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HISTORY OF MORTON COUNTY, KANSAS

Prior to 1886, the territory which now comprises Morton County was unorganized territory, and attached to various counties for judicial purposes. At different times it has been called Kansas County, Seward County and Finney County. Just prior to the organization of Morton County in 1887, it was attached to Hamilton County for judicial purposes.

The first survey made in the county was the Government survey of the Santa Fe Trail, which extended from the Missouri River to Santa Fe, New Mexico. This trail ran through Morton County almost parallel with the Cimarron River, from the northeast to the southwest. The field notes of the surveyors state that they camped at Middle Spring on the Cimarron River, now called Spring Arroya, which is located on Section 6, Township 34, Range 42, in September 1826.

The south line of the state was surveyed in 1858 by Colonel Joseph E. JOHNSTON of the United States Army, which gave Morton County its southern boundary. The task then was to locate and mark the Thirty-seventh Parallel. Recent surveys with more accurate instruments show the south boundary to be a few hundred feet south of the actual Thirty-seventh Parallel, but it has not been changed.

The west line of the state, which gave the county its western boundary, was surveyed in 1872 by John C. MAJOR. This boundary line is on the One-hundred-second Meridian, and later surveys vary not more than six inches from the original survey.

The Palo-Duro Trail, which enters the county on Section 30, Township 31, Range 43, followed a southeastern course by Point Rocks, and left Morton County to enter No-Man's-Land on Section 14, Township 35, Range 42. Palo-Duro is a Spanish name and signifies "hardwood". It was so named because of a few hackberries which were growing in the draws along the north side of the river. This trail was originally a military road and ran from Fort Lyon in Colorado to Fort Elliott in Texas. It was used by freighters and cattlemen up to about 1886.

The next established road, which was made by the cattlemen, led from Point Rocks

Ranch to the "O-X" Ranch on Beaver Creek, about five miles below where Guymon, Oklahoma is now located. This was called the "O-X" Trail. The above were the only trails or roads in this territory prior to 1886.

The first temporary settlement in Morton County was made in 1877 when BATES and BEALS, who later operated the "L-X" Ranch in Texas, camped at Point Rocks for a couple of months during the summer to pasture their herds. In the fall they removed their droves of cattle to the Canadian, north of Amarillo, Texas, as that country afforded more water and protection.

The first permanent settlement in Morton County was made by BEATY Brothers at Point Rocks. This company had established a ranch on the Arkansas River forty miles east of Pueblo in 1868. Their huge herds of cattle were ever in need of new pasture and the shaggy coat of the boundless plains held promise for the ambitious stockmen. Thus was broken the sacred stillness that held the bygone ages, as the vast herds were moved to Morton County to a range thousands of square miles in extent without a foot of barb-wire to fence it in.

J. N. BEATY and J. W. McCLAIN established Beaty Brothers Ranch at Point Rocks on the Cimarron in the fall of 1879. According to the field notes of the old surveyors, Point Rocks is 500 miles from the Missouri River by the old Santa Fe Trail and 260 miles from Santa Fe, New Mexico. Point Rocks is almost the height of the surrounding country. The sandstone bluffs are 108 feet high and jut clear up to the river. The Mexicans called Point Rocks, Mesa Blanco, which means white rock. It was so called because of the white sandstone cliffs.

The ranch house was built on Section 12, Township 34, Range 43. It was built either in the fall of 1879 or the spring of 1880, and was an adobe structure of two rooms. The little hut was the rudest kind of an affair, with buffalo horns and coyote skins on the walls, and saddles and cowboys' traps in a corner, a cupboard, a table, and a few crude benches. This house was built by Lewis BEST, Martin MERRILL, and W. B. McCLAIN, who were employees of the J*B or Beaty Brothers Ranch. Mr. BEST died many years ago in Davies County, Missouri. Mr. MERRILL returned to his former home in

Illinois and has been dead many years. W. B. McCLAIN now lives on a farm near Benton, Kansas.

The ranch was operated under the name and brand of Beaty Brothers Ranch until 1898, when it passed to the H. S. BOICE Cattle Company, who operated it for several years. This was the principal and most noted ranch in this part of the country and at different times had as many as 30,000 head of cattle in their brand.

In the fall, large herds of cattle were driven to Granada, Lakin or Dodge for shipment. The outfits organized to take charge of the shipments consisted of one mess wagon drawn by four horses and driven by the cook; a boss in charge; a horse wrangler to take care of the saddle horses; and from eight to twelve men. From the time the herds were gathered until they were on the cars they were watched day and night,

Among the camp places and round-up grounds, was one known as Earney Gow. This was located on Section 35, Township 32, Range 40, and was named for Barney GOW, a buffalo hunter, who had built a dugout on this location in probably 1875. Another camp was called 4-Mile Point, which was approximately four miles east of Point Rocks; another 9-Mile Point, which was on the Colorado-Kansas state line.

The cowboys' life was days, more days, and miles, miles, miles. Their chief diversion was speculating as to how much weight the steers would put on by fall. Occasionally the uninterrupted mournfulness of life was broken.

In the summer of 1883, two outlaws from Nebraska rode into the ranch to camp for the night. These men were horse thieves, had committed murder, and were considered real desperados. The officers arrived sometime during the night, and since ^aone-thousand dollar reward was offered for each of them, dead or alive, they concluded it would be just as easy and possibly much safer to collect the reward by delivering the corpses instead of returning them alive. One bandit was shot as he rode in with the horses the next morning. The cowboys, being a little more courageous than the officers, captured the other.

They loaded the corpse in a covered wagon and with one officer and a cowboy as mounted guards, and the other officer driving the wagon with the captured outlaw at his

side, set out on their return trip. They had gone but a few miles when a buffalo jumped up and the guards gave chase. The officer in charge of the outlaw and the corpse was paralyzed with fear. However, the prisoner saw no necessity for permitting his restrictions to spoil such rollicking sport, and snatching the lines from the officer, the hearse followed in hot pursuit.

After the killing of the buffalo, the officers discovered that though a very much alive prisoner was still with them, the corpse was missing. Much retracing and wending over the prairies was done before the body was located and they were again on their way.

One innovation still remembered by former cow punchers is the first sermon ever preached in Morton County, which was preached at the Point Rocks Ranch. During the summer of 1885, two men traveling in a covered spring wagon stopped at the ranch. In conversation the cowboys suggested that they "swap" horses. The elder of the two strangers said that inasmuch as he was a minister of the gospel and that day was Sunday, he could not talk trade. However, he indicated that if the boys were still in a trading mood the next day they might do business. Upon ascertaining that there was a minister in their midst, the boys invited him to make a few remarks. He was very happy to have the opportunity, but the greatest difficulty in preparing his services was in making arrangements for the singing. The only song books available were those the preacher was carrying, and what songs the cowboys had learned in their youth, they had either forgotten or were unable to carry a tune. They managed a song or two, had a brief sermon and a word of prayer, but neglected to ascertain the name of the minister. No record was made as to whether or not a trade was consummated the next day.

Another treasured memory of the early cowboys is the killing of the last buffalo in this territory. A two-year old buffalo bull came in with the cattle to water on the Cimarron just below Point Rocks. A number of the cowboys immediately saddled their horses and proceeded to rope it. This buffalo was butchered and eaten by the ranch boys. Among those in the chase were, John MILES, who later lived and died in Garden City, Kansas; Henry HELMAN, who afterwards went back to Hardin, Missouri to live; J. W. McCLAIN, who moved to Manzanola, Colorado, and is now deceased; and Joel APPLEBEE.

The Molden Cattle Company started the "1881" Ranch on the Cimarron in 1863, moving here from Barber County. Their brand was "1881" hence the name. S. M. FARRAR was president and manager of this outfit. Frank WEIR came here with them. He later served as Sheriff of this county for several terms, and died in this county.

The first land proved up in the county was in 1883 and consisted only of claims along the river bottom, taken for the purpose of controlling water rights.

In the early days the Cimarron River was known as the dry Cimarron. At that time the river bed was no more than fifty to eighty feet wide, and the broad bottom was covered with a grass that was superb. It was a prairie hay which cured and kept through all changes of weather. The early pilgrims found a stand of it belly-deep to a horse, and a mat of it on the ground that a man couldn't dig through with a pitchfork. Cattle wintered on pasture in those days, and fed themselves by pawing down through the snow to the grass that had been curing for just such an emergency for several hundred years.

Later the ranchmen harvested this hay and in the fall the river bottom was covered with regularly-spaced series of well settled ricks of hay. Water holes stocked with fish lay along the river bottom.

A flood in the spring of 1914 completely destroyed the hay land and water holes and left the river bottom nothing but sand bars and the bed not less than 1,600 feet wide at any point.

Much damage was done by the flood at Point Rocks Ranch. The north bluffs of the Cimarron were cut away and the two large ranch houses of the boss and foreman went down stream, costing the lives of two children.

In the cutting out of the cliffs, an old dwelling house or dugout was uncovered, which had been completely grassed over. The oldest resident had no knowledge of this. It had been occupied, because a few eggshells and things of that kind were found in it. It might have been a cache where some wagon train had buried some of their stuff, or it might have been some scout or soldier had dug it for protection. In a little cave under the bluffs on the north side of the river, they discovered a human skeleton and an old flint lock rifle. The stock was gone but the inscription showed it to have

been made in 1830.

Spring Arroya, one-half mile north of the Cimarron, played an important part in the early history of this territory. It was the only spring within many miles and all early trails crossed at this point. It was the camping place of all wagon and trader trains. The first wagon train, which passed through this territory in 1822, camped at this spring. When early settlers began to arrive, it was the source of their water supply until wells could be dug.

It was, no doubt, the scene of many clashes among the Indians. Asa McClain, a trader, and grandfather of one of Morton County's pioneers, recalled that in 1840 as a trading train passed through this territory, a number of Indian ponies and corpses were lying about the water hole.

During the late summer and fall of 1885, covered wagons began to appear. The Government had opened the county to homeseekers and they came from every part of the United States. They filed on preemptions, homesteads, and timber claims, but few made any settlement until the spring of 1886.

In the spring of '86, dwelling houses appeared in gold rush fashion all over the county. Few of them had any appearance of permanence, and most of them were built of the sod itself and were only the unescapable ground in another form. Many built dug-outs, and but for a piece of rusty stovepipe sticking up through the roof, you could have walked over the roof of their dwellings without dreaming that you were near a human habitation. Some proved up their homesteads without defiling the face of nature any more than the coyote that had lived there before them had done--not a shed, not a corral, not a well, not even a path broken in the curly grass.

Those who hoped to make the country their permanent abode, dug wells, some of them being dug to a depth of from sixty to two-hundred feet. Hand pumps were installed if finances were low, but here and there stood a wind mill gaunt against the sky. This class of settlers proposed to make Morton County into a modern farming country. For a time developments went forward promisingly and hopes were high. The population increased to between four and five thousand.

A number of early towns were started in the county. Richfield, Frisco, Cundiff, Taloga, Westola, Morton Center and Kilbourn were actually laid out as townsites. Early postoffices, since abandoned, were Viroqua, Cess and Blue Stem.

The new villages were typical frontier towns, but Taloga had the reputation of being the wildest one in the county. It was nearer the trails and it was easier for the itinerant traveler to slip in, shoot up the town, and be on his way before the forces of law could be assembled.

Richfield and Frisco contributed most to the history of the county. Richfield was the first town established and was designated as the temporary county seat. Frisco, a little town located almost exactly in the geographical center of the county, contested Richfield for that honor on February 3, 1887. The case was carried to the Supreme Court and a decision rendered in favor of Richfield.

On July 14, 1886, twenty-five thousand dollars in bonds was voted for the purpose of building a courthouse. The plans and specifications of C. L. THOMPSON, of Garden City, Kansas, were elaborate enough to satisfy the architectural ambitions of J. W. McCLAIN, C. B. PACK and Thomas COOPER, who composed the Board of County Commissioners, and were adopted on September 14, 1888. Work on the building was commenced soon thereafter.

A few skilled workmen were obtained from the outside world, but all the labor was given to the needy men of the county. From their earnings they accumulated sufficient funds to return from whence they came, leaving Morton County to the more courageous pioneers.

Native stone was used in the construction of the building, and was secured from the southwestern part of Stanton County at what was then known as the "T-I-N" Ranch. The courthouse was completed in 1889, and the elaborate, many pointed structure then eclipsed anything in all the west. It has remained in service down to the present day.

Construction of the Richfield Presbyterian Church was commenced in 1887. All except \$1500 was raised by subscription, and this amount was given by George and Lucetta PLUMMER, of West Newton, Pa. The church was dedicated in 1888 and called the "Plummer

Presbyterian Church."

The bricks used in the building were burned in a kiln located in the southeast part of town. The church has a seating capacity of about 500 and the accoustic properties make it a fine place for hearing. The red, brick building, with its tall steeple and steep roof, is yet the pride of the city.

The construction of the first county jail was begun in July 1887. The cages were purchased from the Pauley Jail Company at \$4,880. This was a frame structure which was torn down in the early days of 1900. The old cages are still in use in the present brick jail.

In 1889 the settlers discovered the difficulties encountered in endeavoring to cultivate and develop farms in a new country when the weather is unfavorable. It was a period of drouth and failure--the weather was fatal to all plant life; seed could not germinate in the dry soil; the dry grass actually crackled when walked over. A solitary waste reached out into the gray infinitude.

Farmers lost everything. The whole country was discouraged. Some men felt that they were too weak to make any mark here; that the land wanted to be let alone, to preserve its own fierce strength, its peculiar, savage kind of beauty. They were glad to prove up their claims, offer them for sale, and return to a region that had been proved habitable. The opening of the strip in Oklahoma lured away many of the discouraged settlers.

With the removal of the majority of the colonists, the towns were abandoned, which in the big days were quite ambitious sort of pueblos. The population dwindled until scarcely two hundred families remained in the county. Richfield was the only real trading post left on the map.

Some few visioned a day when they might become independent land owners and stayed, regardless of the dry years, regardless of the endless drudgery, regardless of the isolation. These settlers concluded the country could not support its population through farming operations alone and began the establishment of small ranches. Many of the tracts which had been broken out went back to sod and the cattlemen again grazed their

cattle over the open range. Crops were planted to raise feed for their herds and not for market.

Trees that had been set out died for want of moisture. The crumbling monuments of misplaced enterprise in the deserted towns were torn down and moved to the ranches to make dwelling houses, stables, and corrals.

The early 'nineties were years of hard work and careful planning. No government relief was available in those days, but occasionally a little aid was shipped in by the church. Life in those hard, perilous times made heavy draughts on their reserve powers of fortitude and endurance.

The settlers were constantly menaced by prairie fires. Fireguards were plowed about every homestead, but during high winds the flames leaped a great distance. Fires were almost a monthly occurrence, and on these occasions men, women and children turned out to fight fire. The most effective method was to have two men ride on either side of the blaze with chains attached to their saddle horns. Sometimes when chains were not available, a cow was shot, split, and dragged back and forth across the blaze until the carcass was worn out.

The population decreased until not more than five hundred people were left in the whole county in 1895. There was pretty good stock in the remaining colonists if there had been anything in the country to use it on. A man could leave a saddle on a fence and come back and find it undisturbed a month later.

Each fall the ranchers drove a four horse team to the nearest railroad station, sixty miles away, and laid in supplies for the winter. Such supplies included only the bare necessities of life. Their usual diet was corn-meal mush, pancakes, and fat bacon for breakfast, biscuits, fat bacon, potatoes and beans the rest of the time except when a beef was butchered.

The only educational facilities available were approximately seven months each winter in the grade schools. The disappointments and sorrows of the pioneer mothers were softened by the years, but it was difficult for them to become reconciled to the fact that their children were denied the advantages they might have had.

In 1905 four hundred quarters of land were sold at tax sale for \$1.00 per acre.

After the sale, land values rose steadily. With the rise in value, the government land seemed worth the proving up. Another regiment of homeseekers flocked to the county and all land suitable for cultivation was soon homesteaded. This was not a superboom such as was experienced in 1886, and the settlement was of a more permanent nature.

About that time a group of the Richfield people became enthusiastic over the possibilities of artesian water for irrigation. E. C. WILSON, then publisher of The Richfield Monitor, was young and enthusiastic and through his paper he boosted the project along until a well was put down. The well is located in the southwest part of the townsite of Richfield and for years has been pouring forth a stream of water which has been used to irrigate about every conceivable sort of vegetation. The well would irrigate from thirty to eighty acres, depending upon the crop and its moisture requirement.

Another artesian well which has never been developed is continuously pouring water out on the prairie just about two miles south of Richfield. Under these wells a wonderful yield of alfalfa can be produced.

Few prayers were ever addressed to the Throne of Grace as fervently as the settlers' were that some railroad company might be moved to build their railroad into Morton County. They had long dreamed that shipping points would be established in the county where they could sell their produce and do their marketing. In 1912 their dreams began to materialize with the survey of the A. T. & S. F. for the extension of its branch from Dodge City to a point on the southern boundary of the county a few miles east of the Colorado-Kansas state line. This extension was completed in 1913.

With the coming of the railroad, new towns built up rapidly, Elkhart, Rolla, and Wilburton were thriving little villages within a year.

The farming industry, which had never been encouraged because of the great distance from market, immediately developed. For several years, most of the farming was carried on south of the Cimarron River. The sandy soil is especially adapted to such crops as corn, milo maize, kaffir corn, broomcorn and watermelons.

Highways and good bridges were constructed and maintained, and about 1920 the unscarred face of the prairies north of the Cimarron River underwent a change. The advent

of the tractor, combine and truck made the farming of large acreages, possible, and thousands of acres of pasture land became wheat farms. Thus the development of a wild land into a productive farming country was accomplished.

For almost a decade, the harvest season was a busy time. The constant hum of motor trucks was ever heard on the road as they carried the grain to market. Elevators worked day and night. Extra trains were required to carry the wheat away.

This territory lies in an altitude of between 3,000 and 4,000 feet, which is dangerously high for a farming country. Rainfall cannot be counted as a sure thing. When wheat farmers became ambitious and plowed up the prairie sod, they destroyed the only thing for which the country was valuable--the raising of large herds of cattle.

Today many deserted homestead shacks occupy the middle of a quarter section of sagebrush under the open limitless sky, unpolluted by signs of any human presence except eight or nine tons of dust blown up from a neighbor's plowing. Fierce, dry winds blow and the black soil is scattered on the wind ten miles high and hundreds of miles away with dead wheat sprouts riding along with it. Dust whines against the windows unendingly, food gets filled with it, clothes weigh heavy and smell choking, and there is a grittiness about people's skins and hair and mouth that no amount of washing can get rid of. Thousands of acres of land are under contract for sale to the Government.

But like the original colonists, hope filters the atmosphere with a golden glamour for a number. Some yet have a pure, unfounded faith in the benevolence of nature. They know the rains will fall and another boom will again bring new settlers to the county. A regular alteration of booms and droughts is inevitable. Those who stay know the conditions and expect to accumulate sufficient funds in boom times to carry them through the dry years, and borrow money only as the next resort to suicide.

(Data for the foregoing compiled and history written by E. M. Dean and Bertha Carpenter) probably in 1930s)

EARLY HISTORY OF RICHFIELD, MORTON COUNTY, KANSAS

Morton County was virtually untouched by civilization until the year 1885 when homeseekers were attracted by the green expanse of its prairies stretching away to meet the horizon.

Simultaneously with colonization came the need for trading posts, and on October 20, 1885, survey of the original townsite of Richfield was made by J. W. BEATY. The original townsite contained but forty acres. First and Second additions, which were added later in the eighties, included the present six-hundred-forty acre townsite.

Patent had not been issued to the land and it was not until July 28, 1886, that the Veteran Town Company received patent. On April 22, 1886, conveyance was made to the Aurora Town Company, of which James A. COOPER was President and W. R. McDONALD, Secretary.

Since settlers were given six months in which to establish a residence on their homesteads, practically all of them returned to their homes in the east for the winter of '85 to await the coming of spring. A cluster of drab shacks built by a few of the land locaters huddled on the gray prairie townsite, under the gray sky of that winter, but no permanent buildings were erected.

The spring of '86 brought the return of the homeseekers. The absence of human landmarks was neither depressing nor disheartening to these sturdy pioneers. They found something frank and joyous in the open face of the country. With the passing of '86 the roads were still but faint tracks in the grass, and the record of the plow was insignificant like the feeble scratches on a stone left by a prehistoric race.

Many of the new settlers had never worked on a farm at home. They had been handworkers, and with no knowledge of how to tame a wild land, they settled in the little trading post of Richfield, hoping to earn a livelihood, and spend just enough time on their claims to enable them to do the prove up.

The colonizers had faith in the prairie soil, and the little frontier town experienced a building boom in '86. Dwelling houses were set about haphazard on the tough sod; some of them looked as if they were straying off by themselves, heading straight for the open plain.

Main Street was a grassy trail, on either side of which straggled two uneven rows of buildings; the general merchandise stores, the two banks, the drug store, the lumber yard, the hotel, the postoffice, the printing office, the bakery, and other places of business.

Business establishments first owned and operated are as follows: Jake BIDDLEMAN, COOPER and BIRCHSTEAD, BUNTING Bros. and J. H. LOGAN, all general merchandise; Theodore HOBBY, grocery and feed store; Asa ELLIOTT, grocery; H. E. ALLISON, hardware; LITTLE and TUSSILMAN, hardware; Joe PICKERIL, drug store; August VOERZEL, bakery; Mrs. Sarah J. WEIR, then Mrs. Calvin COON, restaurant; CAMPBELL and SHIELDS, feed store; George WHEATLEY, furniture store and undertaking parlors; M. C. SEAVOR, lumber yard; J. S. VIERS, harness shop; Mr. BRIGHTENBAUGH, butcher shop; Jake WATSON, Blue Front Livery Stable; Sam ARMSTRONG, barber shop; Hugh PATTERSON, blacksmith shop; Jim PRATER, who within the year sold to J. A. EVANS, blacksmith shop; Mr. ESTEL, dairy; and an unknown Chinese, a laundry.

Frank STEVENS was the first postmaster. When the City of Richfield was incorporated, the little town of Sunset was abandoned and the postoffice moved to Richfield.

Riley LAKE was the first mail carrier between Richfield and Syracuse. In fact, he carried mail to Morton County, then called Kansas County, long before the town of Richfield was established. Richfield was then connected with Syracuse by telegraph lines.

The telegraph and express office was located in the Elliot Store building.

WEST and THEIS owned the Bank of Richfield, and J. W. ROBINSON and Brothers owned the Morton County Bank. These bankers visioned the pioneers turning the resources of the new land into gold, but they were soon to learn that the settlers were pitifully poor. Poor as to worldly goods, although rich in the spirit of neighborly kindness.

G. H. ALLEN operated the first hotel, called the "Aurora Hotel." The name was changed to the "Windsor Hotel" in 1891. Some of the early registers used by this hotel are now in possession of Richfield residents. It would appear from these registers that Richfield entertained distinguished visitors from afar in those days, but after noting the names "E. C. WILSON, Cork, Ireland," and G. Porter CRADDOCK, Sitka, Alaska," one is justified in believing that the records are not to be relied upon. The "New Deming Hotel" was built in '87. Mrs. Caleb EVANS was the first proprietress.

Ab GRIFFIN ran the pool hall. The pool room generally sounded of the spirited language of the rough-looking country-man, and reeked of their pipe smoke. Kansas was dry in those days, but then as now, the law was very flexible on such points. Early settlers, who oft times felt the need of a mixture of high potency, were able to secure it at Ab's. It seemed that the terms "Victorian" and "Puritan" were becoming opprobrious, when the W.C.T.U. roused itself into action and a party waited on Ab, giving him just twenty-four hours to get out of town. Twenty-fours later he had moved out bag and baggage and was comfortably established in Frisco. However, his departure left the liquor problem still unsolved. If a doctor could be persuaded that a stimulant was necessary, one's thirst might still be quenched at the drug store.

The first newspaper published in Richfield was edited by Quincy ROBINSON. In 1888, Richfield boasted of three weekly newspapers, the Richfield Republican, The Morton County Democrat, and The Great Southwest. H. W. WORTHINGTON, Sam and Frank VAN GUNDY, Ed LEE and J. W. MCKEE were among the Richfield editors of the early eighties.

Dr. BOWERS, who arrived in 1886, was the first doctor. Dr. Julia BROWN followed shortly after, and at the close of 1888, eight doctors were practicing in the town. Possibly this little group made the greatest contribution in the counteracting of the forces which sometimes threatened to overwhelm the little beginning of society that struggled in the wilderness.

Real estate offices were numerous. With one exception, the names of these real estate agents have been forgotten. The one remembered is John H. HAINES, who later became the governor of Idaho.

With the rapid growth of the little town came social and political problems. During the year 1886 the population of the town had increased to almost 1500 persons, of whom a large number were school children.

The first school, taught in '86-'87 in a down-town store building, was a subscription school. A small building was erected in '87 and the first public school was opened that fall. Mrs. Belle LAMAR was the first public school teacher. This building was burned before the fall of 1888 and a large two story structure was built, which served as the house of knowledge for the young hopefuls of Richfield until 1923. At that time the present combined grade and high school building was erected.

The city of Richfield was incorporated on April 11, 1887, and Will PURCHSTEAD was elected the first mayor.

The Mason and Odd Fellows Lodges were chartered and their meetings were held in a hall over BUNTING Bros. store. In later years their membership became so reduced that they were compelled to surrender their charters.

A town band was organized by FREEMAN and Jim NEWTON, a couple of musical chaps from New York. A band stand was built on Main Street and Saturday night concerts were given. These concerts represented the talent of both Richfield and Taloga. This combined band had the distinction of being the first band that ever played on top of Pike's Peak.

The various religious denominations organized their groups and held regular services.

The Methodist Church was organized in June 1886, with Rev. C. H. CRAWLEY as the first pastor. Their services were conducted in the Lodge Hall. The Methodists had no church building until 1922, when the MARTIN school house was purchased and was moved to Richfield. This building is still serving as their church.

The Presbyterian Church was organized in November 1886. This group desired a permanent place of worship, and in 1887, subscriptions were taken to raise funds for the building of a church. After all subscriptions were paid, fifteen hundred dollars was yet needed for the completion of the building. This amount was given by George and Lucetta FLUMMER, of West Newton, Pennsylvania. The church was dedicated in 1888 and called the "Flummer Presbyterian Church." Rev. A. H. PARKS was the first pastor.

The bricks used in the building were burned in a kiln located in the southeast part of the town. The red brick building, with its tall steeple and steep roof, is yet the pride of the city.

February 3, 1887, marked the beginning of the county seat fight with the town of Frisco, a little town about three miles south of Richfield. Frisco contested Richfield for that honor and the case was carried to the Supreme Court. The decision was rendered in favor of Richfield, and after almost half a century, Richfield still remains the county seat.

The first county officials were: Commissioners: Jas. W. McCLAIN, the Chairman, C. B. PACK and Thos. COOPER; County Clerk, J. R. WESTER; County Treasurer, E. EVERSLED; Register of Deeds, L. B. WEIDENHAMMER; Probate Judge, D. D. SAYER; Superintendent of Public Instruction, Walter L. HOLCOMB; Sheriff, J. E. KELLY; Clerk of the District Court, Geo. M. HAVICE; County Attorney, J. D. NORTHUTT.

The E. D. TAYLOR building on Main Street served as a temporary courthouse. On July 14, 1888, \$25,000 in bonds was voted for the purpose of building a court house, and on August 11 following, an architect was employed.

Stone used for the building was secured from the southwestern part of Stanton County at what was then known as the "T-I-N" ranch. The court house was completed in 1889, and is yet a stately structure which inspires a feeling of admiration.

The construction of Richfield's first county jail was commenced in July 1887. This jail was torn down in the early days of 1900, but the old cages are used for the present jail.

With the year 1889 came hard times that brought every one in the county to the brink of despair. The land had its ugly moods; and no one knew when they were likely to come nor why. It was a season of drouth and failure--the last struggle of a wild soil against the encroaching plow share.

The seasons brought nothing more than a seared waste of burned prairie grass. The pastures, fields, roads and sky all took on one color--the same leaden gray. The germs of life and fruitfulness seemed extinct forever. At night coyotes roamed the prairies, howling for food.

The settlers sat about on the wooden sidewalks in front of the stores and told each other that the country was never meant for men to live in; the thing to do was to get back to Iowa, to Illinois, to any place that had been proved habitable. Often after hearing a man make such a remark, he was never seen again. No one knew when he had gone, nor where, but he was gone.

Many concluded they were meant to follow paths already marked out for them, not to break trails in a new country. They promptly mortgaged their homesteads for all they could secure and departed with no thought of ever paying the mortgage.

The opening of the "strip" in Oklahoma in '89 lured away many of the discouraged settlers.

The banks went broke; business houses closed their doors; merchants moved away leaving portions of their stock still on the shelves.

When the exodus was over, scarcely more than two hundred families were left in the county. Hope filtered the atmosphere with a golden glamour for the few.

The next fifteen years marked the era of "small ranches" in the county. The deserted buildings of Richfield were torn down and moved to the ranches to make dwelling houses, stables, corrals, and other farm buildings.

Richfield was the only real trading post left on the county map. Two stores, a hardware, one hotel, two printing offices, and a drug store were practically all the business establishments in the city left in existence. There was little money to change hands and business houses carried on against great odds. It was a period of inactivity for the city. There was little farming done in the county for the reason that poor roads and the great distance from market discouraged any farming. Many tracts which had been broken out in the eighties went back to sod again.

The salaries of the county officials were cut to from \$20.00 to \$25.00 per month. The Commissioners met once in three months and received \$1.50 per day with no allowance for mileage. For a number of years officials were paid in "scrip", which when converted into cash, brought but forty cents on the dollar. Each official furnished his own coal and carried it to the court house in a gunny sack.

Practically all residents burned the "chips" and pioneer mothers yet recount stories of how their children spent two and three days in bed during a rainy season when the chips were wet.

Fortunately no one had ever heard of vitamins and people thrived on the salt pork and corn bread. Occasionally a little aid was shipped in by the church. It is doubtful whether the well-meaning easterners who had charge of the shipments were motivated so much by a desire to help the pioneers as the desire to get rid of their old clothes. Much of the old clothing was unsuitable for western needs. One shipment contained a silk plug hat, which was kept in reserve for the best man at the community weddings, or other gala occasions when some gallant swain desired to appear "well-dressed."

During the nineties, E. M. DEAN purchased the store which had been originally opened in '86 by COOPER and BURCHSTEAD. This store supplied the needs of the county for many of the years to follow and figures prominently in Richfield's history. It was a general merchandise, shoe, clothing, hardware and feed store all in combination into just the one. It was also the social center for the farm women who brought in their eggs and butter to exchange for groceries and dry goods. In 1905 a telephone office was built between Richfield and Syracuse and the store was made the central office. The building burned in 1910, and no later stores have carried such a comprehensive stock.

In 1905 four hundred quarters of land were sold at tax sale at \$1.00 per acre. After

the sale, land values rose steadily. With the rise in value, the government land seemed worth the proving up. Another regiment of home seekers flocked to the county and all land suitable for cultivation was soon homesteaded.

Richfield did not experience a repetition of the '86 boom with the coming of this van of emigrants, but business did improve and a number of real estate offices were opened up.

At that time E. C. WILSON, then editor of the Richfield Monitor, became enthusiastic over the possibilities of artesian water for irrigation. He devoted much space in his paper to the project, and through his efforts a well was drilled on the southwest part of the townsite. This well is still pouring forth a stream of water, which in past years has been used chiefly to irrigate alfalfa.

About 1910 Mayo THOMAS of Kansas City, Missouri, established the Morton County State Bank in the city. Farmers walked in twenty miles to borrow ten dollars for sixty days, and promptly paid their notes when due. The settlers were more conservative than in earlier days, and the development of the town was slower and more permanent in nature.

Richfield residents had long had the dream of a railroad and had built many paper railroads, but the year 1912 marked a death blow to their immediate hopes. In that year the A. T. & S. F. Railroad Company made survey for the extension of its branch into Morton County, which survey was made about twenty miles south of the county seat.

With the completion of their extension branch in 1913, Richfield was threatened with the loss of its population and its position on the map. Business men and the population moved to the railroad. The town was almost deserted; a store, the hotel, post office and courthouse alone remained. Another period of inactivity followed. But for the court house with its official capacity, the town would no doubt have passed out of existence as had Frisco, Taloga, and other of the early day towns. One attempt was made to move the county seat to the railroad, but it was unsuccessful.

In 1920 the shaggy coat of the old prairies about Richfield began to vanish forever. Hundreds and hundreds of acres were broken out and farmers got into the wheat game. From that time to the present day, Richfield has served as a trading post for the wheat farmers. The depression years since 1929 have been no setback to the place. The town has actually grown and improved throughout these years. A large cement machine shed is under construction at the present time and will be completed within the next few months.

Richfield now has a population of between one hundred ~~forty~~ and one hundred seventy five, a good school, two churches, a restaurant, two fine grocery stores, three service stations, a rooming house, a drug store, a garage, a barber shop, an abstract office, and the county court house.

It is by no means an isolated village. It is located at the intersection of two state highways, and nearby railroad towns can be reached within thirty minutes by car. Motor trucks bring in fresh produce regularly. It is connected with Rolla by telephone line, and gets daily mail by motor route from Elkhart, Rolla and Johnson.

A number of the settlers of the eighties, like Hamlet's ghostly father, were "doomed for a certain time to walk this particular piece of earth" and are still residents of the city. E. M. DEAN has the distinction of being the earliest settler. Other present residents who came in the eighties are: Mr. & Mrs. J. C. MORGAN, Mr. & Mrs. J. A. EVANS, Mr. & Mrs. E. C. WILSON, Mr. & Mrs. J. E. CARPENTER, Mr. & Mrs. Thomas LITTLE, Mrs. G. M. TIPTON, Lee E. MOORE, F. M. HINDMAN, W. W. COMBS, Charles E. COLLINS, Miss Ann Jane LITTLE and Mrs. S. J. WEIR.

HISTORY OF TALOGA

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An Address Delivered by T. C. Shillinglaw

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On the Occasion of the Laying of the Corner-Stone
of the Public School House in Taloga, Sept. 25, '87

- - -

(Published by Request)

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:--

I have come, in accordance with your kind invitation and I am grateful for this opportunity to participate in the laying of the corner stone of this palace of education, and the corner stone of the greatest state in the union. Owing to the short notice your committee gave me, to write a history of Taloga, I am compelled to give it from memory, and will be as brief as possible.

About the first of October 1855, I was siezed with the fever known as "western Kansas fever" and I am free to say that I had it bad. My friends at home (in Topeka) and the doctors laughed at me and some said I would get over it. They said it was only a spontaneous boom or a scheme gotten up by land agents and railroad companies to make money, and that the reaction would soon take place and the poor unsophisticated tender-foot would be returning to his wife's people, poorer but wiser. That kind of medicine had not effect on me. The more people I talked with, who had been west, the worse I got. On Oct. 7th, I jumped the Santa Fe train for Garden City, where all was excitement and bustle, and bound for Kansas County (now Morton County--the most fertile county in the great southwest). I procured a ticket to Lakin, that being the only place we could cross the great Arkansas River at that time, secured a team and, in company with three other gentlemen, started for the Promised Land. To cross the river on a bridge was all right, but getting through the sand hills was a long and tedious drive; not even a trail to guide us. Some of the party wanted to go back before we had gone two miles; but I was determined to see Kansas County. Our team was about worked out when we beheld the beautiful prairies. The farther we went through the counties of Kearney, Grant, Stanton and on to Kansas, the better we were pleased, till we came to a halt at old Sunset City, where we camped for a few days and took in Kansas County. We were so well pleased that all took claims. There was no Frisco or Richfield then; I 'took in' the situation at once and came to the conclusion that some one would start a town as near the corner of the state as possible, and made up my mind to try the experiment of town building. Therefore, we started back to Lakin, where we separated, all well satisfied with the trip. As soon as I returned to Topeka and organized what is known as the Topeka and Southwestern Land and Town Company, composed of the following charter members: O. H. BROWN, C. W. RYUS, Ansell GRIDLEY, Kirk ROWLEY, Dave SHOWERS, C. A. ELDER, ROBINSON, J. H. STANTON, S. S. BROWN and myself. I was delegated to select the site for a town as near the corner of the state as practicable. Jas. W. CECIL accompanied me on this trip. After a long and tiresome ride, having met with several mishaps such as sick horses, break-downs and getting lost on the prairies, some were laughable and some were

serious, as water was at a premium but nevertheless, CECIL located a homestead in Kansas County. After making a careful survey we returned and reported to the company, who immediately purchased section sixteen, township thirty-three, range forty-three West for a town site. The next thing to do was to find a name for the new town; the cyclopaedias, lexicons and dictionaries were searched until Taloga was found, which means in Indian, "a place where men go (or live) --- Happy Hunting Ground."

About the 10th of January, 1886, F. T. BERKEY and Jess CORAM started from Lakin to survey the town site. They were caught in that disastrous blizzard in which so many lives were lost and also live stock perished. The party took shelter from the storm in Riley GILLESPIE's dugout, remaining there five days, when the rations ran out and the storm subsided. Owing to the weather they did not get their work finished until the 1st of March. Frank REAM was the first arrival in the new town. He immediately invested in Taloga, commenced building, and in a short while, Mrs. REAM arrived. Mrs. R. is the pioneer lady of Taloga. The company commenced putting up buildings, sinking wells, etc., and the town was booming. We then discovered that the surveyors had made a great mistake by surveying the town on Section 17 instead of 16, which caused an unnecessary delay and great expense to the company to move the buildings and start the town anew. April 1st, J. D. YOUNG and family arrived and took charge of the hotel April 13th.

Dr. DENNING headed the Jefferson County party, composed of fifteen families, all of whom located around Taloga. Our town was lively and prosperous. The company then put up a hotel which cost over \$3,000.00, which opened July 1st. CORDES' Company then put in a large stock of general merchandise. A post office had been established with daily mail from Richfield and Frisco. About this time the county seat contest commenced. The Talogians, instead of looking after their own interests, took a very active part in the organization of Morton County and the location of the county seat. The result was, Taloga did not improve as fast as it would have, had we let the county seat alone. On February 3, the election was held, which was a memorable day for Taloga, with her two polling places, both claiming to be legal, which will be settled in the courts. The contest is over, and Taloga has begun improving.

The Chicago, Kansas and Western Railroad made two surveys through town; the Nebraska, Kansas and Texas, Via Lakin, also made a survey through town. The Mead Center, Cimarron Valley and Trinidad has run a line making in all, four. I have no doubt all will be built. There are no less than nineteen charters filed in the office of the Secretary of State at Topeka for railroads to run to Taloga.

The organization of the Citizen's Bank of Taloga with a capital of \$50,000.00, is something substantial and much needed; also the Taloga Building and Investment Company, with a capital stock of \$50,000.00, have put up some good buildings. Our church and Sunday School organizations deserve particular mention for the good work they have done. The building of a school house costing \$3,000.00 where, but a little over a year ago was looked upon by our friends east as the "Great American Desert."

In conclusion, I will say that Taloga has a bright future and I hope to see a large union depot on the town site of Taloga in the near future.

Note: Mrs. Bertha Hjort sent original of the above copy to me later in 1956, after I had called at the County Courthouse in June 1956 to look for Dean and Brown family history, at which time she gave me the Histories of Richfield and Morton County, Kansas to copy and return. She stated that "Old Sunset City was about four miles southeast of Richfield. Mr. Shillinglaw mentions camping there when he first came to Morton County. That name was later changed to Brandley, but I do not think any town lots were ever sold there."

COURTHOUSE FIRE ENDS RICH CHAPTER IN COUNTY HISTORY

The fire that gutted and destroyed the old native sand stone courthouse building in Richfield Monday, January 24, 1950, ended a rich chapter in the history of Southwestern Kansas. The old courthouse built in the late eighties was destined to become one of the most sought after structures possibly in the whole state, and was to be the scene of many battles for its own survival.

The courthouse was built at Richfield after a brisk battle with nearby Frisco, now defunct, a battle that was finally settled by the State Supreme Court, a fore runner of the story that was to be repeated 65 years later. At that time Morton County was only a few years old. The County was organized in 1886; named for Oliver P. MORTON, United States senator from Indiana. Besides Frisco which was located a few miles south of Richfield, Morton County boasted a few other small settlements among these were Sunset and Morton Center, but they like Frisco soon faded from view.

Work was started on the new edifice in 1887 and was completed in 3 years, the cost of the building, which at that time was the finest courthouse in this section, was \$130,000. The stone for the building was quarried from Bear Creek along the Colorado line west of Richfield and was hauled to Richfield by wagon trains.

Despite reports that the court house construction was a fore runner of the W. P. A. many old timers swear this isn't true. As many of the families still living in Morton County had distant relatives involved in the construction. Just a few of these are the MILBURN, COLLINS and EVANS families. It is true that times were plenty tough in that area and many did work on the building for the express purpose of making enough to get out of the county, but the bulk of the labor was furnished by men who stayed on and finally died in the county.

Richfield for many years was a booming little town with the population estimated at nearly 2,000 at one time. It never was chartered as a city, but became automatically classed as a third class city when it became the county seat.

Soon after the turn of the century Richfield began to dwindle and was soon to wither and practically die when the railroad came to Morton County. The Santa Fe came to what is now Elkhart in the summer of 1913 and with it a little later came much of Richfield.

With the building of Elkhart, Richfield was soon to face its first challenge. Elkhart hadn't been established long when the county seat question became a hot topic of discussion but it wasn't until 13 years after the founding of Elkhart that a vote was finally called on the re-location of the county seat.

It was in 1924 that the people of Richfield really heard rumblings concerning their building, which at one time had been a show place and had boasted the largest courtroom of any in Kansas. On Monday, July 14, 1924 the Elkhart Commercial Club met with the express purpose of discussing the re-location of the county seat. It was pointed out that the building in its condition at that time wouldn't withstand the elements for any length of time. The club went on record as being in favor of voting \$30,000 in bonds for the building of a new structure if it could be moved to Elkhart.

A few weeks later petitions were circulated throughout the county, the first step in re-location of the county seat. A report was current at that time that law forbids erecting a courthouse within three miles of a State line, but a look into nearby Missouri which has a county seat towns right on the line soon stopped this rumor. But in October the same year the County Commissioners rejected the petitions on the ground that it lacked the necessary two-thirds majority necessary to call an election.

But on August 10, 1926 the fate of the county seat rested in the hands of the voters. After several months the supreme court handed down the decision that the Commissioners

could call the election. So voters went to the polls on that August day 24 years ago and voted down the attempt to move the county seat. 308 voters were in favor of the move and 678 opposed. This paper ended their story on the election with the comment "The election is over now-let us settle down and work together in the good old fashion way."

The fight was over for a while, in fact for about 14 years, but in 1940 the question of moving the county seat came up again. At this time petitions were circulated by Elkhart people but a remonstrance petition was soon circulated and a check showed that many county residents had signed both so this effort failed.

Meanwhile, the old courthouse, which had been doomed to fall as early as 1920, still stood stately on the prairie at Richfield. Many efforts to spend sums of money to repair the old building were defeated.

In 1947 the supreme effort was made to settle the long brewing courthouse fight once and for all. After months of preparation, County voters went to the polls on Monday, January 20, 1947 and voted in favor of moving the county seat to Elkhart. The vote was 784 to 522, thus giving Elkhart a margin of .4 of a vote. Thus many thought the long battle for the county seat was over. But in June the following year the Supreme Court ruled that Elkhart failed to get the necessary 60 percent needed to move the county seat.

And that is the way things still stood until Monday morning when word was received of the burning of the building.

Today at Richfield, there is an emptiness that is felt all over the county. The old building is gone to the dust and rubble we are all destined for. The courthouse is dead. It died in a blazing finish, crumbling defiantly, but proudly and even in death it will mock us all.

CAPTION UNDER ACCOMPANYING PICTURE

RICHFIELD COURTHOUSE 1910. This fine picture of the courthouse taken 22 years after it was completed. Note the belfry on top, which was removed about 15 years later, when it began to cause trouble on the roof. The courthouse was started in 1882 and was not completed until 1888. Old timers say it was built to give settlers a grub stake when money was hard to get by the many homesteaders. It was an early day relief project. Out of the expenditure of less than \$100,000 a fine early day edifice was erected. The stone for this building was quarried along the Colorado line west of Richfield. The building has a full basement.

(the picture was furnished by Mrs. Tipton, County Clerk.)

(foregoing copied from Elkhart Newspaper clipping)

Comment in letter from Margaret Webster of Walsh, Colo. on September 29, 1961 in the Dean Family Letter #Richfield finally lost the courthouse to Elkhart."

ACTUAL LOSS OF RECORDS STILL UNKNOWN

FIRE MARSHALL INSPECTS RUINS

As late as Thursday evening it was still unknown just how many records were actually lost in Monday's courthouse fire. It is known that all of the County Clerk's records were lost and much of the Register of Deed's Files.

The county treasurer vault was opened Wednesday and everything in that vault including a large amount of cash was intact. The Clerk of Court vault has not been opened.

The deputy state marshall arrived in Elkhart Wednesday. He, with the county board inspected the fire ruins Wednesday afternoon. He will make his report at a later date.

Mr. Vernon H. HAHN of the Capital Blueprint Co. of Topeka, Kansas arrived in Elkhart yesterday. He represents a photographic record Company that specializes in photographing burnt records. In his belief most of the records that were not totally destroyed could be copied. He admitted it was fairly expensive, but more economical than trying to recopy the records manually. It would also be much faster.

The records removed from the building are in the jail house where a guard is posted over them. Just what will be the next step in the straightening out project is not known but is believed that temporary quarters will be set up as soon as the commissioners meet.

The Elkhart City council met in special session Tuesday night to offer the county the use of the Elkhart City Hall in any way they see fit.

(above copied from Elkhart Newspaper clipping)

SOME HISTORICAL FACTS LISTED IN BROCHURE PRESENTED AT 70th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF CHURCH AT RICHFIELD, KANSAS.

This Church is the oldest living religious organization in Morton County. This building is the oldest building in the county still serving its original purpose. The brick in its walls were fired in a kiln that once stood on the townsite of Richfield.

The cornerstone was laid on Sunday, April 29, 1888. A board of Trustees, composed of A. T. SPOTSWOOD, D. D. KRETSINGER, J. W. ROBINSON, R. M. CAMPBELL, and G. H. ALLEN (KRETSINGER soon moved away and James H. WAGNER served in his place) hired A. A. STANBURY to build this church. It was dedicated on Sunday Oct. 28, 1888.

Known as the First Presbyterian Church, Richfield, Kansas, the name was changed to the PLUMER Presbyterian Church on Jan. 29, 1890 in appreciation of large financial gifts given by Mr. & Mrs. George Plumer of West Newton, Penna.

Both Methodists and Presbyterians used the building in the early days - often on alternate Sundays. The building cost \$4,500.00 and the money was largely raised by popular subscription.

The Presbyterian Class was dissolved in 1943 and on Feb. 24, 1944 the property was bought and deeded to the Methodists who own it at the present time.

The Methodist Class was incorporated and granted their Charter on April 20, 1888. They met in the SPOTSWOOD House, the Schoolhouse, an old store building, the Church, and out at a country schoolhouse. Finally they moved in a country schoolhouse, remodeled it and used it for their church building. This was known as the Little White Church and stood about the same place as the residence of Mr. & Mrs. Walter MARTIN does now. The Old Methodist Parsonage still stands in its original location although no longer owned by the church and is used as a residence today. It stands just north of where the Little White Church stood.

Anniversary meetings held April 13 through April 20, 1958. Slides of Old Santa Fe Trail, Beatty Cattle Company Days, Boise Cattle Days, Richfield and adjacent towns, Richfield residents, Homesteads and ranches, Organizing of the County, Richfield Scenes and Early Life, Courthouse Pictures and Related Scenes, Artesian wells, The Little Red Brick Church Building, School Pictures, Dust Storm Days were shown. (Almost 1000)

(above taken from letter from Maude Morgan Veach, dated April 23, 1958, in the Dean Family Letters)

JACOB BLACKBURN DEAN

The entire independent career of Jacob Blackburn Dean has been passed in Morton County, where, classed among the early settlers, he has worked his way from modest circumstances to substantial prosperity and a position among the leading ranchmen of this section. His advent into Kansas occurred March 5, 1886, when the family came by rail to Syracuse, being headed by Mr. Dean's father, George W. Dean, from Wayne County, Iowa. There, at Corydon, Jacob Blackburn Dean was born October 12, 1870, and his education, commenced in the public schools of his native place, was completed in public schools of Richfield, Kansas. He has in later years served as a member of the board of directors in school district No. 12. His father entered as his homestead the northwest quarter of section 9, township 31, range 41, just north of Richfield, and there the family home was maintained until J. Blackburn Dean was of age. The senior Dean lived for a time at Syracuse, where he purchased a farm and conducted it for three years, when he disposed of it and returned to Morton County and resumed his farming and stockraising there. He was also in the Star Route mail service from Syracuse to Richfield for a period.

George W. Dean was born at Mount Ephraim, Ohio, December 22, 1834, and about 1840 accompanied his parents to Iowa, where he resided in Van Buren and Wayne counties until coming to Kansas. His father William Dean, of English birth, who married Eliza J. Smith, and they are buried in Wayne County, Iowa. The old parents were farming people, although William Dean was by trade a shoemaker. Their children were: George W.; Lizzie, who married Starkey Bracewell and resides in Southern California; Jacob, who met his death while serving in an Iowa volunteer regiment during the Civil War; Francine and Fannie, twins, the former of whom married Lewis Hammock and died in McPherson County, Kansas, while the latter is the wife of Perry Hill, of Cherokee County, of this state; Maggie, who was first the wife of Houston Moore, but died at Renfro, Oklahoma, as Mrs. M. E. McCart; Janie, who married Hiram Van Felt, of Mitchell County, Kansas; and Isaac N., who is a farmer in Missouri.

George W. Dean secured a common school education and as a young man was engaged in teaching school in Iowa. The Civil War came on to interrupt his activities in this direction, and he enlisted in Company D, Twenty-Third Regiment, Iowa Volunteer Infantry, Colonel Kinsman being his first regimental commander. Mr. Dean, who was orderly sergeant of his company took part in the battle of Duvall's Bluff, Champion Hill and Big Black and the siege of Vicksburg, and was detailed with others to take 3,500 Confederate prisoners north, and later his regiment was sent down the Mississippi River to New Orleans and across the Gulf of Mexico to Texas, where at Fort Esperanza he was mustered out of the service and honorably discharged. He was neither wounded or captured during his three years service. After the war he joined the Grand Army of the Republic and attended numerous encampments, state and national. Mr. Dean's political history was somewhat diversified, for he voted for Ben Butler for president, for General Garfield, for Mr. Bryan, for Colonel Roosevelt and for Mr. Wilson. He was treasurer of Wayne County, Iowa, for two terms and in Kansas was on the board of his school district. His religious faith was that of the Methodist Church.

George W. Dean was married in Wayne County, Iowa, to Serephina Moore, daughter of Samuel Moore, a farmer and ante-bellum settler of Iowa. Mrs. Dean died in 1872, having been the mother of the following children: George W. who died at Chickamaugua Park, Georgia, as a soldier during the Spanish-American War; Elnora, who married W. D. Richey and died at Caldwell, Kansas; Sam M. of Baca County, Colorado; J. Blackburn, of this notice; Serephina, who married Will Olinger for her first husband, but is now Mrs. Lawson Whitehead of Baca County, Colorado. George W. Dean for his second wife married Martha

M. Shipley, who died at Dodge City, Kansas, having borne her husband the following children: Jesse, of Baca County, Colorado; Mary Nettie, who is Mrs. James Davis, of Syracuse, Kansas; Mabel, the wife of Jesse Morgan of Morton County; Oliver Berry, of this County; Colonel Kinsman, of Baca County, Colorado; Harry Simpson, also of that county; Leona Maud, the wife of Herschel Kriegh, of Los Angeles, California; and James Alva of Baca County, Colorado. The father of the children died August 7, 1916, and is buried by the side of his wife, Martha M. at Syracuse, Kansas.

J. Blackburn Dean, who is everywhere among his friends known as "Bug", continued as a part of the parental establishment until he had passed his majority, and when twenty-one years of age took a homestead northwest of Richfield, where he lived in a little shanty, 12 by 20 feet while proving up, and while complying with the law in the acquirement of a deed worked out for what living his claim failed to produce.

Part of the time was spent working on the range, making a couple of trips to Montana with trail herds for O-Is and Union Beef Company, and working on the "round-up" for Beatty Brothers O O outfit and C C C's. He was in Oklahoma territory at the time the Sac and Fox country was opened up, also when the Cherokee Strip was opened, made the race from Orlando, but was prevented from filing because of his Kansas rights already exercised.

The report of gold discoveries in the Yukon country caused him to seek Alaska, and he sailed from Seattle to Juneau, found work with a quartz mining company, and returned home again in seven months.

He finally sold his homestead for \$55 and then settled in his present locality, Section 31, township 31, range 43. He has improved this property from raw prairie and the house which shelters him and his family was built of buildings moved out from Richfield and added to at various times. Money was decidedly scarce with Mr. Dean when he came here, but he was better off than some of the settlers, owning a team and being associated with his father in the ownership of a bunch of cows. To supplement his farm earnings he hauled posts from the cedar breaks of Colorado, freighted a little from Syracuse, and on the claim endeavored to grow feed for his stock. A few years after they came to this locality Mr. Dean and his father bought fifteen quarter-sections of land at \$30.00 a quarter, a county sale of delinquent tax lands, most of which now forms the Dean Ranch. Later Mr. Dean and brother Sam. M. developed the present Dean Ranch of about thirty quarters lying astride the Kansas line, improving the property in 1908 with one of the largest barns in Morton County, built of cement blocks, a structure 32 by 100 feet, 14 foot ceiling with mow capacity of 100 tons of feed. For several years they bred Aberdeen-Angus cattle of the grades but subsequently changed the blood to White Face and Shorthorns. Their experience with cattle has justified their opinion that they have been the salvation of the settler here. The ranch is still owned by the Dean Brothers,

Mr. Dean was county commissioner for the third district for eight years, being first elected in 1908 and leaving office in 1916. He served with Commissioners Ira Milburn, William E. Moore, John McGuire and Gilbert Mangels. The work of most importance while he was on the board was a suit to recover fees from the ex-clerk of the District Court which belongs to the county and which suit was a partial success. The murder of Sheriff Moore caused the board to take official notice of the act and hire a lawyer to prosecute the case against the murderer, with the results of conviction against five people.

Mr. Dean was married at Syracuse, Kansas, February, 28, 1910, to Lydia Anna Watson, who was born in Butler County, Kansas, November 12, 1877, a daughter of Jacob M. and Olive (Chenoweth) Watson. Mr. Watson, who was a school teacher and farmer, came from

Ohio to Butler County, Kansas, in the early 70's. He was one of the organizers of the present town of Leon, Mrs. Dean being the first baby resident. Mr. and Mrs. Watson had three other children, Thomas D., Charley J. and Nelle V. The family moved to Morton County, Kansas, in March 1887, and later across the line into Baca County, Colorado. Several years previous to her marriage Mrs. Dean taught in the rural and graded schools of Kansas and Colorado. Mr. and Mrs. Dean have one child, a son, Jacob Bertram, who was born at Coolidge, Kansas, December 24, 1910.

MARY OLIVE CHENOWETH was born in Dark County, Ohio, March 18, 1857. When she was very young the family moved to Logan County, Illinois, near Atlanta. Here she spent a happy childhood with her brother and five sisters. Her mother's death occurred when Olive was eight years old.

In 1871 the Chenoweth family and two other families, traveling in covered wagons, migrated to central Kansas and took claims in Butler County. Here they lived the life of all pioneers on the plains, not long before inhabited only by Indians and buffaloes. Even at this time, buffalo were plentiful a little farther west. The lumber to build their homes was hauled from Leavenworth.

Here Olive Chenoweth grew to womanhood, taught one year of "subscription" school. The following winter Jacob M. Watson, a young man from Ohio, who was her teacher, also taught her to love him. Christmas eve, 1874, they were married, when she was seventeen.

Their struggle was the same as that of any other young couple building a home on the frontier. Drouths, grasshopper year, cyclones and Indian raids are all recorded events of that period of Kansas history.

Later they moved to the new town of Leon, of which Mr. Watson was one of the founders, living there until 1887, when again it was Westward Ho! This move was made by train to Syracuse, thence sixty miles by team and buggy to the pre-emption in Morton County, Kansas, near Richfield.

The sod house was comfortable and roomy, floored with boards. Such floors were few, and the neighboring young people welcomed an opportunity to gather on occasions and enjoy an old fashioned square dance. The roof, alas! like all flat roofs would leak, and how it rained that summer of '87. At such times the bedding, clothing and "small fry" had to be shifted around and stowed compactly into the few dry spots. Thus mother and children held down the claim, while the father ran a livery business in Richfield.

Kansas had a herd law, so it was decided to move to Colorado, where there was free range and try the cow business. The new county of Baca had just been organized August 23, 1889. The move was made this time by ox team hauling the household goods. Other possessions were five cows with calves, a team of Indian ponies and a spring wagon.

The new home was a "dug out" in the bank of the creek. The well was scooped from the bed of the creek and water dipped with a bucket. There they planted trees and garden; raised sorghum and made molasses; milked cows and sold butter, as low as five cents a pound.

We experienced the ups and downs of every day life, as lived in those days. We were no better nor worse off than our neighbors. There was plenty of work, but we also had our good times.

Ours was a stopping place for freighters going to and from Syracuse. Men taking their herds to shipping points to market; cowboys from the trail herds camped nearby; the district school teacher, the preacher on his circuit of the county all found a hearty welcome, as well as food and lodging.

Neighbors were few and far between. Sometimes they "dropped in" for a visit of two or three days and we had glorious times. Regardless of how many came or how long they stayed, my Mother always managed. How she did it, I never knew. If we had no coffee, cornmeal and molasses, mixed together and browned in the oven, made a good substitute. She always made the hominy, sauce from the humble pie melon and a marvelous spread she called "egg butter." If the coal oil gave out she made a grease light,

using a cloth wick and melted tallow. Mountain sage tea cured all our ills. "Chips" from the bed grounds of the trail herds solved the fuel problem.

Of the six girls and one boy in the Chenoweth family, all have passed to the Great Beyond except the youngest, Mrs. Viola Ham of Stillwater, Oklahoma, now well beyond eighty.

Mary Olive Chenoweth was the mother of six children. Five were born in Butler County and two were buried there. Laura Bell the firstborn and Mary Kanola, the third child succumbed during an epidemic of diphtheria. The sixth child, Nelle Viola, was born in the sod house in Morton County.

Jacob M. Watson passed away in 1915
Mary Olive Chenoweth in 1941, age 84

All honor to the Pioneer Mother, whose dauntless courage and unwavering faith blazed the trail for those who are trying to follow in her footsteps.

The foregoing was written at the request of Mrs. Mae Mundell, member of the Walsh Civic Club, (Walsh, Baca County, Colorado) and read at their Pioneer Mothers program, March 1943.

by Mrs. J. B. (Anna) Dean

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