

Trego County KS Pioneer Families

CUSTER

Raymond Earl Custer was born August 22, 1892 near Marion, Kansas, and as a small child, moved with his parents to Menard County, Illinois, where he grew up. He returned to Kansas as a young man and enrolled at Hays Normal. His education was interrupted by World War I and he did overseas duty in France. After the war he returned to Fort Hays University, graduating in 1919. He received his Master's Degree in Education from Kansas University in 1928. He taught schools in Illinois and Kansas. He came to WaKeeney in the fall of 1928 where he was principal of Trego Community High School for nineteen years. In 1947, he went to work for the State Department of Education, working for ten years, after which he retired. He died December 6, 1974.

In December, 1919, Raymond married Edna Walker and they were the parents of one son, Raymond E. Custer, Jr. They lived in Gove, Kansas where he taught school. Edna died June 7, 1925.

On June 30, 1927, Raymond married Eva Walker at WaKeeney. They were the parents of four children, Charles Francis, Jean Anne, Kathleen Kay, and Sara Beatrice.

Eva Walker was born November 17, 1902, on her parents farm northwest of WaKeeney, where she grew up. She attended T.C.H.S. and College of Emporia at Emporia, graduating in 1924. She taught school, at the high school level, for three years, one year at Kinsley and two at Gove. Eva died in 1997, Raymond Earl, Edna & Eva, they are all burried in the WaKeeney Cemetery.

DRUMMOND

John James Drummond, born February 10, 1835, in Clarksburg, West Virginia, came with his wife, Cynthia, to Western Kansas in 1888. He settled first in Graham County where he took up a tree claim. His wife died there and on November 8, 1896 he married Mary Elizabeth Robinson. To this union was born one daughter, Lois.

The Drummonds moved to Trego County where they were engaged in the mercantile and hotel business. The hotel was located at the south end of Main Street (near the present Skelly station) at which both room and board were provided for guests. J. J. served as sheriff for two terms, during which the family of three lived in the court house in quarters provided for the sheriff. He also served several terms as township trustee.

Mary Drummond was born April 19, 1855, in Belmont County, Ohio and died February 19, 1918, her death due to anemia. J. J. Drummond died February 10, 1935.

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Folkers

Charles F. Folkers was born to Fred and Taalke Folkers on December 1, 1861 in Benson, Illinois. He was baptized and raised in the Lutheran faith. His parents emigrated from Germany in 1852.

Grace M. (Garrels) Folkers was born to Fred and Almina Garrels on August 21, 1866 in Remels, Germany. She was baptized and raised in the Lutheran faith. She immigrated to America with her father in 1882 settling in Benson, Illinois joining several brothers who had arrived earlier.

Charles (more commonly known as Charlie) came to Trego County, Kansas and filed a homestead claim on the NW/4 of 32-13-23 in March 1886 and built a small house on his homestead establishing residency in September 1886. He spent his first winter in a dugout. After living on this homestead for seven years and making improvements he acquired title to this land in 1893.

Charles filed a timber claim September 1886 on the SW/4 of Section 32-13-23. The summer of 1886 was spent in improving his claim. The first year he cultivated 5 acres and the second year he cultivated 6 acres. The third year he planted 5 acres of cottonwood and willow cuttings along with walnut, hickory and pecan nuts. The fourth year he planted an additional 6 acres and replanted the original 5 acres to locust, walnut, maple, box elder and catalpa trees. After 13 years of planting and cultivating trees he acquired the timber claim title in 1899.

In January 1887 Charles went back to Benson, Illinois and married Grace. They returned to Trego County and lived their entire lives on this homestead raising 9 children, 7 boys and 2 girls ♦ Fred, Theodore (Wally), Carl (Karl), Minnie, Herman, George, Dora, Otto and Richard. Their homestead was located 9 miles south, 1 mile west and 1/2 mile south of WaKeeney. They were members of the Zion Lutheran Church at Trego Center. The children attended the Excelsior, District #28, country school.

Times were tough in those early days and for 5 months of the 1889-1890 winter they lived and worked off their homestead to make a living.

One of Charles♦ barns was built from the stone out of the Smoky River bluffs about 5-7 miles south of their farm. It took all day to make one trip with a team of horses and wagon traveling to the bluffs to cut out the stones, load them in the wagon, travel home and unload them. There were many of these trips made for the building of this barn.

In the years before telephones if these early settlers needed or wanted their neighbors for something, they would run a flag up the windmill. When a neighbor saw this flag they would come and see how they could help.

To his original 320 acres embraced in the homestead and timber claims Charles added 2,400 acres of Trego County land, and title to these acres was never encumbered by a mortgage lien. His four married sons and one daughter lived on and rented many of these quarters from their dad. Charles owned the NE/4 of Section 32-13-23 and out of this quarter he gave land to the Zion Lutheran Church congregation at Trego Center for their church building on which the church still stands. He sold them the land for the cemetery and the parsonage.

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Charles was a prominent businessman and farmer raising crops and cattle. He was the owner of a French Draft (Percheron) stallion ♦ Bijou. Farmers from all over the county would bring their mares to be bred by this celebrated Bijou.

Charles and Grace were well thought of and respected in the community and took an active interest in community affairs. They had barn dances and one article in the June 1900 WaKeeney newspaper stated ♦ The dance at Mr. Folkers last Friday night was well attended, there were about 175 present. The people came from far and near. Late in the evening a supper and ice cream, coffee and lemonade was served. Mr. and Mrs. Folkers are the best entertainers and it is concluded that it was the most pleasant entertainment given in the county for years. ♦

Charles died in 1946 and Grace in 1955. They are buried in the WaKeeney City Cemetery. They lived an active life albeit a struggle for many years enduring the hardships and trials of homesteaders.

GALLOWAY

George T. Galloway, born June 10, 1854, near Quincy, Illinois, came to Western Kansas in April, 1879. He settled on the Saline River where he "proved" up a timber claim about five and one-half miles north of WaKeeney. He was a blacksmith by trade but he enjoyed planting and growing flowers, etc. In 1898, he made his first purchase of high grade heifers and gradually increased his herd until he had nearly four hundred registered Hereford cattle. When he first came to Trego county, he operated a wagon and plow shop in partnership with Leonard Smith. He died in 1912, and his son, Lew H. Galloway, took over the farm and continued the breeding and raising of purebred cattle.

His wife, Helen (Wait) Galloway, came to WaKeeney in September, 1879, and they were married September 23, 1880. She was born June 5, 1855, at Hamlet, Rock Island County, Illinois, and died June 3, 1923, at WaKeeney, Kansas. Helen Galloway received a good education at an academy in Illinois and worked toward having her children get an education too. She enjoyed reading good books and singing and playing the organ. George T. and Helen Galloway were the parents of six children, Milton Blythe (1881-1949), a Doctor who lived in Webster City, Iowa; Lewis Hamilton (1883-1962); Grace Irene (Mrs. Charles Staggers, 1887-1976); Ruby Gray (Mrs. Charles Bradley, 1890-1967); William John (1894-1937); and, Georgia Helen (Mrs. Leo Canning of Long Beach; California, 1900-). Of their children Lew, Ruby and Bill remained in WaKeeney after they married.

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Lewis H. Galloway, born September 4, 1883, grew to manhood on the Galloway Ranch, and after the death of his father in 1912, he took over the ranch, continuing farming and breeding Hereford cattle. He had a lifelong interest in all phases of agriculture and in community projects. Besides his interest in agriculture, he served twelve years as county commissioner, served twenty years as Secretary of the Trego County Fair, was director of the Kansas Livestock Association, was a member of the Board of Directors of Trego-Gove Federal Land Bank Association, served two terms on the State Banking Board, was a member of the State Board of Agriculture for nine years, and was its president in 1954. He also served as a member of the Board of Trustees of Trego-Lemke Memorial Hospital of WaKeeney. He was active in politics and served as Trego County- chairman of the Republican Party for many years. He was well-known over the state as a master of ceremonies. Lew died February 4, 1962. Lew married Anna Euphemia Nelson on December 12, 1912, at her parents' home south of Ogallah. To this union were born four children, George Nelson, Anna Lou, Robert Hamilton, and Helen Margeurite.

Anna Euphemia Nelson, daughter of Peter and Anna Nelson was born July 4, 1883 near Varna, Marshall County, Illinois. She came to Kansas with her parents, in 1900, settling on a farm nine miles south of Ogallah. She attended high school in Ellis, Kansas and after receiving her teaching certificate taught school for two years. After that she moved to WaKeeney and worked in the WaKeeney State Bank. . She died April 30, 1963. Lew died February 4, 1962.

GROFT

Joshua Groft was born December 23, 1844, in Indiana County, Pennsylvania, and died December 2, 1920, WaKeeney, Kansas. He married, as his first wife, Mary Agnes Farrell of Sewickley, Pennsylvania, on June 24, 1873. She died October 1, 1879, WaKeeney, Kansas. No children were born to this marriage.

He married, as his second wife, Nancy A. Turner, on December 11, 1884, at WaKeeney, Kansas.. She died on October 8, 1886, at WaKeeney. One daughter, Mary Elizabeth Groft, was born to this union. Mary Elizabeth Groft was born June 20, 1885, and died July 16, 1979, at WaKeeney, Kansas. Mary was a retired elementary school teacher and a former superintendent of Trego County Schools.

Joshua Groft married as his third wife, Luella Bramlette Murrah, on December 20, 1887. Luella was born October 14, 1861, in Adair County, Kentucky, and died April 7, 1928, at WaKeeney, Kansas. Seven children were born to this union: Anna Allen (Mrs. Henry DeWitt), born December 17, 1888, and died March 30, 1961. and Andrew Joshua, born October 16, 1891, died and is buried at Vacaville, California; Earl Murrah; Audley Fetterman, born September 14, 1894, and died January 27, 1935, WaKeeney; William Bert, born November 16, 1896, and died in 1951, WaKeeney; Eveoline Gertrude, born November 1, 1898, died November 1, 1967, at Stockton, Kansas; and Arch Dale, born April 23, 1902, and is buried at Salt Lake City, Utah.

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Joshua Groft, as a young man, attended Westminster College at New Williamsburg, Pennsylvania, and was graduated from that school with a B.A. Degree on July 5, 1873. After receiving that degree, he studied Technology and became a preacher. Prior to receiving his education, he was a member of the 14th Pennsylvania Cavalry, which was in turn a part of the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War. He rose to the rank of Sergeant and took part in several well-recorded skirmishes in West Virginia, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland. He received injuries during an engagement of the Stone Bridge and was later to receive a pension as a result of those injuries. He was mustered out of the Union Army at Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1865.

Joshua came to Trego County on October 8, 1878. He took a homestead on a quarter of land located southwest of WaKeeney and received title to it on April 29, 1882. He later served as Justice of the Peace for this area and officiated at several trials for horse stealing, murder and other offenses as recorded by the Kansas Historical Society and Trego County records.

Joshua entered the coal business in WaKeeney and built the home located at 111 South Main. He kept a very comprehensive diary, in his own handwriting, of the events in WaKeeney, Trego County and Western Kansas. The History of Trego County, published in the Western Kansas World's 100th Anniversary Issue, published in April 1979, was compiled from his diary.

Earl Murrah Groft was born March 3, 1893, WaKeeney, Kansas, and died November 22, 1936, at WaKeeney. On April 20, 1930, he married Berneice Beulah Weldon. To this union were born two children, Richard Murrah and Sharon Berneice.

Earl was an abstracter and associated with the WaKeeney State Bank for many years prior to his death in 1936. Berneice Weldon was born January 17, 1905, at Beloit, Kansas, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harry T. Weldon. After Earl's death in 1936, she served as Deputy County Clerk and later County Clerk of Trego County for twelve years. In 1948, she attended Cosmetology School in Salina and later opened a beauty shop in her home, which she operated until her death. Berneice married Mr. E. L. Albin in WaKeeney on July 16, 1952. She died March 9, 1973.

HECKMAN

Jacob Herman Heckman was born November 12, 1885, Sterling, Illinois, and died in June, 1961, at WaKeeney. He came to WaKeeney in 1907, and lived on his father's farm on the Saline River. In 1908, he became engaged in a produce and ice business in WaKeeney, then in 1915, became associated with the WaKeeney State Bank, which he continued until his death in 1961.

On November 30, 1911, Jake married Jane Wilson. They were the parents of four sons: Robert, who joined the church in 1926; Harold, who joined in 1928; Carl Douglas, who joined in 1933; and John L., who joined in 1935.

Jane Wilson was born January 20, 1889, the third daughter of Robert Coulter and Nellie Thrall Wilson. She died January 2, 1973.

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Jane graduated from Trego County High School and attended College of Emporia. She was an active member of the Presbyterian church, being active in the women's organizations. She was also active in several local social and civic organizations.

The Heckman family were very active in the Presbyterian Church. Robert Heckman married Susan Stone, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Stone of Fort Scott, Kansas, on January 28, 1942, at Olathe, Kansas. They are the parents of two sons. Bob was associated with the Trego WaKeeney State Bank for twenty-five years, retiring in 1974.

Harold Heckman married Florence Lehman, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Lehman of Protection, Kansas, on August 25, 1940. They, with their children, were very active members of the Presbyterian Church while they lived in WaKeeney. While living in WaKeeney, Harold was associated with the WaKeeney State Bank until his sudden death in April, 1956.

Florence was a teacher, and after Harold's death, she taught school in the WaKeeney Grade School until she, with her family, moved to Reno, Nevada. Carl Douglas Heckman married Roma Lea Custer, daughter of Mrs. Mabel Custer of Quinter, on December 1, 1945 at WaKeeney. Three children were born to them. Doug and Roma Lea lived in WaKeeney where Doug was a business man. He died suddenly on January 2, 1974. John Heckman lived in Emporia where he was an optometrist. He was the father of four children. He died October 24, 1973.

HILLE

Henry J. Hille, 24 years old, of Buck Creek, Indiana, on his way, in 1878, to the silver mines in Leadville, Colorado, stopped in WaKeeney for supplies and remained to open the first drug store in the new Western Kansas town. In the Spring of 1879 he returned to Indiana to marry Eva Catherine Shoup. They came back to WaKeeney and that same year built a home on the present site of the Hille home, which still has part of the original structure. He soon became interested in the open range, and in 1880 purchased his first cattle herd and began acquiring land in southern Trego County on Sand Creek near the Smoky Hill River. He helped to bring cattle from Texas to this area. In 1906, he, with A. H. Blair, F. S. Diebold, W. J. Skelton, and George Baker, organized the Trego County State Bank. He continued in the banking, ranching, and cattle business until his death in 1934. Mrs. Eva Hille's death occurred in 1929, two days before a planned celebration of their 50th Wedding Anniversary. The two sons of Mr. and Mrs. Hille, Charles R. and Henry G., have resided in WaKeeney. Charles R. married Faith Wonner in 1906, and that year began his more than 50-year career in banking with the beginning of the Trego County State Bank. They were the parents of two daughters, Helen Hille Baughman (Mrs. George W.) and Barbara Hille Van Steenbergh (Mrs. S. K.). Charlie died November 7, 1969 and Faith died January 10, 1972. Henry G. Hille, who began a ranching and cattleman's career at an early age, married Josephine Krhut in 1926. They have lived in the original Hille residence since 1935 when they moved from the ranch during the dust bowl days. Their children are Elizabeth C. and Charles G. Hille.

HINSHAW

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Thomas P. Hinshaw, his wife Sarah, and their fourteen children came with a group of Quakers by wagon train from Randolph County, Indiana to Trego County, Kansas in 1879. The family located on land eleven miles southwest of WaKeeney, but the water was tainted with shale, so in 1882, Thomas bought the relinquishment to a quarter of land seven miles south of town, where he made his home. He raised cattle and started his successful orchard as a hobby. He proved that fruit trees could be grown in this part of the country, and his grounds were visited by many. Thomas and Sarah had a large family, but only four sons and one daughter resided in Trego County. One son, Thomas D., was elected sheriff in 1904 and served several years. He later moved to Florida. Another son, Alva P., while a young man, worked on the Union Pacific Railroad, extending the tracks to the Colorado line. Alva P. Hinshaw was born in 1869 in Randolph County, Indiana, and came with his parents to Trego County in 1879. He and his brothers worked to help the family through the rough years after they came to Kansas. In 1900 he plastered almost every pioneer house built in Trego county. He also developed a homestead farm and a timber claim. In 1889 he married Cora M. Kulp of Ogallah, Kansas. They became the parents of four children, Ivian Ethel, Glen P., Ren A., and Lee W. In 1908, he moved his family to town to live so that they could obtain a better education. He worked as a clerk in the Trego Mercantile Store until 1915. At this time Alva P. and his three sons, Glen, Ren and Lee, opened the A. P. Hinshaw and Sons Mercantile Store in the new Masonic Building. He remained in the store until his death in 1949. A. P. Hinshaw and his sons were interested in the development of WaKeeney and the Presbyterian Church. Although A. P. was of the Quaker faith, he very faithfully attended the Presbyterian Church. Mrs. A. P. (Cora) Hinshaw died in 1922.

HIXSON

Mr. A. V. Hixson, his wife, Henrietta, son, John, and three daughters, Ruth, Myrt and Grace, resided in Raritan, Illinois until they became homesteaders in 1886 and came to Kansas to live on a farm Northeast of Ogallah. Mr. and Mrs. Hixson joined the Presbyterian Church on April 6, 1888. Mrs. Hixson died January 30, 1908, and Mr. Hixson died December 12, 1912. On December 12, 1899, John Hixson married Ella Marquand, who was also a member of a pioneer family. They had four children, Brom, Luretta, Eva and a son who died in infancy. In 1909 they moved from their farm northeast of Ogallah to a farm they had purchased east of WaKeeney. On the land they purchased with the stone house of Mr. Albert Warren, one of the founders of WaKeeney. The Hixsons lived in this house for 40 years until they built a new home in 1931. Luretta Hixson joined the church December 16, 1917. Luretta married Elmer LaRue and is a member of the Presbyterian Church in Hays. Eva Hixson joined the church January 6, 1918. Eva is Mrs. Earl Richardson of East Lansing, Michigan. John Hixson served for 20 years as a member of the Grade School Board and was an original member of the Trego County Fair Board. In 1946, Mr. and Mrs. Hixson gave a block of land for the Trego Lemke Hospital site. John Hixson died July 2, 1953 and Ella Hixson died February 2, 1963.

KELLY

James K. Kelly, who was born in January, 1835, in Ireland, came to America in 1850 and settled in Rock Island, Illinois. In 1859, at Rock Island, he married Rebecca Ash, who was born November 20, 1837, in Ireland. They were the parents of four children, James, K., William Bailey, Samuel Francis and Bessie Kelly McCoy.

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Mr. and Mrs. Kelly came with their family to Trego County in 1879. He was a hardware and implement dealer in WaKeeney. He was a highly trusted man and held county offices as well as serving on church boards. He was a ruling elder for over forty years in the Presbyterian Church.

Mrs. James Kelly "Rebecca" was one of the first of the pioneer ladies to locate in WaKeeney, and like all others, she suffered many trials and difficulties, but through it all, she looked forward to better things to come and cheerfully encouraged those about her. She died May 20, 1917, Des Moines, Iowa, while visiting her daughter, Mrs. M. W. McCoy. James Kelly died June 13, 1904, at WaKeeney, and both are buried in the WaKeeney Cemetery.

William B. Kelly married Emma L. Olson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Olson, on December 17, 1885. Samuel Kelly never married. For a number of years Will and Sam operated The Star Grocery Store on Main Street. Emma Kelly died in 1893, William B. Kelly died in 1923, and Samuel Kelly died in 1933.

Carroll B. Kelly, the son of Mr. and Mrs. James K. Kelly, Jr., was born August 5, 1883, and died July 23, 1951, at WaKeeney. He served in World War I and was associated with his uncles, Sam and Will Kelly, in the Star Grocery. For many years he owned and operated the Kelly Theatre in WaKeeney. Lucia Kelly married Hugh Wonner, and they had a son, Frank Hugh. Hugh was also associated with the Star Grocery Store.

OLSEN

John O. Olsen and Rebecca E. Crawford were united in marriage on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 1902, by Rev. H. C. Bradbury, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Lincoln, Kansas, at a large home wedding. Rebecca was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel J. Crawford. He was a Civil War Veteran. Mr. Crawford was an attorney in Lincoln County and later city attorney at Kansas City, Kansas.

John was the oldest child of Otto and Mary Jensen Olsen. Otto Olsen, a shoe and bootmaker by trade, came from Christiana, (now Oslo), Norway, to the United States in 1870 and established his business in Memphis, Tenn. Mary Jensen, of Christiana, joined him there and they were married in Memphis. They had five sons and five daughters; three sons were born in Memphis. They then moved to Lincoln, Kansas, where he continued his trade.

John, after completing a business course at Kansas Wesleyan College, Salina, engaged in farming 10 miles south of Lincoln, Kansas. It was here that John and Rebecca started their married life together.

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In 1905, John Olsen came to Trego County to buy ranchland for cattle raising. He bought the E¹/₂ of Sec. 32-14-23, which included the Wilcox Homestead, and all of Sec. 33 (960 acres). Later, two quarter sections were added to the ranch. He immediately built a tenant house on Sec. 33, ¹/₂ miles south and ¹/₂ miles east of the Wilcox Schoolhouse. This tenant house was later moved close to the large house. Joe Curd of Lincoln, a tenant, took care of the ranch until the family home was built, ¹/₂ mile south of Wilcox Schoolhouse on Sec. 32. John brought C. A. Rand, a contractor and builder of Kansas City to construct a large ranch home, complete with bath, furnace and carbide lights. This was the first allmodern ranch home in Trego County. The home was completed in 1910, and Mr. Olsen moved his family here from Lincoln.

John Olsen served on the draft board for registration of young men for World War I and sold liberty bonds. He was elected to the school board in 1910 and served continuously until the spring before his death on November 19, 1946. He took an active part in politics, serving as Republican Precinct Committeeman.

Rebecca Olsen was active in Sunday School and church services at Wilcox. Having had elocution lessons, she is well remembered for her many "readings." She helped with literary programs where young people took part with their talents of debate, music and many others. She was a member of Margaret Chapter #249 O.E.S. and a charter member of Southdowner Club. She continued to attend services at Wilcox until her husband's death. She bought lots on the corner of 4th and Warren Ave. in WaKeeney. Deines Construction built her a new home there. She attended the WaKeeney Presbyterian Church until her death, February 2, 1951.

John and Rebecca Olsen had seven children. The three oldest attended high school in WaKeeney, boarding and rooming in town. The next three attended Ransom High School, driving from home. Alan, the youngest child, chose to attend Hebron Lutheran Academy, Hebron, Nebraska. All except one attended schools of higher learning. Emerson, chose to be a farmer and bought farm land directly north and east of Wilcox School. He farmed there until his death, March 5, 1942. Ruth, Mary and Alan were schoolteachers. Gladys went into nursing. Blanche was employed by Beachcraft at Wichita, and Orville established a mining business of his own at Silverton, Colorado.

On January 21, 1917, John O. Olsen, Rebecca E. Olsen and children, Ruth Olive, Mary Marie, Gladys Irene and John Emerson became members of the WaKeeney Presbyterian Church. Although they owned a Hudson automobile, (roads were not suitable for cars), they came the seventeen miles to the church in WaKeeney, with two driving horses and a surrey, (with a fringe on top).

SPENA

Albert Spena, born July 14, 1838 at Burotitz, Bohemia, and Rosalia Hotary, born November 22, 1844 at Dievonikach, Bohemia, were married in 1863 at Dushnick, Bohemia. They came to America in 1866, settling first in Chicago, Illinois, where he worked in a shoe factory. Then they moved to Chelsea, Hamilton County, Iowa. In 1879, thirteen years later, they came to Trego County where they homesteaded land in the Banner neighborhood, twelve miles south of WaKeeney.

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They came to Kansas by covered wagon with eight horses, eight cattle and seven children, Frank J., Antonia, Joe, Jim, John, Tom and Charley. One child, Anna, a twin to Antonia, died on the trip to America and was buried at sea. Henry, the youngest child, was born in Trego County. He died in 1907.

The family found it took a lot of hard work to make a home in this new country. First they had to search for water, then they had to break sod to build a house for the family. The next job was to help the others in the neighborhood to build a school house for their district. But Mr. Spena was a thrifty and hard-working man and soon owned three quarter sections of land, 125 head of cattle, 11 head of horses and enough new machinery to farm his land. When each son left home to start his own life, he was given a team of horses and a hammer from his parents. Mr. Spena died May 25, 1904, and Mrs. Spena died July 4, 1924.

Their son, Frank J. Spena, born in 1864 in Dushnick, married Mary Zeman in 1886, and they were the parents of five children: Henry, Josie (Mrs Fred Schmitt), Bill, Edward, and Agnes. Later they divorced, and he married Della Kessler, and they were the parents of Mabel Spena Albers, who is now deceased.

Antonia Spena (and her twin Anna) were born in 1865 at Dushnick. As a young girl Antonia taught school until her marriage to Joseph J. Keraus on November 23, 1887. They lived on his large ranch where he raised cattle and horses until 1898, when they moved to town and he and John Spena bought a hardware store. This store was started on the east side of Main Street where the present Fabric Shop is located. In 1924, a new building was built on the west side of the street where they continued their business until 1961, when the store was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Orma Welch. Antonia was born September 13, 1867 & died June 20, 1954. Joseph J. was born February 2, 1864 & died November 3, 1928.

After World War I, Art and Ed joined their father in the hardware business, continuing it after their father's death in 1928.

Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Keraus were the parents of three sons, Arthus S., Edward and Paul.

Arthus S. Keraus was born May 9, 1889, and died August 9, 1970 at WaKeeney, Kansas. He spent his early years on the family homestead south of WaKeeney, moving to WaKeeney with his parents in 1899. He was in the U.S. Navy from 1917-1919, serving on the U.S.S. Pocahontas with the Navy Band.

Upon his return from service he and his brother Edward joined their father in partnership in the Keraus Hardware Store operating the business until 1962.

Art was active in many community organizations and projects. One of his favorite projects was planning and constructing, with J. H. Heckman, the beautiful Christmas decorations that are displayed each year in the center of WaKeeney's downtown area. He served on the City Council and was Mayor from 1935-1939.

On May 23, 1924 he married Velma Smith at WaKeeney. To this union were born four daughters, Ellen, Margaret, Ruth and Janice. After Velma's death in 1953, Art married Helen (Blair) Cole of Denver, Colorado, on May 25, 1963. She died June 29, 1970 at WaKeeney.

Velma Ruth Smith, born January 30, 1900 at Cambridge, Nebraska, was the oldest daughter of William and Isis Smith. When a small child, she moved with her family to Emporia, Kansas, where she completed her education and was graduated from College of Emporia in 1922.

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Velma came to WaKeeney in September, 1922, as a music and Spanish teacher in the high school. Velma died April 17, 1953 at the hospital in Kansas City, Kansas.

Joe H. Spena married Anna K. Papes in 1897, and they were the parents of four children, Fred, Alfred, Rosa and Harry. They lived on a farm three miles west of WaKeeney. Joe died April 9, 1955 and Anna died November 14, 1964.

Fred Spena married Alice Anderson on September 7, 1924, and they lived on a farm west of WaKeeney. Fred was active in the American Agriculture farm program, played in the WaKeeney City Band for many years. Fred died August 28, 1972.

Alfred F. Spena married Estella Spitsnaugle, and they, with their daughter, Rosemyre (Mrs. Ronald Long) were members of the church. Later they divorced and Alfred married Lena Wiles. They are the parents of a son, Robert. Alfred was born February 2, 1902 and died January 5, 1969.

James M. Spena married Elizabeth Kutina on May 10, 1898. They lived on a farm two miles west of Big Creek Hall and were the parents of five children, Walter, Clara, Laurence, LaVerne and Glen. James died in 1908, and his wife later married George Stradal.

Clara Spena married Albert Krhut, and they were the parents of two sons, Gifford and Frank. Albert died in 1965.

Charley Spena married Mary Hladek in 1902, and two years later she died of a fever. In 1906, he married Carrie Cummings, and they were the parents of two daughters, Grace and Gladys. They lived on a farm four miles west of WaKeeney until 1920 when they moved to a farm at the north edge of WaKeeney.

Charley died July 20, 1958. Carrie was born August 15, 1888 at Nodaway, Iowa and died December 31, 1961, WaKeeney.

Grace Spena married Henry Boxberger, Jr., on April 8, 1928. They are the parents of two daughters, Darlene Boxberger Veh and Celia Dee Boxberger Wolfe.

Gladys Spena married Bernhardt Deines on April 22, 1930. They are the parents of twins, Marlene Lee and Myron Lee. Ben was a building contractor and died January 27, 1969. Gladys died 2-13-2002.

SWIGGETT FAMILY

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The Swiggett family came from Iowa to Kansas in April, 1886. They settled on a homestead near Collyer, where the children received their elementary education. Although they experienced pioneer life and hard times, they maintained -a hospitable home that was open to any needy wayfarer. In 1899, the family moved to WaKeeney where they made their home.

The father, Francis C. Swiggett, was born November 6, 1837, at Seaford, Delaware, and died April 24, 1906, WaKeeney, Kansas. He moved to Cambridge City, Indiana, and from there enlisted in an Indiana Artillery regiment and served throughout the Civil War.

After moving to WaKeeney, Mr. Swiggett served several years as commissioner of the third district and was elected probate judge in 1904. He had joined the Masonic Fraternity in 1859, so was the oldest Mason in WaKeeney at the time of his death. He was a member of the G.A.R. and the Presbyterian Church, having joined it August 1, 1904.

In 1870, he married Eustine Mosbaugh at Cambridge City, Indiana. She had been born April 5, 1838, in New York City and as a small girl had moved with her parents to Cambridge City, where she grew to womanhood. Mr. and Mrs. Swiggett were the parents of six children, one of whom, Lemuel, died in infancy. The other children were Mary, Samuel Ashland, William Hinds, Walter Forest and Margaret.

Mary Swiggett Acre Smith was their oldest daughter. She was born October 16, 1870, in Cambridge City, Indiana, and died October 24, 1957, WaKeeney. She was the mother of four children: Margaret Acre Jones, Sue Acre Porter, Joe and Clyde Acre.

Samuel A. Swiggett was born December 29, 1872, at Cambridge City Indiana and died March 26, 1952, WaKeeney. He worked for the Internal Revenue in Washington, D. C., until his retirement in 1949. After many years of service he returned to WaKeeney to make his home. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Mrs. Lida Jones Swiggett and his second wife, Mrs. Grace Kiess Swiggett.

William Hinds Swiggett was born November 3, 1875, Cambridge City, Indiana, and died August 13, 1953 in WaKeeney. In his early years he taught school at Ogallah and Collyer. Later he did clerical work.

Walter Forest Swiggett was born July 20, 1877, Allerton, Iowa, and died January 1, 1948. Walter taught school at Ogallah and Collyer and later was employed by the Gilschrist Lumber Company, Greeley, Colorado. While there he was stricken with paralysis and returned to WaKeeney in 1906, where he resided in the family home with Margaret.

In 1910, he established a coal and produce business in WaKeeney, which he managed until 1926. In November, 1932, he was elected probate judge of Trego County, serving for fourteen years. He made many friends and was always willing to give his assistance in any way possible for the welfare of his friends or his community.

Trego County KS Pioneer Families

Margaret Mosbaugh Swiggett was born July 26, 1878, Allerton, Iowa, and died October 26, 1971, WaKeeney. After graduating from high school, Margaret worked as a Deputy County Treasurer until she went to learn the millinery trade at Gages, in Chicago, Illinois. Upon her return, she was employed by Mrs. Nettie Moore as milliner in her store. Later Margaret served as Trego County Register of Deeds for eight years, following which she became self-employed as an abstractor until her retirement. Margaret was very civic minded, having an interest in education, politics, religious and community affairs.

Robert Coulter Wilson came to WaKeeney in 1884 with his wife, Nellie, and son Chase T., who was one year old. They came from Ottumwa, Iowa. He established a partnership known as Wilson & Murray, engaged in insurance and banking. In 1885, he founded the First National Bank of WaKeeney, which became the WaKeeney State Bank in 1887, and has been in continuous operation since.

Nellie Wilson During the next ten years, 3 daughters, Mary, Jane, and Helen, were born to the family. The Wilsons were active in the First Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Wilson founded the Collyer State Bank in 1906, and the Ogallah State Bank in 1909, along with residents of those communities. He was tireless in working to improve educational opportunities, and his greatest triumph was the building of the new high school, dedicated in 1913. He and his family were involved in every type of church activity, and he was deeply supportive of the College of Emporia, contributing heavily to its financial support. All of his children were in attendance there, as were grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Chase and Nellie died in 1917, Robert died in 1920, Mary Fullington in 1970, Jane Heckman in 1973.