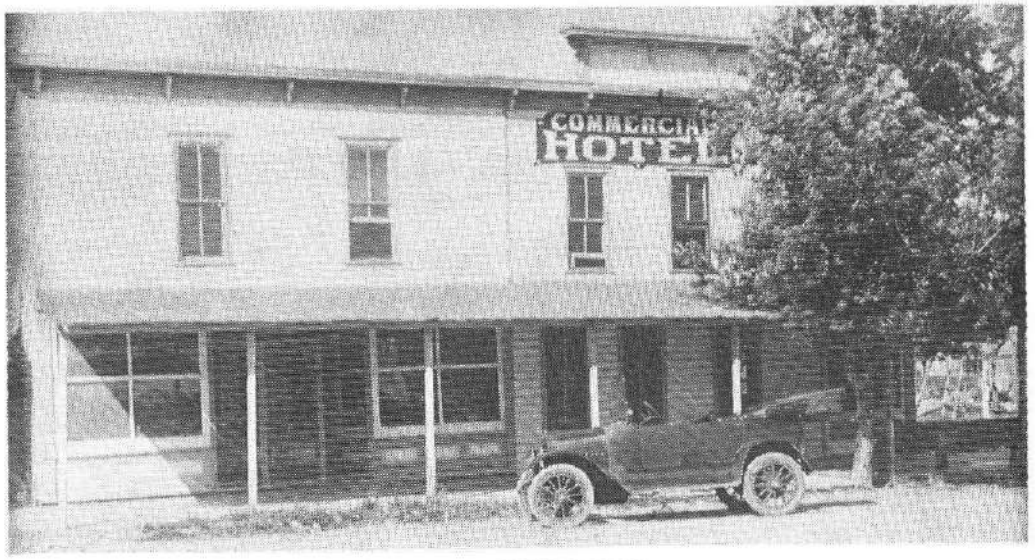
COUNTY SEAT OF LANE COUNTY

DIGHTON

Dighton, the county seat of Lane County, is centrally located on the Great Bend & Scott division of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, 96 miles west of Great Bend. The land which forms the townsite was entered by W. A. Watson in the spring of 1879 and a postoffice was established the same year, but six years elapsed before the town began to grow.

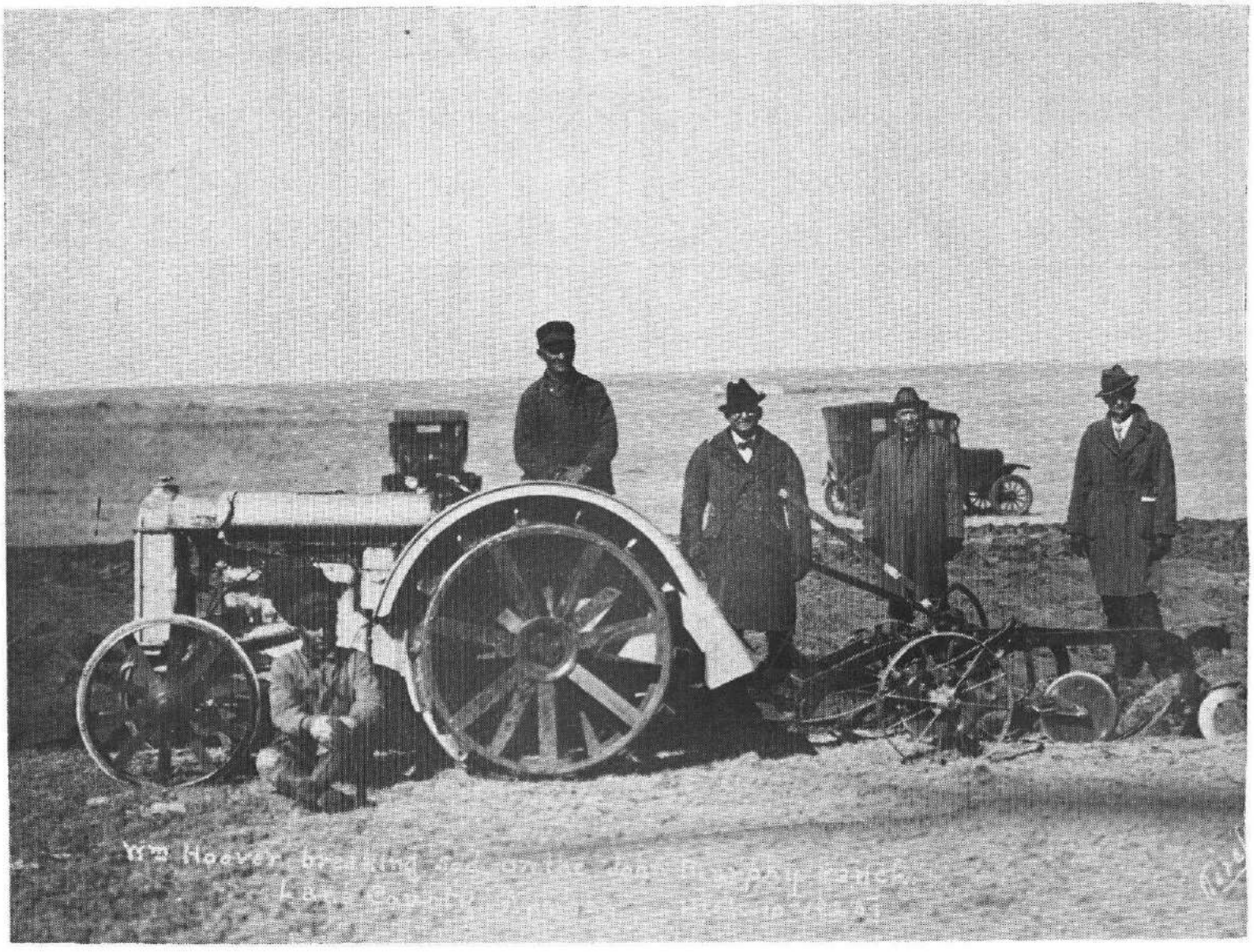
The townsite of Dighton was first started by four men. At the center of the street where Long street and Main street crosses near the present postoffice, these four men built a small frame house in 1878 and they called it their home, thus holding the four quarter sections of land that cornered there. S. S. Dennis held the quarter section cornering to the southeast, E. B. Titus the one to the northeast, A. H. Goforth to the northwest and Ben Goforth to the southwest where the present postoffice now

HORSE SHOW
An annual horse show at Dighton, Kansas, April 4th, 1908.



COMMERCIAL HOTEL
The above hotel was located on lots 12 and 13 in block 13, Walker's First addition to the city of Dighton. The picture was taken in 1915. The First National Bank and Mull Electric are now on the place where the old hotel was built.

Part of the 1924 corn crop in Lane county. Picture was taken Nov. 14, 1924 at Healy. In the background is the Healy Cooperative Elevator. Pictured at the right is A. J. Kerkhoff, who now operates the Continental Grain Company at Healy.



William Hoover is pictured breaking sod on the John Murphy ranch. The picture was taken March 10, 1925.

stands. Ben Goforth sold his quarter to W. A. Watson, and Watson laid out the 40 acres near the present postoffice into town lots and this was the first part of Dighton to be platted.

After A. H. Goforth proved up and obtained a deed for his claim, W. A. Watson purchased that also, and laid out part of it as Watson's second addition and later platted his third addition just west of the first addition. Watson came here from Iowa, in 1879. He was a Methodist minister. He named several streets after his children, Annabelle, Lincoln, Pearl, George and James. Mr. Watson was an uncle of Dr. F. L. Rownd.

Allen Scoarcem, who ran a livery stable with Donny Jones, donated the two blocks for the city park that are now used for that purpose.

Richard Deighton, a surveyor of La Crosse, laid out the town site and the town was named for him, but was first called Watson. In 1886 Governor Martin declared Dighton the county seat of Lane County. Up to 1886 Dighton was spelled "Deighton," but due to an error in the report of the census to the Governor, the "e" was omitted.

Feb. 18, 1886, R. W. Montgomery issued the initial number of The Dighton Journal, which states that there then were 70 buildings and a population of 350, with about 50 new buildings in process of construction. The expectations of the founders at that time have not been realized, though Dighton is one of the active energetic towns of Western Kansas and was incorporated Jan. 4, 1887.

The first courthouse was built in 1886 and a new one was built in 1930. The first public school in Dighton was built in 1887 at a cost of about $15,000. It consisted of four ventilated rooms and in addition a library room filled with about five hundred books.

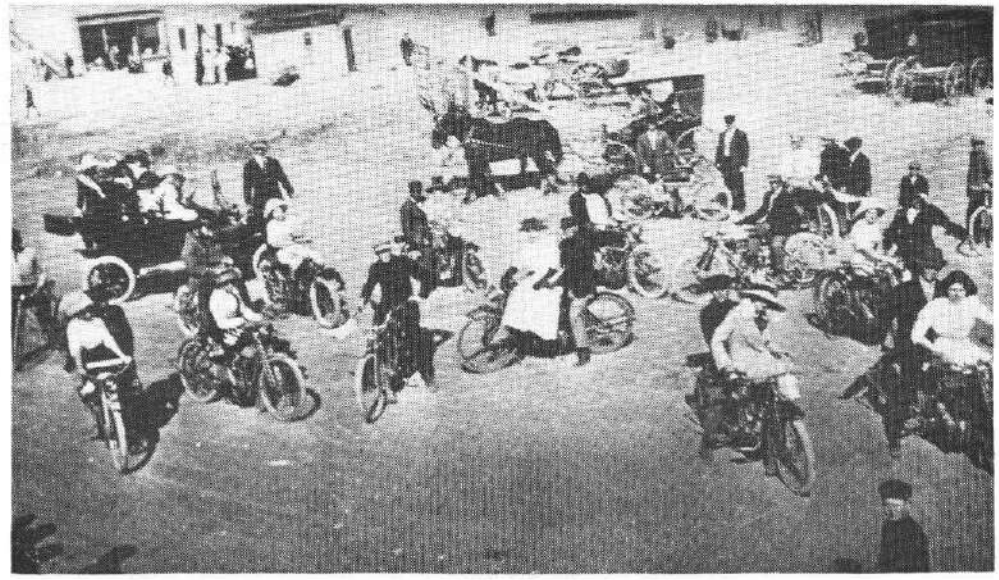
FIRST INHABITANTS

The first inhabitants of Lane County were the buffalo and the Indian. The land was a great buffalo range, and the Indian derived much of his livelihood from the buffalo, using its meat for food and its hide for clothing.

When the white men first entered this part of the Great High Plains region they found the Pawnee Indians, a tribe which was very powerful at that time. They seemed to claim as their own all the territory drained by the Platt and Kansas rivers. The Pawnee finally lost their power, partly as the result of the ravages of smallpox and war with other tribes:

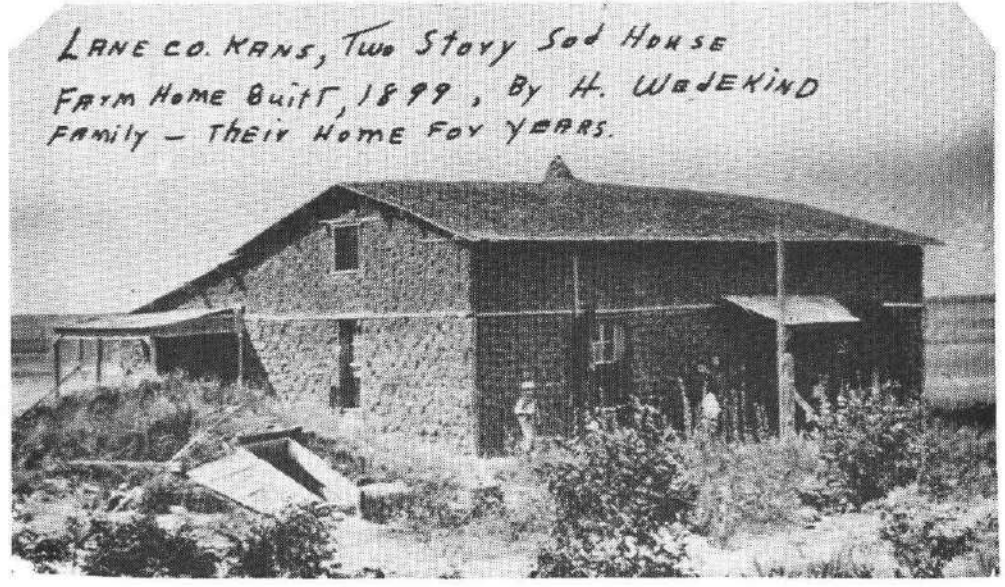
A part of the Great High Plains also belonged to the Kaw Indians; however, the most important tribes of the plains after the supremacy of the Pawnees was broken were the Cheyennes, the Arapahoes, and their allies the Sioux.

The Indians were hostile to the white men. As the railroads advanced and the buffalo hunters crossed the plains, they became more and more unfriendly. They regarded the buffalo range as their last line of defense in their struggle to retain their primitive way of life. Tracklayers for the railroad had to work under armed guard, and the people traveling on the overland trails went heavily armed. The federal government dispatched troops to the region to protect the construction gangs and keep the trails open. Among the Indian outbreaks were some in 1878, when the Indians destroyed property, stole livestock and committed other



MOTORCYCLE PARADE

Showing three modes of transportation, in early day Lane county. Motorcycles, Fords and horse and buggy are visible in the picture.



SOD HOUSE

One of the first houses in Lane county this two story sod house was built in 1899 on a farm by H. Wejekind and family. This was their home on the prairie for many years.

depredations on their route to the North, those were a band of Cheyennes, another outbreak occurred in 1882 perhaps the last one.

The Jordon Massacre 1872 occurred along the Middle Walnut either in Lane or Ness county. Dick Jordon and his brother George were buffalo hunters from Ellis who lived at what was then Park's Fort. They killed buffalo, dried and stored the meat to ship to eastern markets.

In August 1872, Dick decided to make an extended buffalo hunt, planning to hunt the country between Park's Fort and Fort Dodge or possibly Granada and would at one point or the other dispose of the hides and meat he might have accumulated on the trip. Mrs. Jordon had but recently lost her four month old baby and, feeling very lonely, she asked to go along. Since she had gone on similar trips before and understood the ways of buffalo hunting and camping and the Government headquarters assured all the frontier was perfectly safe she was permitted to go along.

Before leaving Mrs. Jordon visited relatives in Ellis and informed her mother not to worry if she did not hear from them for some time perhaps six or seven weeks, as they couldn't communicate with them until they reached Fort Dodge.

The hunting party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Dick Jordon, his brother George Jordon, and a young Swede, Fred Nelson. They had two well equipped and provisioned canvass covered wagons pulled by mules. The family dog, Queen, a large Newfoundland, which often went on hunting trips also went on this trip.

After two weeks had elapsed not hearing from the hunting party, one morning Mr. Jordon arose to find Queen, the dog on his door step. The dog's continued howling caused the relatives to become alarmed but still did not go in search of the hunting party until a hunter came from the south to Buffalo Station and reported having run across the ruins of a wagon or wagons and remnants of harness which bore evidence of having been hurridly cut from the horses. He had not stopped to examine much but did notice that some grain sacks had printed on them R. Jordon. The body of a man was lying near the wagons, which he covered with a blanket and hurried on in to Buffalo and offered to guide a party to the scene.

Word was wired to Hon J. H. Edwards, Rep. at Ellis, home of the Jordons, and he immediately sent the following telegram:

TELEGRAM

Ellis, September 30, 1872

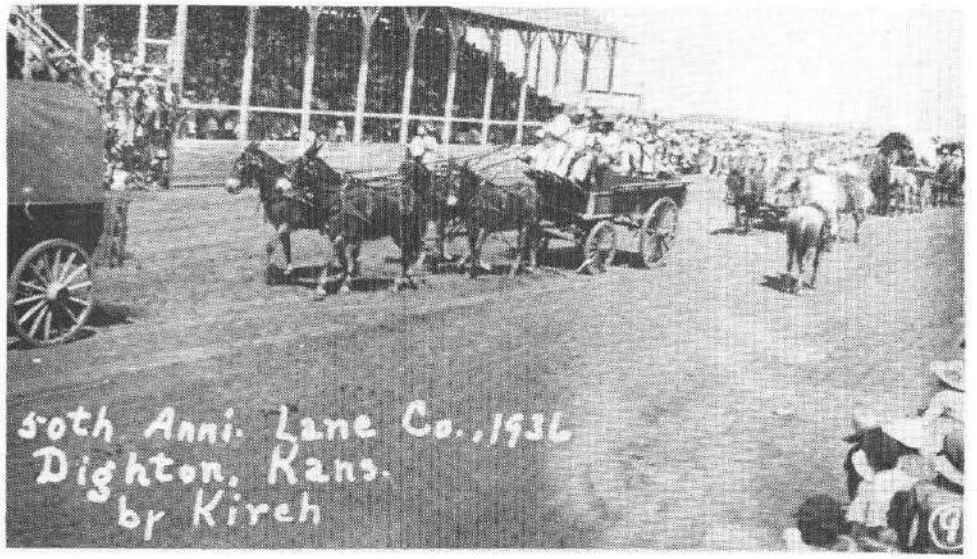
Received at 4:20 P.M.
To Commanding Officer
Fort Hays, Kansas

A party of four, three men and one woman, left Park's Fort on Line of K.P.RR about seven weeks since; nothing heard from them until today a hunter and a red man came into Buffalo Station and reports having found their wagons on Pawnee Creek, forty miles south of Buffalo Station with horses standing around and harness cut up, apparently done by Indians from all appearances no one had been near the camp for sometime. Can you send out troops to hunt for them or their bodies? Answer?

Signed: J. H. Edwards
Rep. 89th District.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES
Records War Dept.
Dept. of the Platte File 2692-M-1872

Lieut. Col Neill of Fort Hays at once sent a sergeant and ten privates to Buffalo Station, where they went south, guided by

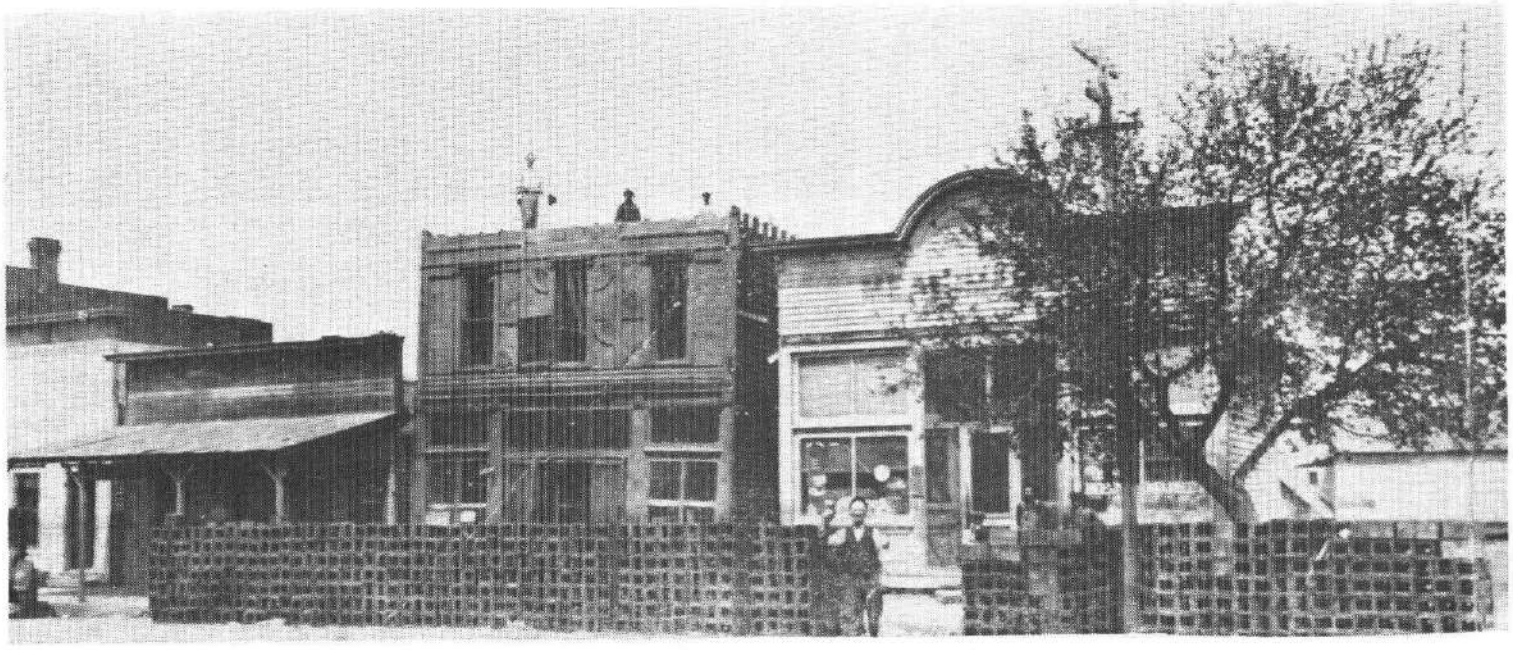


FAIR TIME

Showing the celebration of Lane county's 50th anniversary at the Lane county fair. Picture was taken in 1936.

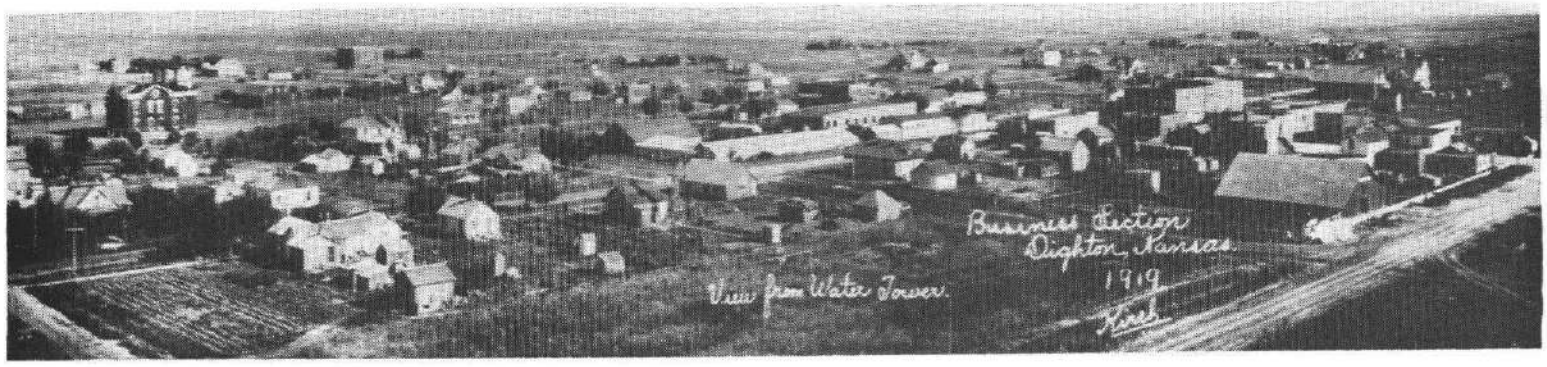
DUST STORM

Dark Sunday, April 14, 1933, showing one of the dust storm clouds as it rolled across Lane county.



BUILDING IN 1925

Site of a new building on Dighton's Long Street. The Ford roadster on the left has a 1925 license tag. The picture shows the Yates building at the left; I. S. Armantrout grocery in the center and the proposed W. V. Young building at the right.



CITY OF DIGHTON

This view of the business district of the city of Dighton was taken in 1919. The photographer was on top of the water tower when the picture was taken.

SCHOOL STUDENTS

These were students in the Dighton public school in about 1905 or 1906. Identified in the picture are first row—Edna Dole, Daisy Ballard, Edna Noll, Agnes Cavanaugh, Frankie Casteo, Etta Schiereck, Rodney Patton, ——— Green, Harold Ferris, Dick Bradstreet, Bernard White, Chester Green, Elmer Crandell, Albert Hineman and John Schiereck.

Second row—Marie James, Cora Walker, Maude Bates, Alice Delaney, Edith Miller, Bob Maple, teacher Arthur Lewis, Stuart Simmons, Wayne Peck, Art Crandell, John Jewett, Chester Phillips, "Doc" Ellis and Fred Hyames.

Third row—Hal Jewett, Harry Phillips, Blanche Towns, Mary Horn, G. R. Dodge, ———, Kenneth Cutler, Bill Noll, Clark Whiting, Walton Freas and Guy Patton.

the hunter and accompanied by T. K. Hamilton and Nickolas Jordon, brother-in-law and brother of the victims. They reached the scene of the massacre late in the day and found the body of Dick Jordon at the camp fire and of the Swede a few yards away. Hamilton set out at once for Buffalo Station and wrote the following note to J. H. Edwards:

We found the remains of R. Jordon and the Swede man scalped and apparently have been dead five or six weeks failed to find the body of George but suppose it will be in a Swamp near where the others lay from signs we find Mary is undoubtedly alive and carried off by the Indians whom we suppose to be a band of Kiowas.

T. Hamilton.

To the Assisting Adjutant
6th U. S. Cavalry
Camp near Fort Hays, Kansas

OCTOBER 2, 1872: Left Hays City at 2:45 A. M. proceeded by rail to Buffalo Station a distance of 70 miles, arrived at Buffalo Station at 10 o'clock A. M. took off our horses and fed them and the detail had dinner; left Buffalo Station at half past twelve P.M. and marched in south westerly direction; crossed Big Creek at its head a distance of 4 miles from the R. R. crossed Hackberry Creek at 3:30 a distance of 15 miles from the R. R. changed the direction there and proceeded in a south easterly direction for about two miles passing and leaving to our left a large sand stone rock and cave, a distance of 6 miles from Castle Rock and arrived at camp at 5:30 having marched 21 miles. Camped in a ravine with very little water to be found in holes and stagnant; got water for use and drinking out of a small spring with a box in it on the right side of the road; the spring was not known by any of the party; grass very poor; wood none.

OCTOBER 3rd, 1872: Left camp at 7 o'clock; went in south easterly direction for about 4 miles crossing the Butterfield trail and at 8 o'clock moved in an easterly direction for 5 miles and crossed the Smoky River, traveling south east for 30 miles; met a number of hunters on the middle fork of the Walnut a mile east of the place where the wagon's were last seen on this creek we found the bodies of the Jordon boys and the Swede who accompanied them; the first body was recognized by his brother as Richard Jordon he knowing him by clothing he had on. The second body was recognized as the Swede. It getting too late for us to continue the search we broke camp again at 5 o'clock and crossed the middle fork of the Walnut and marched about southeast for 5 miles, went to hunting camp about 6:30 P.M. Wood plentiful, water scarce and grass poor. Distance traveled 44 miles.

OCTOBER 4th, 1872: Left camp at 8:30 procured tool for purpose of burying the body found. On arriving at vacinity of the murder we found the body of Swede about 500 yards S.E. of the first body and lying upon his face and being like the first one scalped, the former being wholly scalped that is all the skin taken off his head, the

latter only having part removed; we then made a thorough search for the missing body but finding it to be in vain and having found a hat supposed to be his in the Creek his brother and brother-in-law arrived at the conclusion that the body was concealed in the creek. So after a fruitless search we dug a grave and buried the bodies side by side on a small elevation about 20 or 30 yards from the Creek. The place selected by the brother and is on the north bank of the stream. Having accomplished our mission the relatives of the deceased left us and proceeded to return home leaving us; we fed or rather let our horses graze for an hour longer. A party of hunters now coming up and traveling in the direction of Hays and wishing our company we went with them to find a good crossing for their heavily laden wagons. In doing so we found the remaining body. This one also was scalped and horribly mutilated having five arrows in his body one of them being in his mouth. As the other party had taken the tools we were unable to bury him so we marked the place well and started for Hays marching in a N. E. direction for about 8 miles then we camped for the night in a small ravine with barely enough water for the horses, arriving at 5 o'clock, grass fair, wood none, 13 miles.

OCTOBER 5, 1872: Broke camp at 8:45 A. M. marched N. E. until we reached the Smoky River which we crossed about 65 miles S. W. from Fort Hays; went into camp on the north bank of the Smoky having marched about 20 miles. Wood none, water plentiful, grass poor. Arrived in camp 4:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 6, 1872: Left camp at 7 o'clock A. M. Marched in northerly direction for 5 miles passing to the S. W. of Castle Rock, arriving at Stage road at Hays at 8:30 o'clock; marched N. E. for about 20 miles camping for the night at Downing; grass good, water excellent and plentiful, wood none. Distance marched 25 miles.

OCTOBER 7, 1872: Left camp at 7 o'clock marched in an easterly direction reached camp at Fort Hays, Kansas.

Signed:
Daniel Ahern
Sergeant Co "A"
6 Cavalry

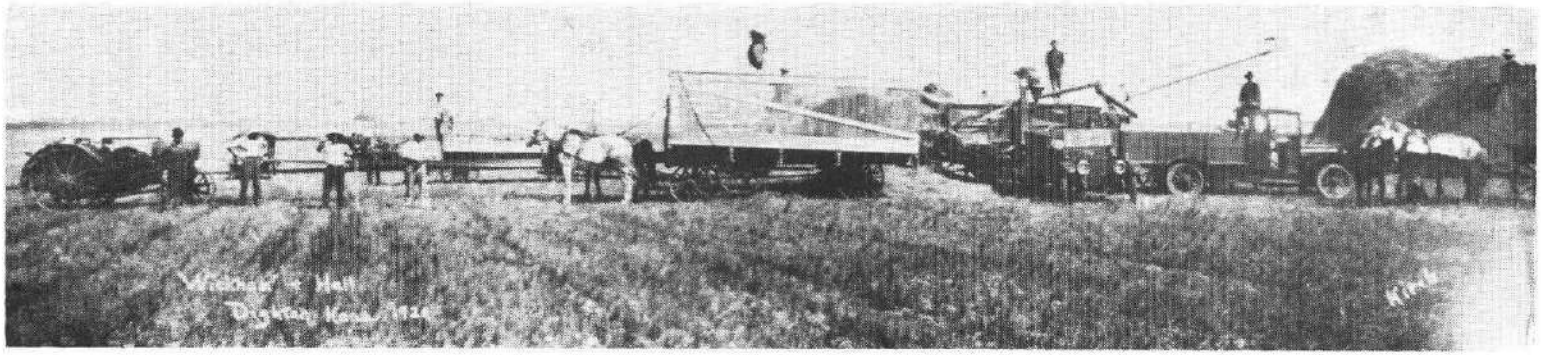
According to reports Mrs. Jordon was never found but her sunbonnett was found by the side of her husband who was covered with a blanket and her apron was found several hundred yards farther off, the supposition here and among those posted on Indian Matters is that she has been carried off to fate worse than death.

According to a letter from headquarters, "'I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 12th on the Jordons and I have seen Medicine Arrow and Little Raven, the principal men of the Cheyennes and Arrapahoes, and they assure me that none of their people were engaged in this act. The story I learn is about this—A party of Northern Cheyennes or Sioux were coming down to visit the Southern Indians. Near the head of the Walnut Creek they came across buffalo hunters, and one of the Indians approached them but was warned off. He then laid down his gun to show he was friendly and still approached the camp when he was shot dead by the hunters. Being too large a party to attack the Indians left and coming down the Walnut Creek met the Jordons and killed the men, took away the woman and left the horses in the camp to show they were not a marauding party but committed the act in revenge.

This is the Indian story and I merely mention it here that

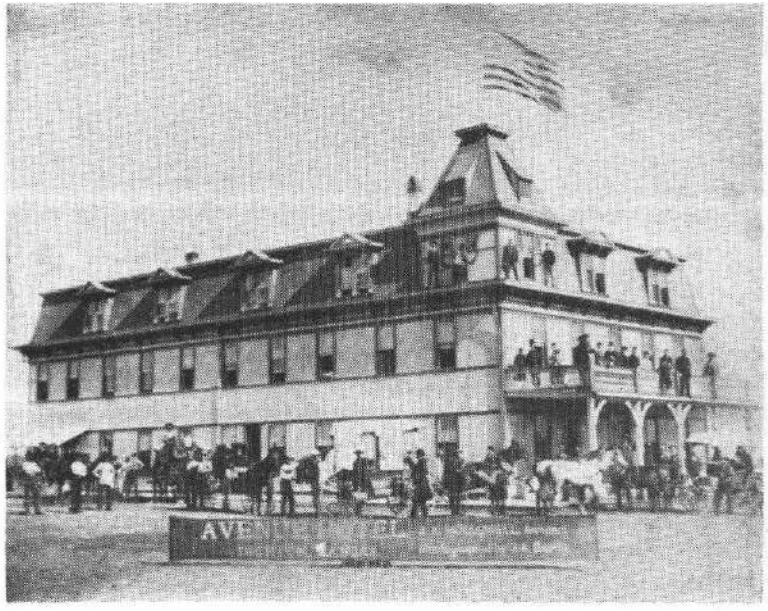
EARLY DAY FAMILY

This family picture shows the Melvin Marling family, one of the early day pioneers of Lane county. Pictured, left to right, Max A. Marling, Melvin A. Marling, Maude E. Marling, Ethel L. Marling and Dona Reed Marling.



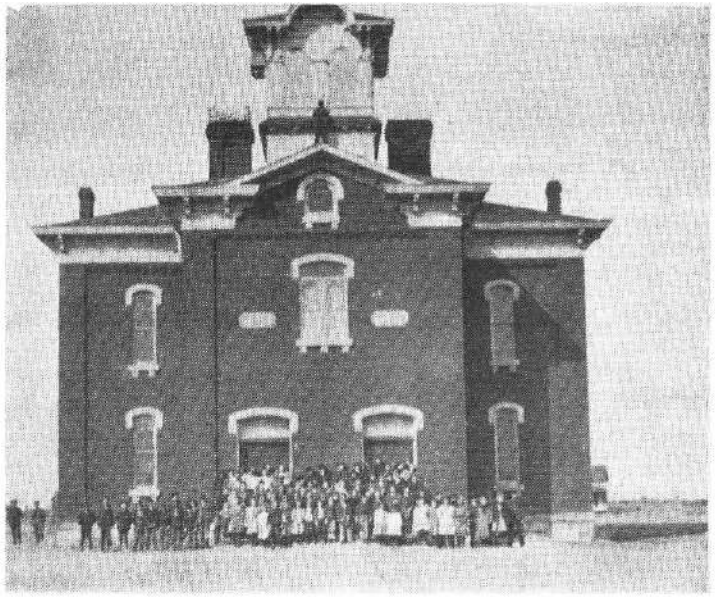
WHEAT HARVEST

Wheat harvest 1920 style. The above photo shows harvesting the 1920 wheat crop. The wheat land was owned by Wickham and Hall.



DIGHTON HOTEL

The Avenue Hotel in Dighton, Kansas. The picture shows arrival of the stage coach from Garden City. Exact date of the photo is unknown, Photographer was J. A. Baird. J. K. Hollowell was architect for the hotel.



DIGHTON GRADE SCHOOL

Showing the Dighton grade school class and the first class of the Lane County High School in the above building. The picture was taken in 1903. H. J. Le Vries was principal.

inquiry may be prosecuted among the Northern Indians for the person of Mrs. Jordon.

J. W. Davidson
Lt. Col. 10th Cavalry

According to Howard C. Raynsford the site of the Jordon Massacre was in Ness county but after carefully reading Ahearn's report and according to Ness county tradition the Jordon Massacre took place just over the Ness county line in Lane county on the south fork of the Walnut. Records show that C. A. Nicholas or Big Nick in 1872, had a camp just outside the Ness county line in Lane county. This is the camp we think Ahearn went to after finding the bodies of the Jordons and the Swede.

CATTLE POOLS OF EARLY DAYS

Smoky Hill Cattle Pool

Lane county was among other counties in the Smoky Hill Cattle Pool which was organized in August 1882 at Farnsworth postoffice. The first officers were S. S. Evans, president; W. A. Sternberg, secretary and treasurer; Noah Chenoweth and J. W. Felch directors. The pool headquarters were at Farnsworth at first, but as its membership grew and its territory extended its headquarters were changed to Grainfield and E. A. McMath was made secretary and treasurer.

The pool had its own officers, range riders, and other employees. Members were assessed to cover expenses according to the number of cattle each had in the pool. The pool territory extended 30 miles along the Smoky and was 24 miles wide. The river furnished plenty of water for the cattle.

Each member had his own cattle and his own brand, but the cattle all ran together on a common range and were rounded up once a year.

The policy of the pool was to avoid over-stocking the range. When the pool started about five thousand head of cattle were represented and increased to 15,000 head of cattle by 1884 and was very prosperous. The expense of keeping the cattle the first year averaged around twelve and a half cents a head a month. In 1884 the pool bought 140 high grade Shorthorn animals for breeding purposes and allotted them among the members.

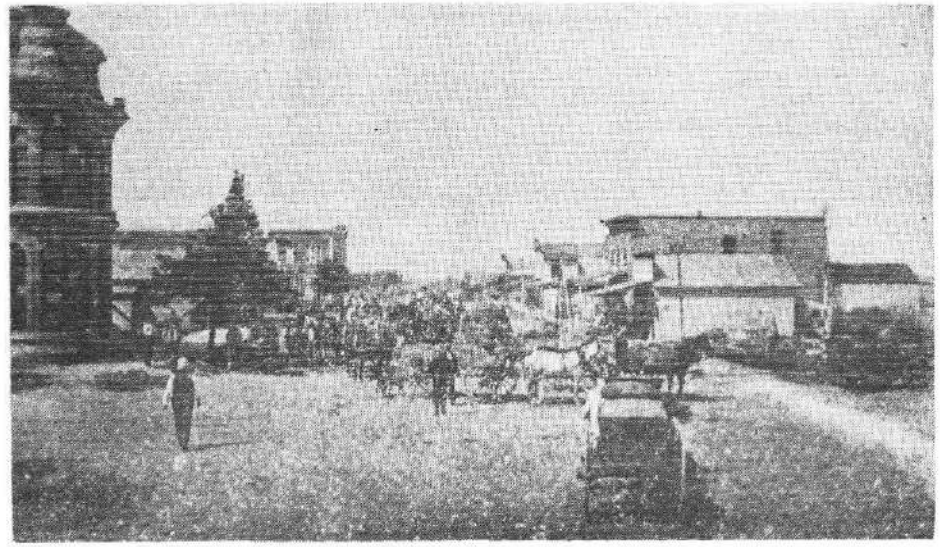
A contract was let to build a drift fence forty-eight miles along the south and east side of the range. This fence was a substantial affair with oak posts and galvanized wire. Joshua Wheatcroft of Pendennis was given the contract to build the fence.

Joshua Wheatcroft's two sons, Link and Joshua, Jr., started working on the fence in 1883. They hauled posts and wire from Grainfield to the Sternberg Ranch where the fence started.

The posts were white oak, set four-rods apart, with one wooden stay and two wire stays between the posts and three four-pointed galvanized wires. The wire was rolled on wooden spools.

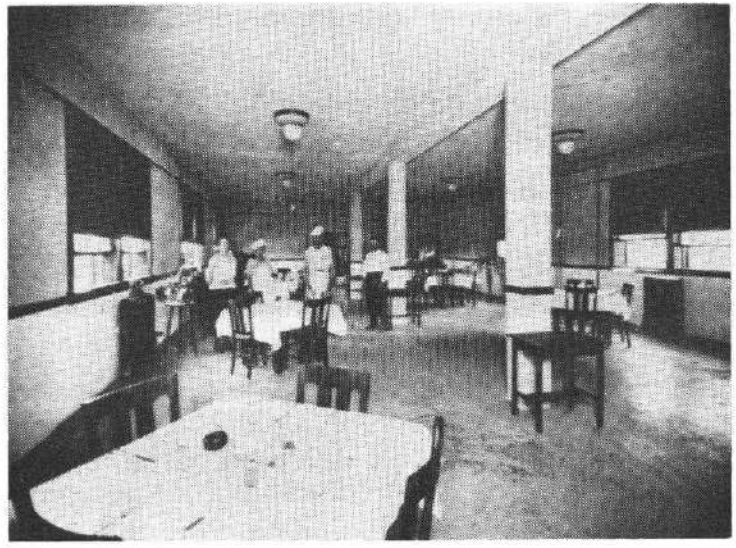
The fence proved its worth. In the spring of 1884 it was announced that the cattle were badly scattered by storms but the fence had held them on the range and kept them from drifting away.

Fifteen hundred pool calves were branded in 1884. The calf crop was smaller than expected. Some of the cattle men were putting up windmills on fresh ranges. A new pool was formed in the fall of 1884 known as the Forrester Pool.



STREET SCENE

Main street in Dighton, Kansas when the wheat is coming in. The above photo was taken in 1898 or 1900.



DINING ROOM

The dining room of the then recently completed Hotel Dighton. The picture was taken in 1920 and shows the completed dining room, ready for business.

Forrester Cattle Pool

The headquarters of the Forrester Cattle Pool were at the Forrester Ranch at the big spring mouth of the Smoky now owned by Dave Bollinger. The pool had twenty miles of fence and four thousand head of cattle; its members were Forrester Brothers, Kellerman Brothers, I. P. Olive, Joseph Gotier, E. R. Moffit, and Joseph Middleby.

Prosperity continued in 1885. At first the calf round up two thousand head were branded; the calf crop was estimated at three thousand for the season. During the season seventy-four car loads of cattle were shipped from Buffalo Park, forty seven of them going in the month of October.

The winter of 1885-86 brought an end to the Smoky Hill Cattle Pool. It was the hardest winter that western Kansas had ever known. The cold was long continued and intense, with frequent blizzards and the ground covered with snow; without feed or water only the strongest cattle could survive.

The cattlemen held their last meeting at Grainfield in the spring of 1886. The directors were instructed to take immediate steps to dispose of the wire fence erected three years ago. Wire and posts were in demand at that time as the farmers were fencing their own places. The pool wire and posts were sold to the settlers for $40 a mile as it stood. Some of this wire is found on some of the farms today.

In July 1886, the members of the Smoky Hill cattle Pool and the Forrester Cattle Pool were arrested by the U. S. marshal on the charge of fencing government land. They were defended by Lee Monroe and E. A. McMath. In the days of their prosperity the members of the pool had felt and expressed some indignation against the outsiders who had brought cattle into their range; but circumstances alter cases and now they were glad to point to these outsiders as evidence of the fact that the pool had not monopolized the land or kept anybody out. As for the pool fence, they contended that it was not an enclosure at all, but merely drift fence on one side of the range to keep the cattle from straying. The court took this view of the case when it met at Leavenworth in October the action against the cattlemen was dismissed.

The pools had other troubles, too. When they drove the Texas long-horned cattle through on the Texas trail they had to be separated from the pool cattle.

A camping outfit had to follow with the herders and many unusual experiences were endured on the prairies. Mrs. Anna Scott [Joshua Wheatcroft's daughter] was one of the cooks for the Smoky Hill pool. She tells about being left at the tent alone. She saw antelope outside and killed one or rather shot one leaving it struggling she finished killing it with a butcher knife.

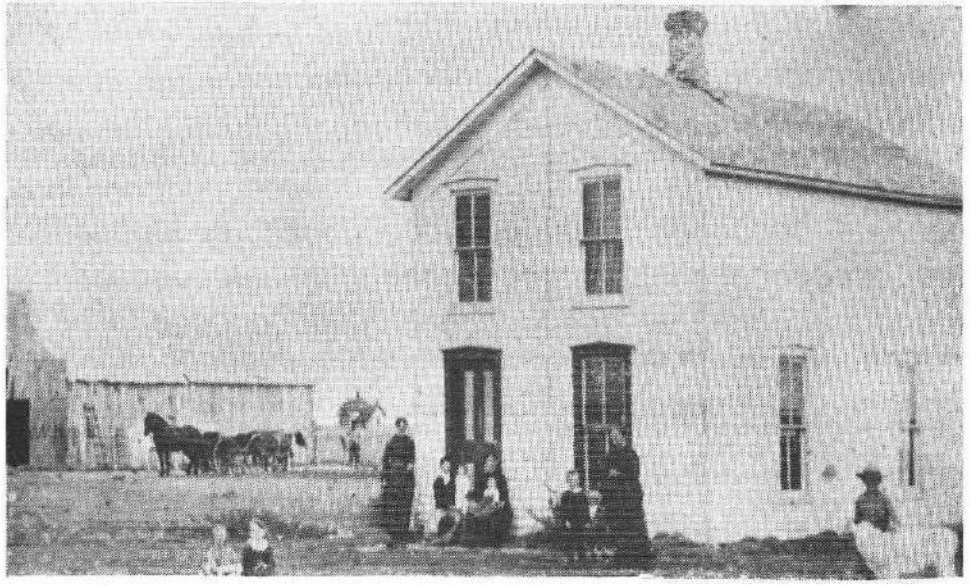
During the winter of 1883 while building the pool fence the men lived in a tent. The fuel became exhausted so they unwound the wire from the wooden spools so that they would have fuel and brought in the discarded spools to burn too.

HORSES IN WESTERN KANSAS

The Hollenbeck Brothers were noted in the early day for bringing wild horses to this part of the country from farther west and southwest. They would round up a large herd of wild horses, bring them here and turn them out on the range. Young boys in the country around were hired to look after these horses. Each horse was clogged before turned loose on the range. A heavy strap was passed through a link of a heavy short chain.

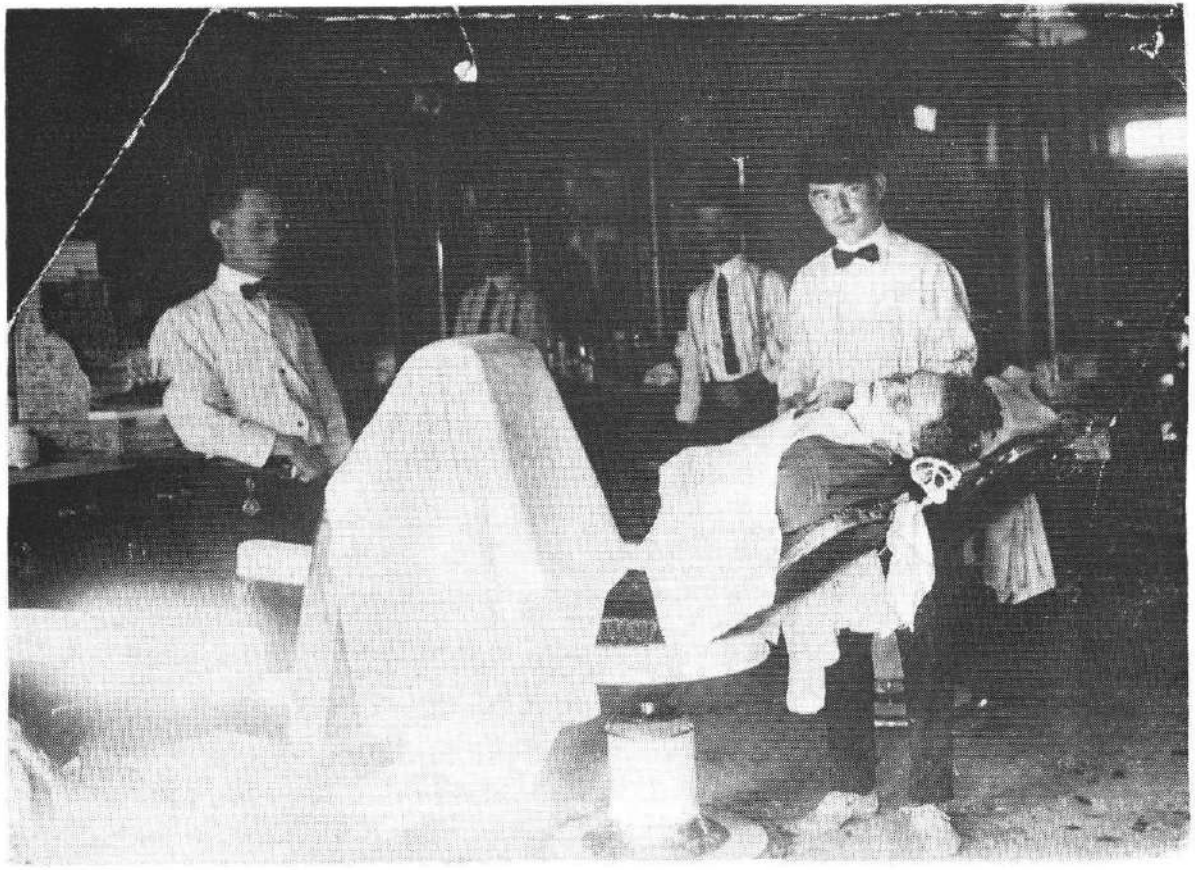
BANK BUILDING

The men in toppers are ready for business at the bank building in Dighton. The photograph evidently was taken about 1900. The brick building in the background is the present Dighton Cleaners building.



NEW HOME

W. H. Walker's new home on a homestead in Lane county. The homestead was adjoining northeast to the present city of Dighton. The photograph was taken in 1887. Photograph was by J. A. Baird, who advertised as a portrait and landscape photographer.



BARBER SHOP

An early day scene in the Morris Barber shop. Pictured, left to right, Hodges, Rusty Morris and John Morris. George Caldwell is in the chair. The photograph was taken in 1915.

then the strap was buckled around between the ankle and the hoof of the foreleg. The chain lashed his forelegs preventing the horse from running away.

The Hollenbeck's would bring in one bunch of horses, rest a few days then return for another herd. After they had a big herd together they would proceed to the ranches and cow-camps. Many of these wild horses lost their wild traits and became excellent saddle horses.

The breaking and training of these wild horses gave both amusement and entertainment to the west. The cowboy riding steers gave both the settlers and the cowboy enjoyment while training the horse and cowboy to work together.

Branding and dehorning were done in those days by roping the critter, throwing him, then the operation was performed. Several cowboys and horses were needed for this operation therefore horses were very necessary in the early day.

Horse ranches were popular in the early day. Wm. Sternberg had a well known ranch on the Beaver north of the State Lake. His ranch was fenced and came up to the Smoky Hill Cattle Pool of the early '80s..

J. F. Dobie's book, "The Mustangs" gives an early history of the wild horses at Farnsworth. Chester Evans' pony, Prince, mentioned in this story lived to be thirty-eight according to records.

Horses were very necessary in the early days but not only to the cowboy and cattlemen but to the farmer who cultivatd his soil by team of horses. Transportation in those days was by wagon, buggy or horseback. Livery stables became popular and small hotels to accomodate the traveller going from one place to another. Travel was slow and a trip to buy groceries and supplies usually took two days to travel there and back.

The saddle and harness shop, the blacksmith and horse

shoer, the livery stables, hitching post, and the land offices were not uncommon sights in the early days of Lane county.

Hineman Mule and Jack Farms were noted early in the history of Lane county and became nationally known throughout the world as he shipped to many countries.

In 1912 came the "horse disease," a malady which the veterinarians have never been able to explain, which killed over a thousand horses in various counties of the west. All the counties in the wheat belt were stricken, in the neighboring states as well as Kansas. Farming operations were paralyzed for several weeks then the disease disappeared as mysteriously as it came.

With the automobile the horse industry vanished gradually except for a few who kept saddle horses on their ranches and others who had race horses or trick horses. S. D. Leighton shipped in horses for rodeos and took them to various places in Iowa for entertainment. Lewis Wheatcroft did some stunt riding on his ponies in June, 1927 at a rodeo in Iowa.

Today, there are many who are interested in various types of race horses and enjoy that chiefly as a hobby.

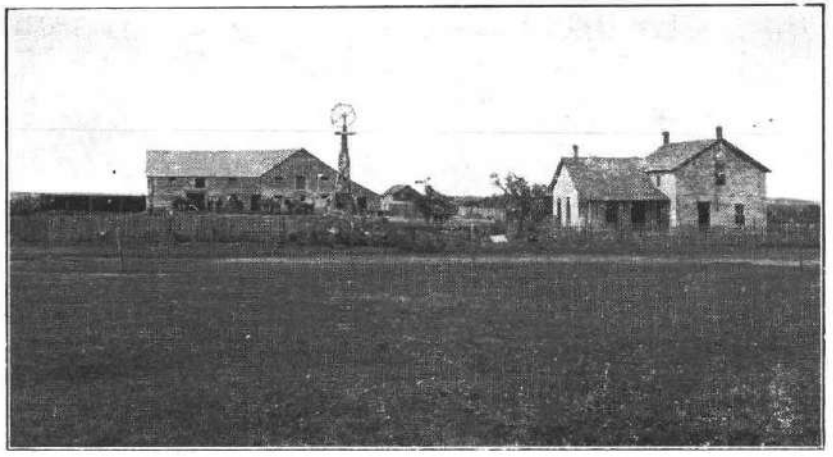
THE TEXAS CATTLE TRAIL

The Texas Cattle Trail was one of the important events in the history of Lane county. Large herds of Texas long-horns were driven through the county every season. This occurred immediately following the Civil War. Texas at that time was full of cattle but they were scarce in the north. Cattle were wanted for the feed lots of the corn belt and after the buffalo were exterminated and the Indian vanished, cattle were needed to stock the ranges of the west and northwest. Joseph G. McCoy of Abilene was the originator of the drive; and the cattle at first were driven to Abilene, later to Hays, Wichita, and then to Dodge City.

The line was established by the legislature of 1879, beginning at the boundary of the Indian Territory, ran up along the east side of Clark and Ford counties to the Arkansas River, then west along the river to Dodge City, and then along the east boundary line of Finney, Lane, Gove, Sheridan and Rawlins counties to the Nebraska line; no driving was allowed east of the line. The regulation was to direct the stream of cattle to Dodge City. Here some of them were shipped to eastern markets over the Santa Fe railroad, those going north continued on their way to northern points. The Santa Fe and Union Pacific railroads were then the only railroads in the country and after leaving Dodge City no stations were met with until they arrived on the Union Pacific line at Buffalo Park.

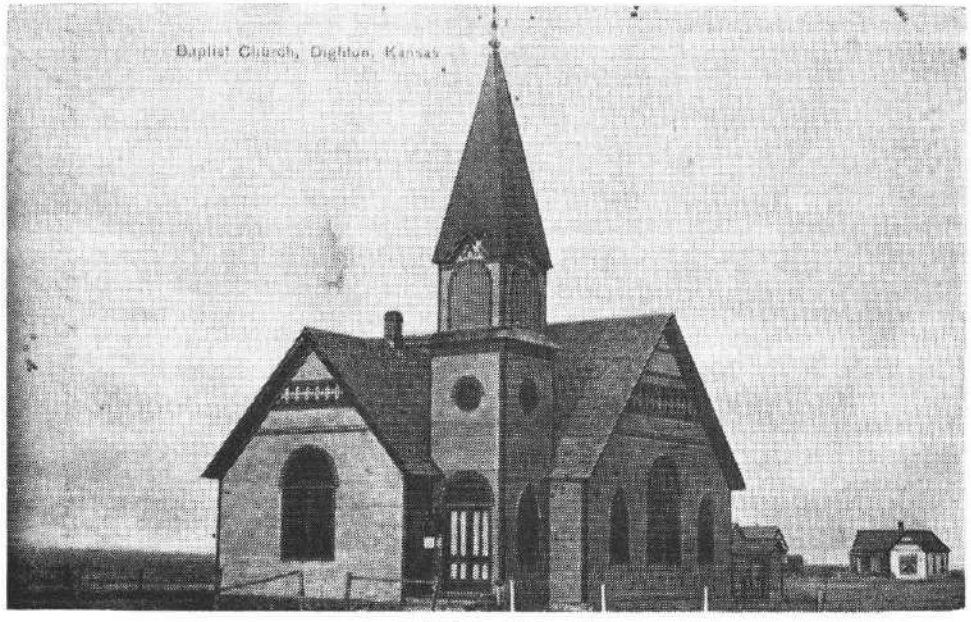
The trail entered Lane county five or six miles west of the southeast corner of the county and struck across the country in a direction north to Gove county. The old trail can still be traced for a part of its course across the country. The trail was an early day landmark in western Kansas, and places and distances were reckoned from it for a long time after the cattle ceased traveling it. The trail proper consisted of a number of cow paths running parallel. In most places there were more than 150 of these paths. But the farmer's plow and dust storms have almost obliterated from view the one-time plain western Kansas landmark.

The trail was changed at various times. At one point the trail changed from the old trail which went through Park, it



DENNIS WHEATCROFT

"Dennis Wheatcroft came to Lane county in the year of 1885 and took up a homestead in White Rock township. He made a success of farming and now own 640 acres of land. He had about $1,000 when he first came to the county, and today is worth about $11,000 in cold cash and other property. He is well pleased with his experience in this county."



BAPTIST CHURCH

An early day view of the Baptist church, Dighton. The church is now used by the Assembly of God church members.

EARLY DAY RESIDENTS

Most of these early day women in Lane county are not identified. However, in the picture are Maude Marlin, Kate McKenna, Connie O'Connel, Mary Freeman, Anna Hagans, Winnie Brothers, Oma Crowley, Florence Whiting, Sadie Walker, Alice Rockwell, Bessie Prose, Bell Sanders and Ella Dixon.

turned west in Lane county, by the Sternberg ranch and on up by Wallace, according to the stories by the early settlers.

According to early settlers the trail had been mapped out, or the route had been picked out and gone over carefully before the first cattle started north out of Texas. First it was necessary to take into consideration the best watering places and the shortest route from one watering place to another, second, the lay of the land was to be considered, avoiding the rough ground when possible. Those who went ahead marked the route by digging up sod and making little mounds, each mound being placed so that it was in sight of the last one.

It has been said that the leading steers were still in the lead at the end of the journey providing they didn't meet by accident during the drive. The cattle were allowed to rest at a good watering and grazing stop several times during the long drive.

These long-horn cattle were not like our present day cattle; they were very wild and became frightened at the least unusual sight or noise, and would stampede. A stampede of several thousand head of cattle was serious and would often mean death to the cowboy and his horse if they got in their path. The method the cowboys used in checking a stampede was to ride along at the side of the herd, close to the front, finally causing the cattle to run in a circle. They called this "milling the herd."

Night herders always watched the cattle. Thunderstorms and lightning caused the herders much trouble and disaster for this was one major cause of stampedes, and often took the lives of many cowboys before the cattle were settled.

The trail herds were accompanied by cowboys, horse-wranglers, saddle horses, a cook, mess wagon, a horse shoer as all the horses were shod. The mess wagon usually pulled by a yoke of oxen and followed by saddle horses followed some distance in the rear of the trail.

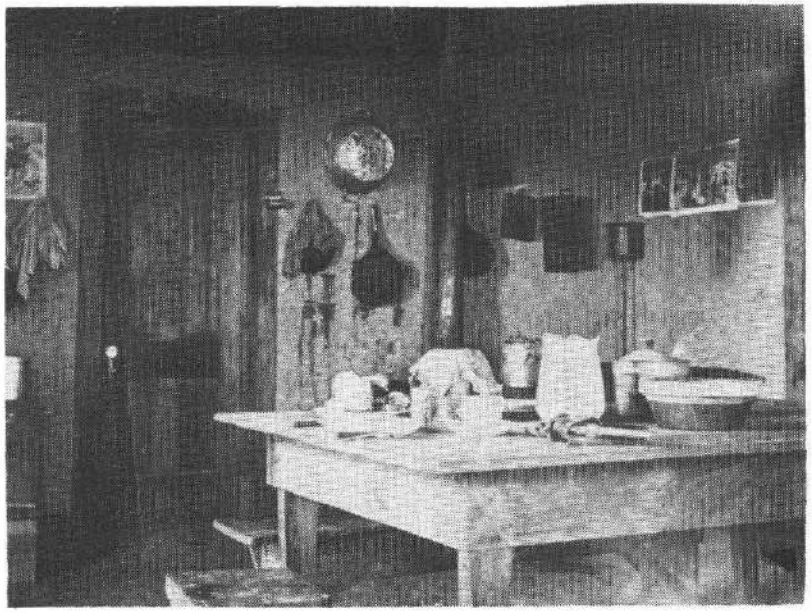
Thousands of cattle went over the old trail and in 1886 thousands of horses traveled over the trail north, that was the last year of the traffic over the old trail. The cattle drive became unpopular in Lane county for the same reason that had caused it to be outlawed in the older counties. The cattle destroyed the crops of the settlers, who could collect no damages. The cattle brought diseases into the country causing much trouble for the settlers. The cattle trail ceased sometime in 1883 after the settlers had appeared at Congress giving full details of the damages caused by the free range of the long-horn cattle.

Other noted trails in western Kansas were the Santa Fe trail, Overland trail, the Smoky Hill trail, and the Butterfield trail.

The Smoky Hill route sprang to life in 1865 when David A. Butterfield, a man of much experience in freighting, took over the line and built up a thriving business. His company had no monopoly on the route; consequently, it was used by the government, and other companies and individuals in the freighting business.

The Butterfield trail crossed Gove county, the trail angled southwest to the Smoky, and, after reaching it, the trail extended up the river until it left the county.

The Indians constantly attacked the stagecoaches, so they were placed under guard. In March 1866, Butterfield sold



An interior view of typical sod house. These homes formerly dotted the landscape of Lane county. Cool in the summer and warm in the winter, most of the soddies were single story.

A photo taken in Dighton during one of the many horse sales conducted in the city.

out to the Holiday Overland & Express company. The latter sold out several months later to the Wells, Fargo & company who operated the line until the Union Pacific was completed.

THE OGALLALY SONG

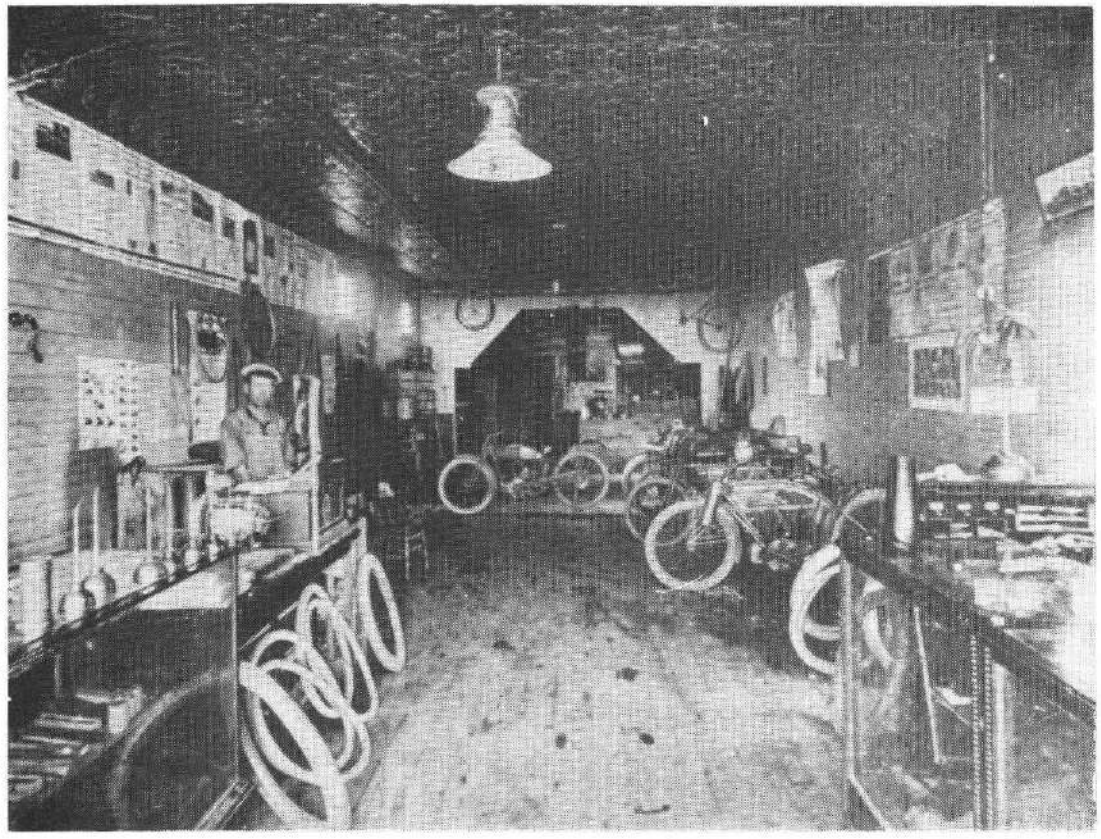
pp. 163 Botkins, "Western Folklore"

We was camped on the Cimarron,
And I heard John Henry sing, Oh,
I'se gwine north with the Blocker Seven herd
Then I hear his partner answer him, oh,
And Mister Ab is a movin' like a bird, oh,
Julie's got a baby,
A little black-eyed baby, and don't I love my Julie
The best one of them all, oh.

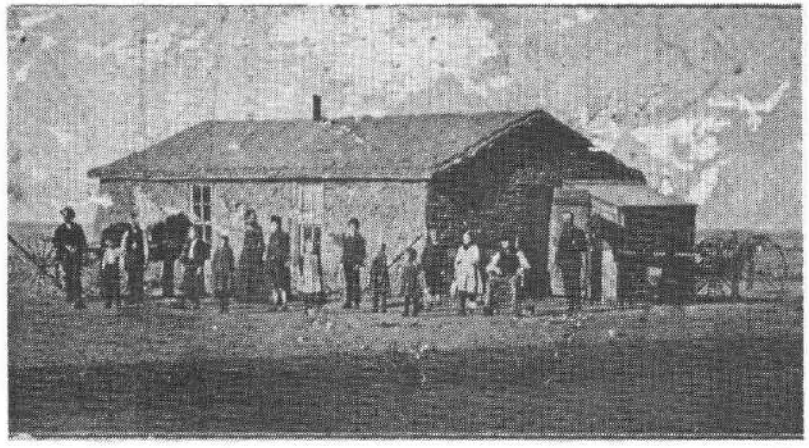
That was not really a song, but was just made up as the trail went north by men singing on night guard, with a verse for every river on the trail. That song starts out on the Nueces River, which is the furthest south of all the Texas rivers that flow into the Rio Grande, and from there it follows the trail clear on up to the Yellowstone. But when I heard it the first time it only went as far as Ogallaly on the South Platte, which is why I call it the Ogallaly song. I must have heard them singing it when I was on the trail in '79 with the Olive Brothers herd, but the first time I remember was the night in '81 on the Cimarron. There were thirteen herds camped on the Cimarron that night and you could count their fires. A Blocker herd was bedded close to ours; it was a bright starlight night and John Henry was riding around the herd singing the Ogallaly song. John Henry was the Blocker's top nigger— Here is a part of the Ogallaly song as it was sung before I came along and put more to it.

We left Nueces River in April Eighty-One
With three thousand long-horned cattle, and all they knowed was run, oh
We got them through the brush all right, clear up to San Antone,
We got some grub and headed north, as slick as any bone.
We crossed the Colorado at Austin, a big town,
And headed north until we struck the store of high renown.
The old Red River was on the prod and sum from bank to bank,
We busted him and got across, a good horse for to thank.
The Washita was running full, but we got them all across,
And counted out on the other bank, and never had a loss.
Then we got to Dodge City on the Arkansas, (Saw)
Got a few drinks and some more grub and pulled out once more
On the Republican we got another storm,
The boss he says this is the damedest country I've seen since I was born.
Doan's store on Red River, the Jumping Off Place on the Western Trail.

Rabbits were a pest of the 1930's causing a great amount of damage to what crops the farmer was able to grow. People organized "rabbit drives" to help keep the rabbit population under control. It was not unusual to round up several coyotes with a huge number of rabbits in the drives. Today, rabbits have become scarce; however,



An interior view of the Pioneer Garage and salesroom of Harry Jennison and John Jewett.



Pioneer school and Students. Photo was taken about 1887.

the coyote population has increased so much that they are causing considerable damage. Coyotes too are being hunted by the farmers, it is not uncommon to see a load of hunting dogs and coyote racers going through the country and returning with several coyotes.

The pheasant is a very important game bird in the country. There is an open season on pheasants each year. As you drive along the highway, it is common to see large groups of pheasants. Many hunters come out from the city in the fall to enjoy tne open season on pheasants, coons, muskrats are plentiful along the creeks. Trailing coons along the creeks is a favorite sport of many hunters.

A number of farms are dotted with prairie dog towns, however many of these are disappearing. Farmers are attempting to exterminate them. Rattlesnakes are often found around these towns but they too have gradually disappeared with man constantly on the lookout for the dangerous snake.

Other animals found in the county include skunks, minks, badgers, ground squirrels, red squirrels, and opposums. The price paid for skins of many animals is so low that most of them are not hunted for their skins.

There is a plentiful supply of carp and catfish in the streams. Other species of fish which are found are bass, crappie, sunfish and suckers. During dry periods some of the streams and ponds go dry, and many fish are removed or die.

The first trees in the county were found along streams. Most of these were cottonwood and willows. A part of Lane county was settled under provisions of the Timber Claim Act. Under the provisions of this act, a homesteader could acquire title to a quarter section of land by planting 10 acres to forest trees and maintaining them for a period of eight years.

NATIVE ANIMALS AND VEGETATION OF LANE COUNTY

Lane county was once a great buffalo range like many of the western Kansas counties.

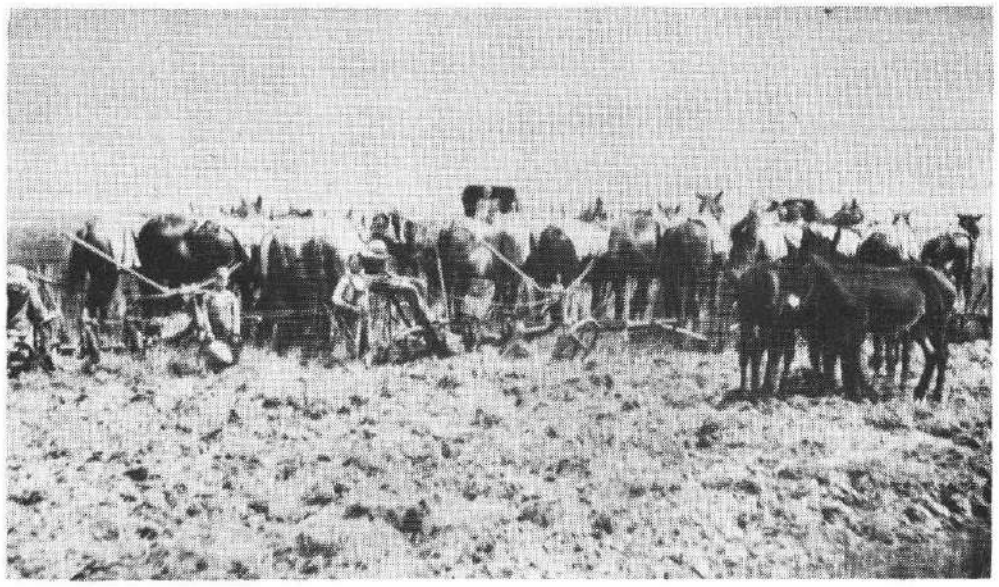
Its natural vegetation of short mesquite grass known as buffalo grass helped to make it a paradise for animals. Charles Sternberg, the noted fossil hunter, writes that on his excursions of the Western Counties around 1876 his party was rarely out of sight of herds of antelope, wild horses and buffaloes. Mrs. Anna Scott, Dighton, recalls when she was cooking for the Smoky Hill Pool seeing and killing an antelope, 1882.

Between 1868 and 1881, the period when the buffaloes were killed chiefly for their hides, there was paid out in Kansas alone $2,500,000 for their bones gathered on the prairies. These bones were used by various carbon works of the country. Estimating 100 carcasses to the ton of bones, and the general price of $8 a ton, this sum represented the skeletons of more than 31,000,000 buffaloes according to the Kansas Historical Records Survey.

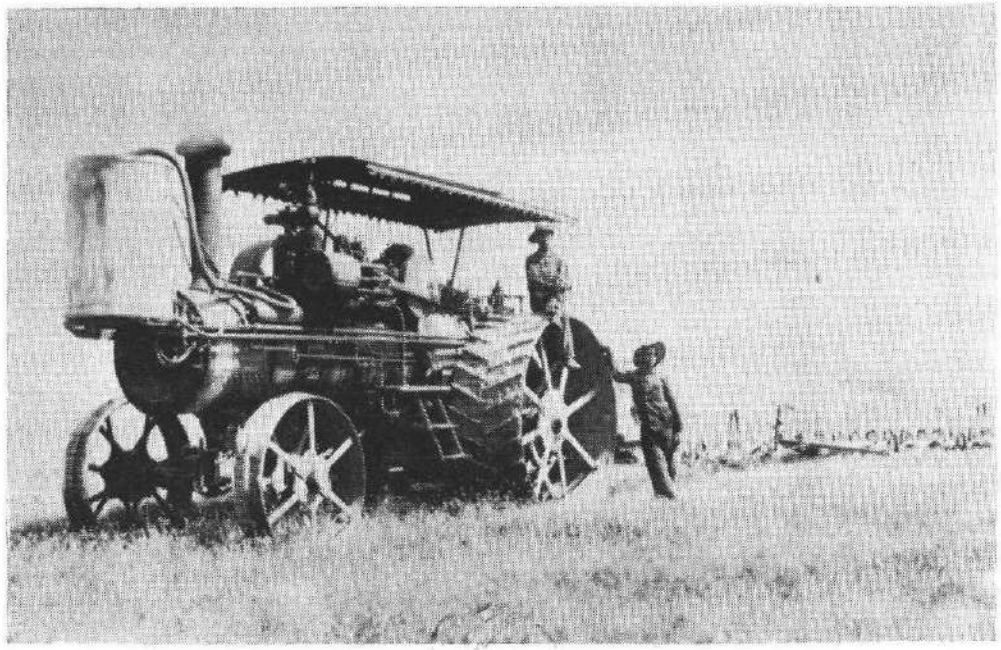
Today the buffalo grass furnishes excellent grazing for the cattle and other animals of the farmers. The number of cattle that can be pastured on the grass varies with the rainfall and other climatic factors.

There are many places on the land of Lane county that are known as buffalo wallows. These wallows are shallow depressions which have become covered with grass, but not original buffalo grass. The prairie blue stem found its start in them.

During the dust storms of the '30 era much of the grass was killed, but more favorable years following that period have restored the grass. Cacti was in great abundance during the drought period. The government paid the farmer for cutting the cacti. Due to the shortage of feed, some of the cacti were processed and fed to the



Plowing in Lane county. Note the moldboard plows—hardly used in the county today.



One of the first steam threshing machines in Lane county. This one was owned by Joe Shull.

cattle. Thistles, which were also plentiful, were mowed and put into stacks to be used as cattle feed.

TRANSPORTATION

Railroads

The Union Pacific Railroad was completed in 1868 north of Lane County and the Sante Fe Railroad south of Lane County, therefore in the early day settlers traded at WaKeeney or Garden City until their railroads were completed in this county.

The Sante Fe Railroad line was built into Dighton and completed September 1, 1887. The Denver, Memphis and Atlantic Railway was completed in October, 1887. This railroad later became known as the Missouri Pacific Railway Company on August 9, 1909.

Another railroad anticipated was the Garden City Nickle Plate Railroad. The Garden City, Gulf and Northern Railroad which was to run from Finney County north through Dighton, Gove County to Hays, was chartered in 1908 but the plans were never carried out.

The Union Pacific Railroad aided in the settlement of Lane County. The first passengers on the railroad were the buffalo hunters, and the shipping of buffalo meat was its first business.

Today, the railroad transports much of the farmers' products to markets east and west. During the busy wheat harvest season the railroad does a rush business in trying to carry the farmer's wheat, but a considerable amount of the wheat often has to be piled on the ground because of the lack of adequate transportation facilities.

Every fall the railroad does a big business shipping the farmers' cattle and sheep to eastern markets, usually Kansas City.

AGRICULTURE

The early farmers of Lane County brought seeds with them from their eastern homes, but the seeds were not suitable to this region, and the farmers' first crops were almost complete failures. Being unable to grow crops, the farmers turned to raising cattle. People who wished to farm were discouraged by the cattlemen from coming to the county. During this period however new crops were being developed. A new variety of wheat brought by Russian settlers proved suitable to climate conditions, and in 1886 some wheat was raised in Lane county.

Gradually more and more acres were planted to wheat and other crops. In 1897, for the first time in history of Lane county, the produce of the fields was worth more than the livestock. In 1903 came a phenomenal wheat crop with wheat averaging 25 bushels per acre. Not too much moisture fell but the precipitation came at the times it was most needed. In 1903, grain elevators were built all over the country on railroads so that the wheat could be shipped to markets east.

The population of the county doubled between 1896 and 1906, and the value of livestock increased over four and a half times. The future of the county was not always so bright, because in 1911, 1912, and 1913, the yield from crops was far below average, and in 1912 occured the horse disease. More favorable weather conditions occured again in 1914, and, for three consecutive years, over a million bushels of grain was produced in the county. Although the farmers were not able to take advantage of the high prices in World War I because of the poor crop yields, the stockmen made money.

In 1920 another good wheat crop was harvested and during the rest of the decade, with 1923 and 1927 being the poorest years. The dust storm era of the 1930' seemed to be almost the end of farming

An early day livery and feed stable. Note the surrey with the fringe on top at the right of the picture.

All dressed up for a Sunday drive. Joe Shull, former Lane county resident, is ready for a swift take-off.

in Lane county. If it had not been for the government payments many would have lost their farms. The Lane county farmer was happy when he saw the clouds coming in May, 1936, not dust but rain which brought an end to the dust storms.

Comparatively good years followed, and the farmers again renewed their confidence in agriculture. Favorable years and high prices brought prosperity to the farmers during the years of World War II and the years immediately following.

The size of farms are larger today than they were in the early day of Lane county. Although the semi-arid climate conditions of western Kansas made it economically advisable for him to carry on extensive agricultural operations, the early farmer did not have the machinery and capital to enable him to do so.

The livestock industry is an important industry in Lane county, however, the raising of wheat is the primary industry. Western Kansas' rolling plains are conductive to large scale methods of farming. This factor has contributed to elevating the Great Plains to the position of a leading wheat growing region, however the yield of wheat per acre fluctuates from year to year. Favorable conditions in recent years have resulted in the farmers bringing considerable land into cultivation which is not suitable for farming under normal conditions.

It is the intent of Lane county farmers to put their land to its best use, and by using scientific farming practices, to get the most from their land. Attempts are being made to conserve the moderately low rainfall and prevent erosion. A combination of practices are being employed in order to conserve moisture for growing crops. Conservation of crop residues contour farming, terracing, fallow, cloddy tillage, and timely tillage are important agricultural practices used to a great advantage. Proper vegetation and mechanical measures are to be taken to prevent erosion from wind and water.

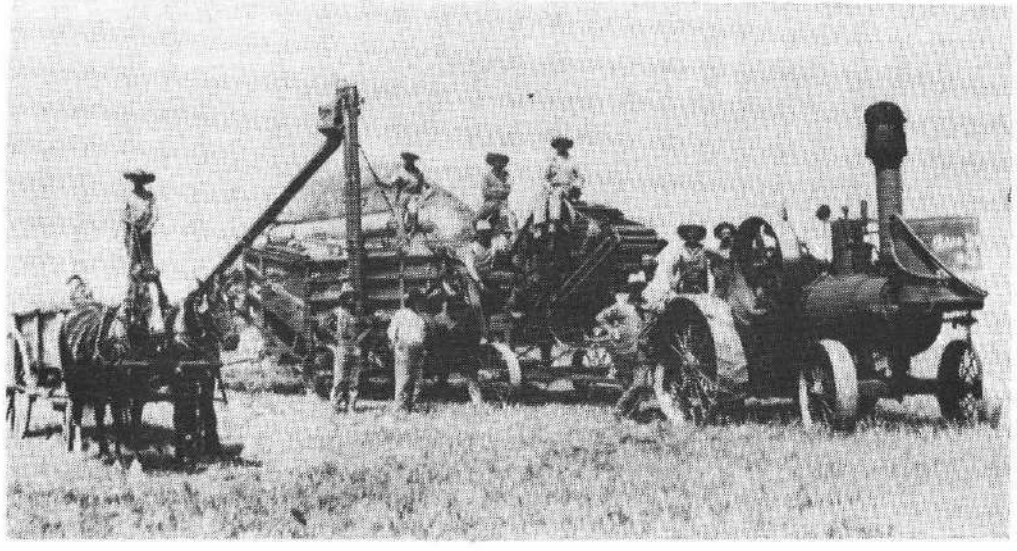
THE LANE COUNTY BACHELOR
by Clint Hanna—1957

The following was written by Clint Hanna during summer school at Kansas State University, Manhattan. Acknowledgements are given by Hanna, to Mrs. Kittie Kepner, Bert Prose, Raymond Tillotson and Arle Boltz. Special acknowledgement was given to his mother, Mrs. Joe Hanna.

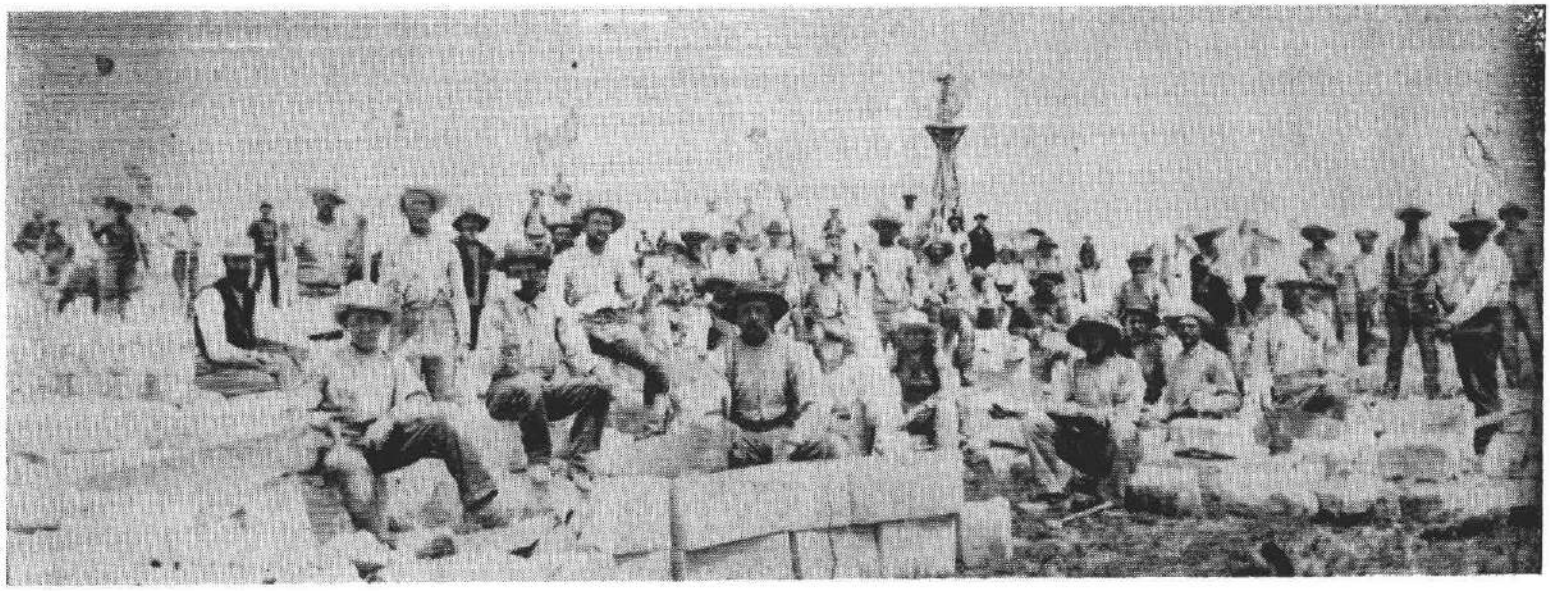
The ballad "The Lane County Bachelor" was written sometime between 1886 and 1891 by a man by the name of Frank Baker who homesteaded in Spring Creek township of Lane county.

There is at least one early day settler of Lane county who weathered the homestead depredations so aptly described in the song and still lives in Lane county today. Mr. Bert Prose, now 79, was 7 years old when he came to Springcreek township with his folks in 1886 where they homesteaded. The Prose homestead was not far from the Baker homestead which was the southeast quarter of section 12, township 20, Range 27. Baker's friend, Harry (Brigg) Harris, homesteaded the quarter adjoining Bakers on the west and the two built their sod house so that half of it was on the Baker Homestead and half of it was on the Harris homestead. This allowed them to meet the requirements of the homestead act with a minimum of effort. In the late eighties some of the Prose family came down with typhoid fever and Baker and Harris came to help take care of them. Mr. Prose first recalls hearing Frank Baker sing the song during this time. The song was sung at what was called "Literary Societies" which were gatherings for the amusement of the community. Minnie Dubbs Millbrook makes reference to this in her

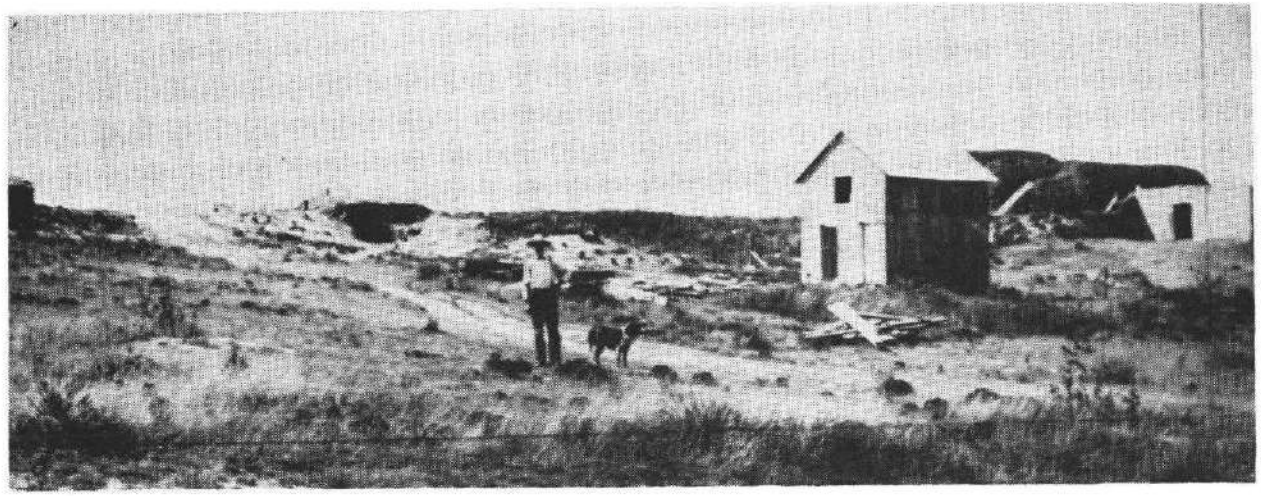
A jackrabbit kill in Lane county. At the left is the late Joe Dickinson.



An early day harvest in Lane county. Note the steam tractor at the right.



This group of men were starting the Ravanna courthouse, in 1888 or 1889. The town of Ravanna has since been abandoned and the site is in Finney county, south of the Lane county line.



An early day settler of Lane county, Pat Murphy, is shown on his farm. Note the different types of structures. There is a dug out, a sod house and a frame building.

book "History of Ness County." Frank Baker did not stay in Lane county and live on his claim long enough to obtain legal ownership. Baker left in 1889 and Samuel J. Smith of Halstead bought a relinquishment from him for $300. Smith's claim is dated March 25, 1890. At the present time this land belongs to Bert Prose. Mr. Prose got his copy of the song from a neighbor, Mr. Ed Kepner, who wrote the song down in 1891. The first copy in this report is a duplicate of Ed Kepner's copy.

Further evidence that the song was written in Lane county may be found in "The Kaw", a book by Floyd Benjamin Streeter. The book presents evidence that the song was written in 1887 by Frank Baker who homesteded in eastern Lane county near the Ness county line.

The song made a great hit throughout the West, especially in states that were being homesteaded at the time. In the book "Cowboy Songs" the name is changed to an Oklahoma Ballad by a singer by the name of Tom Hight. Hight homesteaded in Greer county, Oklahoma and changed the county name in the song to Greer. There are other details that have been changed but the song is still recognizable as the "Lane County Bachelor" and is sung to the same tune "The Irish Washerwoman." The song has been frequently collected by collectors of frontier and western music. There are many different versions of the song which have came about with different locations and different groups of people.

The song is always sung to the tune of "The Irish Washerwoman" and is normally sung at a moderately fast rate.

1. Millbrook, Minnie Dubbs, **History of Ness County,** Millbrook Print Company, Detroit, (1955).
2. Streeter, Benjamin, **The Kaw,** Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., New York; Toronto; (1941)
3. Lomax, John and Alan, **Cowboy Songs,** The MacMillan Company, New York; p. 407, (1945).

Tune—Irish Washerwoman

March 8, 1891

Frank Baker's my name and a bachelor I am,
I'm keeping old batch on an elegant plan.
You'll find me out west in the county of Lane,
I'm starving to death on a government claim.
My house it is built of the natural soil,
The walls are erected according to Hoyle.
The roof has no pitch but is level and plain,
And I always get wet when it happens to rain.

Chorus

Hurrah for Lane County, the land of the free,
The home of the grasshopper, bed bugs and fleas,
I'll sing loud its praises and tell of its fame,
While starving to death on a government claim.

Second

My clothes they are ragged, my language is rough,
My bread is case hardened, both solid and tough.
The dough it is scattered all over the room,
And the floor it gets scared at the sight of a broom.
My dishes are scattered all over the bed,
They are covered with sorghum and Government bread.

The Amy community band. The picture must have been taken about 1909.

Harvesting wheat in Lane county—using straight eight horse power.

Still I have a good time and live at my ease
on common sop-sorghum, old bacon, and grease.

Chorus
Then come to Lane County, here is a home for you all,
Where the winds never cease and the rains never fall
And the sun never sets but will always remain
Till it burns you all up on a Government claim.

Third
How happy I feel when I crawl into bed,
And a rattlesnake rattles a tune at my head.
And the gay little centipede, void of all fear,
Crawls over my neck and down into my ear.
And the little bed bugs, so cheerful and bright,
They keep me a-laughing two-thirds of the night.
And the gay little flea with sharp tacks in his toes,
Plays "Why don't you catch me" all over my nose.

Chorus
Hurrah for Lane County, Hurrah for the west,
Where farmers and laborers are ever at rest.
For there's nothing to do but to sweetly remain
And starve like a man on a Government claim.

Fourth
How happy am I on my government claim,
For I've nothing to lose nor I've nothing to gain.
I've nothing to eat and I've nothing to wear.
And nothing from nothing is honest and fair.
Oh, it is here I am solid and here I will stay,
For my money is all gone and I can't get away.
There is nothing that makes a man hard and profane
Like starving to death on a Government claim.

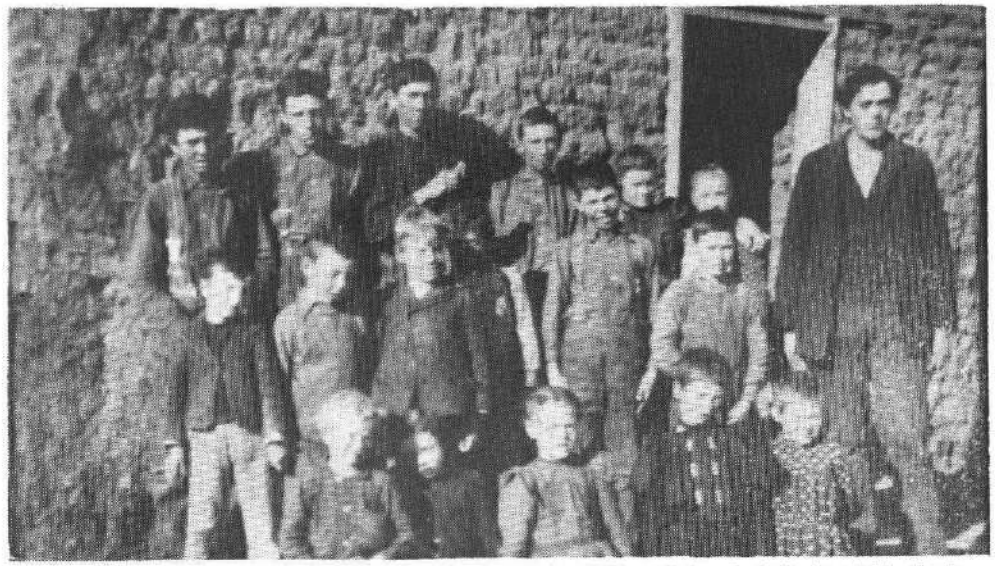
Chorus
Hurrah for Lane County, where blizzards arise,
Where the winds never cease nor the flea never dies.
Come join in the chorus and sing of its fame
You poor hungry hoboes that's starved on the claim.

Fifth
Now don't get discouraged you poor hungry men.
Just stick to your homestead and battle the fleas
and look to your Maker to send you a breeze.
Now, all you claim holders I hope you will stay
and chew your hardtack till you are toothless and grey.
But as for myself, I'll no longer remain
And starve like a dog on a Government claim.

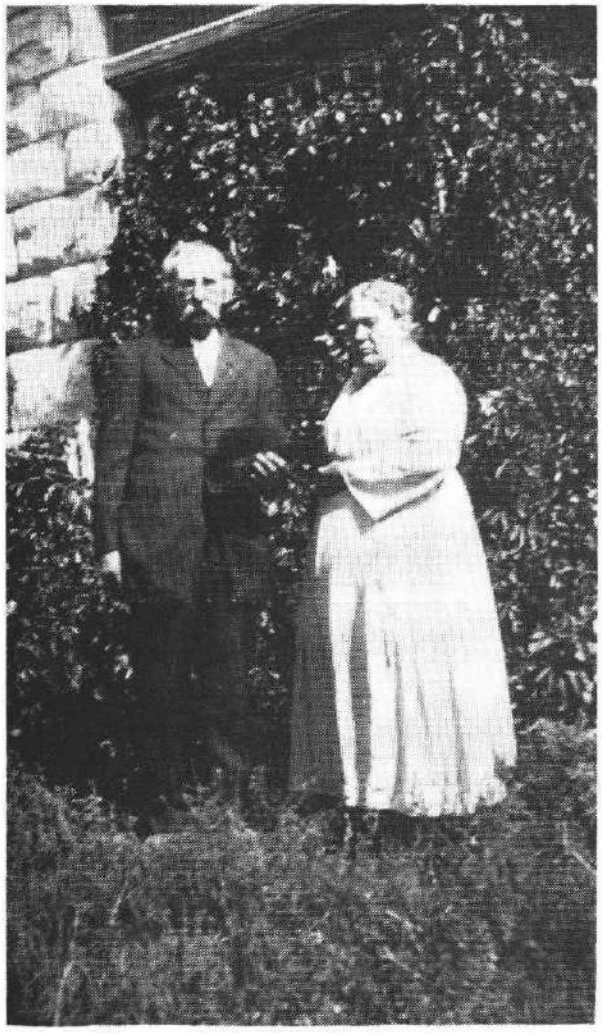
Chorus
Farewell to Lane County, farewell to the West,
I'll travel back East to the girl I love best.
I'll stop in Missouri and get me a wife,
And live on corn dodger the rest of my life

This has been loaned to me by Mrs. Kittie Kepner, Widow of the late Ed Kepner. It is a copy of the song as Ed Kepner wrote it down in 1891. The original of this copy is at Hays, having been kept there when some college girls borrowed the manuscript from Ed to use in their school work there.

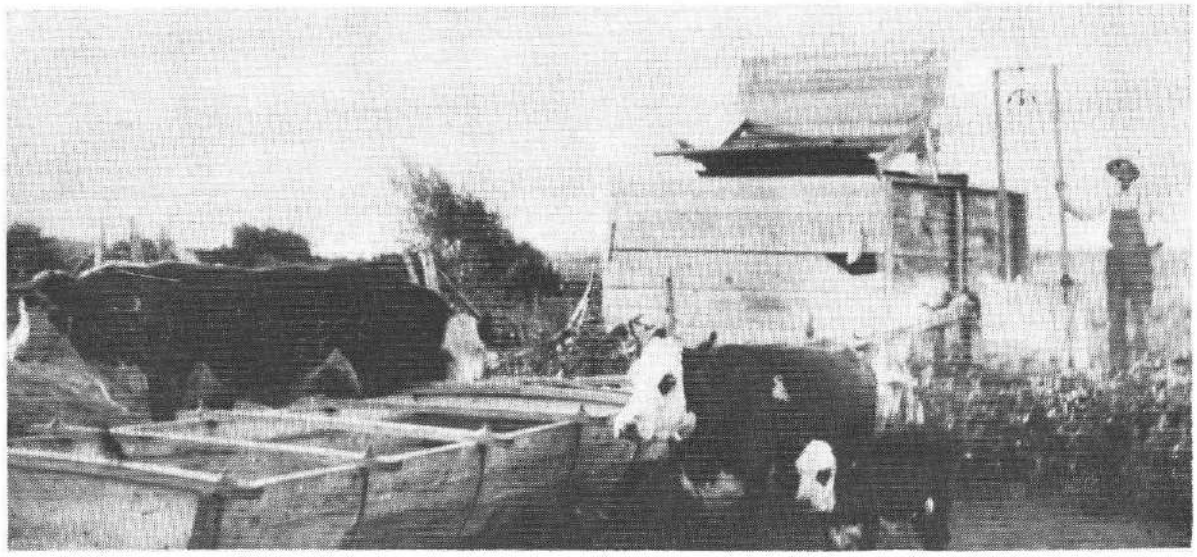
The F. A. Brown threshing crew in 1914. Cutting wheat on the Van Pelt farm.



Cottonwood school district No. 42, taken in 1900. Pictured, left to right, back row—Marshall Davis, Harrison Davis, George Fuller, Minnie (Stewart) Russell, Jessie (Davis) Fuller. Middle row—Frank Fuller, "Tough" Davis, Arthur Waterson, John Russell, Roy Davis, Grover Davis and teacher Arthur Haney. Front row—Jim Russell, Josie Davis, Edith (Neeley) Waterson, Olive (Wheatcroft) Russell and Elsie [Goodman] Russell.



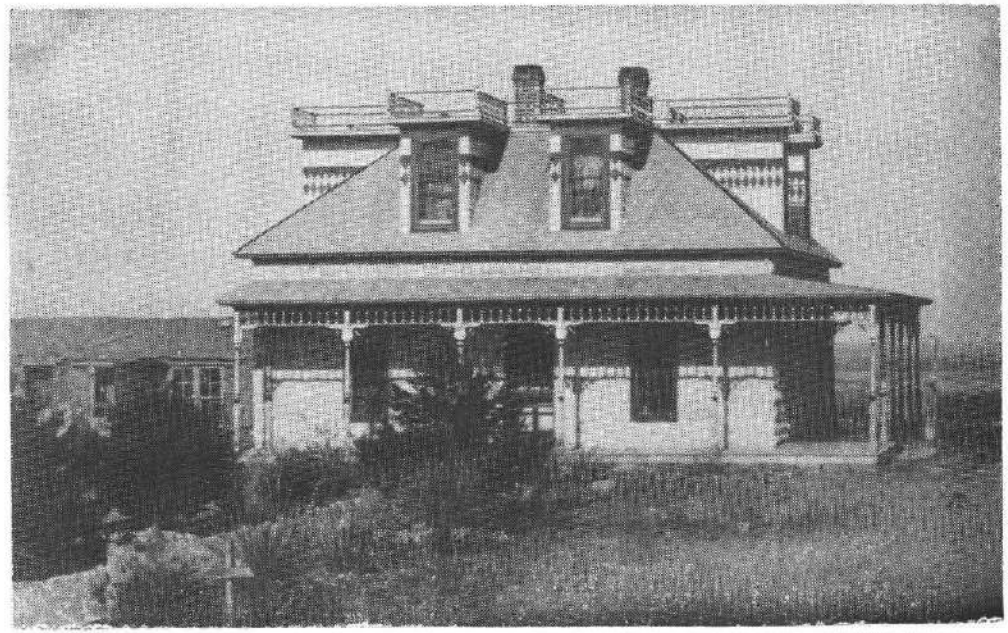
Mr. and Mrs. Silas Frank Dickinson. Mrs. Dickinson was the former Annabelle [McGowan] Dickinson.

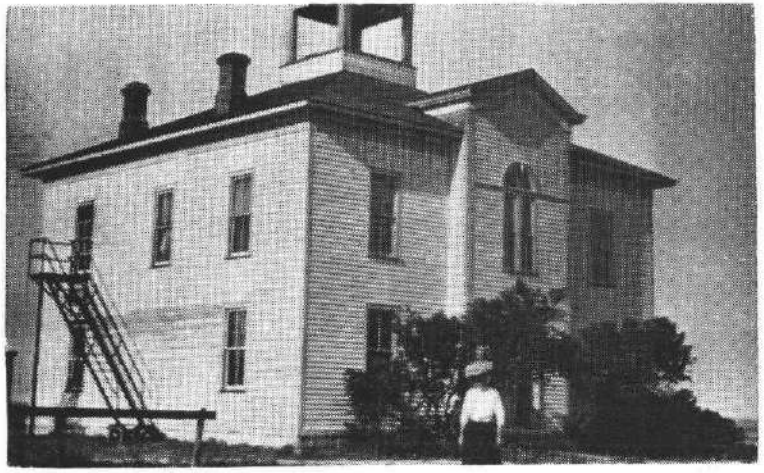


An early day windmill in Lane county. Shown at the well is Pat Murphy.

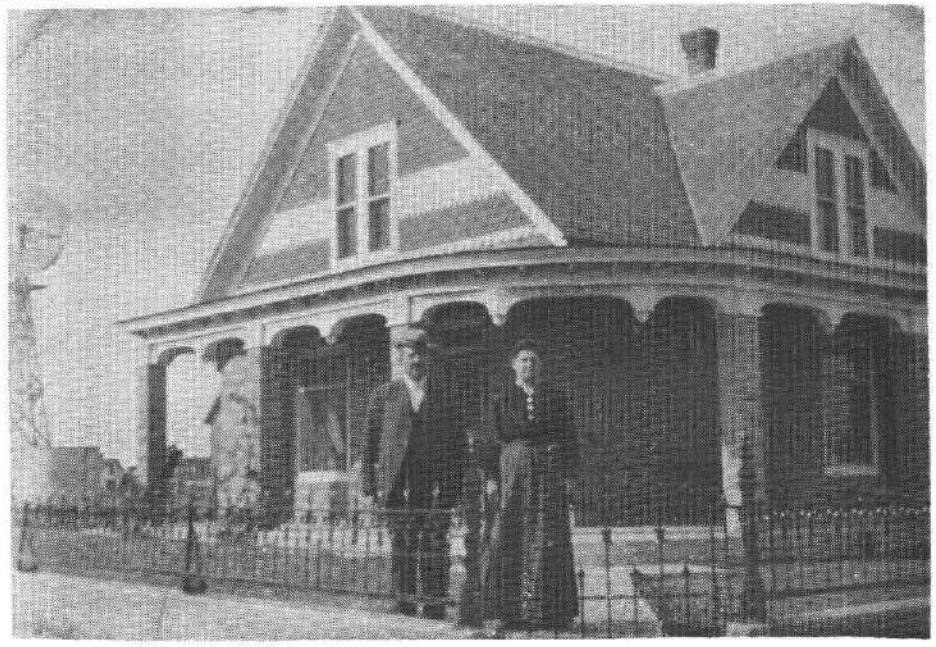
This family picture was evidently taken just before the Sunday afternoon ride.

Model barber shop and the E. D. Hyames real estate and abstract office, Dighton.





An early day view of the Lane county courthouse.



Two views of early day houses in Lane county. These were both of quarried stone and the upper took some 14 years to build.

The first Alamota general store, operated by F. J. Vycital, father of Frank Vycital, present owner. The store pictured above burned in the 1950's.

RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY DAY RESIDENTS

Our family came to Lane County in 1886, the year that there was the greatest migration of people to the western part of the state to take up homesteads and acquire free land.

My father, Frank S. Jennison, homesteaded on land in Gove County right next to the Lane County line.

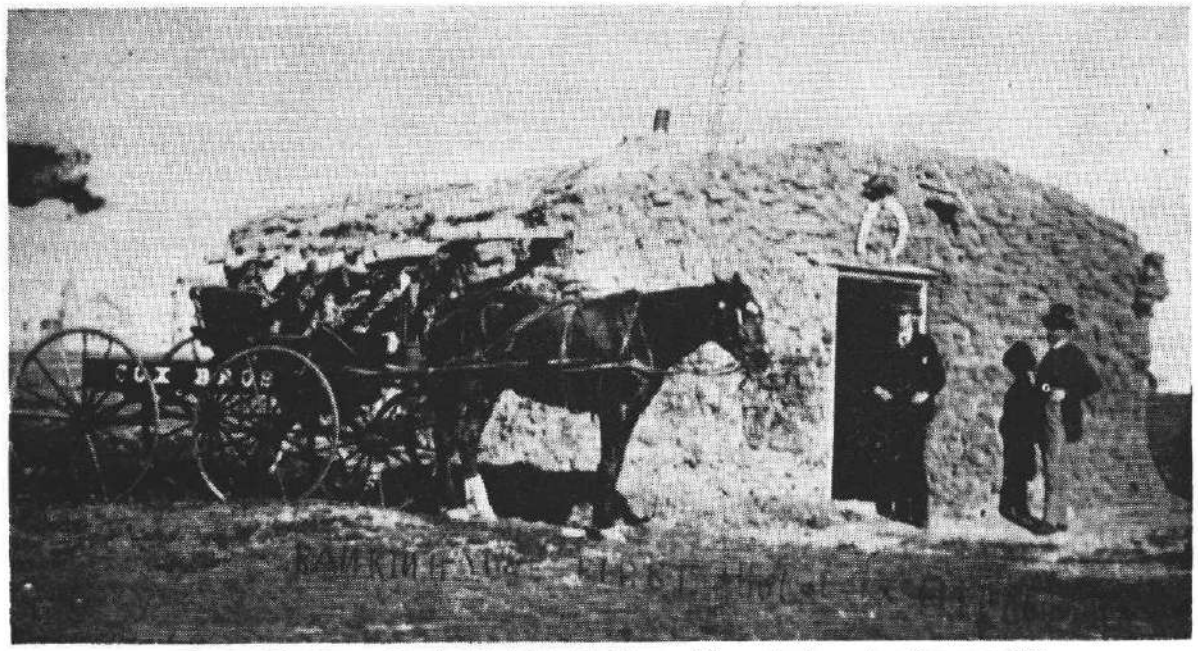
At this early date varieties of crops suitable to the area had not been developed. The U. S. Department of Agriculture was gathering grain samples from all over the world trying to obtain crops of grain that would produce under semi-arid conditions. I remember father trying out some of these different grains such as rice corn, Jerusalem corn and kaffir corn. There was not much of a market for these different kinds of grain but they did make good stock and chicken feed.

The first wheat cutting machine that came to our neighborhood was a wheat binder purchased by a neighbor William Bowie. Father had him cut our wheat with it. That was 1889 or '90. Soon thereafter headers became common and lasted until the days of the combines.

The first wheat crop we had was threshed with a horse power threshing machine. Four horses were hitched to a sweep and went around in a circle turning a tumbling rod that ran along the ground to the threshing machine. A man called the "Feeder" had to stand in front of this machine and feed the wheat into it. If the wheat was bound as most of it was he had to cut the baling strings along with his other work. It was a man killing job. This job was soon done away with when the self feeders were invented. Soon the steam threshers appeared on the scene. The first ones were not self-propelled but had to be pulled by horses from place to place.

Most of the early settlers built sod houses on their claims, some had wood floors but many had only dirt floors which soon became hard and smooth from the patter of many bare feet of children. Some of the settlers had what was known as dugouts. They would build along the bank of a ravine excavating a hole large enough for living quarters, using the banks of the sloping sides of the ravine for two sides and the back, leaving only the front that had to be built up with sod. These rather sketchy abodes were usually built by bachelors who wanted to cut corners and save work.

The sod house was ideally adapted to the time and place. Most of the material was right at hand. They were warm in the



The Rankin House, the first hotel in Dighton. The cost of construction was $100 with lumber used being hauled for 60 miles.

winter and cool in the summer and even an inexperienced man could build one. They were so universal that this time is known as the "sod house era."

Doctors were few and there were no hospitals anywhere in the country. In case of sickness the neighbors all rallied around to help in any way they could and no sick person suffered from lack of loving care.

Three preachers I recall from boyhood memories that made the rounds of the country. Rev. Kenyon preached in Dighton and at Shields. He may also have preached other places as well. He was a Methodist. Reverend Harvey was of the Baptist faith and often preached in the outlying towns besides his regular pastorate in Dighton. Probably the most colorful of all of them was Rev. E. L. Gay. He was a colporteur as well as a preacher and used to come to our house several times a year, always late in the day when he knew he would be welcome to stay all night. He came to Kansas with the railroad building crews that built the Union Pacific R. R. He was not a railroad worker but a card sharp who plied his trade among the gangs building the railroad. I have heard him say that in his younger days he smoked so many cigarettes that his skin was the color of a well smoked ham. One night he awoke in the middle of the night and all at once he decided that his life of gambling, drinking and smoking was evil and that he was going to reform. So he piled all his playing cards, his cigarettes and tobacco and booze all into a pile and set them afire and from that time on he joined the church and preached against the sin of smoking, drinking and playing cards.

The first telephone lines in the country outside of the towns were strung along the wire fences and in many cases the top wire of the fence was used as a telephone wire. You could ring anyone on your line by ringing with the crank on the wall telephone the proper number of long and short rings. On lines with many customers a person might have a signal with five or six rings. It was customary for the telephone customers to obtain the neighborhood gossip by taking down the receiver and listening when someone rang. If there were too many of these "listeners" on the line, the conversation faded out and was hard to hear. But news did get around fast this way.

Even the small towns had livery stables and the usual charge for stabling a team over night or for a day was fifty cents. This included having the livery stable proprietor help unhitch the team and hitch it up again when you were ready to leave.

Hitching racks for horses were common in front of stores and along the side streets. Farmers when they came to town, if they were going to stay all day, usually brought along grain for their horses and if they came in a wagon, as many of them did, they might put some hay in for the horses. When they arrived in town they would unhitch the horses and tie them to the wagon so they could eat while their owners went about their business. A man might indulge himself in the luxury of a haircut and shave. This would set him back thirty-five cents for the two. Some barbershops had facilities for their customers to take a bath. Only in the towns a few homes had hot and cold running water. In the country you were lucky to have cold water piped into the house.

Most of the dental work was done by dentists who had a regular circuit that they made perhaps every two or three months. They had notices put in the local paper when they would be available. One of these early day dentists who made the rounds from one town to another was Dr. Raffington who made the circuit for many years. No electrical dental gadgets were available as there was no electricity.

Fred Sable was manager of the Stevens-Scott Grain Company, Healy, when the above picture was taken. Photo shows a corn crop and was taken March 14, 1924.

He operated the drills and other doodads by means of a foot power machine. Every time he came down with his foot in drilling a tooth you could feel that drill going z-z-z-z-. The sanitary surroundings were also rather lacking. I remember once of going to him just to see if I needed any dental work. Business seems to have been rather slack at the time for he drilled out a perfectly sound tooth and then put in a filling. However, the charge was only one dollar which was the going price for fillings at that time.

Not long ago I went to a dentist here in Portland and had a filling put in and it cost fifteen dollars but there were electrical gadgets all over the place and a beautiful dental nurse to take care of any painful drill operation.

Times have sure changed since I was a boy back in the sod house days of Western Kansas.

Harrie L. Jennison
1561 E. E. Linn St.,
Portland, 2 Ore.

I made my first trip into Lane county in June 1882 in a two-wheeled cart with Adam Crim who at that time was carrying the mail from Ness City to Dighton.

I had been carrying the mail from my house to Alexander to Ness City and came in here to try to get the job of carrying it from Cimarron to Dighton and from Dighton to Grinnell.

The sun had been so hot back in Rush county that spring that I had been compelled to get an umbrella to protect my eyes from the glare. I brought this with me that day and when some miles out east of Dighton, where the poorhouse once stood, we met up with Rev. Watson who was later known as Father of the proposed town of Watson.

The seat of that cart was too small to accomodate the three of us and since at that time it was the custom to never pass anyone

An early day view of the main street of Healy, Kansas.

on the road, we compromised by taking turns at riding and walking, and when we came into Dighton it happened to be Rev. Watson's turn at riding and he was protecting himself by using my umbrella.

When I came up to the post office, I heard this remark "What fool is that coming in here with an umbrella?" While at that time I did not hasten to claim it, I don't believe it was the first one brought to Lane county.

My bid being the lowest I was given both routes and sent back for my brother Ed to come help me. He took the one from Cimarron to Dighton and I from Dighton to Grinnell. After a while we were carrying from Dighton to Ness City, Utica and Garden City. Over these trails we soon had established a kind of special delivery service. At our various stops we had one or two good honest cowboys with their little ponies to whom we could entrust any important message or money.

At one time Ed and I owned 45 or 50 ponies or driving and saddle horses as they would be called today, and had stables and someone to care for them at the different stops. We also had about 15 or 20 different old rattle trap carts such as surrey, buckboard, sulkey, etc., and these we used as hacks to carry our passengers from one place to another. And of course we never charged the young ladies. We were only too glad to have their company for we had no holidays in those days.

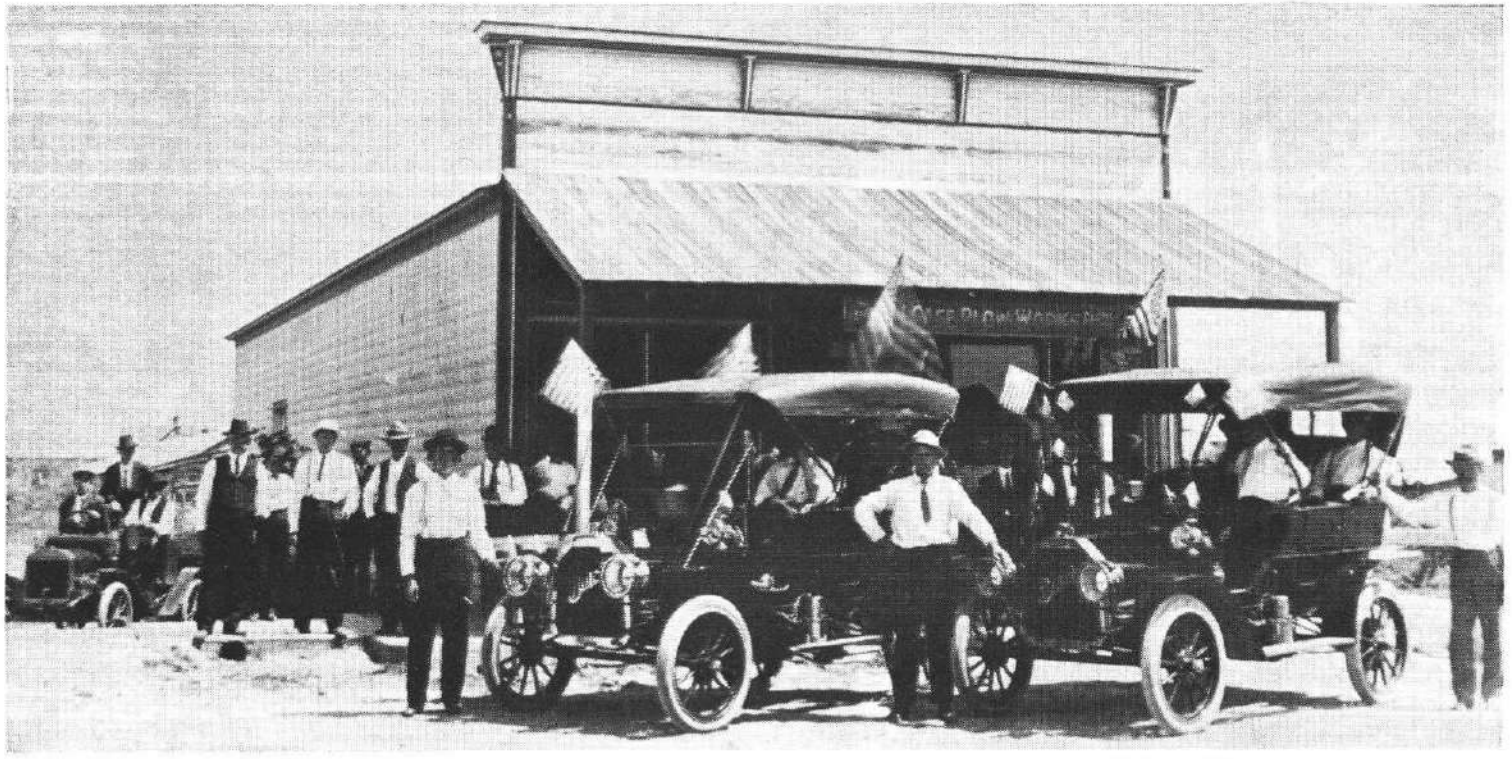
We began carrying the mail in July 1882 and carried it until after the county was organized in 1886. Those were happy days of constant hard work and little play.

But I think the happiest day for both of us was the day we met at Dighton after the big blizzard of the winter of '82 and '83. We each knew the other was out on the trail in that awful blizzard and that each would stick to the trail and protect the mail entrusted to our care as long as there was life in our bodies. We each had been compelled to turn our pony loose and abandon it to its fate while we each took such shelter as we could make with our coats and blankets to protect us and the mail until the blizzard was over or help came. Neither of us could have the least hope the other could possibly have outlived that blizzard. And when it was over, each had started out afoot to first deliver the mail then to go on over that endless expanse of snow in search of the frozen body of his brother. And when we met there that day, both alive if more or less frozen and sore, our joy knew no bounds. Our tears were not the only ones shed there that day, and all were truly tears of happiness that we had been spared when so many lives had been taken.

William H. Walker

August 13, 1936

Sent in by Jay C. Walker.

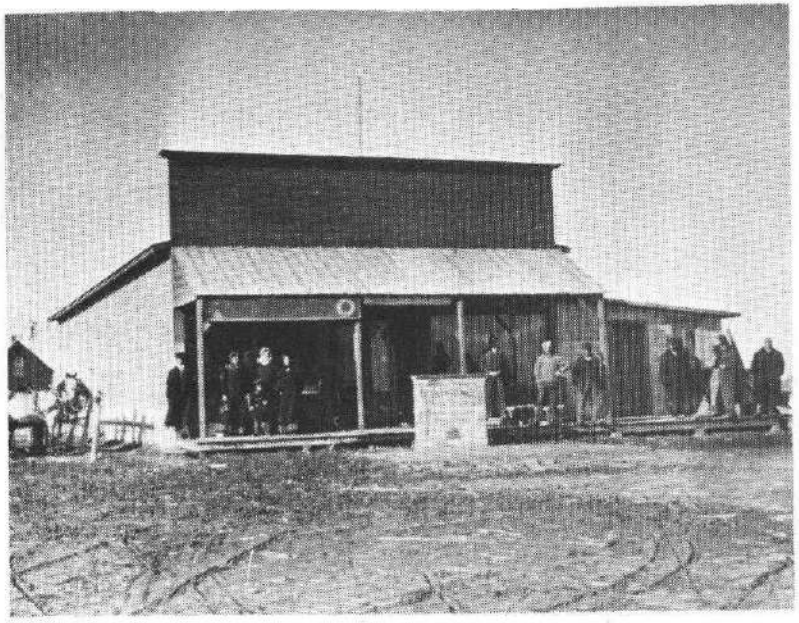


This early day photo was taken of The Dighton Lumber Company in 1908 or 1909.

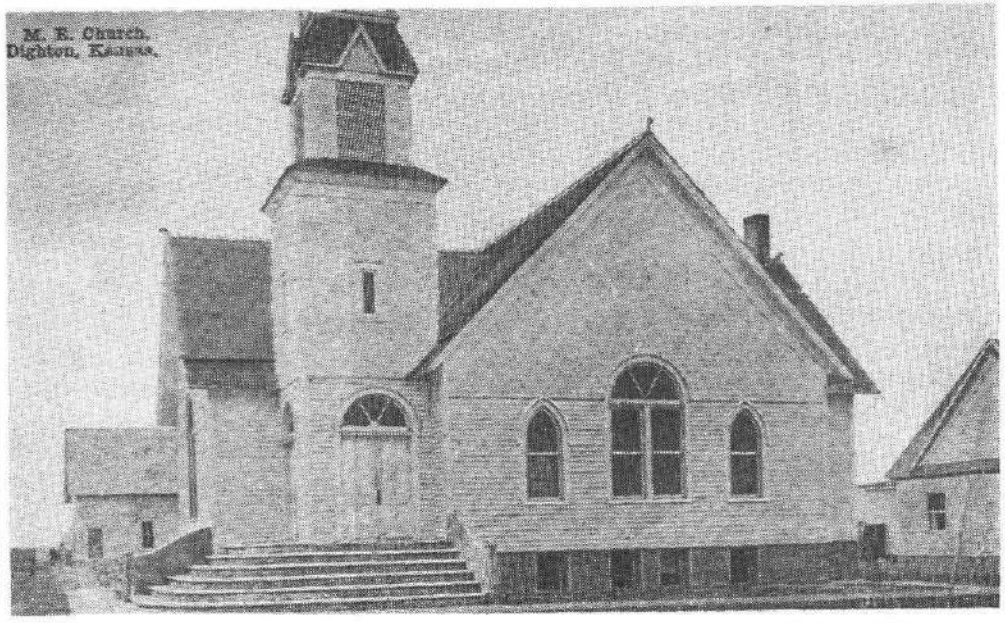
The kill after one of the major jack rabbit hunts in western Kansas.

Early day transportation in Lane county.

An early day view of the interior of the Dighton Lumber Company.



An early day view of the Amy store at Amy, Kansas.



First Methodist church, Dighton. Built in 1913 and dedicated Oct. 19, 1913.

Nortonville, Kansas

May 22, 1961

Dighton Herald

Dear Sirs: Well—I don't know if there still is a Dighton Herald—but there used to be because my father subscribed to it for years after we left there in 1894.

I have often thought I would get back out there but never made it.

In the year I was born—1885—my father, the late Ira Bond, went with his brother, Oliver Bond, from Humboldt, Nebr., to Lane county and filed on a claim five miles west of Dighton.

I still have the patent, signed by president Benjamin Harrison. The land numbers as follows: SW 1/4 of S. 8 Ts 18 S. of R 29, west of 6th Prin. Mer. Con. 160 A. Uncle Oliver's claim joined father's claim on the west side.

My father dug a well, built a dugout soddy (about three feet down in the ground and four feet above), plowed a fire guard and in April of 1886 he brought his family to the new home. My brother Clifford was 3 years old, I was 1 year old and our pretty mama was 22.

Dighton had no railroad at that time and my father freighted goods to the small towns.

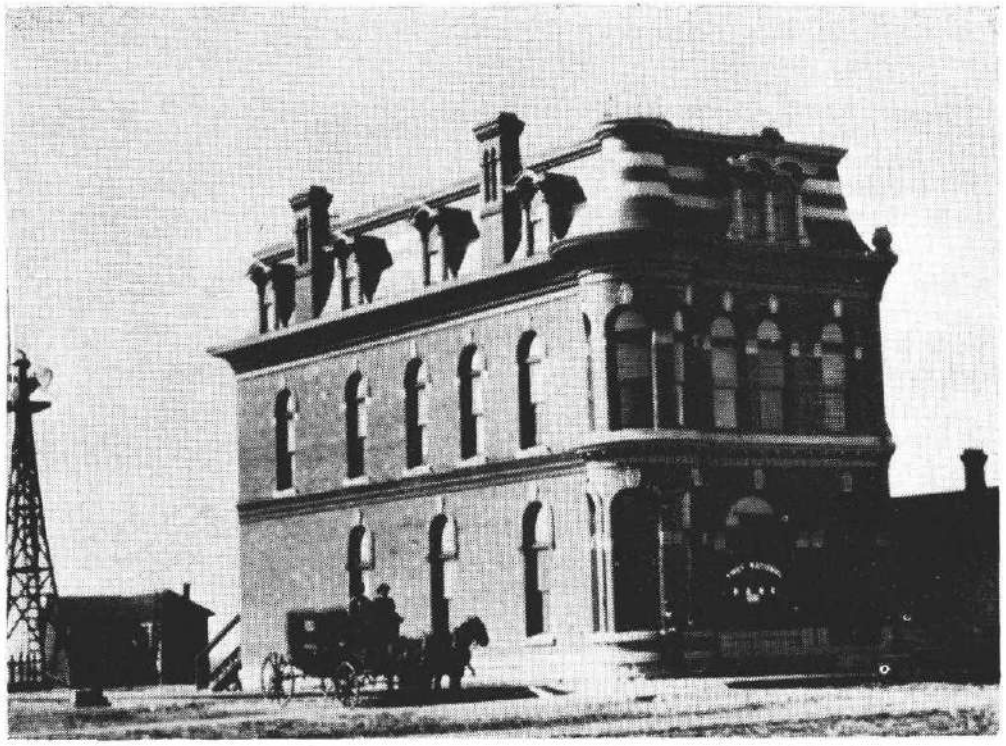
He owned a large mule team, Queen and Charley, and was away quite a little as he also had a tree claim at Grigsby (which I understand is now called Grigston), and trees or tree seed must be planted each year.

In 1908 when brother Clifford was at Dighton for the wheat harvest he sent me a postcard picturing the first house in Dighton. It was a soddy and five men are grouped about the door and one on a horse in the background. Of this I have made a large painting.

I have a sharks tooth found in the soil taken from the well dug on our claim, and a pair of buffalo cow horns found near our home. Our place was sold to one George Boltz.

I don't suppose any are left who remember Ira and Alma Bond, and my grandfather Jacob Babcock, who taught three terms of singing school at the Stevens school house. My father drove the horse power for a threshing machine run by Moss Fosdick, and one of my father's half sisters, Jennie Bond, was married to Mrs. Fosdick's brothers Charles Dutoit. We had a neighbor who moved to California I think, whose name was Henry Udali. The Tom Hahns lived north of us, and there are many other names I recall, though I was only nine when we left there. We hope to get out there, my daughter and I, and see some of the old neighbors if any are left who remember.

If there had been a school near enough for us to attend, we probably would not have left there as we liked the country.



The original First National Bank building, Dighton. Since this photo was taken the top story has been removed and the front renovated. The building is now used by the Lane county ASC office.

Lenna Bond Babcock
Nortonville, Kansas

PS: My daughter who lives at Wheaton, Ill., a Mrs. Ralph Weber, said she had written the Chamber of Commerce and they had asked for information, which I send to you.

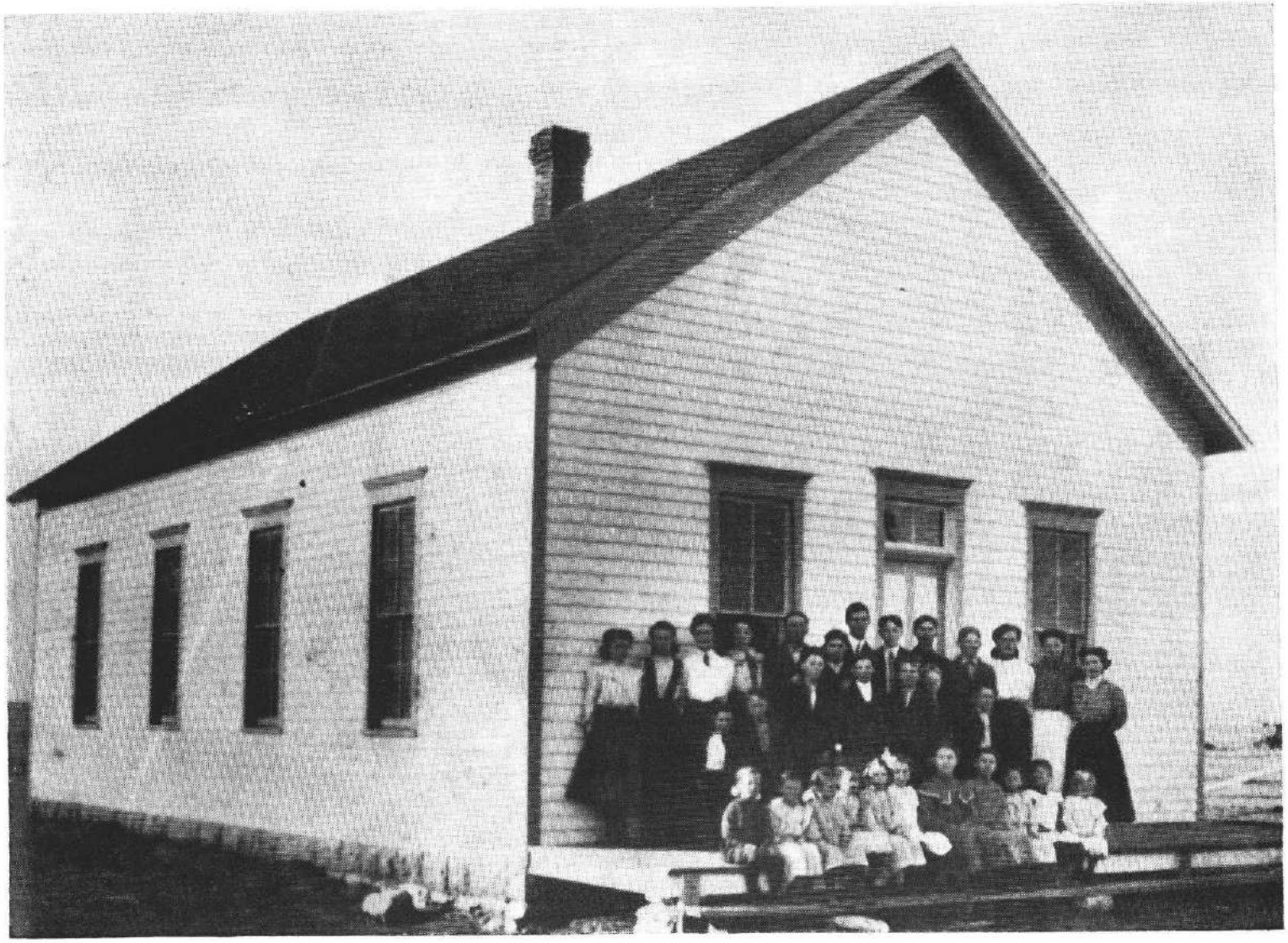
BERTHA DORIS McKELVY

I was born in Litchfield, Mich., Dec. 29, 1885. My mother brought me to Kansas in March 1886 along with my brother Barney and two sisters, Kittie and Bess. We came on the train to Dodge City and our Dad brought us in a wagon from there to his homestead in south Lane county.

My earliest recollection is of herding cattle with Barney and Bess. We were always barefooted and took our dinners with us and herded the cattle all day as there were no fences. Many times we saw wild antelope. One day the three of us dug out a den of skunks, that is, with the help of the dog. We didn't meet with a very favorable welcome at home that night. There were 15 children in our family. I started to school in a sod school house with Mrs. Isabel as the teacher. Stormonts, Fallises, Marshalls and McDaniels were some of my schoolmates.

I married Sam McKelvy December 29, 1902. We had two children—Frank, now at Parsons, Kansas and Grace of Dighton.

Sam passed away January 17, 1956.



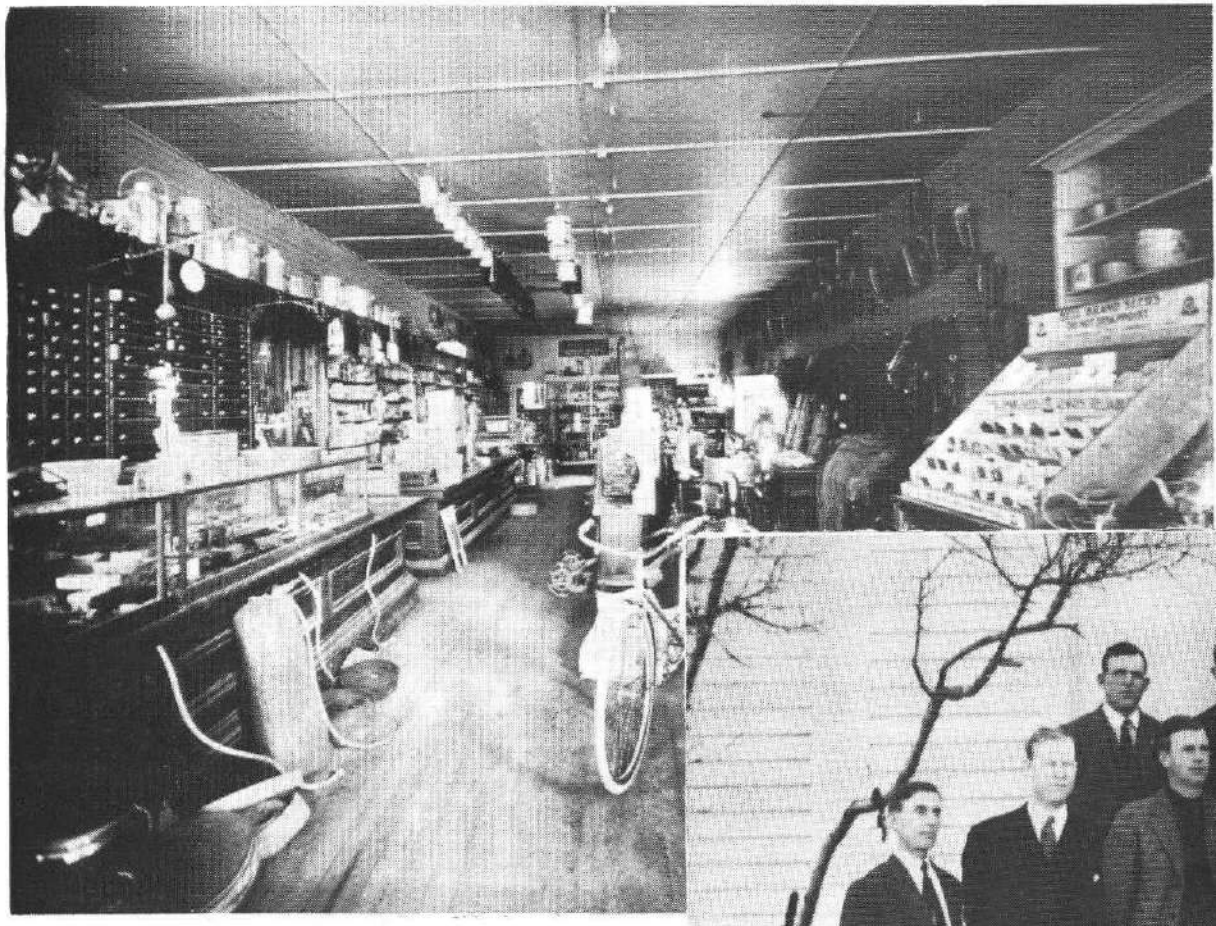
An early day class of the Alamota rural school.

Dickinson family taken in the early 1900's. Left to right, back row, Joe Dickinson, Truss Donovan and Pearl Dickinson. Second row, Bessie Dickinson, Belle Dickinson, Willetta Dickinson, Beebe Dickinson, Leah Dickinson, Sarah McGowan and Mr. and Mrs. Dickinson.

Early day school of Lane county. Miss Jennie Tyner, teacher, is in the background.

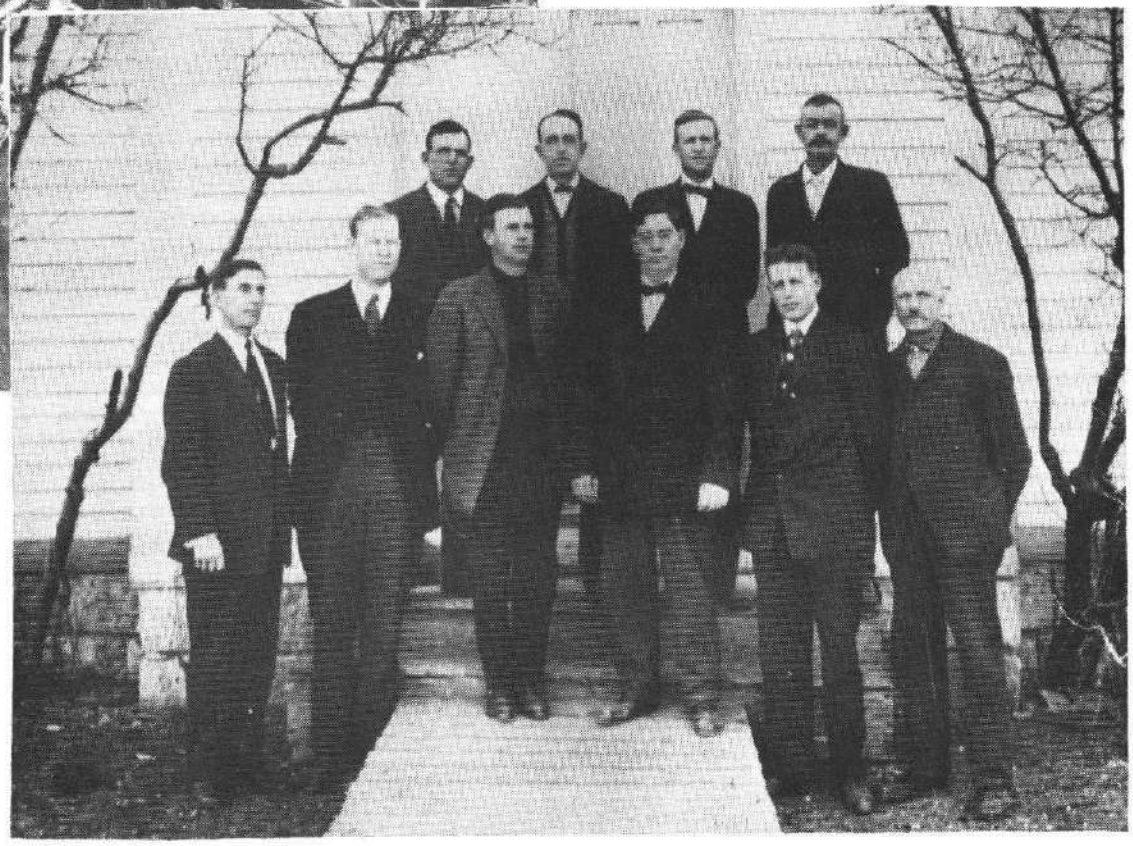
An early day class of the community high school of Lane county.

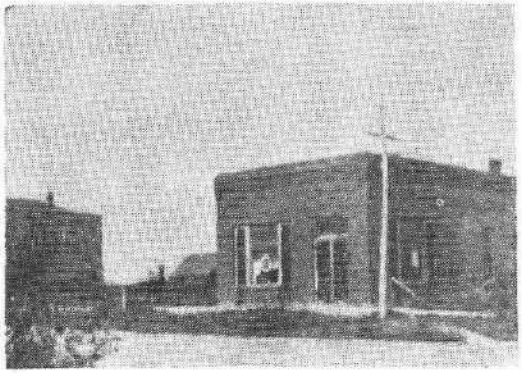
The above photo of The Dighton Lumber Company was taken about 1915. Pictured in the photo, from left to right, Gelnn Frazier, W. A. Charles, and Frank Marks.



An inside view of The Dighton Lumber Company. The picture was taken in 1917. Note the buckets hanging from the ceiling and the horse collars at the right.

Lane county officers. The picture was taken in the early 1900's.





An early day picture of the First State Bank at Healy.

484 Wickliffe Dr.,
Pasadena, Calif.,
May 30, 1961

Dear Sir:

I am answering the letter that my wife received. I cannot qualify as a pioneer, as I came to Dighton in 1899, but my wife, who was Carrie Stormont, came to Dighton from Dodge City in a stagecoach with her family. Arrived in Lane county about 1886

My wife's eyes are bad and she has a tough time writing, so I am pinch hitting for her.

I set type by hand on the Herald when it was owned by Bill Lee. I am now retired after 60 years as a printer in Colorado and California.

Respectfully yours
Bert E. Watson

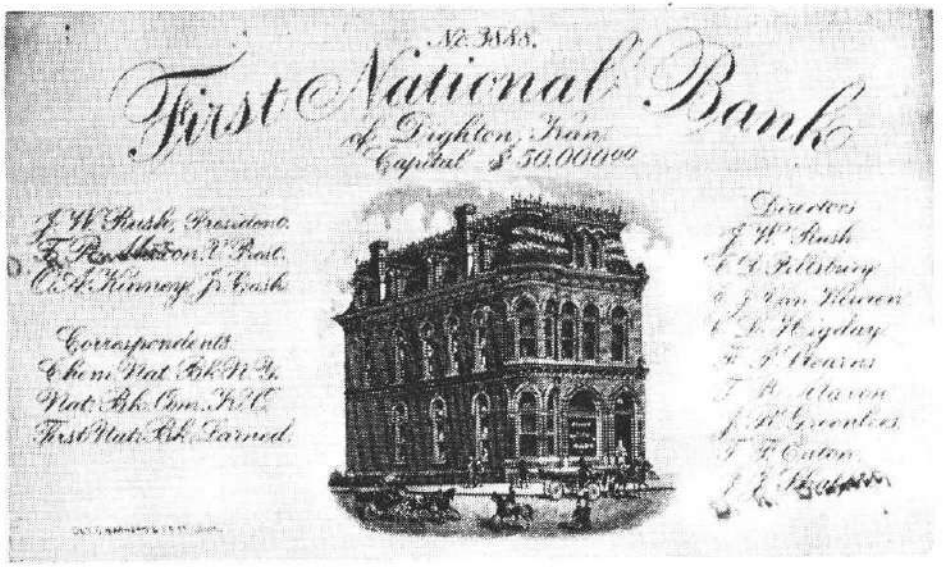
Kansas Land

Verse I
We've reached the land of corn and wheat,
Of Pumpkin pie and potato sweet.
I got my land from Uncle Sam,
And I'm as happy as a clam.
Chorus:
Oh Kansas land, Sweet Kansas land.
As on the highest cliff I stand.
I look away across the plain
And wonder if it will ever rain,
But when I turn and view my corn,
I think I'll never sell my farm.
Verse II
At first the grass grew brown and sear,
With drough and grasshoppers each year,
But now we have so much rain and snow,
The cattleman he has to go.
Verse III
When first I came to get my start,
The neighbors they were miles apart
But now a man on every claim,
And sometimes three all want the same.
Verse IV
My horses Norman Percheon stock,
My chickens are all Plymouth rock,
My cows are Jersey very fine,
And Poland China are my swine.
Verse V
And now at last the cars are here,
We wanted them for many a year,
And won't you with me take a smile,
For I have freighted fifty mile.
Chorus for last verse.
Oh Kansas girls, sweet Kansas girls,
With sky blue eyes and sunny curls,
They sing and dance the organs play,
Till some Yankee dude he come that way,
They meet him at the parlor door,
And he must skip forever more.

Feb. 14, 1903

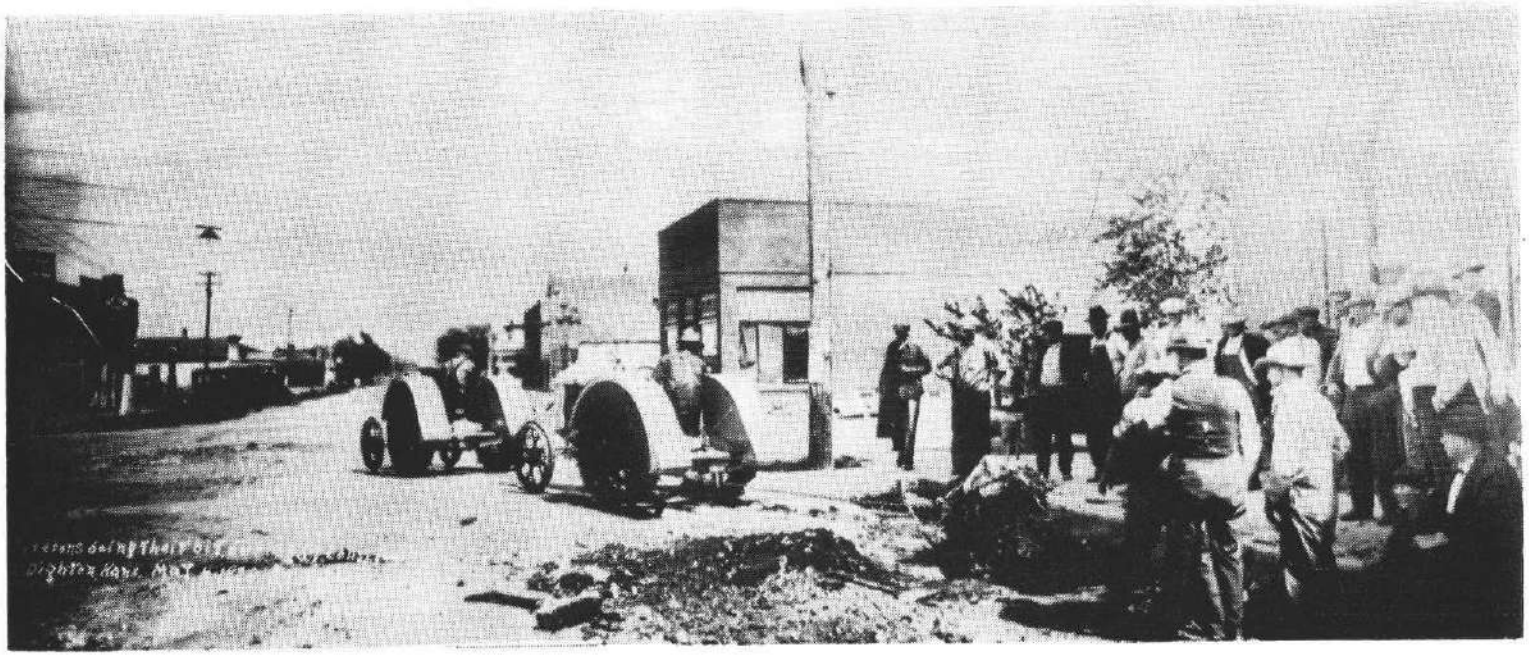
(Brought in by Mrs. Lavern Schriock. It was in her grandmother's papers.)

2431 Cherry Grove

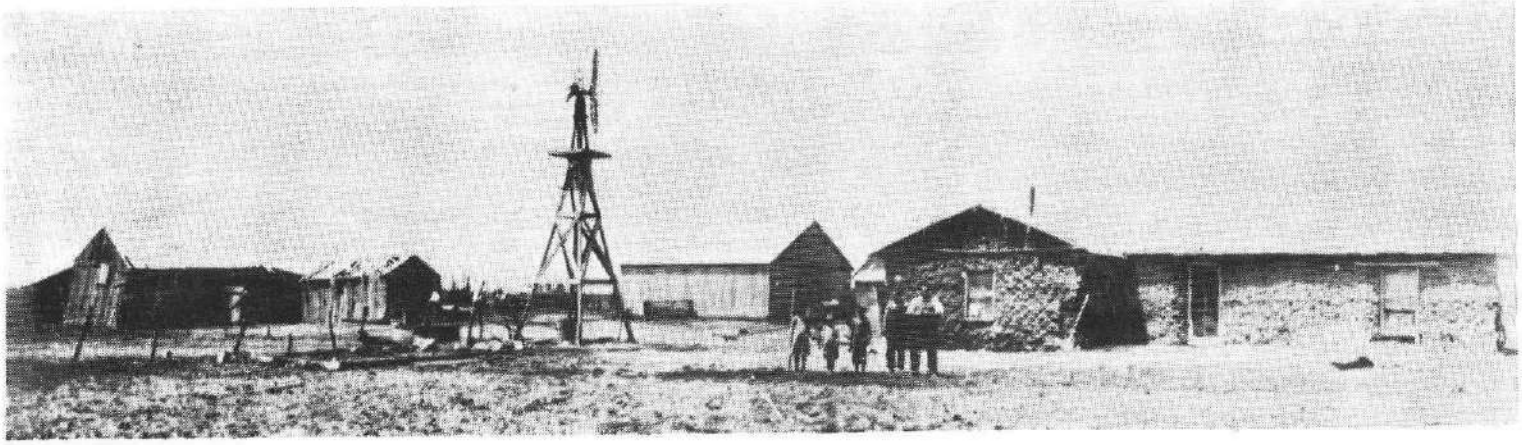


A calling card of the First National Bank, Dighton.

H. T. and George Hineman receiving a championship trophy on mule "Tillie" at the American Royal in 1938.



Ford tractors doing their work during the street construction in Dighton, Kansas. The picture was taken May 24, 1926.



The farm of Charley Conner in Lane county, Kansas. The photo was taken May 18, 1925.

Eugene, Oregon
April 29, 1961

Dear Mr. Allman:

In reply to your letter of April 14th would like to say, "Yes, I am very much interested in your Kansas Centennial and Lane county's 75th anniversary and would be only too glad to send a few notes on my early recollections.

I am sending an old family picture which you say will be returned in good shape. Left to right in this picture are: Max A. and Melvin A., Maud E. (Benham), Ethel L. and Dona Reed Marling.

Would like to begin by saying I am Ethel, youngest and only living child of Melvin A. and Dona Reed Marling, who drove west from St. Joseph, Mo., in the fall of 1883 in a covered wagon drawn by two horses and with a cow tied behind. In the one wagon were all their earthly possessions including three small children, besides an orphan boy who also wanted to go west. His name was Ed Green. I don't know what became of him but one of my earliest memories is of Ed crying so hard when he froze his ears and my mother thawing them out with snow.

My family settled on a homestead in what later was known as Alamota. Three years later my father donated a small corner of his homestead and helped build a little sod school house. I wish I could give all children of today a clear picture of what that first school was like. One of my own grandchildren once remarked, "I can't believe the things you tell about the early days, but it makes a good story."

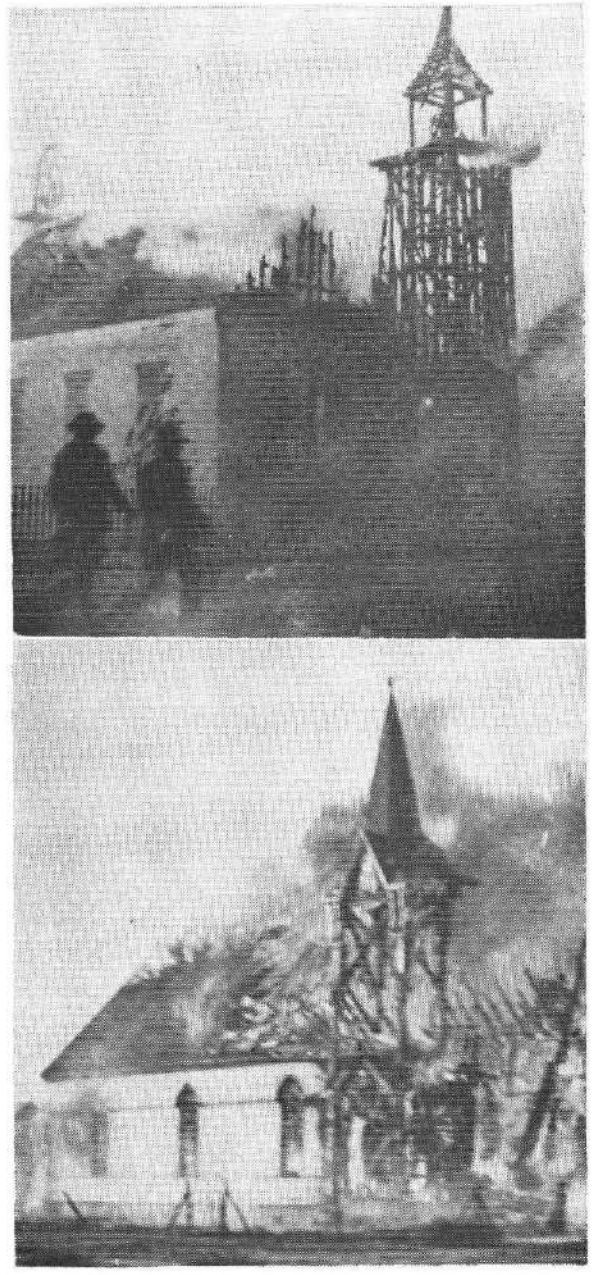
Nothing was organized at that time but someone knew of a good teacher in Indiana who had been sick and doctors had advised change of climate so all homesteaders started hunting pupils—all sizes and ages. I remember one foreign man, well educated in his own country but couldn't speak our language, but he learned it there in the little sod schoolhouse. I was 4 years old, he was 35. But we were in the same class and if there wasn't room enough on a long wooden bench where we recited, I could sit on his knee. One homesteader who had never been to school quit when a small child spelled him down.

I remember the terrible prairie fires. At such times all were willing fire fighters. Some brought wagons filled with barrels of water. Others brought buskets, sacks, rags or shirts hastily pulled from their backs. These last three items would be dipped repeatedly in the buckets of water and used to slap out those long lines of grass fire. That grass was all that most of them had to feed their cattle and cattle was their living. A bad fire could keep everybody out for several days, but no one quit until the fire was out.

I recall the dreadful blizzards. Some were so bad that men would have to get to the cattle shelters to break ice from the noses of both cattle and horses so their animals wouldn't smother. Some who went out to do this couldn't find their way back and froze to death. Others tied ropes or heavy cord around their bodies and fastened the other end to the doorknob before venturing out to the shelters, so they could find their way back.

Most fearful of all was the rattlesnake. This I know, because my brother was bitten when he was eight years old. Even now it seems unbelievable how soon our little sod house filled up with people who had in one way or another heard our bad news and had come to help with whatever remedy each had for snakebite. That was the old days. Everyone helped wherever he could. Because of people like that, Kansas grew from a few scattered settlers into the wonderful state it is now.

Ethel Marling Conley (Mrs. John Conley)



Upper photo shows when the old Methodist church burned and the lower photo shows when the Christian church burned.

Mr. Le Roy Allman, Editor
The Dighton Herald, and
Citizens of Lane County, Kansas.

Dear Friends:

I received your letter of April 10th requesting that I jot down a few lines covering my early days as a citizen of Lane county.

Having reached my 92nd year, and being well on my way to my 93rd, you may know that most of my time is spent sitting in my easy chair and thinking back to the many happy and troublesome years which I spent in Lane county.

Happy, because I had my wife at my side, and what a wonderful partner she was during those pioneer years. Happy, because of the friends and neighbors, whose every thought was to help and assist each other during those years of lean crops and family disasters.

My first trip to Lane county was in June 1882 at the age of 14 years. My brothers Will and Ed contracted to carry the mail from Grinnell to Cimarron. Dighton, consisting only of sod houses, was at that time the center point of this route. My brothers hauled supplies along with the mail, and such supplies made up the only merchandising at that time. They covered this mail route for four years.

During this time, my parents lived on their homestead in Rush County and I returned there to help them with the farming.

I was married in 1898, and three years later my wife and I returned to Dighton and settled on the farm three miles northeast of town, and later moved into town where we made our home for 40 years.

Very little land had been broken in Lane county and very few trees could be seen. The only birds were the meadowlark and turtle dove. Wild plums, grapes and chokecherries growing along the creeks were our only supply of fruit.

At the time my brother Will contracted for the mail route, he took up a homestead in Lane county, proved up on it, and lived there the rest of his life. This homestead is now occupied by his son Jay C. Walker, and is farmed jointly by him and his son Jay C., Jr.

Some of the early settlers with whom I was acquainted were David Bradstreet, Dave McClellan, Ace Ferris and John Schiereck.

A few herd of wild horses were roaming the range in 1882, but they disappeared when the county became more settled.

I went through the blizzards of 1884 and 1886, and during these storms, my brothers Will and Ed almost lost their lives. Many head of cattle and horses were lost in those storm.

Some of the early industries in Dighton were a cheese factory, molasses mill, a brick plant and a flour mill, this was located where the new grain elevators now stand.

I had the pleasure of constructing and helping to construct many of the early homes in the city of Dighton.

Although I would very much like to help Dighton celebrate her 75th birthday, I am afraid my health will keep me from doing so.

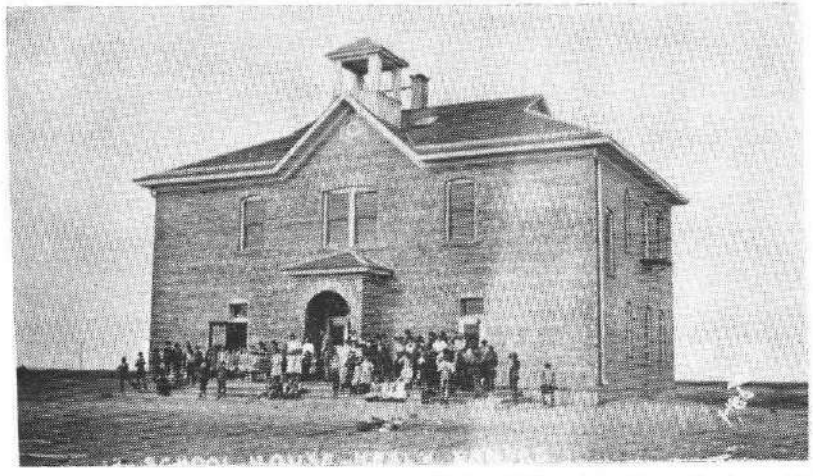
At the present, I am making my home with my niece and nephew, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Smith, Hoisington, Kansas.

I am almost 93 years young and wish I could be here to write you on Dighton's 100th anniversary.

Yours sincerely,

Thornhill Walker

The Doris girls. Pictured left to right—Mrs. Ed (Elsie) McKelvy, Mrs. T. P. (Bessie) McKelvy, Mrs. S. W. (Bertha) McKelvy, Mrs. Edd (Kittie) Kepner and Mrs. O. D. (Nora) Kepner.



School house at Healy, Kansas, built in 1911. Teacher, Orpheus Settles, is in entryway of school.

922 Poplar
Newton, Kansas
May 12, 1961

Dear Sirs:

I was handed one of your information sheets by Edna Graves. Cannot tell you anything about the early days myself as I was born in Lane county 66 years ago.

My father and mother came to Kansas and homesteaded in Finney County about 1885. From there they came to Lane County and settled (1890) on Salt Creek north of Healy.

My father taught school in Healy, various country schools, was county commissioner and superintendent of Sunday school when Reverend Harvey used to come from Dighton and preach at the little Christian church. We never missed a Sunday, driving seven and one-half miles to Healy in lumber wagon, with straw in wagon bottom with quilts over for us kids.

Our family consisted of my father T. J. Taylor, mother Susie Taylor, oldest sister Lettie Taylor, Alma Taylor, Jay Taylor and myself, Reba Taylor. Father, mother, Lettie and Jay have all passed away. Alma married Dr. Grune and now lives in Paradise, Calif. I married Charles Huddleston and live in Newton, Kansas.

The enclosed picture was taken my first year in school at Healy. I won't remember all the kids, but will name as many as I can.

I sure want to know when Healy has their observance.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Reba Taylor Huddleston.
P. O. Box 545
Lebanon, Nebr.

1939 - 11th Avenue
Greeley, Colo.
May 15, 1961

Dear Sir:

Sometime ago we received a letter from you in regard to the Kansas Centennial. Mr. Freeman is the last survivor of his generation of Freemans who made a three weeks' trip by covered wagon from Fall River, Kansas to Lane County in March of 1886. He was 12 years old, and remembers much about that time, but he is not able to write a letter. He would like to send greetings.

We always felt the story by Mrs. Mary Broughton, his sister, in the Lane County History published some years ago, was sufficient, and never wrote one himself.

I came to Dighton in 1910 to teach in the Lane County High School. We were married in 1912 and came at once to Colorado.

Yours truly,

Mrs. W. E. (Anne B.) Freeman

The First State Bank, Healy, Kansas. The above photo was taken in the early 1900s.

An early day view of the First Christian church, Healy, Kansas.

June 5, 1961

The Dighton Herald

You want my story about my recollections of coming to Lane County. I was only two years old when my parents came to Lane County. so I don't remember anything about that. But I do remember about living in a sod house and learning to milk cows when I wasn't very old.

The first time I went to school it was at one of our neighbor's sod house and our neighbor lady was my first teacher. They had a big south window and after dinner she would fix a bed for me in that south window so I could take a nap.

Then I remember after I was a little older, my folks were building another sod house. We only had one team of horses and one of the horses died so my dad didn't know what he could do as he had to haul the sod in the wagon quite a ways, so he hitched the one horse to the wagon and walked along beside the horse to hold up the wagon tongue. That's the way he and Mother finished building our second sod house. Then they had to get neighbors or someone to help put the roof on and there weren't many neighbors around those days, I guess, but they all tried to help each other the best they could. God Bless them.

Mrs. Clyde (Seretha) Zink

In October 1882 my father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Rockwell and myself, also my grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Tyner and family, left Indiana for Kansas, coming by rail to Hutchinson. Then by stage to Kingman where we lived three and one-half years. Then Daddy and Grandpa decided to go to Lane County where they could homestead land.

In the spring of 1886 my family, accompanied by Grandpa and Aunt Jennie in a covered wagon with a crate of chickens tied on back and herded cows, started for Lane County. This trip required eight days. We camped at night where there was grass for the stock.

At last we were at the land six miles north of Dighton, a level quarter of buffalo grass, not a house in sight. The wagon box was set on the ground where we lived until a sod house could be built.

In the summer one of Daddy's horses died leaving him with one horse. He was a stone mason and plasterer by trade. Work was plentiful so he went to town and batched, going home over weekends.

Aunt Jennie, Mamma and I lived on the farm the 11 months then moved to town where they spent their life.

My two sisters, Mrs. Alice Bishop and Mrs. Minnie Martin, still live in Dighton. The Tyner family also spent their life there.

Lane County has braved the droughts, blizzards, grasshoppers, winds, dirt storms and hail, and today is a prosperous county with fine homes, good business buildings, churches and schools and large fields of wheat, grain and herds of fine cattle.

I am proud to be known as a pioneer of Lane County and state of Kansas.

Maude Rockwell Forgy

Palco, Kansas

Orson A. Kinney, Jr., one of the early day cashiers of the First National Bank, Dighton.

Pictured in the back row are Sam McKelvy and Chester Shaffer. The girl's basketball team is, left to right, Mrs. William (Fern) Smeltzer, Mrs. Sam (Bertha) McKelvy, Mrs. Chester (Laura) Shaffer, Mrs. George (Anna) Lawrence, Mrs. George (Julia) Clauston. Note the model T in the background.

by J. O. Coombs, Sedgwick

My father, Harvey A. Coombs, came to Lane county in 1886. He left Indiana and came first to Woodson county, stayed there for a time and then he and a brother-in-law, Will Hyde, came on to Lane county. He had bought a team and same cows. He came in a covered wagon to a homestead, southeast of Healy.

Later he purchased a small grocery store of the former Missouri Pacific agent, whose name was Mullenix. After a time he sold coal and lumber and was a grain buyer. The Missouri Pacific railroad went through Healy at that time but there was no church or school until the early nineties.

My wife's father, Charles Slocum, came to this area about 1883-84. He settled on Salt Creek about four miles north of Healy. He set out trees, and raised fruits and vegetables by means of irrigation. It is recalled that he shipped celery to Denver, Colo., and also that people brought their children to "see apples on a tree."

---

by Bessie Brown Settles, Saint John

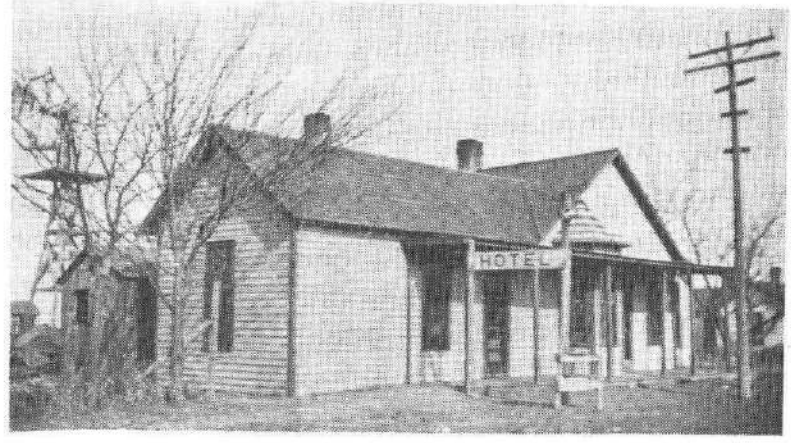
We arrived at Farnsworth April 6, 1886. Our family consisted of my parents, Hiram Neal and Jennie Owings Brown; my brothers, Ford, 14 and Sam, 12 and my grandmother, Martha J. Owings. On our way to Lane county we stopped and spent the winter at Waterloo, Kingman county. The Tyner family were living in Kingman county at that time and we stayed a night with them on the way out to Lane county.

My earliest and one of my most pleasant recollections was roaming the vast prairies in company of my grandmother, picking wild flowers and buffalo peas which grew quite profusely. I like to recall my first trip to Dighton that I can remember. My father sold Dearing farm machinery and on one of his business trips he permitted me to go along with him. Along Main St. as we came from the north I saw the first roses I had ever seen in my life and such a thrill as I had at sight of them! A Mr. and Mrs. Everett were keeping a hotel at that time. They had one daughter, Clara, who later became Mrs. Crandell and who I believe is the mother of Miss Clara or Ethel Crandell who still lives in Dighton. As I was only about six or seven years old my father thought I couldn't keep up with him so he let me spend the day with Miss Everett. Needless to say that was quite a red letter day for me.

Two of my very dearest teachers who stand out quite vividly in my mind are Carol Bower and Miss Jennie Tyner. A dear old minister of the gospel was Elder E. E. Harvey.

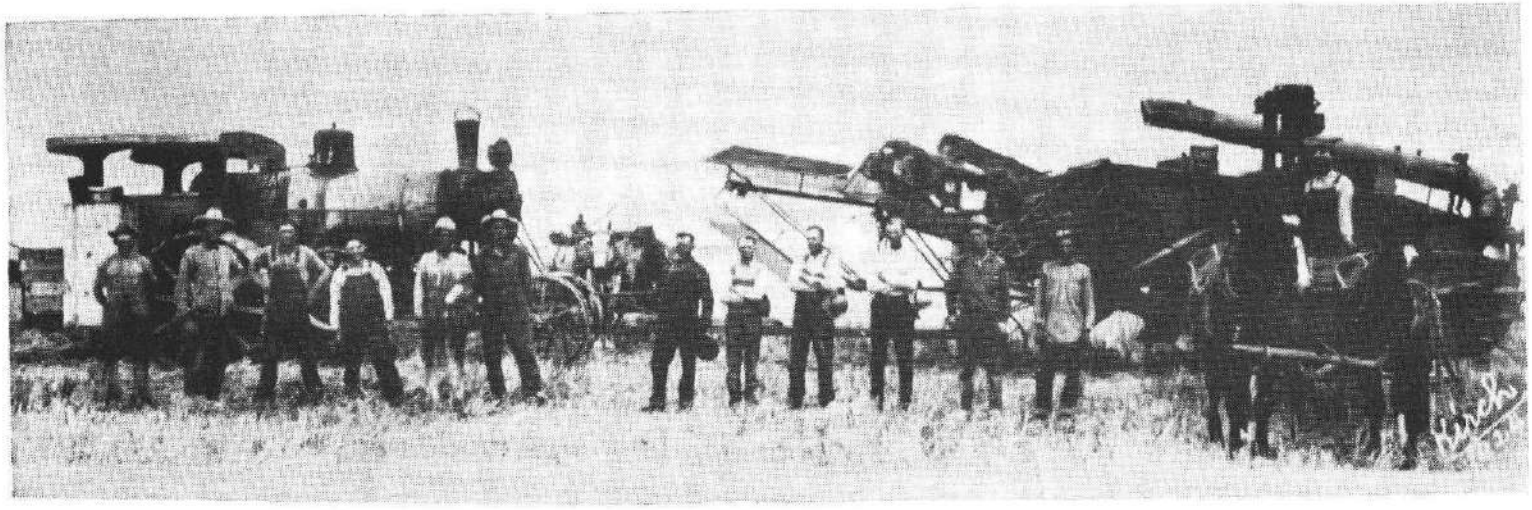
First time I saw Mr. John T. Shull was at a school picnic north west of Healy. He led the singing. Song I remember was "Rock of Ages." I could write all day of people I can recall but I must leave space for the recollections of others.

Early day mail carriers from the Healy Postoffice. Left to right, Adolph Preusch, Glenn Waterman, Mrs. Glenn Waterman, Mrs. Decker and Charles Strobel. Pictured in the background is the Beatrice cream station.



First hotel in Healy, Kansas.

Early day school busses at Healy, Kansas. The above photo was taken in 1912.



The William Doris threshing crew at the Chester Shaffer farm. John McGuire is fourth from the left in the picture. The photo was taken in 1924.

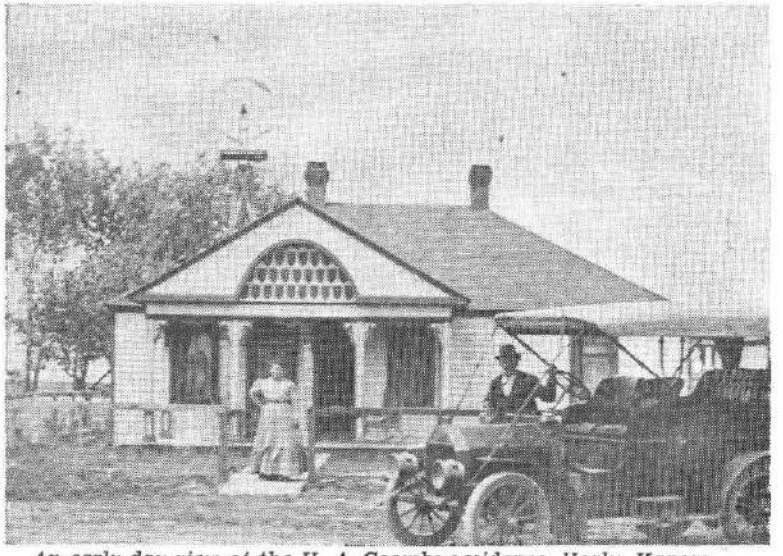
By BELLE DONOVAN OWEN

My father and mother, Walter L. and Nancy Donovan, were born in Ohio. They came to Kansas in 1878 with a mule team and covered wagon. Father, was a Civil War veteran. Land could be homesteaded. His uncle, John Donovan was here. He was a scout in Indian warfare. At Arickaree Creek, Beecher Island, a branch of the Republican river, the soldiers were surrounded by Indians. A. J. Philey and Jack Donovan succeeded in getting through the lines without attracting attention. They had taken off their boots to make less noise, lost them, and walked barefooted to Fort Wallace for aid.

My father traveled pretty well over the eastern half of Kansas before deciding which was the best place to settle permanently. They had two children, Carrie and Jack. I was born in 1879 near Pleasanton. Jack died before I was born. The family resided for a short time at Frankfort, Kansas near Hiawatha, where my sister Bertha was born in 1881. In 1883, they went to Fall River near Fredonia where with his big mule team, Father did hauling to build the Railroad bridge across Fall river. My brother, Charles Trusler was born there in 1883. There were plenty of Indians there then, but they were friendly. Father was a member of the GAR and IOOF and with some of his lodge brothers, A. B. Freeman, Tom Munson and Frank Maple, came out in 1884 to look the west over. A friend by name of Durling lived about four miles east of Dighton, so they came here. They thought this was the place for them. They located in Sutton Township. (My mother was ill so we couldn't come when the rest came.) So in May 1886, we started out with two covered wagons. One for Mother and children to sleep in, the other with supplies. Fourteen head of cattle, and a crate of chickens on one side of the wagon and a crate of pigs on the other side. Father was afraid he could not find any here. We were a long time coming. It was open prairie most of the time and we would stop often and graze the stock. Some heavy rains came. When we reached Great Bend, the Cheyenne Bottom was like an ocean. The roads were so bad that we camped for two or three weeks just west of the cemetery on the farm of one of Father's war time comrades. Then we came on to Bazine, Kansas, where he had another war time Buddy, and we stopped over to rest the cattle again. Father had taught school in Ohio, also in the Limberlost in Indiana. So they persuaded him to teach the school. They were building a school house so he taught the first school in High Point township in Ness county. He came out first to Lane county and located a claim four miles north of Alamota on the Walnut Creek. In Ness county we had four neighbors, the Bondurants and Bonebrakes, and Tom O'Brian who for years was sheriff of Ness county. When school closed, we started again for Lane county.

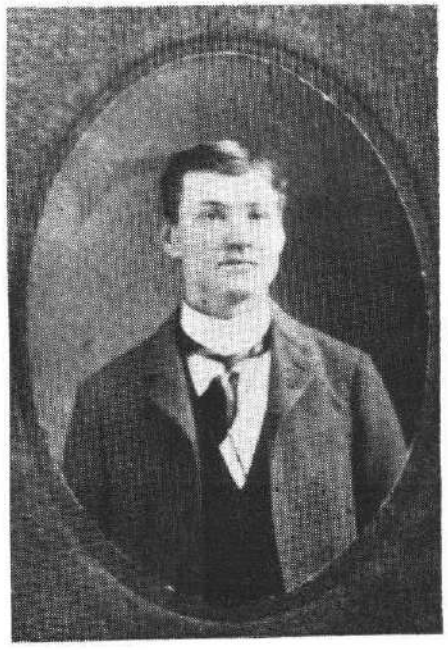
The Santa Fe branch railroad was built to about a mile west of Beeler. At noon we built a fire by the side of the grading and made coffee for lunch. People always stopped to talk to the travelers. A man told us where we could find a vacant place with a corral and a stone house which was about a mile east of the Fritz Kuehn place on the north side of the road. Another camper beat us to it, but we all stayed the night. Alamota was then on the northeast corner of where the Frank Frantz place is now. A family by the name of Ketch had a hotel, the postoffice and a store there. Mr. S. F. Dickinson and Joe with an ox team and a sled had been there for their mail, so they stopped to talk. They made a plan. As my father had horse teams and Mr. Dickinson wasn't very well that spring, that we

Watermelon time in 1917. Mrs. Ebra (Zelda Lawrence) Johnson shows off one of the many harvested that year on the George Schmalzried farm.



An early day view of the H. A. Coombs residence, Healy, Kansas.

Bessie Young was teacher of School No. 31 when this picture was taken in 1907.



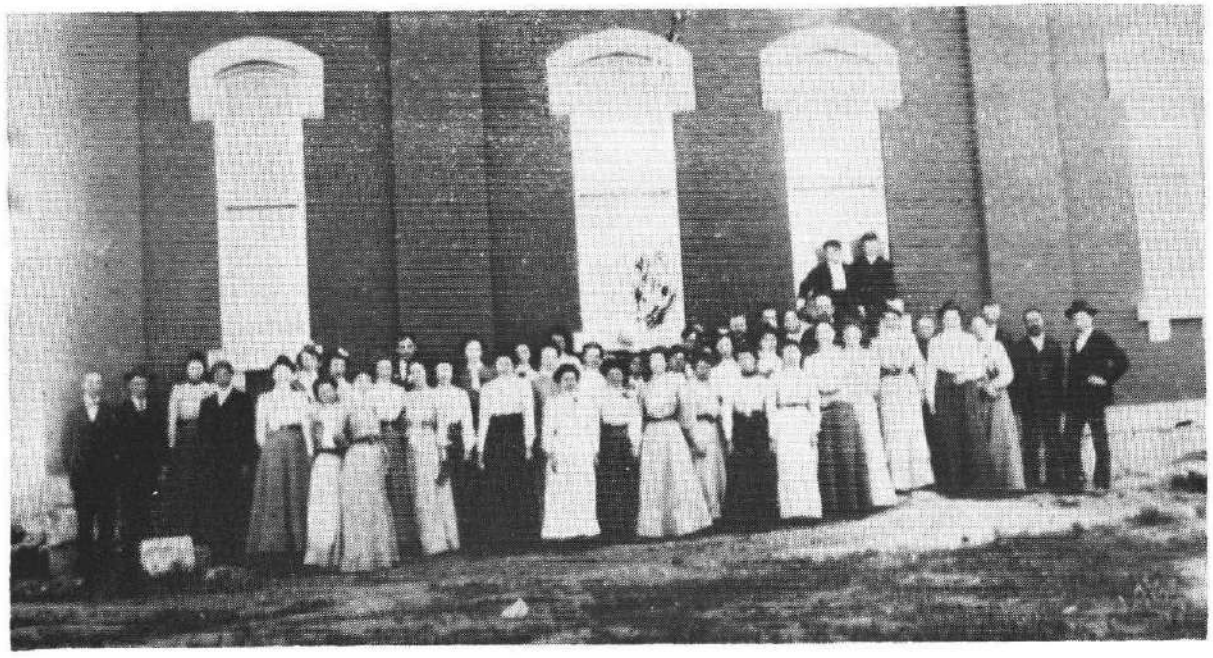
Pictured at the left is the late C. N. Owen, real estate agent in Dighton. At the right is Mrs. C. N. (Belle Donovan) Owen. The pictures were taken in the early 1900s.

might live in their pre-emption house which was a one room sod house. Father helped him plant his crop and he would help build the house on our claim. So Father broke ten acres on our claim and they farmed that way. They built a two room sod house. A bedroom just large enough for one double sized bed and a small single bed. The larger room had a bed in one corner, the stove in one corner, dining table in another. The partition was made up of shelves for dishes and food. Father always built a storm cave first thing with bins along the sides to store vegetables. He made the bedsteads and table and some bench seats out of lumber and we would paint them. Our mattresses were filled with corn husks and new mown hay. Mother had a feather bed. We had two good chairs. A family was leaving the country so Father traded him a horse for the lumber in his buildings and some chairs and other furniture. I think an old Singer sewing machine. They dug a well, but the water wasn't good so we carried water from a spring for house use up one hill and down another—and how saving we had to be of it. After harvest (wheat was cut by binder and threshed by a horse power machine) Father would haul it to Utica where they had a flour mill and he would bring home flour and cornmeal for winter. He would also get two barrels of apples, one for cooking and a better grade for eating raw to take in our lunches to school.

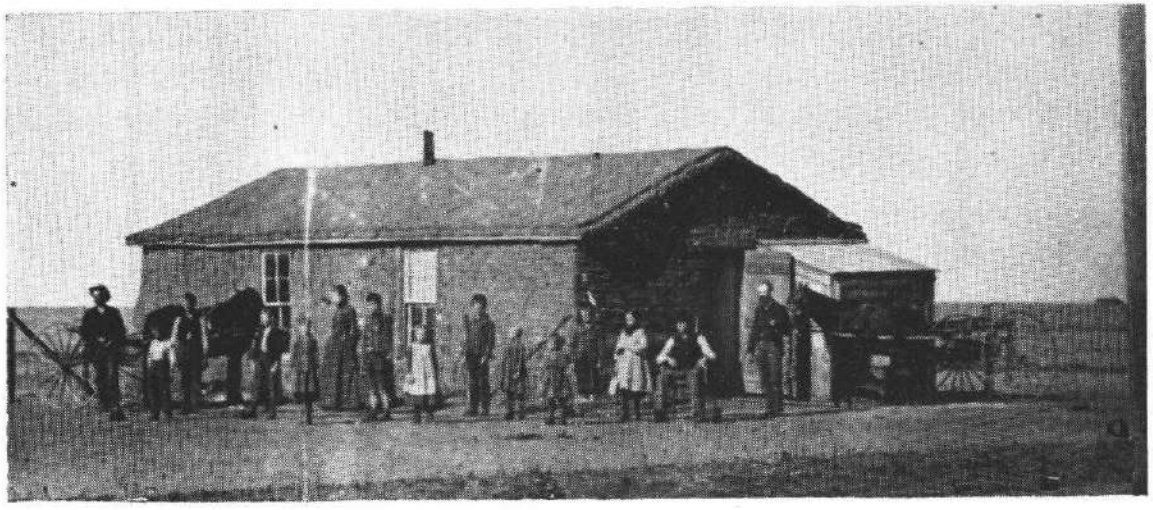
My Father didn't farm on a very large scale. He thought twenty five acres of wheat was enough, but prided himself in growing corn and other grain crops. We grew what was called rice corn. The head bent over like a crooked head cane. The grain was white. It was my job to thresh it by beating the heads over the edge of a barrel tub, then winding out the chaff. When boiled, it would pop open like popcorn and with cream and sugar it made a delicious cereal. We also raised a special kind of cane or sorghum and took it to a mill near Utica and would have 50 gallons of molasses made each fall. And the delicious cookies Mother would make with it! The creek bottom land was good to grow vegetables, potatoes, turnips, cabbage and different kinds of beans; soup beans, pinto beans and black eyed Susans. We would have bags full stored for winter. Also we would make kegs of Kraut and lye hominy. We generally raised two hogs which we killed and cured for pork and to make lard. Then we raised cattle also. The neighbors would go together and kill a beef. Each take a quarter and when that was gone, another would kill. They went the rounds so we had plenty of meat. We always exchanged vegetables if some failed to grow what they wanted. I remember it was plenty hard work to plant, raise, gather and store them.

There was a bend in north Walnut Creek came up in our claim and there was plenty of wild fruit to be had, grapes, murrants, chokecherries and plums. I remember we would cook them, press out the pulp and juice and can it in gallon stone jugs with paper and sealing wax. Sugar was scarce. We would wait for winter when eggs sold higher (sometimes as high as ten cents a dozen) to buy sugar and then make up a gallon of jam at one time. We thought it was good. We also made watermelon preserves as we raised lots of

Mr. and Mrs. Sam McKelvy taken on their wedding day Dec. 9, 1902.



Lane county teacher's normal institute. The picture was taken in 1901.



Early day school in Lane county. The picture was taken in 1888 or 1889.

watermelons and canteloupes. Sugar seemed to be a drawback. Our groceries were salt, pepper, soda, matches, coffee and tea, tobacco and sugar. Sometimes we bought oatmeal and rice. We exchanged eggs and butter for them. I still have the churn and dasher in which we churned our butter.

Our clothing was made of cheap material and home made even to Father's work pants. Mother was good at sewing, flour and grain sacks helped out as material.

SCHOOL:

I remember the first year we were here, they fixed up the old stone house (where we spent our first night in Lane county) for a young lawyer who was holding a claim just east of the county line. I. B. Kershner was the teacher. So many of the pupils then were teenage as the terms were three to four months and it took so long to finish the eighth grade. I believe Mrs. Black taught the next term. Then they built a sod school house in 1889 across the road north of Fritz Kuehn's residence. Will Dodge was the first teacher there. Then his sister, Elsie. Then in 1889 and 1890, a man, Mr. Babcock taught the school. He taught us vocal music, penmanship and tables of arithmetic, but not much of anything else. He put most of his time teaching the eighth graders, but those tables came in handy when I went to business school. We didn't get to attend the schools very regularly, but every night after supper, we gathered around the table with books, slate, and pencil and Father was a very strict teacher. I think I had Ray's higher arithmetic and Harvey's grammar, Barns U. S. History, and physiology that Dr. Woods had given me learned by heart. An old Professor named Carson gave me "Life of Napoleon" and "Ancient Rome" and other books.

NORMAL:

Each summer we would have a month's teachers normal institute in June. They were refresher courses for teachers although others could attend. I think the tuition was one dollar. I attended first in 1892. It was enjoyable to me to meet and know all the teachers in the county. Then each month in the year, a teachrs' reading circle. One book was teachers' guides in work, one history, literature or the like. We met on Saturday afternoon once a month for the lessons.

Then the Central Normal college at Great Bend was a great help for teachers. We could teach a short fall term of school. Classes were arranged to accomodate the teachers. We had ten week terms, so we would get in the spring and summer terms. The teaching was very good. Afterwards they sold the buildings to what is now the St. Rose hospital and joined the Fort Hays State college. I was fortunate in attending Central Normal college for three years. Hurrah for CNC!

Our neighbors were the Moreheads, Dickinsons, McLeish, Dodges and Russells; also a blacksmith Michael Power. Dr. Woods land joined ours just across the creek north. They built a fine large stone barn. It was a county landmark for many years. Then at Alamota lived Chitty's, Dows, Guerys and B. A. Bannan who afterward moved to Dighton and was elected probate judge. After the new sod school house was built, we had a very good Sunday School. Will Dodge was the first superintendent. Then Mrs. Chitty was superintendent for a few years until she also moved to Dighton. Then Mr. S. F. Dickinson was superintendent for many years. It was a union Sunday School and church and preachers of different denominations. Rev. Harvey of the Christian church and some Methodist ministers and sometimes one from the Later Day Saints. We had good atten-

An early day view of the pupils of the Healy grade school.

Back row left to right—
Earl McGowan, Vernon Frantz, George McCoy, Floyd Shay, Ralph McLeish, Teddy Broce, Earl Davis, Mark Hanks, Boney Davis, Edith Davis (Salmons), Laura Davis, Helen Hanks, Mary Davis, Beebe Dickinson, Leona Broce, Minnie Rockwell Martin, teacher.
Front row left to right—
Jim McCoy, Ward Morehead, Frank Frantz, Frances Morehead, Lila Hanks, Angeline McCoy, Estelene McCoy, Pansy McGowan, Mattie Morehead, Thelma Frantz.

The IOOF parade at Healy, Kansas. Photo was taken April 25, 1902

dance. Some came from quite a distance. Usually one half went home with the other half for Sunday dinner and basket dinners at school on every special day. This was most of our social life. I remember one Columbus Day, October 12, 1892 a program and big dinner.

When Dr. Woods proved up his homestead claim, they moved to Dighton and became a partner of Dr. Rownd. He had practiced medicine while living on the farm. Dr. Rownd's hearing became defective so he slowed down on practice and put in a leading drug store, the original of the one we have now. I think it was one of the best in the state. After several years of teaching in different parts of the county, C. N. Owen, also a teacher, and I were married August 12, 1903. He taught the Alamota school that year and I taught District No. 2, Darcreek school. He had a homestead three miles south of Alamota. We couldn't get water on the flat so bought school land and built our ranch. We lived on the ranch for twelve years. In 1914, we moved to Dighton to put the three children in school. Seven years out of the twelve, C. N. or I taught the Darcreek school. He also did real estate business. For 56 years, he was connected with real estate, insurance and Building and loan. In 1944, we sold the west part of the ranch to Fenton Whipple. I still own three quarters east of the road (the land he homesteaded).

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

by Bessie Dickinson Hawley

My father, Silas Frank Dickinson, was born in West Paw Paw, Ill., March 26, 1860. He lived there till he married Anna Bell McGowan and they lived in Memphis, Mo.

My father had not been well for some time and wanted to come west, but mother had heard so much about the Indians, the tall grass, and rattle snakes, she thought she would have to run every time she went out of the house. But father kept getting worse. The doctor told mother if she wanted a husband, she would have to get him to a higher and drier climate.

They had four children. Joe Dickinson the oldest, lived here all his life and died in July, 1959; Pearl, who was Mrs. Finkenbinder; Bessie married Wesley Deloss Hawley and Bell who married Ray Smith.

My father came out in 1885. He met several fine men who had also come for health and to get them a home. One was Harry Finn and Tom Britt. Tom came to get a claim for his sister who had consumption. She married a Mr. Harding and came with three children, Marry, Charlie and Bessie.

These three men lived in Harry Finn's dugout and went to WaKeeney to get their claims settled.

My father got one for his mother who was a widow, Grandma Dickinson. They fixed grandma's place first and were to live with her till he got his place fixed. Grandma's house was a dugout, dug back in the hill, just building the front up for a door. The ridge poles were of hackberry or cottonwood poles, then smaller switches laid across, then sod laid on top of that and other dirt thrown on top of that and tamped down so the water would run off. The seven of us, my father and mother, grandma and the four children lived in it for several years.

The family came in May 1886, my father coming for us with an ox team to WaKeeney. It took us three days to get to Alamota where our claim was.

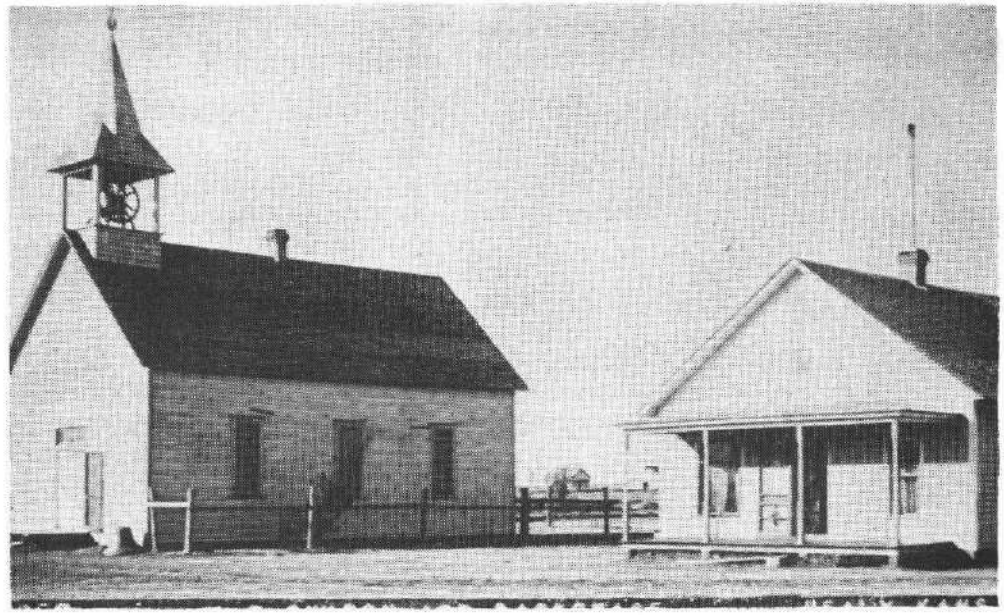
The spot he chose for grandmother was in a little valley or draw as we called it. It had three or four good ponds of water in front of her house and on the opposite bank was a wonderful spring of water where we got our water to drink. We would put our milk, butter and other things we wanted kept cool into buckets with lids on and set them in the spring.

In the ponds were small sunfish we caught to eat. Much later when these ponds froze over, Dad cut ice off of them, 20 inches long, about the same wide and 7 or 8 inches thick. That would vary according to how cold it got, sometimes thinner.

My mother and grandmother made a garden, planted some trees, peach, cherry and plum, planted gooseberries, red currants and black currants. We were the only ones that I can remember around us that had peaches or cherries and they did well for several years and then they died off.

My father took a pre-emption and a timber claim. He built his house one and one-half miles north of grandmother's up on the level ground. This house was built out of native sod cut 10 to 11 inches wide, 16 to 18 inches long and 21 inches thick. It was laid with the grass side down and laid as brick houses are laid up. It was only one room big enough for a bed for father and mother, a cot for the boy Joe, and he built a trundle bed for us girls. He took boards and

Kansas Chief, grand champion jack, at the San Francisco World's fair in 1915. The late George Hineman is holding the jack.



The Methodist church and parsonage at Healy, Kansas. The photo was taken in the early 1900s.

built it so it would go under their bed. It had rollers on all four corners, the mattress was of hay or corn husks. We were put in bed, pushed under with only our faces out. That way they had more room. There was room for an iron stove and cupboard, two chairs, and we sat on boxes or stood up at the table, the boxes put out after meals. One night our cat wanted to come in with us. We let her and when we woke up the next morning, there were six little ones with us.

The floor was just a dirt floor. The rafters were of cottonwood or hackberry poles, then willows laid over them, then sod was laid, putting some dirt on top, tamping the cracks full to keep the rain out. The willows were not satisfactory though as the snakes and mice could come through.

My mother had brought her canary birds with her and was going to raise some for sale. She hung them from the rafters to keep the cats from getting them. One morning she got up and found a snake had crawled down the chain and into the cage and eaten her bird then could not get out. As soon after that as they could, they got a board roof, also a floor.

He also plastered the houses with native lime and sand dug out of the shale bank. This kept the house warm and the mice out and looked much better.

We had a door in the west and two windows, one in the north and one in the south. Most of the time they were filled with geraniums. When there was a funeral, there were no flowers but what my mother had. One funeral there was only one blossom.

Sometime later Dad built a sod barn for the cattle, those we kept at home. Then he started to get some work to make some money.

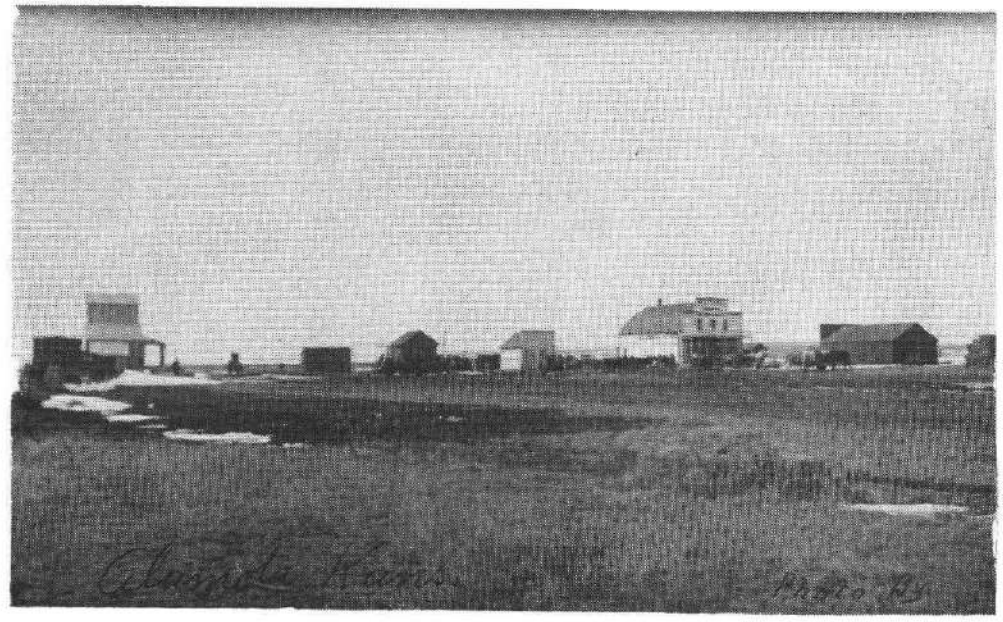
At that time there were thousands of cattle being driven through, bunches every three or four days. He, Harry Finn and Tom Britt got some cattle to winter and care for. They got $1 per month for looking after them. There were no fences in those days. All open range and a few people were planting a little crop. We had to stay with the herd to keep them from eating the neighbor's crops and mixing with other herds of cattle.

The men helped the other neighbors build their houses and when they were busy doing that, my grandmother hitched her little burrow to a two-wheeled cart and would ride and watch the cattle, taking one of us with her to get the cattle out of places she could not get to with the cart.

We had two wonderful Shepherd dogs named Towser and Nig. We could send either of them a mile to turn the cattle back from a field or a herd of cattle. They also could smell a rattlesnake from a great distance. If we were going that way, they would jump in front of us and grab the snake, one the head and one the tail and pull it in two pieces. If only one dog was there, he grabbed it in the middle, shook it around his head till he stunned it, then dropped it, jumped in and chewed it till it was dead.

The dogs were bitten numerous times but Dad cut the bite open, let it bleed a while, then made a paste of baking soda and household ammonia and put on the bite. When that turned green with the poison, he repeated till he saw the dog was getting well. Dad also did the same with horses and cows that were bitten. That happended quite a few times.

He was called numerous times over the county to care for stock. Also for cattle that had bloated from eating new and green feed with dew on. The cows would be bloated so full that their feet were sticking up in the air. He would take his knife, stick them just



An early day view of the Main street of Alamota, Kansas. The photo was taken in 1910.

Pictured is, left to right, Bridget Murphy and Doris Kepner in front of a dugout in Lane county, Kansas.

in front of the hip, put a wedge in to hold it open while the air came out, and the cows got well.

As the grass was eaten off close all around home for miles, Dad had to take the cattle south in the winter to pasture. It was too far for him to come home nights or often so he built a dugout and spent the winter with the cattle. I remember one winter he took me with him and what a wonderful time I had playing lady of the house. I had to stand on a chair to put the teakettle on as they were all made of iron, and heavy earthern ware crocks for holding milk, etc.

When the cattle were brought back home in the spring and summer, we children herded them, took them out at sunup, brought them in at sundown. If it was cold, mother would throw a quilt over the horses back, set us up on it, then wrap the corners all around us to keep us warm. We would set that way most of the day, lots of times having no water to drink. If we got too thirsty, we got down on our stomachs and drank out of a buffalo wallow that was filled with rainwater. Maybe it had been there several weeks, cattle wading through and drinking also, also dried bones, etc., but I am still living to tell the tale.

We amused ourselves by playing house with broken dishes, making mud pies, digging in ant hills for Indian beads and hunting for arrow head flints. We would gather pretty rocks. One we found looked like a dried peach with the seed taken out, the same color and all. We kept some for a long time but finally lost them.

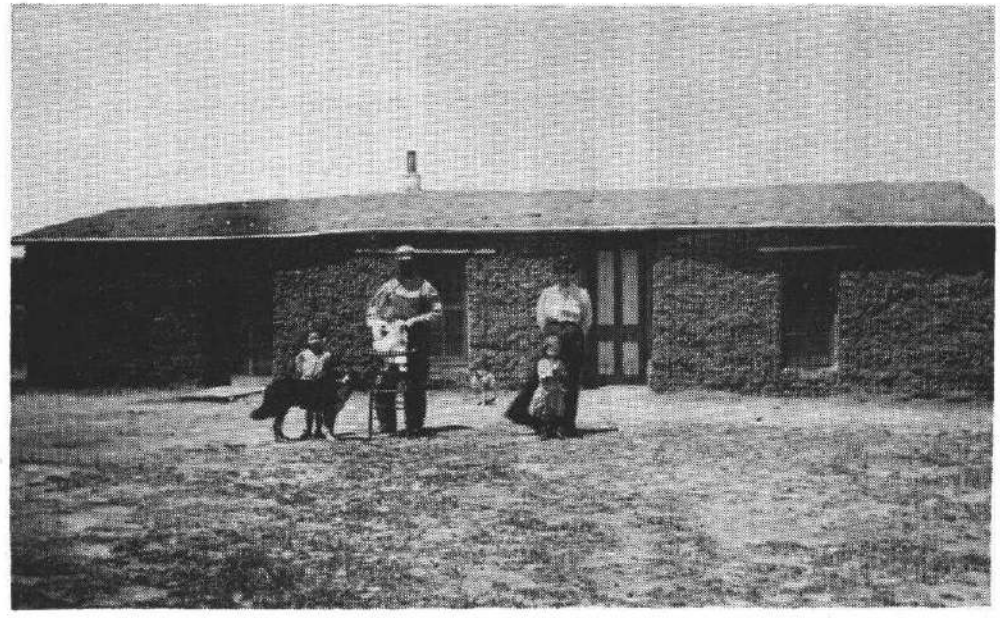
In 1889 Mr. Donovan with his wife, three daughters and one son came—Carrie Munson, Belle Owen and Bertha Pearch. He had some horses and told my father he would plow for him if my father would help him build his house.

Mother had planted a little corn before by just digging a hole in the ground and dropping in a few kernels of corn, but this year Mr. Donovan plowed his 10 acres of sod ground and that began our farming. While father was busy at other things she put in some crops with the ox team. All the old timers tell of how fine the corn was those early years but they never kept it up. Wheat was the crop later.

After the field was plowed mother planted it with a corn planter made with two boards with a little seed box in the center, at the bottom were sharp iron plates. You pushed them into the ground as deep as you wanted to plant the seed, then you sprung the boards apart and the seeds fell in. You pulled the blade out and covered it over. It was on the order of the post hole digger only the opposite. You open the post hole digger to cut the hole. When you want to pull the dirt out you shut it to hold the dirt. That was our start in farming. Later they put in 81 and 9 hundreds acres of wheat, barley, oats, cane, etc. In the early days her crops were all done with the oxen. Finally they got horses, then machinery.

The oxen's names were old Tom and Jerry. She would drive them the mile and a half to work and back at night. One night a pack of wolves, six or eight, followed her nearly home. She was riding in a little sled with two board runners driving the oxen and she was nearly scared to death. Skunks or pole cats would follow the cattle home at nights. We had to watch very closely to save our chickens. We often saw wild antelope but no buffalo.

To make extra money the men would gather buffalo bones as they were all over the plains, stack them by the house and soon some one would come by and buy them. They got 5 cents per tail for the little ground squirrels that were ruining the crops and one dollar for a coyote's scalp or ears. They also took the horns and scraped and



Left to right, Estelene Spitzer, Mrs. Walter (Thelma Owen) Herndon and Mrs. Louise Roberts. In the background are their parents Mr. and Mrs. C. N. Owen. The picture was taken in 1909.

Beck and Queen, champion jacks at the Kansas State fair, Hutchinson 1920.

polished them and made hat and coat racks. I saw one big arm chair made of them. They made horns to call the men in from the field or to dinner. They also made corner what-not-shelves. My father did some freighting from Dodge City to WaKeeney and Cimarron. It would take him a week to make the trip. They cut the tall grass in the lower land for hay for the stock. In the winter, also, they cut early cane so the leaves would be edible and the seed half formed for hay.

There were a lot of hardships caused by snow storms and prairie fires.

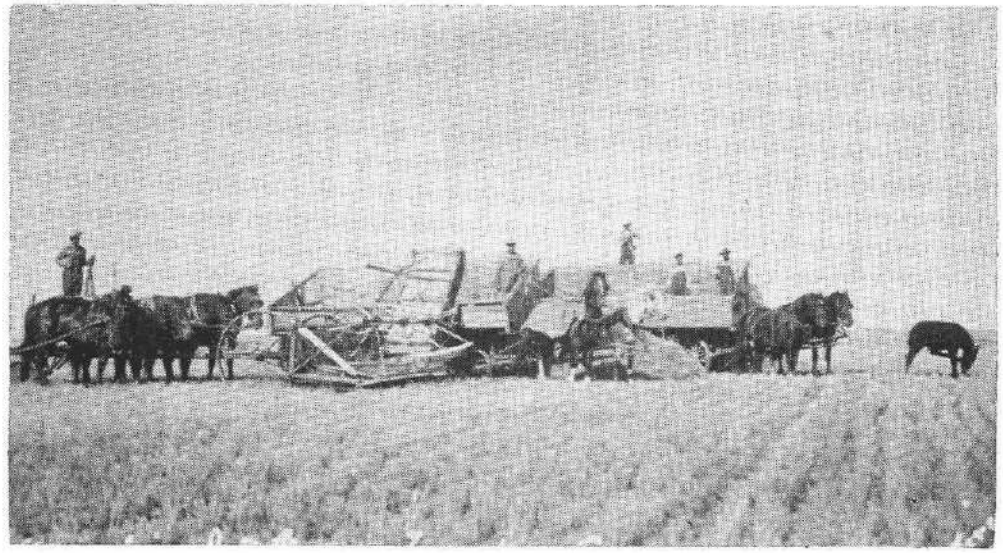
I do not remember too much about the terrible blizzard in 1886, as I was too small, but I heard all the talk, nearly scared me to death hearing about the thousand of head of cattle drifting away for miles, gathering into gullies and fence corners. If any, there would be hundreds in one pile, lots of cattle froze standing up. They said you could track the cattle by the carcasses every few yards. Some smotherd by ice forming over their noses and mouths and eyes from their breath. Afterwards some said it probably was a good thing for the country as these big ranch men went broke, or we might of had a range war. Lots of wild animals froze also, jack rabbits, etc. and many people.

I remember about them talking about the Reverend Dodge, a circuit rider, a preacher going around the country. He was the father of Will, Elsie and John Dodge. He was on his calls and was frozen to death. My father Frank Dickinson, performed the funeral services during those early days. He did that quite a few times. Reverend Dodge and he were good friends. Elsie and Will both taught us in school.

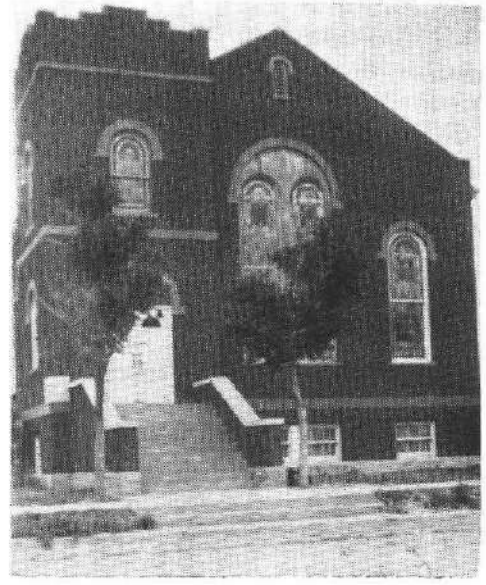
A Mr. Daws took a load of beef to Garden City and on his way back the storm overtook him. He tied the oxen to the wheels of the wagon and turned the wagon body over on him. A Mr. Crow found him sometime the next day, took him home and called a doctor. He was frozen so badly, especially his feet, they had to be amputated and he was in such a bad shape he only lived a short time.

One man went to see about his cattle and froze to death between the house and barn. Also a Mr. Wolf and his daughter froze to death. We had a bad blizzard in November of 1885, one in Jaunary 1886 and one the fall of 1886. Some people tied ropes from the house to the barn so they could look after the cattle. The snow was so deep there were no land marks left to guide one by. Snow covered the houses, fences, clumps of trees, etc. They had to dig out every time they went out as snow drifted in again. Some were snowed under for three or four days till someone came to see how they were and dug them out.

The first four years we had to carry our water from grandmothers spring, one and a half miles, in a big wooden barrel on a sled pulled by the oxen till Dad got his well dug on the claim. It was dug round about 36 inches across with a spade. I do not know how deep he had to go at first, but later over 90 feet, but we had lots of fine cool water. We had to draw it up in oaken buckets, hand--over-hand, for house use and to wash with. Sometimes for the few cattle we kept at home. At one time we milked as high as 30 head. We sent some of the milk to Dighton where they had a cheese factory. The rest we sent to Beeler where the milk was separated. We were paid for the cream and brought the whey back for calf and pig feed. We mixed it with bran and shorts. Later we bought a cream separator and sold the cream. The money we got for that was for mother's and our clothes and spending money. Mother did all kinds of things in the early days. She did her share of caring for the sick, she boarded



Harvesting on the J. A. Graves farm in Lane county, Kansas. The picture was taken July 1, 1925.



A picture of the present day Methodist church at Healy, Kansas.

The Tillman Peters sodhouse in Lane county.

lots of the bachelors, mended and washed their clothes. One winter she took in a lady to care for who had erysipelas. She was related by marriage to B. A. Bannon. He was a fluter in the Union army. His son Len Bannon was a snare drummer. He was in the band when they built a wagon with seats on either side and went from one place to the other to play for different things. Len later had a barber shop, later a music store and sold all kinds of instruments. He played the harp or mouth organ beautifully.

Mother canned vegetables she raised, also wild fruits we gathered on the creek at grandmother's place Choke cherries for jam, grapes for jelly, wild currants for pies and sauce and plums. In the winter my father dug quite a deep pit, put straw or hay in the bottom, then put our potatoes, carrots, onions and cabbage, also parsnips, then put straw over that and covered it over with about three feet of dirt and we had fresh vegetables all winter. Oh, how we hated to go out in the cold, shovel off the snow, dig a hole in the pit and pull out enough vegetables to last us for a week! They also made their sauerkraut. They took a big oak barrel, shred cabbage in it about three or four inches deep, covered it with salt, then tamped it down firm with a big sledge hammer, then another row and another until the barrel was full. Then we set it aside until it was done. We had our hog meat to eat, smoked hams, sow belly for bacon, head cheese, liverworst, pig feet and pig knuckles. We did not have much fresh meat as we had no way to keep it. One farmer would butcher a beef, say our best neighbor, Mr. John McLeish. My father took a hind quarter, others took what they could use till the beef was gone. Then the next time my father would butcher a beef, give Mr. McLeish back a hind quarter he had borrowed and so on down the line. Then another farmer did the same and on and on. If some could not afford meat they had jack rabbits and a few fish or frogs from the ponds. My father took his wheat to the mill at Ness City and had the wheat made into flour and brought home the bran and shorts for cow and hog feed.

We raised sorghum cane for the horses and cattle also, but also took some of it, stripped the leaves off, cut the nicest stocks and took it to a mill, ran the stalks through rollers to get the juice out, then it was put in largevats and boiled till it was thick as you wanted it. One had to stir it with a long wooden handle with a piece at the end like a hoe to keep it stirred up from the bottom as it would stick and burn. We used this syrup to sweeten most things with as we had very little money to buy sugar.

In the early days the fuel we had to use was cow chips.

Mother made all the soap we used. She saved every scrap of fat meat, skins and gristle and small bones, put it in an iron broiler we had, fried the fat out, put lye in to eat the skins and bone. When it was as thick as she wanted it she poured it out in boxes the size she wanted, cut the soap in squares and it was ready for use.

We had very little time for good times, did have some picnics,

debating societies, box suppers, where we auctioned off the boxes that were filled with sandwiches, boiled eggs, pickles, pie and cake to the highest bidder and the money went for things we needed in Sunday school. Once for an organ we had spelling bees, choosing sides, then spelling to see which side stood up the longest. My mother was a fine speller and was awarded the champion. We also had singing bees. John Dodge was our leader. He was fine but we used to laugh at him when he got up with his tuning fork, gave it a ping to get the tune before starting a song. Parties, the nicest I remember was at Elias Russell's house. He had three fine girls, Grace, Minnie and Jennie. There were smaller children I do not remember. We had such a good time we did not leave till the sun was coming up. We also had our fourth of July celebrations where we gathered from all over the country, spread a big table and all food was put on. Everbody helped themselves to what they wanted. After dinner we had a patriotic program. My first piece I learned to play was "Rally Round the Flag Boys" and I played and sang it with my two sisters, Pearl and Bell. Singing was our part in any program. Our supper was what was left. Then we had fire works. Oh, what wonders to us children! We that lived quite a distance did not get home till 11 or 12 o'clock but had to get the cows in after that late hour and milk them before we went to bed. You see we had to pay for our fun. We always had our wonderful American flag flying all day, also.

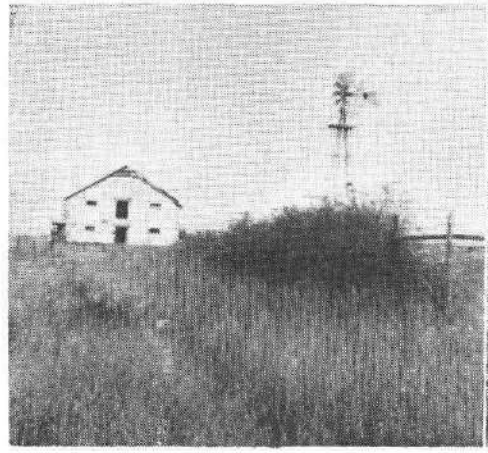
I saw my first mirage on the 4th of July. My brother Joe got up early to fill an anvil with powder, fixed up some tin cans to make a loud noise and set it off. We looked toward Dighton and we could see it so plain and could recognize the different peoples' homes and the stores. It had to be a very clear morning. A picture in the sky. The dictionary calls it an optical illusion as of a sheet of water in the desert, or as ships inverted in the air. Other times we could not see Dighton.

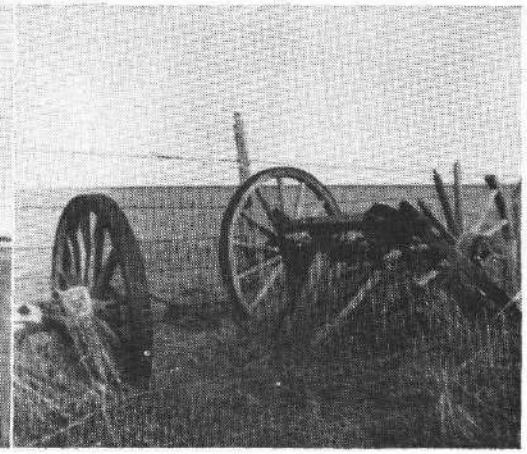
Our first school house was built by Tom Brett one-half mile from our house and Tom was staying at our house. He was a brother of Mrs. Jack Harding who had consumption and came for her health. They had three children, Mary, Charlie and Bessie. Carry, Bertha and Truss Donovan, Joe and Bessie Woods, Bertha, Edd and Willard McLeish, Willie and Minnie Morehead, Charlie, Emmett and Blanche Shay. My first teacher was Mr. Babcock. Then Will and Elsie Dodge, Carrie Munson, Belle Owen, who is still living, Erma and Olin Fallis.

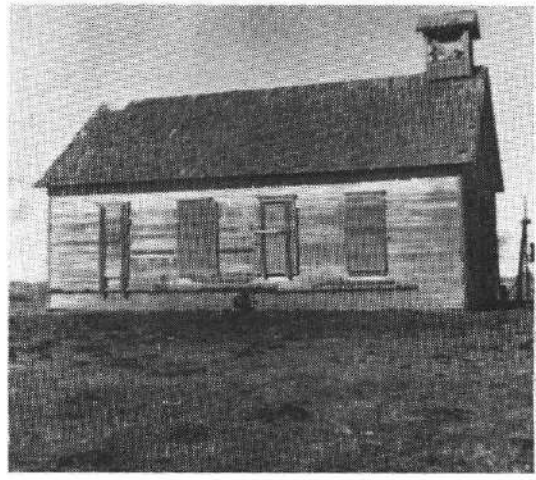
I forgot to mention they celebrated wedding anniversaries in those days. The first was paper, the second cotton, third leather, fourth fruit and flowers, fifth wooden. One year one family got a lot of fence parts, wooden potato mashers, rolling pins, etc. Sixth sugar and candy, seventh wool and copper, eighth bronze, ninth willow, tenth tin, etc. The only one our mother had was tin, up to that time we had iron tea kettles, iron boilers and skillets. After this we had lots of tin.

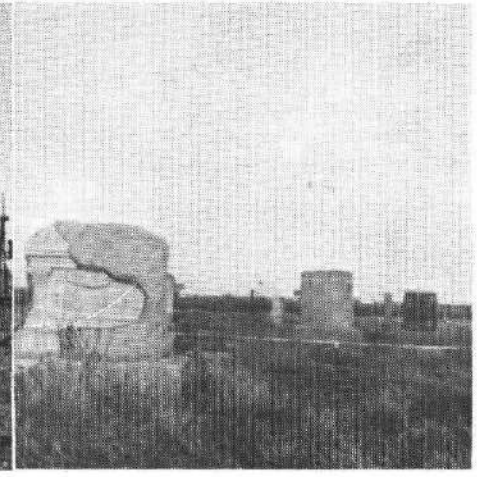
The first store I remember was in a stone building built upon the Kitch corner going south on the Frantz road. Later it was moved to Alamota. Mr. Daw had a store and ground feed with a round mill. He was killed by lightning while turning the mill off to go to lunch. He had three daughters, Nellie, Gertie, and Grace. She later married Ed Collins, Gertie Daw rode a horse in the Cherokee strip drive for land but she did not get anything.

I also remember our first poor house. It was across the road from beyond the railroad track on the north side. Sam Dodge ran it for the Company. He had two daughters, Lizzie and Fina Dodge. We









At the upper left is shown where the first stone buildings were built near Pendennis by the Joshua Wheatcroft family. The barn shown was used for Sunday school gatherings in 1888. White Rock township is named for these stone buildings. At the upper right is a picture of broken wagon wheels. These are on the Wheatcroft farm south of Pendennis. At the lower left is shown the frame school house in the Pendennis community. The building is not used for a school now. At the lower right is the White Rock cemetery south of Pendennis. The ground was given to the White Rock township by Joshua Wheatcroft.

went to spend the day with them, Dad going on to Dighton for suppplies and would pick us up on his way home.

We went up stairs to play. There was a gray haired man in bed with palsy. They put a fan in his hand and he fanned himself just by the shaking of his hand with no effort from him. This man told he was a close friend of Carnegie and he wanted him to put his money with his and go in as partners. This man was afraid of losing his money and would not. Now he was broke and dying in the poor house while Carnegie was a rich man. He was the only inmate we ever had in the poor house.

The doctor I remember was Dr. Woods. He was a doctor in the Union army. He would go anyplace where needed, he had a two-wheeled cart, wore a buffalo coat, and had a large buffalo robe to cover his knees. He went in any kind of weather also went if he knew he would get nothing for it. If a patient was very sick, he stayed the night and some times the day, to care for him or her.

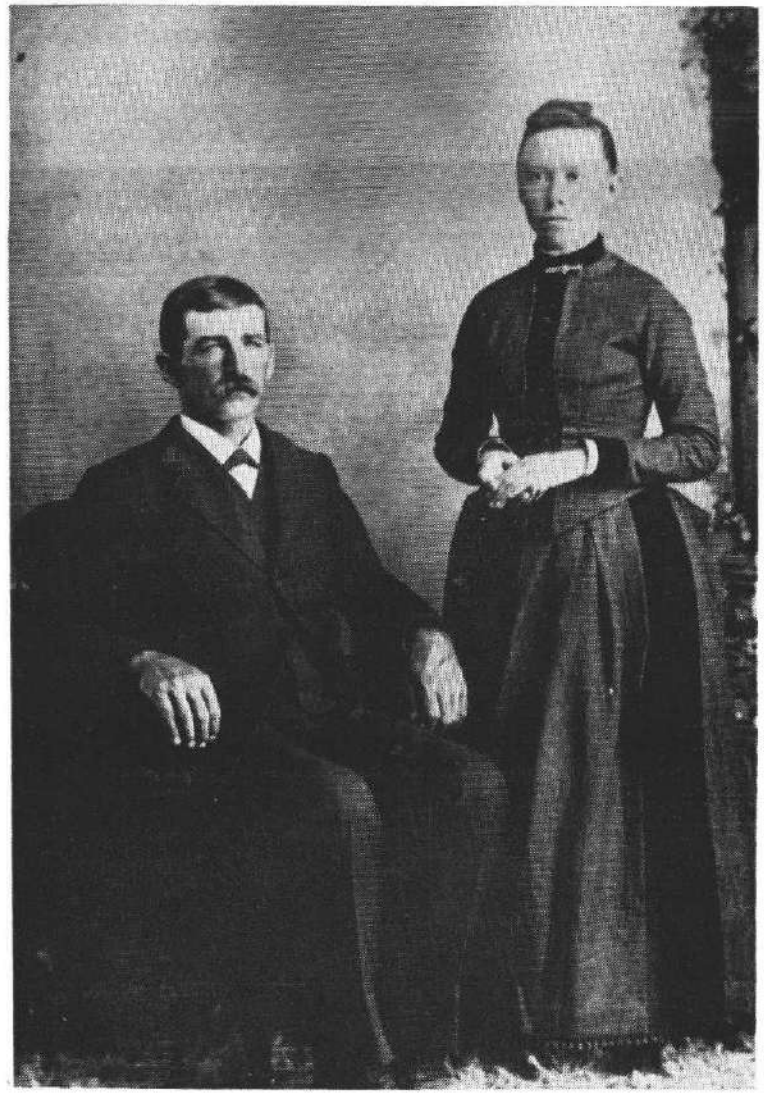
Mother left me with the cattle to watch and the baby to care for. I do not remember what it was, but it was very urgent and could not take the baby. I got to playing and forgot the cattle for a time. They were getting away from me. The baby was asleep so I laid her down under a bush of some kind and went to turn the cattle back. When I got back she was awake and crying and rubbing her eyes. They soon swelled shut. Mother wasn't gone too long. She called Dr. Woods, we had no phones. I do not know how she got him. He stayed the night but was afraid he could not save the baby's eyes as she rubbed poison ivy in them so he took my grandmother and the baby to his home so he could give it constant care. He saved the baby's eyes. The doctor got very little pay in those days. Some worked the fee out, some gave chickens and eggs, some a hog or a calf or cow, he took what they had to give or could spare. Many could give nothing. Dr. Woods had a nice place, had a big stone barn on the place. It was the show place of the country.

We also used our sod school house for our Sunday School and church. Our first ministers were circuit riders. Our first regular one was Mr. Hatter. His daughter married Jim Morehead who came in 1879 with his brothers Mart and Charlie. My father was the superintendant for years and kept it going. He was a member of the Methodist church. He always said grace or thanks before every meal and had our worship every night before going to bed. Mother would read from the Bible, then all would kneel down by our chairs while Daddy thanked God for all the blessings we had in a wild country. I remember the first time I left home to go to St. Louis to be with my grandmother who was not well. We were to take the train at Utica some 18 miles away. We were to leave home at 11 o'clock at night to meet the train. The neighbor children had come in to play and say goodbye, but before we started he called us all in. Mother read from the Bible, all knelt by our chairs and Dad asked the Lord to go with me and watch over me while I was gone and keep me a good girl. I think that prayer meant more to me through life than any other.

When he went to help others thrash or harvest those who knew he gave thanks at the table would say, "Now Dick, talk to your plate." Father did give thanks and tried not to be offended at their rudeness.

Mrs. Lamb helped with the church and Sunday School. She was the nurse of the neighborhood. She always came to help in sickness and in death. She was a wonderful woman.

Lots of land was covered with prairie dog towns and they were taking more and more. Finally the company furnished poison if the men put it out to kill off the prairie dogs. There were many



Mr. and Mrs. Richard Morehead, early day settlers of Lane county.

rattlesnakes also. Some said the snakes and dogs lived together but I thing the snakes took the abandoned hole. We killed from 20 to 30 rattlers and still have a lot of them. I remember one time a rattle snake came in our house through a mouse hole and was under one of our beds in the other room. We girls went in and were having a pillow fight. I threw one, knocked my sister Pearl over and the pillow went behind the bed. She threw herself back, put her hand down for the pillow. We heard the rattler, tried to get something to kill it, but he got in the hole and away first. We tried to coax him out with a saucer of milk but nothing doing. We got cuckle burrs. stuffed in the hole and plastered over it. That night Mr. Gay, a circuit rider, came to stay all night, but when mother told him about the snake, he would not stay, wanted them to tear the house down. Mother said we have worked years, gone through hardships to get what we have, nothing-doing.

When anyone joined the church in the early days, especially the Baptist church, you were not saved until you were baptized. One winter May Bannon was converted. They went to the ponds on my grandmother's place, cut a hole in the ice and baptizes her. Some years we had grasshopper epidemics where the crops would be nice in the mornings and by night they would eat the whole field up. You would not know anything had been planted. We were told the grasshoppers were so thick that the railroad trains could not run as the rails were so slick. I remember taking the scoop shovel and shoveling bushels out of the header box for the chickens at night when we came in.

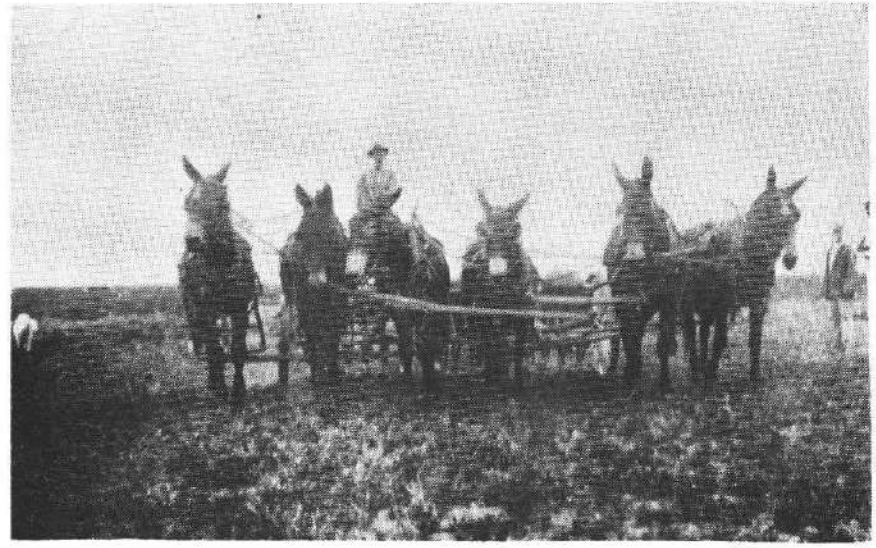
One year we had a diptheria epidemic. My father's sister married a doctor in St. Louis. They sent us medicine and told us how to use it. We pulled through and also most of the neighborhood. We had a great many hot winds also in the early days. Your corn and cane would be so nice and green in the forenoon a hot wind would come up and by night you could take the leaves in your hand and crumble all to pieces.

Our first trains were something to see. The Santa Fe came through in 1888 and 89. That gave work to lots of men. The Missouri Pacific went through Healy in 1887. The Santa Fe came a mile south of our house, but we could not see it as it came through the draw. It came up one day, went back the next. Sometimes Mother would let us go the half-mile where we could look over and see the train go through.

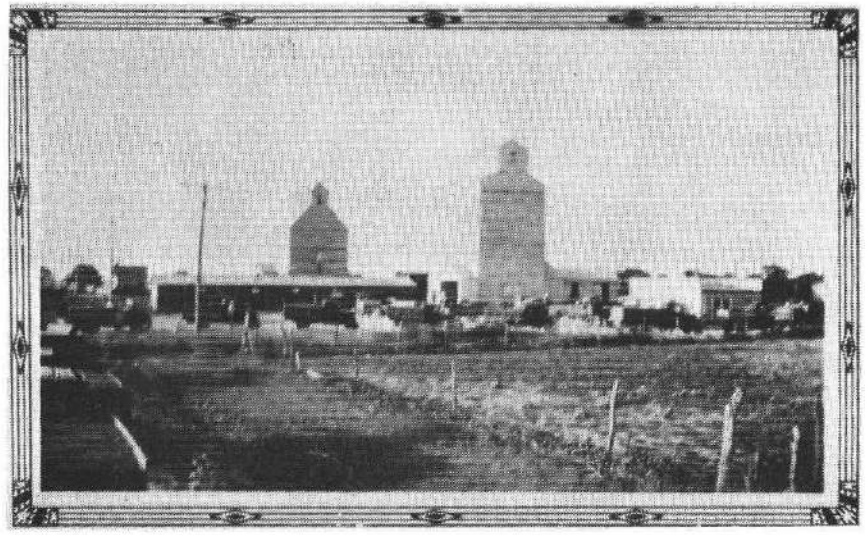
Decoration Day was a great day for us. The flowers we had were wild flowers from the hills. We often got the soap weed or buffalo peas. It had a purple flower and looked something like the Wisteria of the south in later years. I think it was called the loco plant. When grass was scarce the cattle ate it and caused a disease. Dad had to hire men to dig it out. The first Negro man I ever saw came to help dig it out. We got wild morning glories and sensitive roses, sometimes a wild rose like the Cherokee rose. Oh, yes, we always had the wild onion, those in abundance if nothing else. We used to eat the onions, too, and smelled to high heaven when we got home mother said we would poison ourselves someday. Sometimes we had a few geraniums.

Some said our mail was brought in by pony express. Ed Walker, being the rider, his route from Cimarron to Dighton.

For years we were afraid of the Indians. In those days a lookout tower was placed on a hill south of Alamota for the purpose of watching for Indians and wild horses. We never saw any as they went north of us. One winter Sitting Bull broke loose with 26 of his braves but they were caught at Scott City where the park is now. We were always worried about the grass fires. Men plowed fire guards. Several furrows, left quite a patch of grass plowed a few



H. T. Hineman, farmer in 1918 in Lane county. Pictured at the right is George Hineman.



Wheat harvest in Lane county 1929 style. The above photo shows trucks hauling harvested wheat to the Farmers Cooperative Elevator, Dighton.

An early day baseball team of Lane county. Pictured from left to right, top Sid Scott and Clare Van Pelt. Middle row—Ed McLeish, Shorty Van Pelt, George Holmes, and Jim McClellan. Front row— ————, Joe Dickinson and George Hineman.

more furrrows and when the wind wasn't blowing, set fire to the grass in between and that made us a good fire protection, unless a tumble weed or a cowchip got on fire and blew over. A tumble weed could set many fire rolling over the prairie.

In 1893 a fire started at Garden City, burned to Dighton, over three counties before it could be stopped and it took most everything in its path. Fire was so destructive that where men saw smoke anywhere they hitched up their team, filled everything they could find with water, got gunny sacks, brooms, plows to fight it with and they started to help.

Some of the curious things I saw was the Auroraborealis on a still cold, cold night. We saw it in the north. They said it was the sun shining on icebergs. When Mother saw it first and called me to see it, I thought it was some big monster, so hid. She got me as she thought I may never see it again. Another was the water witch stick, a forked stick he carried in his hand. He would walk over the ground if the switch turned in his hand there would be water.

Many scoffed at this but men would dig several wells where they thought water was and this water witch would find water for them. One other strange thing seeing a man that had built him a sod wall fence about four feet high around his ten acre piece of land. There he planted Walnut trees, his garden and corn, etc. Why he did it we could not find out.

After people began to plant wheat we girls were quite big girls then. Pearl and I did the plowing with a two shear riding plow, pulled by four horses each. We also did the drilling of the wheat and discing while the men did harder and walking jobs like cutting cane and corn by hand, shocking it up, using the cultivators to cut weeds and loosen the ground around the cane and corn, build fences, etc. Sister Bell had the cattle to look after. We also worked through harvest, stacking the grain back in header boxes. We wore slat sun bonnets to keep the hot sun off, also the dust and wind out of our eyes. In the early days there was so many that had trouble with their eyes, especially the cowboys. They would be out with the cattle for days and weeks, some year after year, those driving the thousands of heads through year after year. Their eyes would swell shut, have granulated eyelids from the constant sun, wind and dust, raised by the cattle. One boy rode in one day and could scarcely see to get to the house. Mother gave him something to eat and he told her his trouble. She had made some eye medicine she used for us so she fixed him up. Do not know long he stayed. Some time later some of the boys rode in and said this boy's horse had stumbled and killed him. Mother cooked this medicine in an egg shell setting the shell in the eye of the iron stove lid. It had to be measured very carefully as the eye is a precious thing. During the winters Dad quarried rock in the hills for a new house.

The World's Fair year in 1904 we had a bumper wheat crop. Lane county people chartered a railroad car, had a big plaque and put it on the side and all went to the fair. The sad thing, mother stayed home to care for things and never did have much pleasure, only in her family.

My sister Willetta Dickinson was born April 9, 1903. We had asked mother to get us a baby so many times. Jim McLeish was born some time before. We tried so many times to trade something for him. One day mother sent us down to make a trade. We nearly

A Corn crop of 1928 in Blaine township. Shown are Henry Owen and Lee Cox.

did, but when we got home we had the nicest sweetest baby girl you ever saw. They could hardly keep us home long enough to do our evening chores, as we wanted to go and tell them we did not want their baby.

Beginning that year and 1904 we had a depression. No rain for months, no crops, so people gave up their places to go back east to their wife's peoples homes. Some only to get work to tide them over. Mother left a diary that year and in it she tells how dry it was, how discouraged they were, so many came for something to eat, how they shared. She says one day seven wagons went east and another day 12. Some only two or three. One day as high as 20 in a caravan. Dad held out, but finally he got his train wagon, plow and provisions ready and was going. That night we had a little rain and he stayed. Some people wrote to their people in the east about conditions. It was put in papers and the DAR, the churches and lodges sent food, clothing and coal. We did not take any help as our uncle in St. Louis started to help us. Mother kept track of all we got and later she paid him back.

During this time my mother's brother's wife left him with two children and he could not care for them so he asked mother to take them. One was Earl McGowan and Pansy, his sister, now in San Francisco. Later their father came to stay with us. Her father died in Iowa and her mother came out to make her home with us. A cousin of my fathers, teaching in the orphan home in Webster Groves, Mo., took a fancy to a little boy, wanted him herself, but couldn't care for him, as she had to make her living. She asked the folks to give him a home, which they did. His name was James Oatley, who now lives in England. His uncle hunted him up and started him in the bakery business there and he has done well. All through these times mother had to make the garden, keep house, bake the bread, wash and iron the clothes for all of us. Besides making our clothes she canned vegetables and all kinds of fruit to help with the table, also helped in the field when necessary. Dad joined the Masons, the Woodmen of the World and Eastern Star. He and mother were worthy matron and worthy patron for a long time besides holding many of the other offices. The children joined as soon as they were old enough and had many a good time in Dighton. When we served refreshments we took ice cream as we had the milk, eggs and ice. We always took two gallons.

I nearly forgot to mention Christmas. The neighbors would get a big tree, set it up in the corner of the sod school house, cover the branches with cotton to look like snow, string cranberries, popcorn, colored paper made into a chain, all this over the tree to make it pretty. Mothers made quantities of popcorn balls, enough for everyone in the house to have one, cowboys and all. These balls were

made out of popcorn, they took cane syrup, boiled it down thick so it would make a ball when put in coldwater, then poured it over the corn, mixed it through then rolled it in balls, large ones. I haven't had one for years. We made molasses candy also by boiling in the same manner, then pouring it out in the snow to pull, then pulling it till it was white, cutting it in squares or just breaking it in pieces. The one I remember the most—we had the stock all fixed for the night, fires all banked down to keep until morning, lamps put out, started to get in the wagon and saw three or four covered wagons driving in. They asked Dad if they could stay all night as it looked as though we were going to have a blizzard. Dad never refused anyone, but he started to this time, then said yes. They said they started to find a place to stop at noon on down, everyone told them no as they were going to have a Christmas tree. Dad said, "Put your teams in the barn, feed them, go in the house, stir up the fire and fix your supper. We will be home about mid-night." Which we were. When we got home the house was so full of people we could hardly get in, some moved out to let us in. We did have a storm that night, they stayed for several days.

Sister Belle was the faithful one staying with the folks till they passed on.

My grandma, while staying on her homestead, made hair wreaths out of human hair and all kinds of flowers. One is on exhibit at the court house, belonging to my brother who gave it to his son Frank Dickinson who has the picture show. Belle Dickinson also has one she prizes dearly.

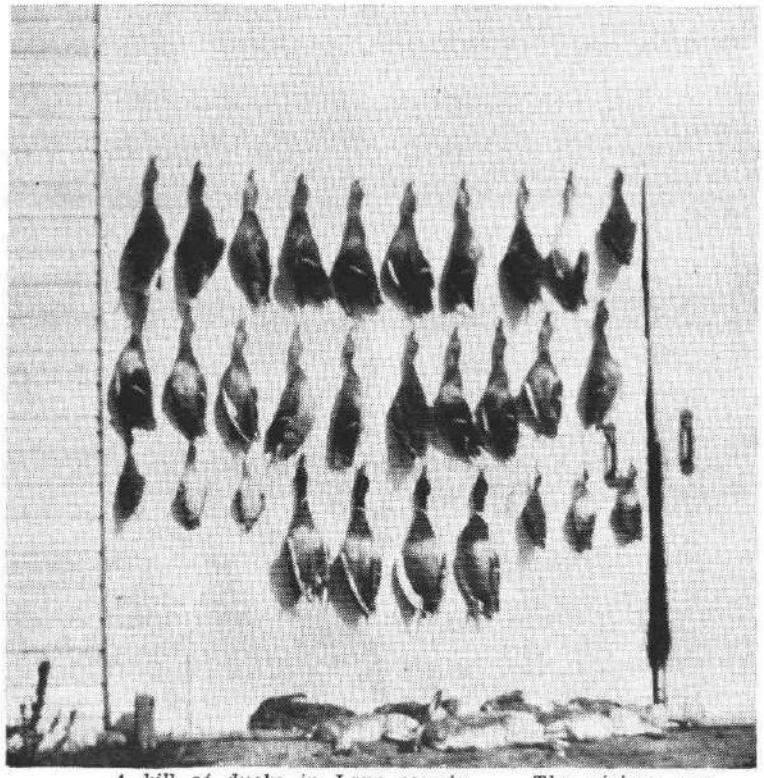
Sister Willetta as a hobby took up millinery and pictures and some ceramics. She has made a round table top with the Kansas seal—it's wonderful.

I also remember when Mrs. Durr and Mrs. Vycital came to this part of the country and settled at Alamota. Mr. Durr to farm and Mr. Vycital started a store. The first one was in a box car set off on the siding. He carried lots of people for groceries until they harvested their crops.

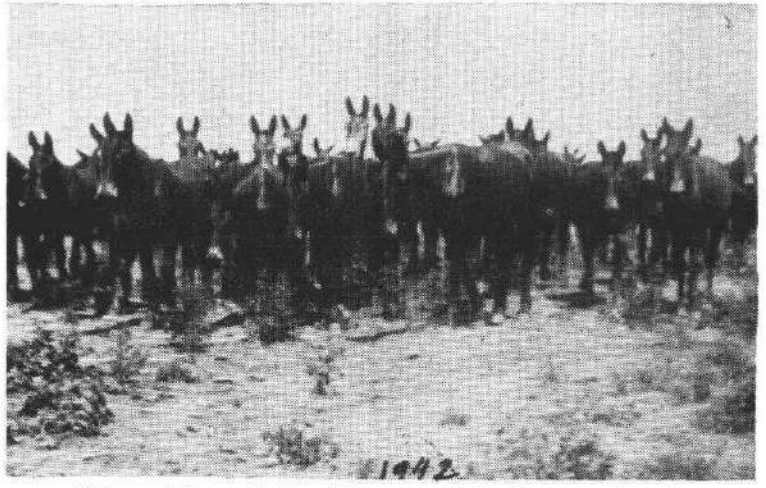
My father started out with the first crop of 10 acres, finally bought five quarters of land from Tom Britt and bought them on wheat payments and bought a lot of school land. At one time he had over 24 hundred acres in his place. He put in from eight to nine hundred acres of wheat, oats and barley, besides cane and fodder for stock. I also remember the first telephone. It was attached to our barbed wire fences. If we wanted to talk to a neighbor a block away, the voice had to go around 50 miles of fence before it got there.

This is my memorium to my father and mother who went through hardships and many discouraging times but were cheerful through it all and lived very happy lives knowing and believing what the Bible said, that all things worked together for good to those who love the Lord. Bless them. Their second daughter,

Bessie Dickinson Hawley.



A kill of ducks in Lane county. The picture was taken in 1925.



Picture taken at the Hineman Jack farm south of Dighton in 1942.

Lebanon, Oregon

June 25, 1961

Mr. Le Roy Allman, Editor of the Dighton Herald:

I received your letter asking me to write a few of my recollections of early days in Kansas.

I, Minnie Morehead, was born on my father's homestead Dec. 1, 1884 and lived there until three years old, when my parents and one brother, William, moved to Oregon. We resided in Oregon for four years and returned to Kansas where we lived one year. We returned to Oregon in 1894 and in 1895 returned to Kansas again where we lived until 1903. We then returned to Oregon where we still live.

I have many recollections of school, Sunday school and church held in the Eureka sod school house. My brothers and sisters and I drove four miles to school. There our friends and neighbors met, and there we learned lessons which I shall never forget and treasure those lessons very dearly. Some of my teachers were William Pierce, a Mr. McKelvy, Belle Donovan, Erma Fallis Dickinson and others I cannot recall.

There all our neighbors and friends gathered each Sunday for Sunday school and church. The Dickinsons, McLeishs and others I cannot recall.

My brothers and sisters and I drove four miles through the snow to school. We got pretty cold but enjoyed it all. I do admire the people who have stayed in Lane county through drouth, wind, rain and hail. They have been real pioneers.

I still have three cousins and some friends there with whom I correspond, Mattie Garton, Frances Steffens and Ward Morehead.

I should like to return to the good old Sunflower state for a visit. But do not know as yet whether it will be a reality.

My father and mother, Richard W. Morehead and Emma C. Galbreath, were the first couple married in Lane county Nov. 7, 1883. I am enclosing their photograph. They were married at the home of and by the Rev. N. R. Van Dearins. Their witnesses were P. S. Golladay and Martin, my father's brother. Some of the early residents of Lane county may have known these men.

I am enclosing other pictures of our last home there, a sod house which was cool in summer and warm in winter. Also in the picture are the cottonwood trees my father planted. Here we spent many happy days and years together.

Very truly,

Mrs. Minnie Morehead Preston,

1187 Eddie St.,

Lebanon, Oregon.

A picnic group July 13, 1913. Some of those in the picture are Monte West, Eula Doris, George Hineman, Anna Alexander, Johnny Murphy, Letha Doll and Everett Alexander.

I, Viola Smith Grady was born in what they called a dugout in south Lane county, Kansas, November 4, 1886. My father, Marion Smith came to Lane county from Eskridge, Kansas in April, to locate a homestead. He and two others were caught in a blizzard, one of those late blizzards that western Kansas was noted for at that time. He took a heavy cold and soon after returning home, it became lung fever (pneumonia) and he died.

After his death, mother came west with her father, Grampa McKelvy. He had filed on a homestead there the year before. Mother was just 18 years old, but being a widow, she had the right to file on a homestead which she did. Her homestead was eighty acres close to Grandpa's homestead. It so happened her neighbor adjoining her was a young bachelor, William Smeltzer, who had come from Michigan, seeking relief from rheumatism, and he had filed on the homestead the year before in 1885.

A romance started up and in March 1887 they were married and we moved to his homestead, where mother lived until her death in 1934.

Since they both couldn't prove up a homestead, mother sold her relinquishment to Mike Stokes for $200. Several years later they bought it back for the same amount.

In April 1888, Laura was born. In May 1889 Clara was born and in September 1890, William, Jr., was born. Ten years later in July 1900 Arthur was born (now deceased).

I don't remember when we didn't have milk and eggs. Papa had a milk cow, chickens, and pigs, when he and mother were married, plus the team, Molly and Fanny. The teams lived to be quite old, did all the farm work, and when Papa had to go to Dighton, a distance of 18 miles, they drew the lumber wagon there and back. He didn't go too often. In the fall the wheat had to be hauled there to sell, and he always brought back a big load of groceries to do for the winter months.

There wasn't any coal to be bought so we burned cow chips for fuel. The cattle trail from Texas to Oklahoma to Montana was close to us and they always bedded the cattle there as our place was on South Hackberry. At that time the draws always had water in them. Sometimes they would stay over a day to rest the cattle and the cowboys would come to our house to get eggs, milk, butter, and drinking water from our well. We children were always so excited to see so many cattle, several thousand head, and they had such long horns. Papa called them Texas long horns. Then after the chips were dry we all picked chips and Papa hauled wagon loads in and put them in the chip house for our winter fuel and often built a large stack of them outside.

At first we had lots of neighbors, as there were settlers on nearly every quarter section, but in 1893 it was so dry nearly everyone that could—up and left, abandoned their claims and went east. Mostly all went as they came, with what belongings they could haul in their covered wagons. Some drove their stock along. Soon there weren't many people left. The Murphys, Doris, McDaniels, Fallis, North West of us and Lewis Wests and Charlie McDonalds North East. The Gene Millers, Dave and Johnson Lloyds, and a bachelor, Bob Davison, on the east. I remember the Johnsons, Echerts, and the Allridges on the west. The Johnsons soon left for the east and Eckerts and Allridges moved to Dighton. Soon there wasn't anyone south of us till we got to Ravanna. It was a boom town for awhile, then the railroad fell through and Garfield County was found to lack a few acres and was put into Finney County and Ravanna was soon just a ghost town. We teenagers danced in the old court house until it burned down.

Sometimes it would be a month or two before we'd get our mail. Neighbors always brought mail for each other when they went to Dighton. We got the Youth Companion and once in a long time a letter from some of the folks back east from Michigan or Pennsylvania.

We four older children loved to roam over the prairies. We'd go to the old abandoned places, most of them the buildings had burned from the prairie fires which seemed to me were pretty often but we'd find pretty broken dishes and etc., to lag home for our play houses. We loved to lie down and watch the antelope. They would circle us each time coming closer to see what we were.

I don't remember ever being lonesome even if we never had many children to play with in those days. I'm sure our guardian angel was always there with us as there were many rattlesnakes then and open wells. Once on the place just north of us we were playing, seeing who could roll the closest to the well without falling in. Willie went over the side but luckily Laura and Clara caught him by the hair just in time! Just then Bob Davison, our bachelor neighbor from the east, came by. He really scolded us and told us to get for home. He was on a horse so he went on down and told Papa.

He said, "Bill, you should give those kids a good licking. They could all have fallen in that eighty foot well."

This picture is labeled, "A Group of Old Maids."

But instead Papa picked up his shovel and went up and began filling the well. Soon after that, the county hired men, giving them $1.50 a well to go around and fill all the vacant wells, as cattle sometimes fell in them. They had been left covered by the settlers when they abandoned their homestead but the fires that had burned the dwellings also burnt the covers from the wells.

Our first school house was a soddie. It was in District 12. Laura and I walked two and one-half miles to school. Our first teacher was Mrs. Addie Crawley, Oma Crawley Peck's mother. Some of the other teachers I remember were Maude Fallis Lawrence Erma Fallis Dickinson, Mrs. Lou Green and Mother. She taught school after Willie was born, every year but one until I was married in 1907.

Mother was a good seamstress and always made all our clothes. At first I remember she had an old White sewing machine of Grandma McKelvy's, but in 1892 Papa had what they called then, a good wheat crop and one night on his return from Dighton he brought a new Singer sewing machine and a new heating stove. Wasn't everyone at our house proud that night!

Papa always raised a good garden and he'd pitted or put in a cave, potatoes, turnips, cabbage, beets, carrots, squash, and pumpkin for winter and they would keep a long time. Mother dried corn and also put it down in a crock in a salt brine. The salt brine corn had to be soaked in fresh water overnight when we wanted it also par boiled to freshen it. But is was good!

Papa killed his hogs, and a beef. The pork was put up in brine and some of the beef. They hung the beef covered on the north side of the house and it would stay frozen till we had it eaten.

Our fruit was dried apples, prunes, peaches, and raisins, bought at the store. Wild plums, grapes and choke cherries we picked on Johnson Lloyd's place. Fresh peaches, I never saw or ate until our teacher, Mrs. Crawley, brought some to school for us to eat. Mr. Crawley had gone to Larned that fall and brought

several bushels home from an orchard there. I'll never forget how good I thought they tasted!

Mother baked all our bread and we churned our butter with a dasher churn. We used to hang butter and milk down in the well to keep them cool.

There were two doctors. Dr. Seese, who lived on a farm southwest of us. He rode a horse to see his patients. I remember he came every day when the McDaniels had typhoid fever one summer. And neighbors came for miles to sit with them. Mother and Papa went every day. Mother would sit at night and Papa went to do what he could outside as everyone of them was sick. Those days neighbors were really good and were never too busy to help one another and to care for the sick. The other doctor was Dr. Miner. He lived at Eminence in Finney County, he was the father of Dr. Miner who now lives at Garden City. Dr. Miner came in a buggy 16 miles to mother when Arthur was born. For the rest of us children, mother just had a mid-wife.

Now as I look back from my 75th year, I wonder how our parents managed without any conveniences at all. With so many disadvantages, like the terrible blizzards, the hot winds that took your crop in only one day, the grasshoppers and the potato bugs.

With determination and no complaining they advanced year by year and we children had a very happy childhood.

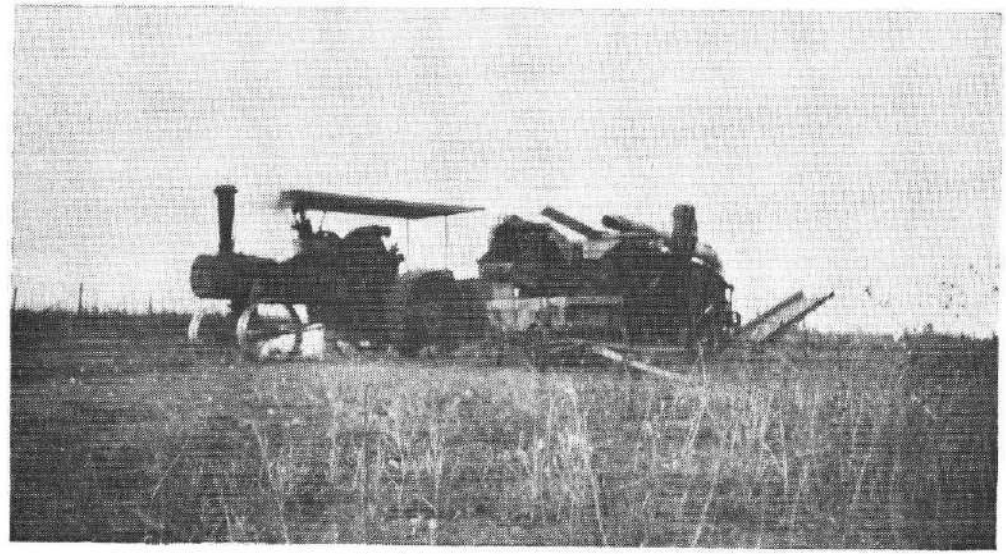
In the eleventh year of their married life we moved from our two-roomed soddie, which was 25' by 28' with a sand floor and a wood roof that didn't leak and was plastered with native lime and sand, to what we always called the new house. For the new house, Papa hauled native stone for the 30' by 36' basement. For north and east sides were built in the bank with the west and south sides in the open. The upper part was frame with three bedrooms and a large living room. How we children in our teenage did enjoy that house!

We three girls were all married by the time we were 20. We all three taught school as did Arthur our brother. In 1908 Laura was married to Chester Shaffer in our home and as a bride went to live on the place where she now lives in Lane county.

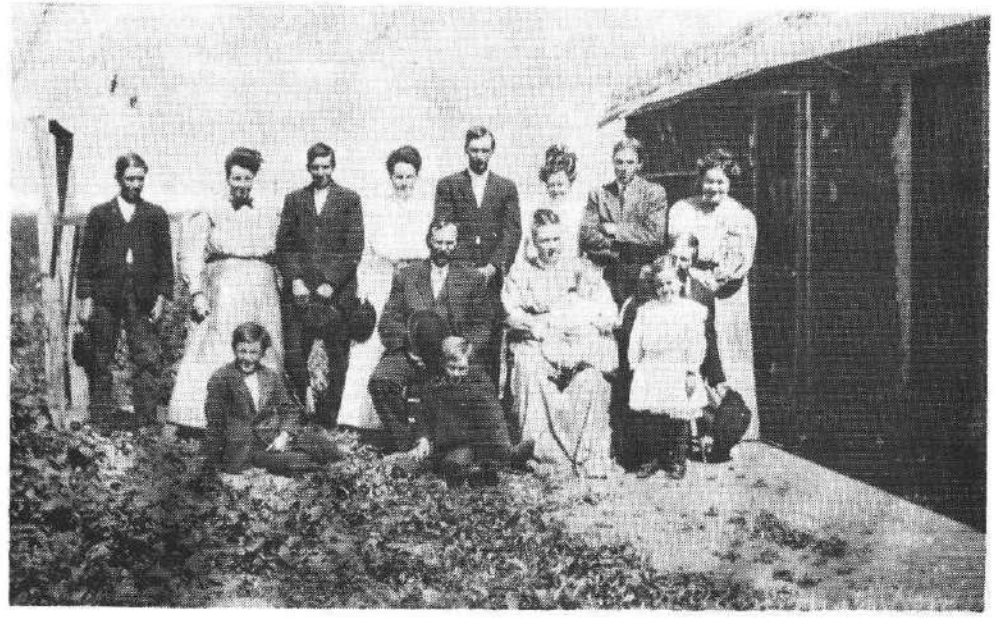
Clara and her husband, Emery Brown, moved to Indiana in 1912 and still live there. Willie and wife, Fern Lawrence, own and live on the Ed Kepner homestead on north Hackberry.

I and my four children moved to Bayfield, Colorado, during the depression days of the dirty thirtys. It's a beautiful country and I love it, but when I think of going home which I do every few years, its Lane county. I enjoy every minute I'm there visiting with my relatives and old friends.

I admire all those good folk for their bravery in staying on there through thick and thin and making Lane county what it is now.



The Charlie Doris threshing outfit.



This picture was taken in 1908 in Lane county and shows the M. A. Mumma family. There was Mr. and Mrs. Mumma and eight boys and five girls.