Treasured Memories

Morton Co. Kan.

Compiled by

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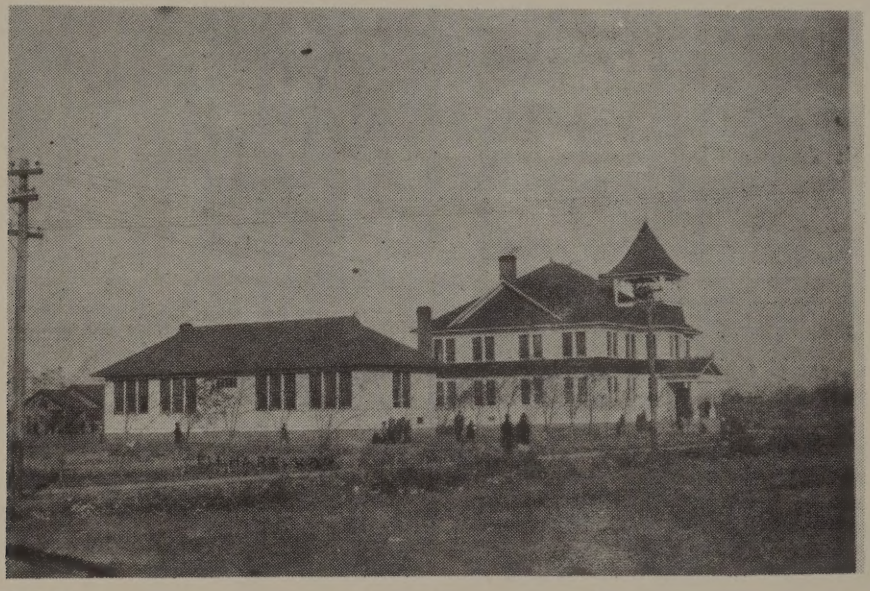
COURTHOUSE
Courthouse at Richfield built in 1888 to furnish employment for homesteaders in the county. Dome originally on building had to be removed shortly after completion when it was found that the hand cut rock walls would not support the weight. In 1950 this building was gutted by fire and became a total loss.

COVERED WAGONS
Immigrants from the Arkansas City–Winfield area enroute to settle southeast of Springfield, Colorado camping overnight at Elkhart in 1917.

HOSPITAL
Morton County's first hospital built about 1920.

DUST STORM
Dust storm approaching in the mid '30s.



SCHOOL
Building on the right was the first public school building in Elkhart. It was built in 1915 on land donated by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company. Building on the left was built later.

BROOMCORN--An estimated $250,000 worth of broomcorn stored at Elkhart awaits shipment. At that time Elkhart was competing for the title of the World's largest broomcorn shipping center.

FOREWORD

There are few left among us, in these days, who can tell, from personal experience, the fascinating, real life stories of those early days in the settling of Morton County.

The enthusiasm generated by the celebration of the KANSAS CENTENNIAL YEAR has inspired me to gather together a few of these treasured memories and to place them into this booklet before they are lost forever.

I began by asking people who are, or have been, residents of Morton County to write of some of their experiences and those of their family and friends. I am delighted with the response and wish to thank each writer for his or her part in making an inspiration a reality.

It has been a joy to receive and compile these letters. Each has been like a window, through which we can catch a glimpse of the past.

I hope you will enjoy them too.

Sincerely,

Ida M. Ketchum

Ida M. Ketchum

Table of Contents Page

The James A. Evans Family

By Edith Evans Coursey

My father, James A. Evans, and my mother, Emma Mason Evans, along with their three older children came to Morton County in a covered wagon in the early spring of the year 1886. My father filed on a homestead about fourteen or fifteen miles southwest of Richfield. They built a small dugout which was their home.

There are many interesting and amusing things to tell--along with some very sad ones. Things are very different now from what they were then.

My father was a blacksmith and went to Richfield to work, leaving Mother and the three children on the homestead. Father often walked the fourteen miles both ways between Richfield and home to spend Sundays with the family, having sold his team and wagon to pay for what lumber was in the dugout, which was the minimum amount since it had no floor.

My sister Etta was born July 2, 1886--the first child born in the county after it was organized and named Morton County.

Droughts came and many (in fact, most) of the people moved away. My folks moved to Manzanola, Colorado which was then called "Catlin". This was all before I was born and I cannot give the exact dates. I think it was in the latter part of 1889. They returned to Morton County three years later. During their three year residence in Manzanola, they lost two children and these children were buried in the Rocky Ford cemetery. Life was not easy in those days.

After returning to Morton County, the children who were school age attended school in Richfield and then the family moved out on a place twelve miles Southwest, on the North Fork. The following two terms, the children attended the Taloga school, as Mother had moved in to Taloga with all the children but Earl. He stayed at home so that he could help Dad but rode to school the six miles on horseback.

The following year Delitha, Etta and George went to Westola to school. This was still a bit ahead of the times when buses came to the door for the school children, so they got there the best way they could--horseback, burroback or they rode their "shank ponies". In their case they had a burro named Jack and a horse named Kid. One rode Jack and two rode Kid--that is if Kid was in the mood to take them to school and many times he wasn't. Then they would take turns walking and riding the burro. It was four miles to Westola school.

We all had to work hard and began to work when quite small. There was a large family of us and we had good times playing together and with neighbor children--mostly at school. Our most permanent neighbors were the Addingtons, of whom there was also a

large family. The children of the two families enjoyed many happy times playing together. I see a vast change in the kind of games the children play now as compared to those times. We had no playground equipment or manufactured contrivances or planned activities. Some of the games we played were Black Man, Dare Base, Duck on the Rock, and Ante-over--to mention a few, but our good old standby (and, I think, a favorite with most of us) was a kind of ball game much like baseball. But since we never had enough players for two ball teams, we played a game we called "Work Up" which could be adjusted to any number of players from four to ten or twelve. It was real fun. Girls, boys, big and little, all played together. Most of our balls and bats were homemade. If we had only two to play ball, we could play "One Old Cat."

One of the big events of the year was the Easter egg hunt, which started "officially" about a week before Easter with each of us getting and hiding every egg we could find. Then we would try to find each others eggs and take them and rehide them for our own. Easter morning we would each go bring in our eggs and the object of the game, of course, was to see who could have the most. Some of the neighbor children had the same custom except that no one touched the eggs another had hidden. I couldn't see much point in hiding them if no one would take them. We Evans' played for keeps! My brothers, Jim and Frank, were younger than I but evidently more shrewd; and certainly bigger teases and they nearly always came into possession of my hoard of Easter eggs. One time Dad told me he would help me hide some eggs where they wouldn't find them. In a corner of his shop was a little room with nests in it. He put the eggs in the bottom of the nests under the hay. My actions gave them a hint that my eggs were hidden in that room, so there they searched and searched and one of them called to the other, "Here they are. I've found them." I started to rush right to my chosen hiding spot to see if they were still there, but Dad, wiser to the tricks of big brothers, said, "Don't go to them. They are fooling you." That was one year they didn't find the eggs. But then there was the year I thought I had done a really superb job of hiding them--each time I looked the eggs were still there. So confident was I that my cache was undetected that I put all the eggs I could get my hands on there. Easter morning I went to get them and not an egg did I have!! The boys greatly enjoyed my dismay and said, "Well, we knew where they were and if we had taken them sooner, you would have found another place which we would have had to look up." If Mother got short of eggs, she would announce at the breakfast table that no one was to take any eggs from the nests that day, and we would obligingly "lay off".

One night my sister Etta and a Ben George, one of the cowboys from the OO Ranch went on horseback to a dance in the courthouse at Richfield, twelve miles away. I remember being awakened in the night by my folks rushing around and talking excitedly. I saw that they were grabbing pillows, quilts, or most anything to put in the windows as rain and hail was bouncing all over the floor. The storm was really terrible and the hail had broken the windows. I was really frightened.

At the time the storm came up, Etta and her friend were on the way home. As it struck, they jumped off their horses and pulled off saddles and blankets to provide themselves such shelter as they could on the open prairie. They didn't take time to bother with removing the horses' bridles. When the rain and hail stopped, they plodded home through the mud, arriving just after sun-up. Investigation disclosed Etta's horse was at our barn but Ben's horse was nowhere to be seen. Ben and my brother George hitched up a team and went back for the saddles and blankets, and to look for Ben's horse. Tracks in the mud showed that Ben's and Etta's horses had left together from the place where they were unsaddled, but soon separated, Ben's horse going toward the Point of Rocks and Etta's heading for home. The boys had no difficulty in tracking Ben's horse where he ran in the mud to where the trail ended at an old dug well. With an instinct that only animals possess, the poor beast had sensed an unknown danger in the pitch-dark of the storm lashed night and had set his feet back a couple of yards from the edge of the well, but lacking footing in the sodden terrain, had slid right on into the well. There they found him, at the bottom of the well, with his neck broken. Ben put a lasso rope around George, under his arms, and let him down the fifteen feet to retrieve the horse's bridle, after which Ben hauled him up out of the well again and they came home with the bridle and only the sad story of the horse's demise.

Fresh fruit was very scarce in those days and any kind of fresh fruit was such a treat to us. In August, 1899, Dad took a team and wagon and camping outfit and started up the Cimarron River to try to find some wild plums. While he was gone, sister Fannie who was seven years old, and two years my senior, was bitten by a rattlesnake. All the remedies that we had ever heard of, were tried, but she passed away in a few hours. No one knew exactly where to look for Dad, transportation and communication being what they were. She was buried before Dad could be reached and get home.

My parents both died in 1936 and are buried in Richfield cemetery.

The J. E. Carpenter Family

By Bertha Carpenter Hjort

J. E. Carpenter came to Morton County in 1885 and filed on a claim in Section 16, Township 33, Range 42. He returned to his home in Indiana for the winter and in the spring of 1886, he, with Mrs. Carpenter, returned to Morton County. They came to Garden City and via stagecoach through Lakin, reached Morton County.

After proving up his claim they moved to Morton Center, where Mr. Carpenter taught school. He later taught a number of years in the Richfield school, and accumulated sufficient funds to buy enough land near his claim to start up a small ranch.

He built a two-room sod house and moved a number of buildings from Richfield and some of the abandoned towns to add a kitchen and washroom to one end of the sod shanty and a large parlor at the other end. Some of the buildings were used for a barn, granaries, chicken house, chip house and corrals.

Five children were born to the Carpenter family--Mabel, who died in infancy; Nellie, who was born at Morton Center, and Carrie who was born in Richfield; before the turn of the century, his daughter, Bertha, and son, Edward were born in the sod shanty on the ranch. In 1906, Mayme Ward, a niece of Mrs. Carpenter and now Mrs. Walter Martin, came to make her home with them and prove up a claim.

It was a day of real pioneering, and all the children could remember the herds of antelope that wandered through the pastures. Wild fowl, such as quail, prairie chicken and curlew, was plentiful, but Mr. Carpenter would not permit his family to kill a single bird. Rabbit was the only wild game available for them.

School was held in District No. 4, and was at first only a six months' school. The Carpenter children walked one and one-quarter miles to school and entered school at the age of four years. State aid was forthcoming only when a school had the required number of pupils, so all children entered school when at least five years of age.

The nearest neighbors was the Cornelius Hentschel family. They were Hungarians and the children were unable to speak English when they entered school. There were five children in the family --Katie, Margaret, George, Frank and Grace. Katie now lives in Los Angeles; Margaret in Boise, Idaho; George died during World War I; Frank lives in San Francisco; and Grace lives in Ottawa, Kansas. Margaret is now a widow, and operates a greenhouse in Boise, Idaho. She has now disposed of some of her holdings, but during World War II she had more flowers under glass than any greenhouse in the United States. Quite an achievement for a little girl who couldn't speak English when she started to school.

Other early day foreign neighbors were Henry Bell, who lived north of the '81 ranch, and William Stechow and his sister, Mrs. Holenback, who lived about three miles north of the Carpenter homestead. All came from Germany. Mr. Bell raised one good wheat crop, which netted him sufficient funds to take him back to his people in Missouri. Mr. Stechow and Mrs. Holenbach moved to Richfield, where both passed away, and are buried in the Richfield cemetery. Conversation with them was difficult, but all who knew them remember them as gracious neighbors. Life must have been extremely lonely for them.

The Milton C. Combs' children were also pupils of District No. 4, and lived down on the Cimarron River. There were five children in that family--Doris, Lester, Harold, Helen and Esther. Doris and her husband are now retired and are on a five-year trailerhouse tour of the United States. Lester died at an early age, and the other three children all live in south Texas.

Florena Weir, nor Florena Minor and daughter of Frank P. and Sarah J. Weir, was the other early day pupil of District No. 4. They lived at the old '81 ranch, and the teacher usually boarded there and they drove to school.

The Carpenter children passed through a prairie dog town on the way to school, and one of their diversions was trying to capture these barking little animals. However, no one recalls that they were ever successful. They were real pests to the cattlemen, as they brought up huge mounds of dirt to protect their holes in the event of a rain, and they also ate the grass within quite an area around their holes. A large dog town ruined that area for pasture purposes. Today, ants infest these old dog towns and woe unto the individual who is unfortunate enough to build a residence over an old town.

The Carpenter family lived the life of all pioneers on the plains. The hardships of pioneer life fall heaviest on the mother of the family. In addition to household duties and the rearing of a family, she takes her place beside her husband in building for the future. The family, working together as the years went by, planted and harvested the crops, looked after the cattle, planted trees and garden.

The gala events of the year were the Fourth of July basket dinner at the court house, which was participated in by everyone in the county, and the Christmas program at the red brick church in Richfield. Each pioneer lady hoped to have a hen set early enough in the spring that fries could be ready for the Fourth of July dinner, and have cabbage head early enough for slaw for that occasion. The only garden sass available in those days was home grown, and every pioneer mother put forth much effort in growing as much as possible.

Eggs sold for 3¢ per dozen and butter at 5¢ per pound, but even so, some ranch wives sold butter and eggs. Arbuckle coffee sold at 11¢ per pound and the coffee beans were ground in a home coffee grinder. If there was no coffee, parched corn, ground in the coffee mill, made a good substitute. Every lady made hominy and baked her own bread. Light bread was baked on Saturday, but the usual week day bread was soda or sour dough biscuits three times a day.

Some time after 1905, another van of emigrants came to Morton County and more children were added to the school population of District No. 4. S. E. Bay and wife, and daughter, Maurine, settled in the Combs pasture southwest of Richfield, and later their daughter, Beth, was born on the homestead. The Tipton family, with their eight children, were also in the District. Chase, Guy, Clay, Clare and Jessie were all through school and Clare and Jessie were teaching, but Vallie, Vera and Waite attended the school in No. 4. These additional young folk enlivened the neighborhood festivities and an occasional party was given.

All ranchers had a plot which no one ever hears of today--the bone yard. Every winter a number of animals were unable to survive its hardships, and their carcasses were hauled to the bone yard, where coyotes picked their bones and howled. When the bones had bleached white in the sun, they were taken to Syracuse and sold.

Chips from the ranch herds solved the fuel problem. Every ranch had a chip house where chips were gathered and stored in the fall as a precaution against the damp weather of winter.

All the Carpenter girls were school teachers, and each took a turn at teaching at old Taloga, now the CIG school. All boarded at home and this entailed an eleven mile per day horseback ride. Carrie married Milford Brooks after teaching one year, and after five school terms, Nellie married Jake Sullivan. Carrie passed away in 1918. Bertha went on to teach one term in the Elkhart schools, and afterwards was bookkeeper and Assistant Cashier in the Morton County State Bank for nine years. She later spent eighteen years as Register of Deeds of Morton County, Kansas. Edward built the Carpenter Theatre in Elkhart in 1921. It has long since been sold and is now the Doric Theatre. Edward passed away in 1928.

Mr. Carpenter spent twenty-two years of his life in County office, serving as County Clerk, County Commissioner, County Superintendent, and Register of Deeds.

Towns of the Early Days

By Estella Cox Wilson

WESTOLA

Westola was twelve miles west of Richfield and six miles north of Taloga. Richfield and Westola were both organized by the Aurora Town Company.

Westola in 1888 consisted of a hotel, livery stable, a small one room building used as a school house, four store buildings and two dwellings of two rooms each. One of the four was occupied by a grocery store and Post Office run by W. L. Harris. In another one the Westola Wave was published by W. C. Calhoun. A broom factory was in the third and my family consisting of my father, James L. Cox, mother, a sister, Linnie, and myself lived in the fourth until we could get a house on our claim one and a half miles west. The hotel was run by C. E. Gurnsey. There was also a shoemaker and a blacksmith.

The first school in Westola was taught by Minta Cooley in 1887. Mrs. Clay Jessup taught in 1888-89 and had ten pupils. May, Everett, Stella and Herman Guernsey, Edna Jessup, Ethel and Olive Arright, Minnie Tabler and Mina and Frank Adams. In the spring of 1889, when I was fifteen I taught one month with five pupils. Four months of school were required by law each year and there had

been only three the year before. I held an eighth grade diploma from the Sedan school. Teachers were scarce and at the request of the school board I took an examination and was granted a temporary certificate to teach one month. On my sixteenth birthday I passed for a third grade certificate good for one year.

Guernseys moved to their claim and Wm. Eddy ran the hotel. We moved into the hotel in the fall of 1889. The townsite was vacated by an act of the legislature and my father bought the 160 acre townsite and buildings. This was the beginning of the ranch now owned by my family.

W. L. Harris was elected County Clerk and moved to Richfield. My mother was Westola postmistress until the office was discontinued.

Bonds were voted and a nice stone schoolhouse was built but no school was ever taught there as Edna Jessup married at fourteen. She and my sister, Linnie, were the only pupils in the district and my sister went with me when I taught in other districts. The new building was sometimes used for church or dances. Like the courthouse at Richfield, bonds were voted by people who hoped to get work on them to earn the money to leave the county.

The first ranches on the Cimarron were Beaty Bros. at the Point Rocks, Barney Gow and Sandwells, The 81, McClains, Combs, and T. B. Porter, whose wife was a Beaty, sister of the Beaty Bros. She was the first woman in the county. She had taught school in Colorado and was made Superintendent of Schools in Morton County.

SUNSET

Sunset was the first town in Morton County and was located southeast of Richfield. It later moved to Richfield and Morton Center.

Residents were: Edwin C. Hobby and sons, Frank and Theodore, and a grandson, Frank Stevens, who married Grace Fletcher. He was later the first postmaster at Richfield; John and Emma Pack, Fletcher, Levi Morgan, Louis Darraugh and nephew, Ed.

CUNDIFF

Cundiff was a small town ten miles east of Richfield. It had only a few buildings, one of which was a hotel that burned in the early 90's. Two boys named Eggleston were burned to death.

MORTON

Darroughs went from Sunset to Morton and Whitmans went from Frisco there. Mrs. Whitman's children were George, Harry and Lizzie Warner who married Frank Van Gundy. He and his brother, Sam Van Gundy edited the Monitor Republican at Richfield. The Stitt and Stipp families lived near Morton. Uncle Joe Reed was postmaster there.

Some of the teachers at Morton were Anderson, J. E. Carpenter, May Duncan, Ernest Wilson, Stella Cox Wilson and Mrs. Whitman.

Morton was six miles south of Richfield.

OTHER SETTLEMENTS

Maud and Vermilye. Maud was four miles and a half mile east of Westola. Vermilye, which consisted of four sod houses built where the corners of four quarter sections came together, was about a mile southeast of Westola.

Dermot was in the northeast corner of the county. Some of the families were Milburns, Pierces, Younggreens and Stoners.

Bluestem Valley, 1890-95 was in the vicinity of Rolla. John and Frank Stout and families, Hargroves, Millers and Morgans lived near there.

My History of Richfield

By Mayme Ward Martin

As a girl living in Ozark, Missouri, I had always enjoyed reading about the early pioneers and thought how proud they must be to have conquered the west and blazed a trail to new territories in which to build their homes. They had endured such hardships, heartaches and frustrations, yet staunchly pushed forward until they attained their goal.

How wonderful it must be to be a Pioneer! Then to my great surprise, one day I received a letter from my Aunt, Mrs. J. E. Carpenter, of Richfield, Kansas, suggesting that I come out to Morton County and take a homestead as many single girls were now doing. I had thought that only men, (the nominal heads of families) had a right to homestead a quarter of government land. But now I could be a Pioneer and settle in a new part of our country and help in a small way to make Morton County into a fine farming country, and the County Seat, Richfield, into a modern growing city. Far fetched? Yes, but worth the trying. So in a short time I arrived in Syracuse, Kansas, the nearest point that I could get to Richfield, which was fifty-two miles south of Syracuse.

The next morning I went down to the Postoffice to take the mail hack south and found the driver had already loaded in some freight and tied it down, and passengers were occupying the extra seat. He asked me if I could wait over until next morning, so I stayed another night in Syracuse. The next morning we left at 8:00 o'clock, pulling through loose sand for miles--no graded roads. When the ruts got too deep, the hack, and also the freight wagons pulled out to one side and made new roads. There was no cover on the hack so we got the full benefit (?) of the sun.

Our lips were dry and sore when we reached the way station run by Philip Kreigh, where we got a fresh team for the rest of the way.

His son, McKinley Kreigh, drove the hack on to Richfield, arriving there at dusk, three days after I should have arrived, owing to two delays along the way. No one was there to meet me and I asked McKinley if he would drive me on out to the Carpenter ranch. He demurred at first, but some of the men persuaded him to do that, as I had so much trouble getting that far. That was the loneliest ride I ever took after night. Several times I asked him if he was lost, but he was confident he was on the right track. And after what seemed hours, we saw a glimmer of light ahead and I said to myself, "Thank Goodness" we don't have to stay out here all night on the prairie. Needless to say, my Aunt and family were very much surprised to see me coming in at that late hour.

Early the next morning my Uncle took me in to Richfield to file on a quarter section of land. It was imperative that I hasten to file my claim as someone else might beat me to it, and I wanted that particular one as it was in Uncle's pasture and near their home. At that time the ranchers were allowed to fence in as many quarters of government land as they cared to for pasture. That is, if they could fence it before someone else got to it. Sometimes there was trouble about the fences. If a neighbor decided he wanted that spot of land, he would go in at night and cut the barbed wire and let his own cattle into the pasture. Of course, that caused arguments and disputes that sometimes lasted for years, but always ended amicably with no one being hurt. But to return to my land deal. On October 12, 1906, I filed on my quarter section of land.

My Uncle and Aunt helped me to build a dugout 12 ft. x 14 ft. x 4 ft. in the ground and 3 ft. frame above ground, with a sod roof. Then I stood back and surveyed my future home with the satisfaction as if it were the grandest mansion ever built in Morton County. I pledged my allegiance to Morton County and to help its progress in any way I could, and to the growth and well being of the little town of Richfield, the County Seat. I liked the people of western Kansas; they were truly friendly and hospitable.

I got acquainted with some young folks who came out here from Canton, Kansas, who took up claims west of Uncle's ranch. They were Miss Emma Dole and her two brothers, Charles and Arthur Dole. Then Emma and I, in trying to find something to do to help out with our expenses, decided to start a millinery and dressmaking shop, since we had both worked in that business before coming out here. Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Dean rented us two rooms in their residence, so we conducted the only millinery and dressmaking shop in Richfield in the spring of 1907. While we had a very good trade and enjoyed it immensely meeting the people, we carried the work on only during the summer of 1907.

We worked for the ranchers during hay harvest down on the river and also during broomcorn cutting. The wives needed help

with all those harvest hands to cook for. But I never learned to make "Sour Dough" biscuits like my Aunt did, and others, too, but those biscuits surely were good! Perhaps because they were cooked with a "chip fire" (?). I'd heard about the buffalo chips that the Indians used, but these were "cow chips", sometimes called "Kansas coal."

We'd have a lot of fun, my Aunt, cousins and I, taking a team and wagon, each with a box or tub, and going out in the pasture to pick up chips, dragging them to the wagon and piling the wagon full. Of course, that night our backs would be stiff and lame, but we didn't mind that when we could stand up by a good hot chip fire. But it kept one busy taking out ashes.

Sometimes when my cousin and I were on the claim, we would be awakened by the "yipping" of coyotes nearby, but we were not afraid for we knew that they were just telling us "Hello" in passing, for they knew I didn't have anything for them to eat. They were on their way to my neighbors, two miles ~~east~~, the S. E. Bay family, who had nice fat chickens that made a very ~~delectable~~ dish to Mr. Coyote.

My neighbor about a mile to the west of us was a bachelor--John Hentschel. He had a dug well on his place and since I didn't have one, he sometimes carried us a bucket of good, cool water when he knew the water we had hauled from Uncle's place was stale. One evening when he brought Bertha (who is now Mrs. Matt Hjort) and I, some water, our lamp began to sputter and go out, and to our dismay we discovered our coal oil supply was gone. Since he didn't get up to go home, I lighted a candle and Bertha was so sleepy she wanted to go to bed. I thought I heard her mutter, "Hope he doesn't sit until the candle goes out." But John was enjoying our predicament and he laughingly bid us "Good Night."

What did the young folks do for entertainment? Well, we'd hitch "Old Dobbin" to a wagon and put straw or fodder in the bottom of the wagon and comforts on top of that and we'd all sit on that--six to ten of us--and go many miles to a school program or to a dance in a schoolhouse. Sometimes we would go away out to Colorado to a dance. Then the cowboys that worked at the Two Circle Ranch down at Point Rocks arranged big dances at the court house on special days, such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day and Fourth of July. Music was furnished by a Mr. Nichols and his son and daughter--two violins and a guitar--sometimes called the "fifteen cent band." At times a colored family named Jefferson furnished the music. Usually on the Fourth of July most of the families met at the court house for a picnic and big basket dinner. Everyone in the county knew everybody else previous to 1906 when the second land boom brought in the new homesteaders.

This country was so "ridiculously" healthy that a doctor couldn't afford to stay here, so the county paid a doctor $500 or $600 bonus a year to get one to locate here, for without a doctor one had to ride on horseback to Hooker, Oklahoma, forty-five miles, or to Syracuse, Kansas, fifty-two miles away, if there was an

accident, or a "little new citizen" arrived, weight five to ten pounds. Most everybody was their own doctor. For colds they used quinine, coal oil, turpentine and lard mixed, and rubbed on their throat and chest. It was very effective. If one had to take a dose of quinine it was terrible for it was just dry powder --no capsule. Everybody kept the traditional "snake bite" medicine on hand. Sometimes they pretended to have snake bite (but I doubt it.) And, of course, there was always Epsom salts. For simple diarrhea, they would boil a half cup of milk, let cool a little, then stir in a teaspoon of flour (the milk should not be hot enough to cook the flour) and drink it.

When I had been here three years, I decided if I was going to stay in the west, I had just as well take another claim (?), said claim being a young rancher by the name of Walter T. Martin, son of W. W. Martin, who as a pioneer arrived in Morton County with his family in 1887, when Walter was just a few months old. Walter was one of a family of ten children.

The law at that time was that a person could "prove up" on a claim in three years instead of the five years prescribed by law by paying $1.25 per acre to the Government, and commuting. I commuted in the spring of 1909, and we were married December 10, 1909. We were married at my parents' home in Chadwick, Missouri. We began housekeeping on my husband's homestead. We raised cattle, horses, mules, and our farming was mostly raising feed for stock. Then in later years most of the people raised broomcorn. After that came the wheat raising and tractors. But in the meantime, I had traded my land for a quarter section joining my husband's land, which I still own. And in 1913, we got our first car, a "Model T" Ford.

We had two sons--Don W. and Gerald T.; Don and wife, Ethel, live in Syracuse, Kansas. He is a farmer and operates his farm, which is near, while they live in town. Gerald and wife, Hazel, and two children, a little girl, Geralynn Louise, and a son, Daniel William, live in Rolla, Kansas. Since these two are all the grandchildren we have, we think they are "very special." Gerald also is a farmer, but has a welding shop which he operates in spare time.

We celebrated our 50th Wedding Anniversary in 1959. And we hope the generations following won't have to do any pioneering and life will be much easier.

Jacob Orth, Pioneer

By Mrs. Charles Orth

Jake Orth settled in the Southwest part of what is now known as Stanton County, with two small sons, in 1885. It was known then as Kansas County and took in the four corner counties of Kansas.

That winter was severe and money was scarce so they did as many pioneers did, and dug their house in the ground. One room, with only room above ground for a small window. The door was nearly flat and one morning the family found a heavy snowfall had weighted the door so it could not be raised. For two days they were unable to get out until Jake got one arm out enough to rake off part of the snow.

Their barn was even flatter than the house and when Jake got out to it, he found a range cow had broken through the roof and was sharing the shelter with the team of horses. She had crippled herself in the fall so he shared the feed with her. She was giving milk and the quart or so he got from her was a welcome addition to their meager supply of food. When the snow melted so she could fend for herself, they turned her out, but with deep snow and the store miles away, the milk she provided was a Godsend.

Jake tried various ways to add to their income, one was to locate or guide would-be settlers to the locations the real estate dealers had in mind. While doing this, Jake peddled a certain line of patent medicine and earned or gained the title of "Doc. Orth". With his oldest son to guide the oxen with one line and "Haw" to the right and "Gee" to the left, he plowed his own and neighbors sod for crops. The soil was new and the big snow had put it in condition to raise feed, potatoes, turnips and the finest watermelons they had ever eaten.

The schools were few and far between and the two boys, Charles and Burtie, got most of their schooling at home. Burtie was a cripple from an attack of polio when three years old and never attended school at all. Their main source of information and instruction was the family Bible. Since Burtie was unable to take much part in the farm work, he became a proficient reader and read the Bible thoroughly. Newspapers were nonexistent for them and books few.

In early April, 1895, Jake and Charles, fourteen years old, left home to go several miles to haul home a shed they had bought. Burtie and his stepmother were to see that their herd of cattle did not wander too far from the place before night. Altho Burtie had one useless leg, he could ride a horse and tied his homemade crutches to the saddle. It was a lovely spring morning and no one could know that a white monster bringing death in its train was sweeping down from the north. During the storm Burtie's horse came home, riderless, with crutches still tied to the saddle.

The frantic stepmother, with a little daughter and soon to become a mother again, knew that the thirteen year old crippled boy was almost helpless in the mass of whirling snow and she was as helpless to aid him.

Jake and Charles, saved from being lost also, were guided to a farm home along their way home because the farmer had seen them coming far down the road just before the storm struck. When he thought them near he called into the storm over and over until

they were guided to safety. Marooned two days by the weather, they finally rode the team home. The bodies of Burtie and two children of the Dick family had been found that morning. Mr. Ally Dick had also been away from home and his wife had sent the girl, eleven, and boy, nine, on one horse after the cattle. Confused and lost, they had laid down with the bridle reins under the boy's shoulders. The standing horse guided the father to his children. Thousands of cattle were also lost in the blizzard and their bones were later gathered up by needy farmers and hauled to Syracuse and sold for fertilizer at four or five dollars per ton.

One rancher near Springfield, Colorado, was able to find only three hundred head alive of his herd of fourteen hundred head. The owner of a herd of thirty or forty head, south of Syracuse, could not find a single one alive or dead in weeks and miles of riding. During that summer a rider noticed swarms of flies over an abandoned well and looked to see the cause and found the lost herd. Wells were dug wide and deep and cattle travel single file. The first one likely broke through the rotten boards and one after the other all fell in.

Jake Orth moved his family farther east a few years after the storm but his name for some reason is still on some deeds of lots in Elkhart, Kansas.

He was a member of the group of soldiers guarding the body of Abraham Lincoln and was buried in the veterans burial plot in the Liberal cemetery.

Wallace Combs, Pioneer

By Elizabeth Combs Orth

When Wallace Combs left the rocky hills of Kentucky, he was bound for the wide plains of Western Kansas, that became his home for sixty years. It was April, 1886 and Southwest Kansas was just a brand new county of grassy sod with here and there a shack or sod house.

Wallace, his wife Millie, and four young children accompanied by his brother Cud Combs and wife Margaret, loaded their belongings from a chartered car at Lakin, Kansas, into two newly purchased wagons, and headed for their claims, two miles west of the new town of Richfield.

They brought with them six long legged Kentucky mules, a saddle horse, chickens, cured pork and lard to last a year, dried fruits, tools, seeds, implements and many other things they would need in the new home.

One thing they had sold, for one dollar, at their sale before leaving was a barrel of homemade soft soap. Through the months ahead, Millie often wished they had found room for the barrel.

They likely never dreamed of a country without even trees to provide wood for the lye to make soap. In fact, trees were missed more than most anything by Millie Combs and perhaps added more to the homesickness that was with her for several months on the lonely plains. Not so with Wallace Combs, however, with his mules hitched to a walking plow, he reveled in the grassy sod with not a rock or stump to delay the job of getting crops started. Having been a corn farmer all his life, he planted his corn as usual.

As the years passed he learned, as did other pioneers, that this new country needed new methods of farming and ways of making a living. He never entirely gave up his corn, but cane, kaffir, maize and broomcorn were added. Having never had only a milk cow or two, he had also never had acres and acres of buffalo grass to provide cheap forage for any number of cattle.

As they travelled from Lakin to their new home, they saw many dead cattle here and there that had perished in the severe blizzard of the winter just passed. With all the snow to soak the soil, the country was like a green carpet with millions of wild flowers to add to its beauty. Also it meant a good year for crops. A dug-out was the first thing most needed and the brothers provided these as soon as possible to house their families.

Water was a problem as the only source of supply was a well on the townsite of Richfield and cost them twenty-five cents a barrel and with the mules and horse, besides a cow they soon bought, chickens, and for family use, the water became quite an expense. The mules evidently missed the streams of Kentucky and were usually thirsty. One day they saw what they no doubt thought was water in the distance, shimmering in the heat, and though they were hobbled, fore feet tied partially to prevent wandering too far, they hurried eagerly towards the illusory mirage. They were headed off and brought back, thirstier than before. The brothers claims were side by side and a well was put down on Cud Combs' place for all to use.

The wells were dug by hand with the dirt drawn up in large buckets by a windlass. This was a contraption with a crank to wind up the rope with the bucket attached to it. Curbs were put around the wells with rope run through a pulley and "An old oaken bucket" attached to each end to be pulled to the surface for the most satisfying drink anyone could wish for.

Not being used to more than a milk cow on a tether or in an enclosure, the men knew nothing about the roping ability of cowmen. One day their cow pulled up her stake and took off across the prairie. While they were trying to herd her towards home, a cowboy came along and roped her for them, to their amazement. Later, they penned her in the barn and practiced to learn such a useful accomplishment. During the years they owned many hundred cattle and became quite proficient in the use of a lariat.

The wives of the brothers were sisters, which meant much to them in a strange, lonely land. Margaret's health was poor, how-

ever, and she lived only a few years in Kansas. Two girls had been added to the family of Wallace and Millie by then, and with six children to do and provide for, other methods besides farming were necessary. Many settlers moved away when drouth and grasshoppers scourged the county.

Like others who stuck it out, the brothers turned to cattle as there was always grass for grazing them. Cud Combs secured land along the Cimarron river and established a ranch to run their herds when the buffalo grass was short. Huge stacks of river hay were put up each year until the big flood of May, 1914 covered the bottoms with sand. The father of the brothers came from Kentucky and made his home with them until his death. Cud Combs and second wife and children made their home on the ranch for many years until it was sold, and they moved to south Texas. Although Wallace and Cud raised tobacco and cured it in Kentucky, they were opposed to its use and neither used it in any way. After a hired hand left a lighted pipe in his coat pocket when he hung it on a door, causing a fire, Cud refused to hire a smoker from then. The fire was soon put out, but years later after they had moved away, the old ranch house burned to the ground one night, supposedly caused by a discarded cigarette.

Wallace and Cud served as school board members of the districts in which they lived and Wallace was also Register of Deeds of Morton County. In May, 1946, at ninety-one, he was laid to rest by Millie, who had gone on fifteen years before. The following year, Cud at ninety-five, joined him. They rest together with the sister wives and father in the Richfield cemetery in the land they loved so long and well.

Staking Our Claims in Morton County

By Charles A. Riley

I, Charles A. Riley, homesteaded the Northeast one-fourth of Section 27, Township 34, Range 42, on August 18th, 1906. My brother, Andrew Riley and I went out and made a one-half dugout to live in while we broke ten acres of sodded land, fenced it and planted it to milo maize.

My brother, Frank Riley, came over to Garden City, from Paradise to see me. He and I went to Syracuse on the Santa Fe train and then rode the mail hack fifty-two miles to Richfield. The stage hack was a three seated affair with luggage on top, and the horses trotted all the way, six miles per hour, with a stop at Bresmen's at Bear Creek where they changed horses. Johnson City was the only stop until they reached Richfield. Roenoke was not there at that time. I have forgotten the name of the man that had the stage route first, but Cutselmie and Jack Covington got it and put on the first auto conveyance, a model F Buick and charged $1.50 for fare. We hired a livery rig at Harmons barn and went out and stayed all night on my claim.

We looked at several plots we had marked as Government land, and Frank decided on the Northwest Quarter of Section 35. We gathered a few heads of maize, it was about four feet high and very large heads, so the time must have been August or later according to the crop. Mr. M. C. Combs offered me $10.00 per acre for it. I thought we would need it in the spring so asked him to look after it for me. When ready to cut he got a Mr. Anderson who lived south of Mr. A. J. Gerbers to sled it for me for a dollar per acre and put it in shock. When we arrived out there the next spring the prairie chickens and rabbits had eaten all of it except for a few heads under the litter, so I lost that first crop. No cattle tracks, so of course the rabbits got the benefit.

About the locating of the land, I had traded for a one-fourth section of the 23-34-42 and it had some hedge brush that a Mr. Borer had put out on the northwest corner in the 1880's and my claim joined this land on the south, and at that time our Kansas State maps were layed out in Townships and Ranges. Township plots and everything west of 6th Principal Meridian was marked "W" and everything east was marked "E". The Townships were numbered from the north side of the state. We had 34½ Townships south across the state. The Townships consisted of 36 Sections and we have 43 west and 25 east, making 408 miles long and there was a 52 rod strip along the Oklahoma State line on Range 42W, so we have 207 miles and 52 rods on that Range line. The land north of the Cimarron River had been surveyed in 1874 and as far west as range 41 W, but the land from the river south and twelve miles east of the Colorado State line had not been staked. Oklahoma and Colorado had late surveys and staked so the maps being drawn and OK'ed, we knew Mr. and Mrs. Hentschel lived on Section 22 at east side in Range 33 north of the river, so Andrew and I found the Oklahoma and Kansas lines and corresponding stakes.

We put a flag at supposed east side of Section 22 on the hill as straight south as we could imagine and went south. As we went over the rise, south, we put another flag on that rise, then went on to the state line. Then we lined them up with the Hentschel windmill which could be seen north of the river. We only had to change them very little to line up with the Oklahoma survey we found, and the number on it we were looking for, so we had a Hind Wheel on my light wagon that was 132" or 11' around. We tied a rag on the wheel and started straight north along those flag stakes. Three rounds of the wheel made two rods so we had five miles and fifty-two rods to the south side of Section 22, that called for 480 rounds per mile or 2,478 rounds of the wheel. That is where the Northeast corner of 27 is, and I don't think they have changed that east and west road. It is north of the McGregor place where Glen Riley lives. However, they did change the north and south line a little along the east side of Section 27, and Frank's homestead one mile south on east side of that line and on Northwest of Section 35, Township 34, Range 42.

Park Riley came out a few days later and filed on the Northwest of Section 34, Township 34, Range 42, and Edd Riley came out in the spring of 1912 and claimed Section 15, Township 34, Range

42. Then Andrew came in 1916, and I left in 1917 for Gove County.

When I first went down to look at the land it was in July, 1906, there was a windmill in McClains mule pasture, that is where Elkhart city limits are now, also a well in west side of Section 28, McClains and Combs in Section 23-34-42. That was all there were west of Mrs. Gordon's ranch from river to Oklahoma line. Park and I took up some of the fence west of Cosmos and put it on the south side of Section 28, and north between 28 and 27 to hook up with Mr. Combs fence at gate northeast corner of my place. We called it "drift fence", they were not allowed to enclose Government land. By all having a part in it, no one was enclosing anything.

Point Rocks had a Postoffice in 1906 and Cosmos was not there until 1907, Sid in 1909. The Star Route came from Syracuse to Richfield, and I don't know who carried mail to Point Rocks. Maggie Tipton could tell you. The Batey Brothers had Point Rocks stocked and Frank Streeter was the boss. Their Brand OO called "Two Circle", McClains was "Half Circle Jay" J, and Mr. Combs brand "Bar Lazy S" [illegible].

In 1907 when Andrew and I went out to build my dugout, the A. J. Gerbers, the Burtons, Andersons and T. E. Lewis had moved in southeast of me, then came the Cyr Brothers, the Stillmans, Coultices, Browns and McGregors, in 1908. Then the Marshalls, Eversolls, Giests, Pickards, Sillaries, Brooks, Kifers, Rolls, Gates, Cravers, Stewarts, Parris and Wilkins. A lot of people over east of me, the Horners,Turners, Shutt, Wilburs and Thompsons.

Dodge City had the only Interior Land Office at that time in the state, later, one was put in at Wakeeney. Grace and I went out on that claim, got there the 22nd of March, 1908, and lived there until the spring of 1917. Martha and Letha were born in the adobe house and Pearl was born on Uncle Park's place, (the Sheep Ranch) in 1914. Then we went to Gove County on land that I had bought from the Railroad in 1901. We stayed there three years, Albert and Alonzo were born there, we then sold out and bought land at Lone Elm in eastern Kansas. We lived there eleven years, sold that and Vernon and Evelyn were born close to Lone Elm, Kansas. We moved to Garnett in 1932 and now live at 309 West Second Street, Garnett, Kansas. Our Martha and the two boys, Albert and Alonzo live in Garnett, Pearl at Kincaid and Letha in Wichita, Kansas. Evelyn lives at San Louis Obespo, California, and Vernon passed away at the age of fifteen months.

Speaking of the town of Elkhart, I built Mayo Thomas a bank building at Richfield in 1910 and his brick Bank building in Elkhart in 1913. I built Ernest Wilson's office, a real estate and Insurance office in Elkhart. Frank and I went to Guymon to get lumber and did not get back in time for the first day of lot sales, which was the 7th of May, 1913. The Santa Fe rails were not laid into town yet. Ernest Wilson had staked that lot for his building, so I could go ahead before the sale, and Jim Wilson and his boy "slim" Jess, built Mr. Frank Nason's office. I built

Cash Wilson's pool hall and the Postoffice in that same block, then Sid Fesenden's Butcher shop on other side of the street.

Rev. Lathrop, the Methodist minister, came to see me to get me to build the First Methodist Church. He wanted to beat the Baptist and get a free lot, and of course we did. The Baptists were still working on their foundation when Rev. Lathrop held his first meeting in his new building.

Then I got the Blackburn & Firmin, the Thayer building and the Bank all at one time. Had to oversee them all at one time, but I had Ray Mallsberry for foreman on Bank and Thayer Buildings, and Mr. McMahan and Eblin. They were all good carpenters. Mr. Clampitt and son Clifton, Asa Coultice, and another helper or two and everything went fast. Then Wilson and I took the warehouse together and he and Slim, Eblin, the Clampitts and I put it up. That is the only place Slim and his Dad worked for me, as I had to move out on the sheep ranch and take care of them. Then Slim Wilson and Louie Keineth worked together a lot.

Grace and I are pretty well and would welcome any and all of our old friends and neighbors.

(Note: The above letter was written for Mrs. Anna Riley Bennett who lives in Santa Cruz, California, a niece of Charles A. Riley).

The Riley Neighborhood

By Mrs. Anna Riley Bennett

My father, William Franklin Riley, with my mother, Mary, and their family of four children, Florence, Ellen, William, and myself, moved from Osburn County, Kansas, to Morton County in February of 1908.

In the fall of 1907, upon the persuasion of my Uncle Charley, father's younger brother, who had already homesteaded on a quarter section of land in the area now known as the Riley Neighborhood, Dad came by train and stage to Richfield where Uncle Charley met him, hiring a team and buggy, they drove the distance of nearly twenty miles south, fording the Cimarron River at what was then known as the M. C. Combs Ranch, thence due south through sand hills covered with sagebrush, cacti and soap weed.

After looking the land over and choosing the quarter he wanted, Dad and Uncle went to Dodge City to the nearest land office and filed on his claim. Upon returning home, he proceeded to put his livestock and household goods up for sale to provide transportation to the new land. We were living on rented land, a public sale was all that was needed. However, the transportation problem was another matter. It took two wagons with over-jet for canvas covering to hold all of our personal belongings.

We left there in midwinter with a couple of two horse teams and a saddle pony. We children found it to be exciting to travel in a covered wagon. We ran into a snowstorm one evening and we stopped at a livery stable at Plainville and the owner allowed us to drive our wagon into the barn, then Dad took us into a cafe to eat. This was my first time to eat a meal in a public place and oh how good that vegetable soup did taste.

I do not remember how long it took us to drive to Gove County where my grandparents lived, but we stayed there two weeks and started on. We forded Smoky Hill River just south of Gove City. The rivers were low at that time but were dangerous to cross because of the quicksand.

After we crossed the Cimarron River, we came onto the sand hills; it was hard on our horses to pull through that sand. We were now entering the ranchers cattle pasture. We saw great herds of cattle, some near the ranch wells and some grazing in the red bunch grass, which grew four and five feet high. We passed by the range well where we were to get water. It was about one mile from Uncle Charley's claim. We hauled water from there until our own well was dug. We stayed at Uncle Charley's place until we could get our own home built. He had gone back to Eastern Kansas to get married and we expected Uncle Park Riley to come out and stake a claim. therefore it was urgent that we get a home for ourselves.

Uncle Charley had built a half-dug-out, one room. I will always remember the furnishings. He was a carpenter and used his tool chest as a table, nail kegs as chairs and had built a bunk bed which was so high that it was necessary to step up on a nail keg to get into bed. He had a small "topsy" stove and we burned cow chips for fuel. The floor was good solid Mother earth—a warm place in winter and cool in summer.

Dad set the over-jets on the ground and that is where we children slept. The cattle would rub against the over-jets and the coyotes would howl, making things lively, but the cattle were as wild as the coyotes and we would yell at them as loud as we could and it would scare them away.

Mr. Combs had invited us to visit them or come see him if we had any difficulties. Dad wanted to find the trail to Guymon for freighting supplies. So we planned on driving over to his ranch on a Sunday afternoon. He lived about six miles north of us.

My sister Ellen and I had been riding our black bronco "old nig" to round up our horses. We drove them to the ranch well for water and coming back, they started to run. I became scared and began to yell. Old nig was a cow pony and thought we wanted him to go faster and he did. I could not stay on and the next thing I knew, I had landed into a bunch of sagebrush and had pulled Ellen off and she fell right on top of me. Old nig was trained to stop on a minute's notice and he stood there with his head down as if wondering what he had done wrong.

I was sick with a headache the rest of the day but I did not let it stop us from going to the Combs ranch. Dad freighted from Guymon and Hooker, Oklahoma, until he had enough lumber to build a barn. We were living in one end of it when Uncle Charley and Uncle Park arrived in the spring.

Dad had plowed a fire guard and had broken sod for his first crop. There were times when our horses would break loose from their hobbles and Dad and William would walk miles and miles to find them. The grass grew so high that it was hard to see cattle or horses very far away.

Uncle Charley built a half dug-out for Uncle Park, then began to build our house which consisted of a two-room frame house with a "lean to" shed kitchen. Those two rooms are still being used at the farm which is still in the Riley family.

It was a beautiful country in those days, peaceful and quiet, and sometimes at night, a blaze from some prairie fire could be seen many miles away. We were very fortunate that we were never near any of those fires. Dad gathered cottonwood saplings along the river to set out for shade trees until we were able to order some fruit trees from seed catalogs. He rode on horseback to find out where the nearest post office was.

Sunday afternoons were spent looking over the countryside going to Cosmos, Postal or Keltner. The mirage was always something of interest, and to this day, I do not understand it thoroughly.

In the fall, we began to look for a place to go to school. We had become acquainted with Archil Cyr and his wife and the Theodore Lewis family. The nearest school was "New Zion", three and one-half miles from our home, a one room, with a "lean to" for coal bin, built of adobe plastered inside and out. The wooden floor had holes in it big enough for snakes, mice or gophers to crawl through. It was located near the northeast corner of what is now the town of Elkhart. We drove to school for five years, letting the horse walk all the way regardless of cold, heat, rain or snow.

I do not remember the date of the time Mrs. Edith Stewart put in her grocery store in her home nor when she began receiving mail for delivery, but I remember that it was a relief that we did not have to drive to Cosmos to get our mail or to buy our staple goods.

In the fall of 1912, we heard of a railroad coming through and we saw the stakes put out for the right of way. Then one day, a gentleman came to our door asking if he could park his camping equipment in our yard where he could get water and stable room for his team of horses. The equipment consisted of a cook shack with trailer for surveying equipment, their light wagon with a team of the liveliest black horses we had seen for sometime. The boss of the outfit was known as Mr. White. He had two young men engineers by the name of Hossback and England. The former was a typical

yankee from New York State. Their driver and cook was known only as "Cotton". I do not remember having heard his real name but he sure knew how to handle the team, coming and going like the wind. This crew purchased eggs, butter, milk and homemade bread from mother all the time they were there.

It was great fun for us when they brought their graphophone over for an evening of entertainment. Our school teacher for that year was Miss Inez Hill and she was boarding at our home.

What a thrill it was to see the "iron horse"-- the work train, when it finally reached its destination at Elkhart in April of 1913.

Mrs. Stewart moved her little one-room shack (which had been known as Sid Post Office) to the new townsite of Elkhart. Every Saturday afternoon, the people would meet in the new town to visit and to meet the people who had come to live in the new town.

The Star Lumber Company with Clyde Washburn as manager put in the first lumber yard. Wilson and Dean Real Estate Office was one of the first buildings to be put up.

My uncle, Charley Riley, was one of the first carpenters. He built the first brick building which was Elkhart's first bank. The building now houses the Tri-State News Office. Tucker and Welsh had the first general store.

My Dad, Uncle Charley and Mr. McGregor used to freight cedar fence posts from Colorado foot hills, and sometimes became snow-bound. Once, they had to wait until the snow had a crust that was hard enough to hold the wagons and horses; while back home my sister Ellen had come down with double pneumonia. In her delirium, she said that Dad was snowbound and asked Uncle Park why he did not go after him.

Doctors were few and far between in those days; Dr. Coffman came from Richfield when I had pneumonia in 1909 or 1910. Then Dr. Tucker came from near Guymon. It was a day's drive either way. People had to depend upon some home remedies such as onion or mustard plaster to cure pneumonia; turpentine, lard and kerosene to rub on for sore throat and sulphur and molasses in springtime.

One time when one of our horses was snake bitten, Dad was away on a freighting trip, and Mother, with Uncle Charley's help, doctored the horse.

In the fall of 1913 the First Baptist Church had built a one-room frame building and it was used for a school room. Miss Rena Boaz from Springfield, Colorado, was the teacher. Later, the 8th grade and first year of high school classes were taught in the Methodist Church building. However, it was later learned that the teacher, a Mr. Wilson, was not certified to teach high school and the students were required to take their first year high school work all over again.

The following year, Mr. Sam Yaggy taught high school and 8th grade in the upstairs room of the building then known as the Thayer building. Miss Boaz was slender, dark haired and dark eyed. We all loved her, but she was not physically able to keep all of the older boys in line, and after the 8th grade moved in with the high school, there were still close to forty pupils left.

The first Christmas program put on by the high school was held in the building which was to be for Blackburn's Department Store, which he later sold to Jess Maricle. We spent considerable time getting ready to put on the pantomime "The Holy City". Mrs. Blackburn directed it and sang the solo while we acted it.

We lived five miles from town and my father moved a one-room frame building into town, where we children lived during school days, going back out to the farm on Friday evenings and returning to town on Sunday evenings.

With all the hardships of fighting rattlesnakes, gophers, coyotes, prairie fire and drought, good years and the bad, it was worthwhile. I remember one time when school was dismissed and all turned out to help fight a prairie fire which threatened to burn the schoolhouse and miles of grassland. Those were years when we trusted our neighbors to help, when help was needed. We can now think back on the many things we learned during those early years.

Pioneers of Morton County

By Mrs. Clarence Fetter

On March 13, 1885, M. J. Allen and Frances A. Gude, rode on the mail-hack from Syracuse to Richfield, after having each filed on a "claim" the day before as they came through Garden City, the "Land Office" at that time. This was four miles north and a mile east of Richfield, being the NE of 27 and the SW of 23 "31-41" if I remember correctly. The next day, March 14, 1885, Matthew and Frances were married in Richfield, and the town company gave them two town lots, as they were the first couple married in the town, or county.

They built their house across the lines of the two quarters and proved up both quarters at once by living on both quarters at once. On May 25, 1887 their first child, Homer, was born (now deceased). February 2, 1893, another son, Thurston, who was killed by a colt, at the age of three. May 7, 1896, the first girl, and third child, Nettie (now deceased). July 29, 1898, I came along, (Marion) now Mrs. Clarence Fetter of Dodge City, Kansas.

We had no supermarkets, in those days. THE one general store of E. M. Dean in Richfield, served all our needs, except for the trips to the nearest Railroad town, Syracuse, where winter supplies of coal, flour, etc. were hauled from. Fifty miles

straight north--it took two days to go up, with the teams, and two days to come back. At Mr. Dean's store folks didn't pull out their billfold and pay cash like we do at the supermarkets. About twice a year, folks tried to get their grocery bill paid, and when they did, there was always a sack of candy Mr. Dean would send home to the children because the grocery bill had been paid!

There were no ice boxes, and no deep freezes. In the summer milk and butter were hung "in the well" on a rope. In the winter time the beef and pork, after butchering, was hung in the windmill tower and wrapped with a sheet. We always had beans, and to this day, I'll never know how they stayed fresh from one day to the next without refrigeration.

Ice Cream? Yes, we had lots of it in the winter! Good cream, skimmed from the milk, sweetened and flavored, and chilled, then stir in a plenty of good clean snow. It sure tasted good.

Automatic washers and dryers? No! We carried the water into the house from the barrel at the well some fifty to seventy-five feet away, heated it in a boiler on the stove over a chip fire, washed on the "board". Carried that water out. Carried more in and rinsed, and if we got a good early start, we would be through washing by noon!

Stove's, heat? Being a cow country, and everyone had cattle, our fuel was cheap, for cow chips were what we burned. On Saturday Mother and the children spent a good part of the day, with the wagon, and pulling tubs from a short rope, picking up the chips, and emptying them into the wagon. Sometimes we used "gunny-sacks" and would go out any time we had the time or needed the fuel, and sack 'em up. Then as we needed to, we'd bring them in on the back of the surry or buggy or hay-rack after feeding the cattle. When you burned one bucket full of chips, you took out two buckets full of ashes, and how that ash dust would settle over the room... About the only room in the house to have a stove, was the cook stove in the kitchen, and the "front room heater" in which we burned coal on most occasions. Bedrooms were so cold that, of a morning, in winter, the covers around your face were frozen stiff with ice, from your breath.

Sunday, in those days, was a day to go to Church and Sunday School, and we almost never missed. It was not only the Lord's day, but it was the only day of contact with neighbors, and to get local happenings, of our friends. We were three miles from Richfield, and I remember of walking to Sunday School and Church many a time, when the horses would be worn out from field work or freighting grain from Syracuse. Mother, of course, always walked with us. She was Sunday School Superintendent for many, many years. The Sundays that we had "preaching" once every third Sunday at first, the whole family always attended. The ministers rode horses, or drove buggies, and held services in many surrounding school buildings and churches, thus having a "circuit". Each day I am so thankful for the <u>privilege</u> of being brought up in Sunday School and church, as I was.

In 1903 my Mother was a delegate to the State Sunday School Convention held in Parsons, Kansas. She took Nettie and I along, and it was our first sight of a train, thereby our first train ride. We drove to Syracuse and took the train from there. It took a week to get down to Parsons and back home.

My Father helped haul the rock for the Morton County Court House, from up in Stanton County, in 1888?? My Father served as County Attorney one time, and my Mother as County Superintendent. The upper floor of the Court House, or the big court room, was always used for the Fourth of July Celebrations, each year. Every family in the County would prepare a big basket of food, and drive in, and this food was spread on long tables, and everyone served themselves, and visited. We youngsters looked forward to seeing other youngsters from the county, whom we only saw at these occasions.

As I grew up I loved to ride horseback. Homer broke out most of our own saddle horses, and I always rode and "circled" for him, as he'd train these horses. Nettie was Mother's constant helper, but I was for the outdoors, and I'd drive any team that I could get close enough to, to put a harness on.

As the years are fleeing, and I'm on the limping side, of life, I truly thank God for Pioneers, of whom my folks were a part. Father was from Massachusetts, and Mother from Brooklyn, New York. No one will ever know the heart aches, of those pioneers, in trying to establish homes, community, and better land in which to live, but what would life have been without them.

My First Term of School

By Marian Allen Garvie Fetter

In the early part of October, 1917, I had just come to the house, with a "buggy-load" of long neck squash from the field, some three quarters of a mile away. As I was carrying these squash into our cellar for winter storage, a model T car drove into the yard, and two men got out. I had on a sunbonnet, home-made coveralls, stocking-legs, under my gloves, and up to my elbows, to keep out any sun, so my arms would stay nice and white, but even so, I was not as embarrassed then as I am now, just writing about it, for all girls and women dressed like that when they were out of doors.

The men, Mr. H. E. Collins and Mr. LeRoy McMillan, from over east of Richfield seven miles and about a mile south, wanted to know if I would teach school in their district, which had just been formed, and there was not even a school house! As I had planned to be a teacher, I was happy to say yes, though it was a late school start, and no preparation had been made.

A small slant-roofed shed, used to store a little grain in, about the center of the school population, could be used for the first term of school. This building was about 10' x 16' with a door in the south side. A window was put in the east end and two in the south. On October 22, 1917, school began and closed late in April with a big community dinner.

There were six of the M. M. Meyers children, Alfred, Mae, Ivan, Carl, Mildred, and Ralph, and two others, their names I cannot remember.

Drinking water was brought from home by each family, as well as lunches. Coal was furnished by the district, but many times the teacher brought the "kindlin' - cow chips" to start the fire each morning.

I stayed during the week, from Monday to Friday, with Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Collins a mile and a half west of the school house. That winter, my sister, Nettie would drive me over in the buggy, and come for me at the weekend. Sometimes I would get up early on Monday morning (as the days got longer in the spring) and ride a horse over, getting there in time for school.

Facilities at school consisted of a small blackboard, a single desk per scholar, a small desk with chair for the teacher, and the small heating stove. We learned the 3 R's and were as happy, maybe more so, than any school in the county.

The outstanding incident I remember, was Ivan Meyers becoming too warm one morning while standing and reading his paragraph from the reader, and he fainted, falling within an inch of the red hot stove. My first experience, and I almost fainted myself.

I received $50 a month for this my first school, and I never was so rich.

The next year the district had a new school house, and that winter I boarded and roomed with the M. M. Meyers family, and walked nearly two miles, to and from school, morning and night.

(Other schools I taught)

1919-1920, 1920-1921 at Richfield; 1921-1922 Milburn School (Dermot); 1922-1923 in Richfield; 1923-1924 Roanoke School; 1924-1925, 1925-1926, 1926-1927 at Manter; and from 1929 to 1932 in Ford County.

My Experiences as a Pioneer

By Mrs. Carrie Carson

I was young and very impressionable and some of my experiences made a deep impression in my memory. My father, K.A.Muncy,

my two brothers, Fred and Will, my brother-in-law, Lon Hurly and my husband to be - R. O. Carson, came to "No Man's Land" in 1906. They all filed on quarter sections, then went to work on living quarters for my brother-in-law, which was two rather large rooms. After they had gotten moved in and settled, my parents, my brother, Will, and I packed our household goods and shipped them along with some horses and some farming equipment. As I remember, we did not bring a cow along at the time. We left Nortonville, Kansas by train. Mother had her canary bird and numerous bundles; perhaps she had her "green umbrella", I don't remember, but I do know we were struggling with bundles and boxes of all shapes and sizes.

I remember being anxious to get to Hooker, Oklahoma, where my brother, Fred, was to meet us in the old "Surry with the fringe on top". I was planning on a nice bath at the hotel--and you can't imagine my disappointment when I saw the hotel; instead of a bath tub, we had a tin washbowl and a pitcher of water. Mother and I hardly knew what to do as the room next to ours was filled with men and the partition between the rooms were made of boards put up endwise with cracks an inch wide. So, Mother hung bedspreads and what covers we could spare and some of our clothing until she had covered the cracks before we dared to undress and go to bed. We got up early the next morning and started for our "new home" to be. I knew nothing of a mirage; and when I would see what I thought was water in the road and in the fields, I could hardly wait to get to it, then it would seem to dry up so fast. My brothers had a field day teasing me about it and I began to wonder if anything I saw was real.

We ate dinner at a place called "Wild Horse" Windmill and I had my fill of clear, cold water, but not for long--the water we carried in the jugs became very hot and undesirable. We finally reached the "Hurly" home, a "dug-out" where we stayed until my father and brothers built our little 12 x 24 house (or shack) as it was just a shell, but it was "home" when we moved in. I was so homesick that first year, I thought I would surely die--there were so few young folks here at that time and I had no opportunity to get acquainted with even those who were here. Finally, the Chappee family moved in to their claim which, as I remember, was southeast of ours, and our place was right next to the Kansas line, in Oklahoma. Effie and I got acquainted and we would take our 22 rifles and go hunting and I became a good shot. There was no Elkhart then and no sign that there would be any town, at the time. We got our mail from Cosmos and bought our groceries there. As I remember, Bert Thayer ran a store there and Mr. Stillman had a newspaper and we got the news each week from different communities. We had church at the Cosmos school house, as well as entertainment. The Schnaufer family moved out here later and we got acquainted with them. Other settlers were coming in and I was not quite so lonesome. Schoolhouses were being built all around and there was more entertainment. I would go places with my brother, Will, as he had, what I thought was a snappy buggy; and drove a big, gray horse that would rather run than eat. Those were the days to remember.

I must tell about a locoed cow that was being chased by some cowboys from McLains ranch and came into our yard. We all ran for cover. She was really on the warpath. She ran into the porch (which we had over our front door) and tore it completely down. They finally got her under control.

Life went on with dust storms and some of the worst thunder storms I ever saw. We got water from the McLain ranch. We also went over there and picked up "cow chips" for fuel. When we would be baking or ironing, it took one person to carry out ashes while another put fuel in the stove. I used to go over to the A. J. Streeter ranch and stay a few days, and my friend, Laura McLain would come over from her father's ranch and we would have a wonderful time riding horseback, over the prairie, at breakneck speed.

One time I remember distinctly, was when Laura didn't come over there until the day after I came, and the Streeters were living in a big, white house just behind the one where we were to sleep, and I stayed in this house alone that night--and I found out the river had come up and washed away about half the foundation. The house was hanging out over the river (which was dry then) and it could have come down in a short while, and later it did and washed the house downstream. I did not sleep enough that night to pay for going to bed; there was no lock on the door and very little furniture in the house.

I was married in our little shingled house in 1909 and then moved to Denver where our oldest son was born. We lived there for three years, then moved to Long Beach, California. Our daughter, now Mrs. Millard Fowler, was born there. In 1915, we moved back to this area and lived on the place that was my brother Fred's claim. Mr. Carson kept a few cows and delivered milk and cream in Elkhart. After living there for about one and a half years, we moved into Elkhart and my husband and my brother, Will, were in Blackburn and Firmin Store. The boys had a real estate office and other business, helped build the Elkhart school building and later were in the grain business. Three of our boys, Don, Joe and Roland were born in Elkhart. We watched Elkhart grow into a thriving little town. My brothers helped in getting the railroad extended to Boise City, Oklahoma.

We were there through the "black dusters" and I do mean "Black". Sometimes, I wonder how we survived that time. When I hear people complain of the dust now, it is amusing, as what dust we have now does not seem bad to me.

I moved to Boulder, Colorado after Joe and Roland came home from the service. Joe graduated from Colorado University and I moved back to Boise City. I live near three of my children, however, Joe and Robert live in California and I don't get to see them often. I am happy to be settled here, I love the wide, open spaces.

I want to add that the old courthouse at Richfield stood out to good advantage in those early days, it could be seen from quite

a distance. When I visited my friend, Laura McLain, her aunt would take us to the courthouse to watch the dance. We did not dance, so we did not stay very long as sometimes it got a little rough. These are golden memories of long ago, nice to think about, though sometimes sad, as old age creeps up on us, but now that we live in the age of space, we must try to keep up with the times.

Our Pioneer Days in Texas County, Oklahoma

By Mrs. C. L. Griffith

We came to Texas County, Oklahoma, in September, 1906. We spent our honeymoon on land we now own. It is quite different now as people have irrigation wells and can grow crops each year. In early day we would plant a crop each year, we would harvest some grain almost every year until the "dust storms" came.

We moved on our homestead in 1907. We came in a covered wagon from Eastern Kansas; we were on the road five weeks and cooked our meals by the side of our wagon--our first experience cooking in the open space. It was a good excuse for poor cooking.

Our first friends in Texas County were Dan and Lettie Welsh. We met them at Postle, Oklahoma, where they owned a store. Lettie was Postmistress. We were six miles from Postle and received mail three times a week. Dan and C. L. visited, talked mostly about farming and what would grow best in this climate. The conversations were better than the crops they harvested. Mrs. Welsh and I rode horseback and had many happy times together. One of our pastimes was gathering cow chips. Several neighbors would go out and everyone would pick chips. We had coal to burn in the winter but used chips for kindling or for a quick fire, as they caught fire quickly and started the coal burning. It was a lot of work to keep the ashes out of the range stoves.

Everyone drove horses and buggies or a wagon as cars were not in this part of the country and money was not plentiful. We all had to be very conservative as we soon discovered money did not grow on trees in these parts. For entertainment, the men and boys played ball and someone would always seem to have a team of horses run away. All was exciting in this lonely country.

In April, 1913, some of us saw smoke early one morning. At first we thought someone was burning weeds but the smoke kept moving and everyone was out watching it. Men were on the windmills and close neighbors gathered in yards to watch the smoke. It turned out to be a work train building a railroad to Elkhart. The crew had camped at Wilburton and some of us sold eggs and butter to the ladies who did the cooking. We were paid 25¢ for a pound of butter and 25¢ for a dozen eggs. We drove there twice a week to sell our produce. We were so happy to get those good prices for produce and to have part in helping the railroad get into Elkhart.

A young bride from Illinois lived near us and thought potato seed came in a package like lettuce, radish, beets, etc. She said she did not know one planted real potatoes. No one had a very successful potato crop that year or any other year during those early years so it really didn't make much difference whether she knew how to plant them or not.

We settlers had to learn to manage, as during World War I, sugar, flour, coffee and about all groceries were rationed. During harvest time we could get two, or if lucky, four pounds of sugar extra, depending on how much grain we had to thresh. The machinery was old and always in need of repair so the crew was there to be fed whether the grain was being harvested or the machinery was being repaired. It was a very difficult task to prepare so many meals with limited flour, sugar, coffee and other groceries, but we all managed and most of us are able to give report of our "early day trials".

In the fall of 1924, we rented our farm and moved to Elkhart, Kansas. After spending several weeks in Hot Springs, Arkansas because of C. L.'s health, we enrolled our son, Lyndon, in the Elkhart grade school. He graduated from Elkhart High School then enrolled at Kansas State College.

C. L. took up farming again, using hired help, whom he hired by the year, until he reached the age of eighty years. He still loves farming and now at the age of eighty-two he has a large garden near an irrigation well, and enjoys working in it. I love growing flowers in my yard and we hope to enjoy working a few more years.

Western Kansas Experiences

By Mrs. G. E. Penick

My father, W. F. Riley, homesteaded on a quarter of land two miles East and three miles North of what is now Elkhart, Kansas, and was then a part of the McClain ranch. His land being in the M. C. Combs pasture. This was in 1907.

He came here with his family in February of 1908 in a covered wagon, from Osborne County, Kansas. Mother and we four children, one boy and three girls, stayed in Uncle Charles Riley's dugout while Father went to Guymon, Oklahoma, for a load of lumber to build a barn or stable in which we could live until we could build a small house,which is a part of the house still on the farm now owned by my brother W. C. Riley.

We hauled water about one and three quarter miles, from the Combs ranch well, which was located on the land now owned by Mr. Geo. Bradshaw. In the fall of 1908, however, a well was drilled on our farm by a man, Mr. Lumbert.

Those first few years were more or less hot and dry with the usual dust storms now and then hiding the sun altho the sand did not sift because of the abundance of grass, which was mostly blue-stam, and in places was as high as a man's head riding horseback.

Range cattle wandered everywhere and were very inquisitive of anyone walking across the prairie.

We were three and one half miles from the New Zion school, which was located on the southeast corner of the E. V. Lavielle quarter east of Elkhart. It was built of adobe and was 12x20 inside; room for about sixteen pupils, however, at our second term here we had twenty some pupils in there, some sitting at the teacher's desk and some on the recitation, or front, seats with no desk. We were always blessed with good teachers and enjoyed our schooling there. Our first two terms were taught by L. E. Rathburn, who later became County Superintendent of Beaver County, Oklahoma. We made the trip to and from school in a one horse, top buggy, leaving home at seven-thirty every morning, taking an hour for the drive to school, not bad when the weather was nice, but rather tough when we had to face a blizzard going home.

Coyotes and rattlesnakes were plentiful; also, once in a while, we would catch a glimpse of antelope. We used the usual prairie fuel to burn, the first five years we were here, which was usually gathered on Saturdays, when we children could help, from the ranch pasture.

My father hauled all his fence posts from the foot hills which would mean a ten day trip, sometimes would get caught in a snowstorm, and, one time, had to leave his load at Vilas, Colorado, and several months later returned for it.

Most of our groceries and clothing were bought in Guymon, Oklahoma. Two trips a year were made, one in the Spring, one in the Fall. My father had two brothers here and two of them would make the trip together so that one would be at home in case of trouble, which often occurred, like the time one of our horses got bitten on the nose by a rattlesnake. My mother made a poultice of some of her lye soap and bound it on the horse's nose to draw out the poison. The horse got well altho he was always so tender mouthed the rein had to be hitched in the side of his bridle from then on.

In the summer of 1910, im August, our mother wanted to visit her parents in Gove County, Kansas. She and we four children made the trip in the same covered wagon we came here in. We stayed the first night at the Halfway place a few miles south of Johnson, Kansas, with a sick horse, and no medicine. The next morning we made it into Syracuse where we got our horse doctored. I think we spent most of four days going. The night before we started home, it came a big rain especially in west of us, which brought the Smoky river up. We reached the river about nine in the morning and it was rolling and boiling bank full. After watching it a while, we took off up the river to the west and travelled until

about four o'clock when we came to a ranch house. We inquired there about the crossing, as the water had gone down considerable, and was told by the rancher's wife that the cowboys had just left and crossed the river there at the ranch and that, if we followed their tracks across the river, we could make it, providing we did not let our horses stop in midstream. We could see their wagon tracks where they entered the river across a small island about midstream and, then, where they came out on the other side of the river. We came across in fine shape. My mother had crossed the Cimarron several times when it was in the same condition. (Now they have nice bridges to cross.) That night another big rain and hail storm came up, and we were afraid our horses would break away as they were just tied to the wagon. The rest of the trip was uneventful.

Our mail first came to the Point Rocks Post Office, then later to Cosmos, Oklahoma, then to Sid Post Office, which was located on the corner two miles north of Elkhart.

Fourth of July celebrations were held every year at different places, Cosmos, Postal and 81 Ranch, also Sunday School Conventions at different school houses. Sunday School was held in nearly every school house, usually afternoons. Most everyone attended.

Dr. Tucker of Postal and Dr. Showers of Richfield were our doctors and usually had to be gone after, on horseback, which sometimes took several hours.

In the fall of 1912 when the railroad was being put through to Elkhart, the surveyors for the road camped in our yard for several months, which was quite an attraction as we were not used to having people around.

In the fall of 1913 we started to school in Elkhart in the Methodist Church building, which was a barn like structure and housed the High School students, also the seventh and eighth grade students, and was taught by a Texan whose name was Scelsor. Miss Rena Boaz taught the other grades in the Baptist Church.

Saturday was always a big day as everyone for miles around, would collect in town, young and old. The older folks would visit and the younger would parade from one end of the street to the other, no place to land.

I have always enjoyed living here and do not think I would be satisfied anywhere else very long.

Every few months the neighbors would gather at someone's home in the evening for a play party, after the play was over, pie, cake and coffee was served. These parties were enjoyed by both young and old.

John Joseph Gallagher

(This letter was written by Mrs. Harry Walker telling some incidents of the life of her father, J. J. Gallagher. Many people remember Mr. and Mrs. Walker who owned and operated a variety store on the corner where the Tebow Drug Store now stands, and remember, also, Mr. Gallagher and another daughter, Marie, who made their home in Elkhart for several years.)

John Joseph Gallagher, (Jeff), was born at St. Marys, Refugio County, Texas, on September 15, 1851. In the first part of 1867, he and his father had a disagreement and "Jeff" ran away from home and hired out as a trail hand with an outfit that came up the Chisholm trail to Abilene, Kansas. This was the year the yard at Abilene was opened for shipments by rail. He followed the role of a trail hand as long as cattle were trailed North and made his last trail trip through Eastern Colorado. He crossed the Arkansas River at Ford many times and once said that he was on the site of Dodge City the year before the Santa Fe was built and that there were three shacks near the river and just off the military reservation which is about the west side of Central Avenue in Dodge City. The shacks were presumed to be occupied by bootleggers who supplied the soldiers at Fort Dodge and some Indians. He stated that he never had any trouble with gunmen and that most of those who did were looking for trouble.

Mr. Gallagher was well acquainted with Pete Robidoux who ran a general store in Wallace when it was the terminus of the Kansas Pacific. Several thousand soldiers were stationed at Fort Wallace and Wallace was really a boom town. Mr. Robidoux told him that the Texas trail herd owners were usually out or very low on supplies by the time they reached Wallace and that he had sold them from $500.00 to $2,000.00 "on the cuff" and that most of them would get on the train at Ogallala and go to Chicago and go home by the most direct route and that he would not see them until they came up the trail the next year, but he never lost one account.

"Jeff" and some cowboys delivered some cattle on the Stinking-water Creek in Nebraska in 1883 and on the way back to Texas stopped overnight at Max, Nebraska, which had been named for Max Monvoison, a taxidermist from Paris, France, who had located on the Republican River in Southwestern Nebraska, and who had a beautiful daughter aged seventeen. The cowboys stayed over for a party and dance and "Jeff" became badly smitten. They had a good time and all agreed to come back on Adeline Monvoison's eighteenth birthday on December 20, 1883. They were wintering some cattle for Colonel Goodnight on the Palo Duro stream in North Texas, and seven of them rode to Max, Nebraska for the birthday party. Mr. Gallagher said it was a serious trip for him and he was on his best behavior as he fully intended to marry the girl, but the other six got drunk and went over to the village store and shot a lot of holes in the tomatoes, beans, etc. He said it cost him about $200.00 to square up the damage.

He came back to the wedding in December, 1884, and remained in the North most of the rest of his life. He was foreman for the American Cattle Company, whose ranch headquarters was about twenty miles west of Magdalena, New Mexico, for a time. They closed out in 1896 when cows sold for $10.00 a head.

He had many other exciting and interesting experiences as a cowboy and ranch foreman in Colorado, Nebraska and New Mexico.

"Pioneers"

By L. C. Green

My parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Green came to Morton County in the year of 1886, filing on government land. They made their home on a homestead just eight miles east of the present site of Elkhart, later known as "Green's Ranch". Their home became a familiar landmark to the weary traveler of the early days. It proved a haven of refuge in many a storm, and in one instance I recall it sheltered thirty-five travelers during a terrible blizzard. Here they lived some thirty years, after which they moved to a farm north of Elkhart. Later they moved into Elkhart and it was here that father passed away in July of 1934, and mother following in January of 1937 at the ages of seventy-eight and eighty-one respectively.

Many and varied were the experiences of this Pioneer couple in Morton County following the date of their arrival, as later when mother came to the county to make final settlement on her claim, the previous arrangements had been that she should go to Hartland, Kansas, by rail where she would get the stage for Hugoton and there be met by her father, who lived a distance of twenty-five miles southwest. Unfortunately she arrived in Hartland too late to catch the stage, and since she had to appear for final settlement on her land the next day, she walked to Hugoton. Unable to find her father in Hugoton, she set out on foot the next morning for her destination, arriving in time for final settlement.

At this early time with the hard cold winters and dry summers, the water situation was quite serious and well drilling machinery was very difficult to procure in the country. Since they were obliged to haul water seven miles in barrels, they decided to drill a well, and in the course of two to three years, at odd times, the job was completed, 223 feet deep, dug by hand. The job was accomplished by means of a "windlass" with bucket and rope to transfer the dirt from bottom to top; and altho the work was very strenuous and slow, pioneer people just never gave up. They erected a high tower and a sixteen foot windmill with four inch pipes, which afterwards proved capable of watering a thousand head of cattle per day. In several instances of blizzard nights, strangers were guided to a place of safety and warmth by a lantern that hung in the top of the tower. The old branch of the Santa Fe trail passed near their homestead, a short cut across "No man's land" of Texas County, and every year thousands of head of cattle

and many travelers passed over the trail. It was a popular stopping place for the herds and herdsmen, and no one was ever turned away.

In the years following when the land seekers came to establish homes, the big well again proved its value by furnishing the settlers with abundance of pure water for their homes and livestock, and as a small boy I can quite well remember the wagons lined up, from seven to ten in number, awaiting their turn to fill their barrels. My sister (Mrs. Edna Day, who resides in Peabody, Kansas) and I can well remember our parents as a very generous, kindly people, who possessed confidence, determination and faith, and they seemed to gain new strength each year from the conviction that altho there was hardships and heartbreaks, they were enduring them for just causes, and none were in vain. They did not look at the future with suspicion, nor fear what the coming year might hold for them. Theirs was the opportunity for self-development and the building of a decent and successful life, and they won.

In tribute to my mother, I should like to submit a paragraph of an article that appeared in the Tri-State News in October of 1927 under the heading of "Mrs. John Green" written by the late Mrs. Grace Washburn who, herself, was an early Elkhart pioneer and a very gracious lady. It follows: "We can hardly imagine how a person could be so modest as to conceal a lineage so really important in the early history of our own United States, yet we have one in our midst whom until solicited never divulged the secret of her ancestral heritage. The person mentioned is Mrs. John Green, whose great-grandfather was James Wilson and came to America in 1766, where he became a classical teacher in a college, was admitted to the bar, and later was a member of Congress. He was one of the strongest advocates of the Declaration of Independence and a signer of that document. Later he became a Judge of the Supreme Court. It is also of interest to note that Mr. Green was a third cousin of Ulysses S. Grant."

Space will not permit me to discuss other memories, fully, of those pioneer years, but briefly I might just mention a few, such as the terrible prairie fire of 1904 when the grass was all burned from the pastures and the saving of our home was nothing short of a miracle; when my sister was bitten by a rattlesnake and Dad rode to Richfield on horseback for a doctor, only to find that the doctor was out of the country. He then rode back, changed to a fresh horse and rode to Guymon. Until the doctor finally arrived, my mother kept the wound poulticed with "chicken flesh" to draw the poison. The little girl had a very close brush with death, however she recovered, altho minus one toe; another time father was caught in a terrible blizzard, and when the snowdrifts became too deep to get thru with the wagon, he tied a rope around his waist and to his trusty horse's neck, and the faithful animal brought him safely home, over seven miles, in below zero weather; once when fording the Cimarron River en route to Richfield for provisions, mother's horse became stuck in a bed of quicksand. The river was in flood stage, and seeing a wave of water coming down upon her, she plunged into the stream, unhooked

the horse from the buggy and they both swam to safety. Instances such as these, and I could name many others, were quite commonplace in the lives of these and other hardy pioneer people of the new west.

Relative to our own immediate family, we did manage to stay, as did many others thru the notorious "Dust Bowl" days of the thirties, when more than fifty homes were moved from Elkhart and W. P. A. was the best breadwinner. In later years, on May 15,1951 many will remember when the tornado funnels which gave Elkhart population the jitters for several minutes as they seemingly moved in and out and everyone was thinking of the most likely place of safety, we, with our two children, Laree and Larry decided to outrace one twister with our car, only to drive directly in the path of another, and the car stalled in a gully. Miraculously, the tornado raised its snout, passed over the car and left us unharmed. What seemed to be a serious situation turned out to be a hilarious occasion minutes later.

Again relative to our immediate family: our daughter and family, Mr. and Mrs. Charlie McGee live in Odessa, Texas, our son Lawrence (Larry) is in Denver, Colorado, and we now live in Mesa, Arizona. Altho we shall always have a warm place in our hearts for our native Kansas, Morton County, Elkhart, and our good friends and neighbors there, we do have a nice home here, with wonderful neighbors, and we are very happy here in the "Valley of the Sun".

1949316

One Time "No Man's Land"

By Mrs. Fairy Travis

I was married to Edgar Walter Travis in Wildwood, Florida, and when our oldest son, Julian, was nine months old, we took a claim in this part of the panhandle area once called "No Man's Land," and years later was spoken of as "The Dust Bowl."

Our home was first at old Eva, two miles northwest of the present townsite of Eva, Oklahoma. This is where we frontiered and where our other children--Ensley, Dorothy, Sylvia, and Irvin --were born. We moved to Elkhart when the town was about two years old.

At the present time, Julian is fire chief at Salina, Kansas. One of his major accomplishments is his perfection of a gas mask which is connected to one hundred feet of hose on a reel--the reel remains in clean air, and as the firemen unroll the hose it enables him to make his way through smoke and poisonous gas. The Salina fire department use these masks, as well as other of Chief Travis' inventions for improvement in fire fighting techniques which have been approved by the National Board of Underwriters.

My son, Ensley, was killed in a car wreck about twenty years ago. Dorothy now lives in Tucson, Arizona. Sylvia, Mrs. Ned Sloan, lives in Elkhart.

Irvin, who was nicknamed "Sam" by his Elkhart schoolmates, graduated from U. S. College, California, and at one time was on the faculty at U. S. C. and is now working as a physical therapist in a V. A. hospital near Los Angeles, California.

After my children left home, I took up my old hobby--that of being an amateur artist. Another hobby of mine is writing stories for newspapers.

Cappers Weekly printed one I wrote about the raise of postage from three cents to four cents on letters and one about the time I locked my keys inside the house and had to take a window out to get in.

Just a short time ago they printed my story entitled--"More Ways Than One to Get Rid of Rats and Mice." The story in part--"She proposed a two-pronged attack on the rodent population, she tried using the terror treatment on one old rat that had carried off some potatoes and bread. The next time, when he scurried across the floor, she threw a shoe at him; the toss was accompanied by a terrifying shriek from Mrs. Travis, who reports that the rat, thereupon, fled so fast that he slipped upon the floor. Second alternative of the double-barreled attack is to encourage a skunk to set up housekeeping nearby. Mrs. Travis says that after this has happened in her basement, the problem with rats and mice is over."

Encouraged by my past success, I am still pushing the stories at the newspapers and since they are, no doubt, overstocked with manuscripts, it is mostly by luck that mine have missed the waste-basket.

Those Early Days

By Belle Hutchison

It was autumn of the year 1906. The place where we lived was in Kingman County, Kansas. We were farmers; our name was Hart.

One evening my father came in from a hard day's work and told the family he did not believe he would ever be able to own a home in this country. He had been reading about the government land in West Kansas. No doubt he and mother had talked it over when we children were not around. There were two of us older children and two younger children.

My father came west and filed on some land and returned home to stay until the spring of 1907 when he returned to the west and built a large two-room dug-out, which, in those days was considered a fine home.

In early spring, mother and we three children came to our western home where my father and oldest brother had worked hard to get a place in readiness for us. How well I remember how hard it was to leave my friends in Kingman County. Some of them came with us to the train to bid us goodbye. Father met us at Syracuse in a covered wagon and it took two long days to drive from there to our new home.

I had begun to be real homesick. It was hot, windy and dusty; I went to bed crying and awoke crying. No doubt I wrote some pitiful letters to my friends back in Kingman County. My dear mother tried hard to console me. The family worked hard those first years and I mean it was really hard.

Some of the older settlers worked a hardship on us. They would cut our fences and drive large herds of cattle through our growing crops. Father was not so easily discouraged and when these people realized we had come there to stay, they began to be more friendly, even bought feed and grain from us, which helped a lot. It didn't take much money to live in those days.

My oldest brother took a job working on the McClain Ranch with the boss Mr. McClain and some cowboys. They were like most men and did not like to cook nor wash dishes, so my brother came home to ask my folks to let me come and do the cooking for them. I was glad to go as I was very lonely at home. Mother gave me some of her recipes to help me know how to cook. She used a starter to make light bread and gave me some of the starter, with instructions on making bread. I soon began to get acquainted and became better satisfied.

My brother and I saved our wages and used it to help our parents buy provisions, clothing and school books for the younger children. Then I started to school in a little schoolhouse in the northwest corner of the county. The teacher was Miss Allie Combs, now Mrs. Clay Tipton. This was in 1908. I first went to school to take my younger sister and brother. My father had an old-fashioned buggy which we drove to school with one horse hitched to it. We took our lunch with us everyday. I soon became interested in school and I played "hide and seek" with the children who were twelve years younger than myself. In the summer of 1909, I went to Bucklin, Kansas. It was there that I met my husband, George Hutchison. He was in the ice business there.

We were married and our daughter Thelma was born before we left Kansas. Then we went to Craig County, Oklahoma, by covered wagon.

It was while we lived at Vinita, Oklahoma, that our son, Bill was born in 1915. We lived there about five years, then we came west to file on government land. We landed in Elkhart and Mr.Ora Carey took us to my parents' home, in his first car. It had no top, just a windshield and we nearly froze that night.

We took land near Point Rock north of Elkhart. Times were hard, it was dry and no grain was raised. We had a small irrigated garden and raised a few green vegetables. My husband went east to get work that we might be able to buy provisions for the winter. There was a little schoolhouse one and a half miles west of us, where our children went to school and where there was Sunday School and Church on Sunday. I taught a Sunday School class of little folks who attended.

John and Roy Moore had claims across the river and they did the preaching for us. The school teachers were Bertha Criddlebaugh and Roy Butts. I taught my children at home when the weather was too fierce for them to go to school There were times when I watched the weather till they came home and would be out opening the gate to let them ride into the old corral. It seemed I spent much time opening those old wire gates. My husband rode horseback to and from Point Rock ranch where he worked feeding cattle for King Brothers.

Some of the winter blizzards were severe. One time my husband hitched four horses to a sled and went to Elkhart to buy oil cake for the cattle and some groceries for the family. We lived in a dug-out and our chicken house was a dug-out too. Our hens did well and furnished us with eggs. There were times I could not wade the deep snowdrifts to gather the eggs, but gathered them as often as I could. I milked our two cows when the weather was so I could get out.

George would take a bucket of eggs on one side of his saddle and a bucket of molded butter on the other, take them to town and sell them and buy groceries with the money. It seems God was caring for us and we did not realize it. We were happy and had plenty to eat. We did not have much money but we really thought very little of it.

As time went on, our children were getting through grade school and we moved to Elkhart where they could attend high school. We found work there. Thelma did the housework when I worked downtown. Bill worked at a barber shop as a "shoe shine" boy and learned to be a barber.

In 1937 we bought the Elkhart Ice Plant. We had to make considerable sacrifice as these were the days of the dust storms and crop failures, which caused many hardships to all the people in that area; however, we were busy, happy and contented. Then my husband's health began to fail, and our son, Bill, tried to do most of the hard work to keep his Dad from overworking, but on October 10th, 1950, about six o'clock, he had a sudden attack and passed away about three hours later in the Tucker Hospital--this was a terrible shock to me and our children, and I do not know what we would have done if it had not been for our wonderful friends and neighbors in and around Elkhart.

I am now making my home in Tucumcari, New Mexico, because I have found the climate here to be beneficial to my health, and I would welcome any of my friends to visit me here.

Our Pioneer Days in Kansas

By John and Leona Hardwick

In the fall of 1908 on the 30th day of September, Leona and I were married in the small town of Berlin, Missouri, which is located in the Northwest part of that State in Gentry County. Little did we dream that in one short year we would celebrate our first Anniversary as pioneers joining the ranks of many others going forth to homestead a tract of land in the new State of Kansas.

Thus we started a new adventure that enriched our lives, far more, we believe, than had we stayed and made our home where the land was already settled. At the time of our marriage Leona had a brother living in Kansas. He lived in the town of Liberal but also owned a farm twelve miles Northwest of that town. After corresponding with him we decided to make the trip West and settle on his farm. Leona and her Mother made the journey on a passenger train and, to save on expenses, I, along with Leona's Father, found passage on an immigrant car that we shipped out. Among other things that we shipped out were some horses, furniture and a huge store of home canned goods. This was my first journey away from home and what a change of scenery! With mixed emotions I watched the flat, flat country roll by until it seemed that I was surrounded with nothing but blue sky. Since it was the fall of the year when we moved to the farm, there was not much to do at first. One day I rode over to become better acquainted with my neighbor, Mr. Davis, who lived just a short distance from us, on which was formerly the old Scates ranch. Mr. Davis was building fence that morning and after talking with him for a time, I asked if he had anything I could do as I was looking for a job. He replied that he had no extra work; but I stayed and as our conversation grew I started helping him build fence. We worked side by side all day and when evening came he asked me to come back the next day and that was the beginning of my first real job. It paid $1.25 a day and my noon meal.

Not long after I started work, Mr. Davis and a friend of his, Frank Green, took a contract to build a railroad from Garden City to Scott City. This left the Davis farm for me to care for while Mr. Davis was away. I had many chores, cows to milk, cattle and hogs to feed and milo to gather. My days were long because of so much to do but these chores suddenly seemed mild when one Friday evening Mr. Davis returned and asked me to butcher a large beef. He then left for Liberal to buy supplies without knowing that I had only seen butchering done but had never butchered before in all my life. The beef looked huge, it weighed about a thousand pounds on foot, and I had to take the hide off on the ground and raise up one quarter at a time. To complicate matters, I had a time limit. Mr. Davis wanted to leave for the Railroad camp early the following Sunday morning, but, in spite of inexperience and other obstacles, when Mr. Davis returned, the beef was ready to load out and he praised me for the job I had done.

One day while at work a man stopped by to feed his team. He was on his way to Liberal with a load of broomcorn to sell. As we talked together I learned that his name was W. D. Thompson and he lived over in Morton County, and he told me of homestead land there that was still vacant. He offered to show me the land if I was interested. I made two or three trips to Morton County looking at land. I also went to Dodge City and got plats of this Government land. This activity took place over a period of about three years. During this time we had moved from Liberal to a farm ten miles East of Hugoton, Kansas; but finally our efforts were rewarded and we filed on homestead land in Morton County, January 4, 1913, five miles West of where the townsite was to be. Our house was small at first, being one room sixteen foot square, the roof slanting one way, and the grass grew as high as the slanting roof. The room had two small windows and a door, but our little niece, visiting from Missouri, must have seen it through different eyes. We smile yet to remember her standing and gazing about and then shaking her head and saying, very slowly "Well, just one room". We moved from East of Hugoton to our homestead in a covered wagon. Made several trips moving and got acquainted with some fine people. Grover Hershey and John Green were two places that we stopped.

Our crops were poor in 1913 and we had to take our cattle back to the farm we had left in Stevens County to winter them. We bought feed from the renter there. This left me with time on my hands and when I found that a Hugoton merchant was buying soapweeds at two dollars a ton in trade, I went into business and kept the wolf from the door by cutting soapweeds and delivering them to Hugoton. My pay came in the form of groceries. We hauled water from the B. W. Boaldin farm two miles from our place until we got a well put down. Bert Smith and Jim Webb drilled our well in the summer of 1913. Other settlers hauled from our well after this.

We remember distinctly the beginning of the town of Elkhart and were there the day the town lots were sold. Tents were up but no wooden structures had been built. It was grand to know that we were soon to have a railroad extended to the townsite and would have a town close by. At first it was talked of naming the new town Kanokla but it was given the name of Elkhart by E. H. Fisher, who was a graduate of Purdue University and a native of near Elkhart, Indiana. Mr. Fisher was an Engineer and surveyed the railroad to Elkhart and also surveyed the town of Elkhart.

Our subscription to the first local paper, The Elkhart Enterprise, furnished us news of the people and their activities in the newly settled community. We got our mail at Sid until the postoffice was moved to Elkhart. I bought well supplies from Dick Stratton who had a hardware store in Elkhart and he would take my check for things I needed, to get going, but he always said, "John, don't give me a bad check for I am just as hard up as you are" and I never did.

Dr. W. V. Tucker was the pioneer Physician and during the flu epidemic and the big snowstorm, the Dr. would stop by to warm himself, while visiting the sick. He was oftentimes tired

from working and traveling day and night. Once he stopped and borrowed Leona's glasses to use as he had forgotten his own. The weather was never too cold nor the snow too deep for him to go.

In 1928 I was elected County Commissioner and served in that capacity for twenty-four years. That was during the dust bowl days. These were the times of discouragement. The Government was buying land up and down the river and one day after a dirt storm we received a questionnaire in the mail, asking if we wanted to sell and we sent back a "Yes" reply. Government men came out the next day and gave us a fair appraisal of $4.00 per acre, but the day happened to be bright and fair and we reached up and found fortitude and encouragement and decided to stay. It was during these days that our neighbor's Jersey cow came to our door. I proceeded to give her some grain and started milking. Leona came to the door and asked what I was doing. I said "I just traded old Jersey some grain for some milk". After this our neighbor shared the cow with us, he milking one day and us the next.

We were faithful in Church and Sunday School attendance. In early homestead days we had an old buggy, the spokes were all loose, so on Friday evening I would throw the wheels in the tank to tighten the spokes so we could go to Sunday School and Church on Sunday morning.

In the early summer of 1913 the Baptist people held their first service in the Star Lumber Yard with Rev. A. W. Ihde in charge of the services. The seats were made by placing foot boards on nail kegs. A few days later the Chapel Car Evangel arrived with Rev. J. C. Killian as the Evangelist and at that time the First Baptist Church was organized in the Chapel Car Evangel, with the Rev. A. W. Ihde becoming the first regular pastor.

Money was hard to get. We raised broomcorn and at harvest time we worked long and hard. We had many workers and Leona had large meals to prepare, bread to bake and various times of assuming chores. Our first thousand dollars came from ten acres of broomcorn. The man I sold to, offered me $999.00 and I begged for the other dollar but did not get it. We enjoyed the pioneer life, even the long, slow wagon trips we made when moving.

We still get a laugh out of the day we had our household goods piled high on our hayrack mounted on a wagon. Leona was following in a buggy pulled by a pony. I had just gotten off the wagon to see how things were riding when a sudden gust of wind blew a comfort off the wagon. Away went the horses and up in the air went our belongings. When we finally got everything together again we took inventory and found that a ham was missing. Of course, in that day, a ham was a very precious item so we drove back along the way until we found it.

We took such pleasure in the simple things that happened to us. We enjoyed listening to the prairie chicken calling out in the stillness, and drove many miles to dig cottonwood trees to bring home and set out, and of course we met and became acquainted with many fine people. Even though times were hard and discouraging, we enjoyed the pioneer life.

John Munyon and Wife Came to Morton County

By Mr. and Mrs. John Munyon

John Munyon and wife Myrtle came to Morton County in March, 1915, from Eastern Kansas with an immigration car consisting of farm machinery, household goods, two horses, two cows and a few chickens.

We located on a small farm bought from Ira Henna and lived in a 12 x 20 one room house, which John had built, with neighbors help, a month before. It was built of foot boards stood upright with a car top. We put in a few acres of crop, then went by covered wagon to Beaver County, Oklahoma to work with a thrashing machine crew. John hauled water with his team and I cooked for about fifteen men in a cook shack on wheels and moved from one job to another in it. While we were gone, we lost one of our cows with rattlesnake bite. The next year, I finished out a term of school as teacher at Point View when it and Wild Rose were in the Elkhart school district. Doctor Tucker was one of the school board.

In the following years I taught at East Cess and West Cess, south of Rolla, both of these houses have since been moved to Rolla for school purposes. I taught also at Wild Rose and Taloga.

I loved teaching, although so many times seemed pretty tough; to mention some, I had a large overgrown pupil who was very unruly. As I was attempting to whip him, he broke loose, running home, which was about four miles, cutting across fields. While I was getting organized and my model T Ford started, he had the start of most a mile. With the help of a couple of young men, who were visiting at a home one-fourth of a mile away and watching the performance, put their brains to work and helped me out. They overtook him and posing as County Superintendent and Sheriff, kept him in conversation until I arrived with strap in hand. I marched him to my car and drove back to the schoolhouse where I proceeded to administer the proper punishment in the proper place.

Another experience in the twenties--John and I cranked up the Model T Ford and drove to Richfield with four of my girl pupils to take the eighth grade County exams on Friday and Saturday. It began to snow about noon Saturday, and as soon as they finished, we started for home. The snow blew through the hood and got the wires wet. John took all the blankets out of the car to cover it up and tried to dry out the wires, but with no success. A car came along and pulled us to the home of Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Weatherford just north of the river on the old jyp road.

Mrs. Weatherford got us all warmed up, fed us a nice supper and bedded us all down on the floor with lots of warm bedding. The next morning we started for home and found very little snow, as it was one of those blizzards that have but little snow. John froze his ears while working with the car.

The first black duster to strike was on Sunday P.M. about four o'clock when John Brown, John and I were visiting in the Sam Wares home. Without warning, the room began to get dark and by the time we got to the doors and windows it was pitch dark. We stood there not being able to see each other. After a couple hours, we thought we could get home and the only way we could was that there were fences on each side and of course we stayed between them.

After this, for several years, we watched for the storms. They came up so rapidly that many times they caught us before we could reach shelter. One came up as we were leaving church one Sunday night. Those coming west on the State line got to Bill Obenhouse's home. Some never got there till 2:30 A. M. after being rescued by men on foot, carrying lanterns.

One time when I was teaching at East Cess, a bad one came up and Herbert Johnson (school board member) came after his children and took me also. I stayed two days and two nights. We wrung sheets out of water and hung them up to the windows to keep the dust out, helping us to breathe. Most everybody wore dust masks. Those bad winds with no rains, lasted so long and we couldn't raise anything, the Government decided to buy the land and most of the farmers sold. Not long afterward the rains came and the Government began to sow the land to grass.

I continued to teach and John worked for the Government, tearing down fences, building new ones and doing away with most of the buildings, although some few were moved. Yet, not everything was bad. People did more visiting and often took lunches and went out arrowhead hunting together and spent all day tramping over sand-drifts and blow-outs. Sometimes we found several, some days none. We have a nice collection in our home.

We finally moved across the state line into Oklahoma on what was known as the old Coffee place, which had been vacant for several years. It was a large 1½ story house with sand banks up above the tops of the windows but a few feet back from them. The windmill was flat and covered up. Fences could be driven over with anything that could get over the sand. We lived there ten years and with moving buildings, cutting trees and lots of hard work, the banks had disappeared when we left. There's a bird's eye view of many farms in the dust bowl. We still live south of the State line on the old George Sweat place three miles west of town. We count ourselves Kansans and Morton Countians.

Time Brings Many Changes

By Mrs. Bertha Haines

As I remember, my father, Christian Baker took a homestead a couple of miles west of old Carthage in the year 1905. He came from Atchison County.

While living there, I became engaged to Dick Haines. Dick had homesteaded about twenty-five miles from where the town of

Elkhart was later built. He had a store and post office and freighted his supplies from Hooker, Oklahoma.

Several others homesteaded about the time Dick did, who were from Nortonville--among them were C. D. Stillman, Dan Stillman, Charley Kaufman, Grace Kaufman and Georgia Nickolas.

Dick and I were married in 1907 and after the wedding, we started overland in a covered wagon to Nortonville, Kansas, where Dick had been born and raised. We were to farm for his father. We were sixteen days on the road and was not inside a house till we were at Nortonville. In our travel, the first railroad town we came to was Dodge City.

Then, in 1912, we returned to Morton County. Before we returned, the Santa Fe built a branch line from Dodge City to Elkhart. It was the end of the line at that time.

Dick ran his own store. He carried groceries and meat. We were there during World War I and during the winter of 1918 the influenza broke out and many people died. Elkhart had no hospital at the time and the high school building was used as a hospital. We lived in Elkhart till 1925 when we returned to Nortonville to go into the mercantile business here. Dick retired in 1951 because of ill health and passed away on September 14, 1958. Since leaving Elkhart, Dick and I had always a warm spot in our hearts for our friends there. Time brings about many changes.

Early Days in Elkhart

By Wanda Burket Handlin

On April 29, 1913, my daddy, Charles Burket, purchased lots in what is now known as Elkhart, Kansas, and started the first barber shop in a Muncy tent, driving a mile south where he took his meals. He slept in an over-jet (a covered wagon) down by the stock yards.

In a few weeks he moved a building in from our homestead at Four Corners onto the location now occupied by the Pioneer Men's Store, using the front part for a barber shop and our living quarters in the back, at which time Mother and I, who were living in Guymon, came to join him.

Sometime later he sold this building to Gilmore and Taylor for a Real Estate office, and built a new building. The west side of that building was used as a barber shop and on the east side Mother owned and operated the first variety store with what little assistance I could offer.

On September 18, 1913, with E. B. Dryden as County Superintendent of Schools and Rena Boaz as teacher in the building of the First Baptist Church, I enrolled in school. I remember that one

room building being as crowded as sardines in a box. All grades attending--there surely was a wonderful group of children.

My daddy installed the first street light by stringing a wire from Roberts Grocery Store to his barber shop, hanging a gasoline lamp in the middle, and, by keeping it filled and pumped up every night, it burned during the entire night.

The building, later known as Legg's Hardware, housed a pool room on the ground floor with sleeping room over it, not partitioned, but with rows and rows of cots.

One of the thrills of the children of the community was the sticks of peppermint candy, weiners, or other edible snack given us by Dan Welsh when our parents sent us there for groceries.

I think the worst fear in our minds was the Cimarron River flood north of town after the one that washed away the Point Rock buildings and the drowning of their daughter--in our little minds we figured it could happen again at any time, and sooner or later cause a flood all the way into Elkhart.

As we remember about the first settlers:

Mart Moore--first sheriff, who gave his life in the line of duty
Dan Welsh and John Tucker--first general store
Doctor William Tucker--the first doctor
Medford's Cafe--called the Greasy Spoon
Danford and Lee--cafe
Brantly--pool hall and sleeping room
J. E. Burks--newspaper, The Elkhart Enterprise
Mayo Thomas--first bank
Charley Bloodhart--drugstore, with Marion Poorman
George Ferguson--bakery
Ora Carey and John Brown--feed barn
Willard Harris--first laundry
Bill Franks--blacksmith

Mrs. Edith Stewart was the first postmaster, moved the Post Office in from Sid, north of town.

It has taken the faithful people, "in these here parts," to accomplish the things we now enjoy in our beautiful and fair city.

Our Westward Trek to Morton County

By Maurine Bay Friend

My daddy had developed Rheumatoid Arthritis in his late twenties and despite many types of treatment by various doctors and hot mineral baths at Hot Springs, Arkansas, he grew progressively worse. The only relief the doctors could offer him,

was to go to a higher, drier altitude. So he and mother left Topeka, Kansas, my birthplace, going to Reno County where my father engaged in farming. But after a few years there, as his arthritis continued to grow worse, he decided to go still farther west and thus our westward trek to Morton County. Daddy went out to western Kansas in the early spring of 1907, and filed on a homestead seven and one-half miles southwest of the county seat of Richfield.

Our furniture and livestock was shipped from Pretty Prairie to Syracuse by immigrant car and then hauled eighty miles, by team and wagon to our future home site.

Mother, Daddy and I lived in the Lane Hotel at Richfield for several weeks until our barn, shed and corral were completed at the farm. Then we moved into a section of the new barn and batched there while the partial "dug-out" house was finished and completely cemented inside. My only sister, Beth, was born here.

One incident of our stay at the hotel in Richfield stands out in my memory very clearly. One night just at suppertime, the acrid smell of skunk permeated the entire hotel. Childlike, I had a fit about the foul smell, and the proprietor, Mr. Lane, teasingly told me it was my dad. Of course I bitterly resented this remark, but it proved to be true. Daddy had killed a skunk on his way into town from the farm and the skunk had retaliated during the skirmish. Needless to say, dad's clothing were destroyed post haste and a good hot bath and fresh clothing soon had Daddy good as new.

After we moved to the homestead we were not only miles from town and any store but also about three and one-half miles to the nearest school. I walked the seven miles daily most of my earlier school days, and completed my eight grades of schooling there.

We lived on our homestead for several years and, like most pioneer families, we raised our own meat and vegetables and had our own milk, cream, butter, cheese, eggs and lard. And any extra butter or eggs could always be traded at the store for needed staples, such as sugar, flour, salt or baking powder.

To supplement the, sometimes, very scanty farm income, Daddy ran one of the first star mail routes from Richfield to the Point Rocks post office, at that time operated by Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Streeter of the Two Circle Ranch. He also cut hair for some of our neighbors and of course many of the Two Circle cowboys found their way to our house for a regular hair trim. Mother, always a most capable needle woman and seamstress, did sewing for some of our neighbors.

I am sure that there were many extremely lean years on the farm, but we had a happy life, as well as a busy one, and we were taught thrift and honesty; and perhaps some of their courage was instilled into our makeup too.

As time went by Daddy became more and more crippled; he found farming becoming too difficult, so he entered county politics and was elected to the office of Register of Deeds, which office he held several years. He was also later Probate Judge for some time. Our family moved from the homestead into Richfield after Daddy took up his duties in the Court House. Dick and Alice Woods rented the farm and they really knew how to work and make a farm pay. Mother took on some work outside the home, soon after getting settled in town. She clerked in the Hindman General Store, later served as postal clerk in the Richfield Post Office under Postmaster Lee E. Moore. Then she became deputy County Treasurer and sometime later was made deputy County Clerk. Mother was a schoolteacher and did substitute work in the schools in Richfield. My sister Beth attended all eight grades in the schools there.

In 1930, Daddy having retired, he and Mother moved to Elkhart where they lived for many years. Daddy passed away at their home in 1941. Mother kept her home in Elkhart for five or six years, until illness forced her to sell it and come to California to be near Beth and me and our families. Mother passed away in Los Angeles in 1951.

My tribute to my parents would be that we may leave as fine a heritage to our children. For Mother's undying faith and Dad's ever ready Irish wit made a house a home where warmth and love made all feel welcome.

The S. E. Bay Family

By Beth Bay Holmes

My family were of the hardy pioneer stock. They came to Western Kansas and filed on a claim or homestead and improved the land. This is not as simple as it would seem. One of the obstacles was the herds of cattle that were free to roam the range. Fences were little protection for the crops when the cattle were looking at the green crops. My father came out, first, to build the house, barn and the usual buildings you see on a farm. My Mother became impatient waiting, so by train and stage, she and Maurine arrived before the house was even started. The barn was finished, so with all kinds of makeshift equipment, they started building the house and other buildings. My father and mother were always very hospitable people, many people dropped by and were invited to eat. This day some boards were taking the place of a dining table, it was spread with the noon day meal. Another guest appeared and the already unexpected list had grown beyong the point of adequate servings. As he filled his plate, by some unforgivable act, he upsets the table and all. This was one of my Mother's dark moments. No market within miles.

Another story that comes to mind is the time my Mother and I hitched the saddle horse to the buggy; (horses had to be versatile also). He thoroughly disliked the buggy. It was customary to get

supplies for the neighbors. We arrived at the general store and made the purchases, and among the items were grapes; as we neared home the horse got excited, pulled out of the old rut road and began going in circles until the buggy turned over; I flew out without injury, but my Mother held onto the reins, being dragged for some distance. The grapes were scattered all over the prairie. So no grape jell from these grapes. These things were really a tragedy in those days.

When I was five we moved to the little town of Richfield, where I enrolled in first grade. My first teacher was Frank Craddock. I am not sure that his methods would have completely satisfied the modern supervisor, but with the pupils he was the greatest. One of his most persuasive pieces of equipment was a never ending supply of summer chocolates. For each perfect lesson you were privileged to go up to the desk and devour a piece of candy. So having a sweet tooth, I would manage to get several pieces a day. Another tool of his trade was a yardstick that came down on the desk with a resounding crash, sometimes breaking up in pieces; however, calm would prevail for some time thereafter.

My second grade teacher, who was also County Superintendent, Mr. E. B. Dryden, was quite a disciplinarian. I always seemed to see or hear something funny and was invariably laughing. We had double seats, which contributed to continuous conversation. The worst punishment for this offense involving Vivian Carroll and I, was to put our hand in Mr. Dryden's coat picket, one on each side of him and go wherever he would go; it seemed to me he made many needless trips around the room.

This was the typical red school house with just the most meager necessities; for heat we had an old fashioned stove in the middle of the room. Some of the older boys would slip bullets in the coal scuttle--this would make a terrifying noise when they exploded in the stove.

Another thing that I shall never forget was the big Christmas programs at the church. No evergreen trees were grown near and none hauled in, so the cottonwood or some other tree was cut down, wrapped in pieces of old white sheet and decorated, even lighted candles on the tree. It made a most effective tree, or at least I always thought so. A program was prepared with many songs, recitations, drills and even plays. Instead of individual trees in the homes, most everyone brought all their gifts to the church and Santa read the many names of the recipients. This one Christmas (the best Christmas ever), I saw two doll buggies under the tree, one with a blue umbrella and one with a red umbrella. I fell in love with the red umbrella doll buggy (of course from my seat at the program). I could stand it no longer and I whispered to my Mother I was going to get the doll buggy with the red umbrella. My Mother tried to explain that Santa would bring some things to the house later, but I was not to expect much there. (She had put a hanky for each, my sister and I, so that our names would be called at least once.) We did have a tree and presents on Christmas Day. But my faith was unshaken--I knew I was getting

the buggy with the red umbrella, and my faith was rewarded. Our neighbor, Mr. Porter Craddock, had put the buggy there for me. The other buggy went to Gileel Coffman, the doctor's daughter. Not only that, but I received a doll laundry set, wooden tub, wash board, iron, ironing board, clothes basket, line and clothes horse. This was from Miss Scott, a teacher in the school, I just adored her, but this was before I started to school. So with all these treasures, which were a real luxury at that time, you can understand why I still remember that Christmas.

The Courthouse was a fine building for the children, it had an outer hall completely around the offices. So on the weekends, we would get our roller skates and skate around and around, it was great sport to get someone who could not skate and fly past him, to see and hear him trying to keep his balance. The goats that roamed around Richfield enjoyed the Courthouse also. They loved to romp in the attic, but one day one of them missed his footing and fell through lath and plaster down three stories, no injury to the goat, however.

The Halloween pranks were fun. I remember helping take a buggy to pieces, with the aid of a rope we reassembled it up on top of the roof of the school house, complete with dummy hanging from the tongue.

The Orth ranch was the place for gatherings on Sunday for the Broncho Busting, roping, etc. I think it would be called a rodeo now. This was much better, as it was complete with home made ice cream and cake.

Some of the teachers that I remember were Miss Dodge, Mrs. Newby, Mrs. H. O. Bean, Mrs. Valley Wilson, Miss Eva Britton, Mr. R. M. Hood, Mr. Ralph Sloan and Mr. Snodgrass.

John Brown and the New Town

By Mrs. John Brown

The following is in answer to a request that something about John's business experiences in the new town be included.

Before the lots in the new town were offered for sale, John was hauling lumber and building materials from Hooker, Oklahoma, and piling it south of the present site of the Santa Fe Railroad Station.

John was reared on a ranch south of Hugoton. He understood the Southwest and its people. He anticipated the long wagon trains from the northwest, hauling grain to the new town and taking stocks of merchandise back to the small towns and ranches that were without railroad in Colorado. Similar conditions existed to the southwest in Oklahoma.

He bought one of the first lots sold. He knew that hundreds of teams would need feed and rest between the long hauls. The Red Front Feed Barn was one of the first to open for business. Three days after the workmen started building and before the roof was on it, the "freighters" were bringing their wagon teams there to spend the night. John built a small addition to it for an office and allowed the men to make their coffee there. They brought their "chuck" boxes with them and slept in bunk beds at the barn.

After he built up a good business he sold the barn and bought other buildings. He spent his time working and making investments. He worked a while at the Amsden Lumber Company when Vern Gracey was manager. He also worked at the Blackburn and Firmin General Merchandise Store. He had known both Mr. Blackburn and Mr. Firmin at Hugoton for many years.

John was married to Miss Emma Cartmell April 12, 1914. He was the first man in the new town to build a home for his bride. He had a four room cottage built and furnished before their marriage. The house was painted snowy white. People remarked about the "shine" it had in the moonlight. Before the white paint dried, a sandstorm blew in and changed the color and gave it a rough sand finish.

The bride did not get to see the "white" house. It was brown ever after. About three years later the Browns' moved to a new home in the north part of town. They sold their first home to the Charles Suttons'.

In 1926-28 John held the agency for the J. I. Case Tractors and Combines. He sold them on credit, carrying the notes and mortgages himself. He bought notes and mortgages. He cashed public sale notes when the banks did not cash them.

Some time after the Morton County State Bank became insolvent and was closed, John Brown and W. N. Muncy bought the assets at public auction.

In 1929-30 John leased thousands of acres of land for oil and gas in Eastern Colorado and in Morton County, Kansas. He turned the greater part of them to the Argus Gas Company of Hugoton. This was about the time that Terrill and Casper were preparing to drill a gas well eight miles northwest of Elkhart.

Cleal Winters, an experienced oil man from Wichita, accompanied John in leasing and wrote up the leases. He often expressed astonishment at the confidence the landowners had in John's integrity. It was a boost to the farmers to have cash payments for their leases at that time, although the leases were dropped eventually.

At that time John was farming some. He owned 5,500 acres of land in the area but when the "Dust Bowl" developed, he reduced his acreage to 3,000 acres of land and 1,500 acres of mineral rights. He does not know why he valued the mineral rights as any-

thing at all at the time. Land was cheap and mineral rights were cheaper, but he kept both.

Travel has been John's chief recreation. The Browns' began their travels in 1926-27 in California and returned there for the winter of 1928-29. In 1930-31 they spent the winter in Florida and Cuba. In 1932 they visited Hawaii for three months. John is now planning his fourth trip to Hawaii. He likes Ocean travel best.

John is enjoying his years of retirement just as he did his most active years in business. He always enjoyed his work. He remains active. Now, August, 1961, he and Mrs. Brown have just completed a tour of the Canadian Rockies and a cruise to Alaska.

When the Browns' returned from a voyage that took them around the world last year, John restated his faith in the Great Southwest as being the best place to live and he thinks it has been a privilege to have had even a small part in helping to develop it.

Mrs. John Brown and the New Town

By Mrs. John (Emma) Brown

It was a strange experience to be a new citizen in the one-year-old town. When the slow train pulled in to Elkhart two days after their marriage, John and Emma Brown were met by a group who showered them with rice. Among them were Mrs. R. D. Stratton and Mrs. Harry (Ethel) Roberts.

The first night in town there was a charivari. They were serenaded with discordant hoises, tin horns, kettles, dishpans, and what not. It was stated that Mrs. Larkey, an elderly woman, was the only person in town not present. At the open door there was a sea of faces--all strange to the bride.

John's Mother had previously visited him and arranged everything in its place in the new home--even to the table set for two. Harry Adams, Very Gracy, Muriel Lamkin, and another girl proceeded to the kitchen to arrange things for fun. The boys drew Snookums (a baby in a comic strip of the day) with fresh varnish on the new board floor of the pantry. Whoever did the art work should have become an artist. No one ever admitted doing it.

Few families had homes at that time. Most of them had made apartments in the rear of their business establishments. Mrs. Clyde Washburn entertained for the bride. It was a never-to-be-forgotten occasion. The bride realized for the first time that she had grown up. She was no longer associating with girls but with married women. Mrs. Washburn was a charming hostess, a woman of understanding and rare good taste. It was there that the bride met the group of women with whom she would be associating for many years to come.

No history of Elkhart would be complete without mentioning the cultural phases of the new town. Churches were being established, study clubs were soon studying and social clubs were forming.

An orchestra was meeting for practice at the W. J. Blackburn home. Mr. Blackburn and Emma Brown played the only violins in the group. It is recalled that Florence Blackburn, who was pianist and who had an excellent ear for tone, stopped the orchestra while it was going full blast.

"The violins are not in tune with the piano," she announced.

"The piano, then, is out of tune," quipped her husband.

There were many laughs at the practice hour in those first attempts to play together. The orchestra was called upon to play for public programs in those early days.

A few years later the orchestra grew to a larger group and met regularly at the John Brown home. Mrs. Ted Smith became pianist. Mr. O. V. Partch was probably the best musician in the town. He played in the Pasadena, California band in the Tournament of Roses after he left Elkhart. Mr. Partch played cornet or trumpet. He explained his excellent tones by saying it was due more to the shape of his lips. He disliked to see children encouraged to play the cornet when the shape of their mouth could not possibly adapt to the technique.

Revival meetings were held in different churches, usually in the winter months. Emma played the violin for these meetings. She never refused to play for any revival, whatever the church, if it were possible to do so. Often a revival would continue for two weeks or longer. She enjoyed sacred music. She sang in the choir or played her violin, whatever the occasion demanded. However, there were some churches at the time that believed the violin was an instrument of the devil.

The most unusual request she ever had, was to play for a funeral in the country. The man who passed away had heard her play at church and had told his wife that he would like that for his funeral. There was no other musical instrument there and the quartet that sang requested her to give them their pitch. They even asked her to go to the cemetery, where they would sing, to give them their pitch.

Emma organized the Coterie Club. She was acquainted with the work being done in the Hugoton Woman's Club and felt there was a need in Elkhart for a good study club. Mrs. R. B. Mays had lived in Hugoton and was an enthusiastic assistant in getting Coterie organized. Emma was elected to serve as the first president. She arranged to have Mae C. Patrick, District President, to come to Elkhart to make the necessary arrangements to receive the club into the Kansas Federation of Women's Clubs. The meeting was held in the Brown home.

During that term of office the club started a public library. Mr. T. M. Deal of Wichita, contributed the greatest number of books and greatly encouraged the struggling club to continue their interest. It was a great undertaking but the members voted to do it and gave of their own time to hold the library open during library hours. Mrs. Mayo Thomas sent several volumes and much encouragement. The Liberal Library gave several volumes of their duplicate reference works to the Elkhart Library.

Emma helped organize the Elkhart Music Club, which joined the National Federation of Music Clubs in 1924. By 1926, when Emma was President, the place of meeting was the Methodist Church with forty-three active members. The Club studied French Composers that year. Their programs were made up of compositions from Gounod, Chopin, Massanet, Debussy, Dubois, Bizet, Faure, Saint Saens, Chaminade and others.

Mrs. Ted Smith asked Emma to assist her in organizing a Junior Music Club. A large number of girls joined the club and held their guest night meetings at Emma's home. The girls received their assignments from their year book and practiced their parts at the regular meetings. On guest night they had their mothers and other guests, for the audience, to hear them recite their assignments.

Because of the dearth of violins in the community, the High School Director of music prevailed upon Emma to assist her in the instrumental numbers in her programs. She became well acquainted with the girls and cheerfully loaned her dresses to the senior girls to wear in stage plays.

She taught violin lessons to children and adults but at no time did she feel qualified to be called "teacher". She did it because there as no one else to fill a need that existed in the community.

The greatest surprise Emma Brown had was after taking a course in Red Cross "Home Nursing" following World War I. Dr.Hansen stopped his car at her door and, without any previous notice, told her that he had brought Miss Conn, a registered nurse, for Emma to take care of. He said, as far as he could determine, she had pneumonia or was bordering on it.

The Browns were building a large, new, roomy home at the time, and during the building they had moved in to their small rental property until the new house was ready for occupancy. The small house had only a small bedroom and no heat nor room for a stove in it. It was cold. Emma's heart sank. It would not be easy to nurse a professional nurse under any condition but it seemed utterly impossible under existing circumstances. However, there was no hospital, she needed good care and there was no choice in the matter. Emma still wonders how she ever got through the long, drawn-out nursing and how the patient ever survived. There was no outside help of any kind and no expense to the patient. She had told the Doctor she would let him know if she needed him and she

did not call him. The Browns' took care of her the best they could. She regained her health and later worked at the Tucker Hospital.

The new home mentioned above, was constructed by Louie Keinath and Jess Wilson. It was well-built and beautifully finished. When John's Father came to live with them, they decided to take him to a warmer climate. They sold their home with its beveled plate glass entrance, twin sets of beveled plate glass French Doors, full length beveled plate mirror doors in three rooms, and lovely matched-oak floors.

In forty-seven years of married life, the Browns' have never mortgaged their home but this house was mortgaged sometime after they sold it. A Great Bend Loan Company moved the house to Great Bend, Kansas, a neighboring city of the Browns' present home town, Hutchinson, Kansas.

Pioneer Days in Elkhart

By Nell Blackburn

I read about Pioneer Days in Elkhart with interest. My family moved from Hugoton to Elkhart in 1913, which must have been in the first year of the town. I was six years old at the time.

I went, my first year of school in the Baptist Church, where all eight grades were taught by Rena Boaz, a small slip of a girl, who handled the whole group extremely well. As I recall, we did not have desks, but sat in the pews, going to the front of the building to recite and had one small portable blackboard.

My father had the first general merchandise store in Elkhart. He was partners with a man named Firmin, and they had a store in Hugoton also, and, because my father was the younger, he was the one sent to the new town to pioneer (so to speak). The store was known as "Blackburn and Firmin Mercantile Company." The name was on the side of the building for some years after they had sold it to Maricle--they did a lot of wholesale merchandising to inland towns and it was not uncommon to see five or six big freighter wagons with six horse teams, lined up to load at our warehouse.

The only houses in the town at the time we came, had been moved in from the country, as lumber and carpenters were a luxury we did not have. And everyone was in such a hurry to get in on the ground floor, all new building and lumber was used for the business buildings--even the Post Office was moved in from a cross roads station.

A lot of these houses had been abandoned for years and were infested with centipedes and mice and the townsite must have been a rattlesnake den because we had so many of them.

I remember that the men of town had to fight prairie fires practically every day, because the sparks from train engines would set fire to the tall buffalo grass and the constant winds would do the rest--the first summer we were there we could often see the fire from the town and only a shift of the wind saved us.

The only water we had was hauled in from out of town where there was a windmill. Everyone had cisterns to fill and paid a dollar a load for water, which was a lot of money in those days. If we had not been extremely healthy and in a healthy climate, we probably would have all died from typhoid--we did have an epidemic among the Mexican laborers who were working on the railroad track and drinking water from a water tower which was open at the top, and was for the purpose of putting water in the engines.

It took all day for the train to come from Dodge City and all day to go back, and I recall that the train crew would stop the train long enough for the people to buy watermelon and green corn from farmers along the way. Some of the passengers would pick wild flowers. The track was so new that the train moved slowly and we used to say, "Anyone could have walked along side and keep up with no trouble," but we had fun and counted all the trips as sort of a picnic excursion.

The only ice we had was from an occasional refrigerator car and the train staying overnight, the ice melting, the train crew would dole the ice out to the town people.

My family was always very busy, and I was quite young, so I do not remember much of civic nature or of general interest, that happened.

Coming to the West as a Bride

By Mrs. Irene Kuder

I will enjoy writing about interesting incidents. This is the beginning of my nineteenth year in office and I am deeply grateful for the employment.

I had learned to love the big old graystone Courthouse with its shadowy circular halls, old stairways and many rooms. It looked like an old castle rising up from the prairie--and it held so many precious memories for old settlers.

From the first day I came here, I found the best teachers to help me to learn this work. They were E. M. Dean, Bertha Hjort, Maggie Tipton and Rose Little, as well as Probate Judge, Geo. H. Terrill who shared my office room and the vault. He taught me continuously and patiently. The courthouse was burned in 1950, and we moved into our present location in 1952.

I was married in October of 1914 to Harry Kuder who lived on a homestead west of Elkhart. We came by train from Dodge City and the train was stopped along the way long enough for the crewmen and passengers to even go hunting awhile. We were met at the Elkhart depot by Elkhart friends of the Kuder family, and welcomed with rice and old shoes.

We visited a while with Mr. and Mrs. Frank Nason, who had their living apartment in the back room of Mr. Nason's Real Estate office.

Crops were good that fall. We had stacks of feed into late winter.

In early February of 1915, a prairie fire swept in upon us. Fire guards helped to save our house, but our barns and sheds were burned. There were nine men from Elkhart who came to help fight the fire.

There was a strong and friendly spirit of cooperation among the people in those early years. We set out trees that grew tall. Prairie chickens and quail were in droves. We had no crop failures.

Early in 1919, the influenza epidemic was raging. A blizzard was on and the snow was drifted. Dr. Tucker was called to a home just west of us. Horses were changed twice before Dr. Tucker reached our home. My husband drove our team and took the doctor on to this home. The snow had covered all roads and fences and as they tried to drive back to our house, they found they were driving around in circles. The doctor advised Harry to let the horses find their way. He did and they reached our home safely through the storm.

After my husband died in 1922, I moved back east but returned again in 1932 and my son, Leland and daughter Nolia graduated from the Elkhart High School. We still own the homestead west of Elkhart.

Southwest Kansas, Our Home

By J. Floyd Breeding,
Congressman, 5th District, Kansas

Southwest Kansas has been my home for thirty-three years. Mrs. Breeding and I moved to Rolla with our two sons, Charles and Ralph, in August, 1928. Southwest Kansas was a new country then and great portions of it were still in grass.

It wasn't long after we started farming and ranching that we discovered the great productivity of this land. It seemed that the soil had everything in it that a plant desired and as long as we received plenty of rainfall, we could grow abundant crops.

Then the bad years of the "Thirties" struck us and everyone knows what that did to our country. Many of us had the determination to stick it out, knowing the richness of the soil and that if rainfall ever came, the land would again be productive. With many of our neighbors, Mrs. Breeding and I and our two sons weathered out the bad times in Morton County. We did everything possible to earn a few dollars in order to provide for our bare necessities.

At that time we owned no portion of any acres in Western Kansas. It seemed at times that it would be impossible for us to stay another year. However, the years rolled on and beginning in 1939 and until 1949, the rains came and the snows came and our country was like a garden spot of the world. It was the reward for many long years of drouth and suffering for those of us who have persevered. When the country came back, we were there to come back with it because of our faith in this land--the country was good to us.

Irrigation now coming into this great area has all the possibilities of making this country the most productive of all. We are doing some research on a program to bring the water in from the Great Lakes or from the many rivers in Canada down through the High Plains area. This water will irrigate perhaps twenty million acres. Presently, many areas are getting underground water but eventually, that may play out, so let us do some tall thinking. It may cost ten billion dollars to complete this program. In years to come, we may need more food. It is something to think about. Southwest Kansas will never be far away from us because that is our home and the people who live there are our finest friends.

When Elkhart Was a New Town

By Flora Lamkin McClung

I came to Elkhart in 1914, the town's second year. My sister, Mrs. Muriel Bradford, was there the first year and was one of the first employees there. I came to attend the high school. We stayed in the home of our older sister, Mrs. Will Blackburn. I entered school in the mid-term of my freshman year. A mixed grade and first year high school was the only high school offered at that time and was held in the I.O.O.F. Hall over a store building on the corner directly across main street from the building which is now The Tri-State News Office. Our teacher was Mr. Sam Yaggy who became a farmer east of Elkhart later on.

The following year, a school house was built. It was a two-story frame building which I believe has been razed in recent years. I graduated with the second graduating class of this school. The building was ample for both grade and high school until 1919. Then I taught the overflew, the first and second grades, in the Christian Church. This was the year, you mentioned Mrs. Ketchum, that your children were my pupils. It was my second year of teaching; my first year was in Eastern Kansas. Soon after

that, a new high school was put up. It is one of the buildings still being used at the west site.

I have pictures of the first domestic science class and of the basketball teams, the boys and the girls teams. Neither the boys or girls team had enough for opponent teams, so we played against each other. The bruises were numerous but we could certainly turn on the "rough stuff" if the teams from other towns started something. These were the teams that formed the nucleus of the "association" which presented the trophy to the high school some years later. Perhaps it is still in the trophy room.

I have a picture of a sign board which was put up about as soon as the town was started. It advertised "Blackburn and Firmin General Store" "J. A. Swan Grocery" and "The Star Lumber Company". W. C. Washburn was manager and I think he was also the first mayor of Elkhart.

We earned money to buy the first piano in the high school by giving plays. Many of us became, we thought, first class actors and actresses. At the time, our superintendent of schools was Mr. H. J. Davis. He was an excellent director and our efforts were a lot of fun as well as profitable for the school.

The efforts of our class to have a banquet for the first graduating class are best told by Velma McClung and have become history, I think. As I remember, Louie Keinath built the skating rink in 1916. That was the gathering place for all ages. Cecil Smith, the editor's son, was manager there and he, being one of us, enhanced the place. This skating rink was behind the bank building (where the Assembly of God Church now stands). It was used for different social gatherings, dances, and parties. When six of the Elkhart boys went to the army during the first world war, their farewell party was held there.

Velma McClung and I had sang a good many duets all through high school and we sang at this farewell party, hemmed in by well-wishers and with tears streaming down our faces. These were boys we had gone to school with and I believe they all returned safely.

The New Town of Elkhart

By Muriel Lamkin Bradford

I was born in Stevens County, so I really know more about early days there, however, I came to Elkhart in the fall of 1913, and will give some of the facts as I remember them.

When the railroad was built down into Southwest Kansas from Dodge City, it missed the Sid Post Office by a few miles. Sid was named for Sid Fessenden who was postmaster at the time and later he was a butcher in the Blackburn and Firmin Meat Market.

When Elkhart was laid out on the railroad, they moved the Sid Post Office in and renamed it "Elkhart" Post Office. The Santa Fe Land Company owned the land and plotted and sold lots.

As I remember, the first business buildings were The Star Lumber Company, managed by Clyde Washburn, The Welsh's Store managed by Dan Welsh, The Bloodhart Drug Company with Charley Bloodhart and Marian Poorman as co-owners, The Bradford Auto Company managed by C. C. Bradford, Blackburn and Firmin General Merchandise managed by Will Blackburn, the Nason Land Company with Frank Nason and Harry Adams as managers, the L. L. Hogan Transfer, Dr. Bibler and Dr. Wright, Dentists, and Dr. Tucker who was the only medical doctor at the time. He moved from Postal, Oklahoma.

The first newspaper was the Elkhart Enterprise owned by J. E. Burks. He later sold it to Eugene Smith and Sons and the name was changed to Tri-State News.

As to churches, I think the First Baptist Church was the first church organized there. I could be wrong about some of these but this is as I remember.

Horse and Wagon Days of Early Settlers

By Don Welsh

I remember a newly married couple living in the Richland Center school district, forty miles from Guymon. The husband went alone to Guymon for some supplies and, being gone a few days, the newly wed wife had a neighbor take her to Guymon to look for him, fearing some trouble. On the same day, he had started home, but they missed each other on the road. This went on for three trips before they both finally arrived at the same place at the same time!

Elkhart's first fourth of July, pop on ice, Earl Tucker (older brother of Edd and Allen) and I took his father's wagon and team and went to Guymon and brought to Elkhart a wagon load of ice and soda pop for the fourth of July celebration of 1913--the round trip was some eighty miles.

After we loaded up, we traveled from late afternoon, all that night arriving in Elkhart the following forenoon--most of the ice was used to keep the pop cool and the pop sold for (5) five cents a bottle--who (in these days) would travel eighty miles with wagon and team for a bottle of cold pop at any price?

I hustled freight and express at the depot in 1914--when you could ship in beer and whiskey from Kansas City and other points east. I don't believe anyone ever got their shipment in daytime at regular hours. They always waited until dark, hunted me up, and asked for a special favor. That way, no one knew who had what or how much. I drew $39.65 per month for eight-hour days--six days a week. I even bought a town lot or two with my savings.

Law enforcement is always a hard job in a new town, and there was one cow hand who had been good at pushing the City Marshal around when I was one of the City Council. So we appointed a new one--he was a man that never had an enemy--never talked much but got things done quietly. He stepped into a pool hall where this cow hand was having a brawl going, put his hand on his shoulder and told him to quiet down. This cow hand made a rush at the marshal, and came to in the local hospital with his scalp split open. The marshal never said a word, but at the next council meeting, there on the mayor's desk was his written resignation, and the marshal was there too. The mayor said, "What is this for, marshal?" to which he answered, "It cost several dollars to patch up this man's head." The mayor said, "We have several thousand dollars in the treasury and I don't know of a better place to spend it; you just keep on splitting heads if it is necessary to have law and order and we will buy the repairs."

There used to be a smart bootlegger that brewed up his rat poison in Oklahoma. The reason it was called rat poison, it was reported that he had trouble with rats getting into his mash barrels and drowning and had to be fished out. He drove a very fine team to a buggy and would come into Elkhart to dispose of his wares. He wore a big fur coat that had many pockets on the inside of it, for a quick delivery. One day the new town marshal arrested him while he was still sitting in his buggy. He told the marshal he had left a big amount of his wares at the edge of town and if he would get in the buggy with him, they would go and get it. The marshal got in the buggy with him and they started out south. The bootlegger picked up the whip and put the horses in a dead run, and the marshal was so busy hanging on, the first thing he knew he was across the line in Oklahoma. Then the horses were stopped and the marshal was let out and invited to walk back to Elkhart, Kansas --one-half mile away. Elkhart got a new city law man.

The Olden Days Around Elkhart

By E. Rae Stillman

These are some of the experiences of my folks and myself as I remember them.

In 1907, my father, Eugene D. Stillman, heard of a colony of Seventh Day Baptist making a settlement around Cosmos, Oklahoma, decided to join them and filed on a claim two miles east of where Elkhart now is. The rest of the family did not go with my father at that time, but soon afterward, my oldest brother, Ernest W. Stillman, joined him and filed on and proved up on the 160 acres joining my father on the west.

Within a year or two, my older sister, Mrs. Helen Asmus, who was a widow with three children, joined him and filed on a strip of land along the state line, south of where Elkhart now is. This strip of land was one and a half miles long and contained about

one hundred fifty acres. She later married Homer H. Sherman and they had a house and other buildings on the hill just southeast of the Elkhart townsite.

In October, 1912, my mother died at Battlecreek, Michigan, where we were living with my brother, Linne Stillman. My father came to the funeral and I returned with him to his claim. The following spring my brother Linne drove a new Model T Ford from Battlecreek, Michigan, and joined the rest of us.

At the first sale of town lots, my father bought one on the south side of main street, but later was offered three times what he had paid for it and he sold it and bought another one on the side street and built a two story cement block building next to the Morton County State Bank building. There he established a Real Estate and Farm Loan office, and with it, a seed store.

I can well remember the first few days of Elkhart, all the hustle and bustle of moving buildings in from the countryside, getting businesses started, and laying foundations for new buildings.

There was a real shortage of water; and I hauled water in barrels on a wagon from our well on the farm and from some of our neighbor's wells and sold it for one dollar a barrel. And some who bought it from me sold some of it for twenty-five cents per bucketful. In the spring of 1920, it came to my attention that they could not get anyone to stay with the job of carrying the mail on Rural Route No. 1, and, as I was needing a job, I took it as a temporary carrier. I carried it until about July 1, 1921, when George Bradshaw accepted the regular job as mail carrier. In August of the same year I took the appointment of clerk in the post office and held that until August of 1933.

We now live in Shiloh, New Jersey.

Reminiscing

By Viola Muncy

Back in the days of the early Pioneers of Morton County, and its neighbor on the South--Texas County, Oklahoma, there were two universal wants, which should be spelled out in capital letters--Rain and a Railroad. Rain was, and is, the most important need of the country, but the railroad was a close second. Many rumors of plans for a road being built into this part of Kansas--each one being a sure thing!--were heard every few months, until no one believed one would ever come!

But finally a crew of surveyors worked southwest of Dodge City, and the road was planned to come into Morton County, ending at the Kansas-Oklahoma State line, where the town of Elkhart was laid out, and the road was completed in a relatively short time

because of the level lay of the land, and in April, 1913, the first train whistled into town. One old timer who lived near the right of way, sold out and moved out into Colorado, declaring he was not going to have his children and livestock killed by that black monster! But the greater majority of the population were most happy to have the road come, for it meant less travel to market with horse and wagon, and to buy food and clothing for the family. Some adults had never before seen a locomotive and train, and came many miles to bring the entire family to see it.

One evening, soon after the train began making its regular trips, the people of the town were puzzled to hear the train begin whistling before it came into sight around the bend, and to continue whistling until it reached the station, but they found someone's horse, more brave than the most of the horses in the country, had walked onto the tracks, and no amount of whistling could induce it to get off until good and ready!

The first businesses in town set up "shop" in tents until a building could be erected, and some homes were in tents, too. The wind and dust storms caused the women folks to rue the day they landed here, but they stayed on and Elkhart grew and grew, and is still growing.

Old timers look back on "the good old days" with a mixture of feelings, but the clock cannot be turned back even if one wished to do so--but who would?

The Mayberrys Choose Elkhart as Their Home

By Marian Mayberry

It seems so long ago that Willard decided to give up a teaching career and enter the newspaper field--he had worked his way through college by reporting on the Emporia Gazette under the late William Allen White. He and his father looked over many communities before settling on Elkhart, but they both loved the prairie country and the warm friendliness of the people they found here.

In May of 1928 Willard bought the Tri-State News from Mrs. Eugene Smith. The plant was located just next door to what is now the Lion's Den. We were married in August of this same year and, of course, ran into many problems and adjustments, but the W. C. Washburns, the George Gears, the Jesse Maricles, the Ralph Peacocks and so many more were very helpful and graciously gave us good advice.

Sometimes, the Saturday night fights on Main street--the Downs boys returning home singing and shooting--the bank robbery with the later hunting and capturing of the Major's gang--the county seat fights and their scars and the political battles were all rather upsetting to me, but thoroughly enjoyed by Willard.

During these early years Willard helped organize, and was a charter member of, the Lion's Club and the Elkhart Chamber of Commerce.

We moved the newspaper to its present location in 1930 in what had been the old Morton County bank building. Through these years so many fine men and women, and boys and girls worked on the newspaper. A few that come to mind are: Janella Powell, Elton Carter, Ray Stillman, Jesse Cutler, Vivian Muncy, "Mickey" James, Byron Hubbard, Glenn Hymes, Don, Athol and Earl Craver, as well as our two daughters, Marilyn and Jocelyn, and many others.

In 1932 we left Elkhart for four years--first to Topeka where Willard was Secretary to Governor Alf Landon, and then a short time in Liberal again in newspaper work. During this time and later, the paper was leased to Mr. and Mrs. Robt. Swenson, Walter Pyle, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Shade, and lately to Jim Tucker who bought the paper in May of this year.

In the meantime, because this was an agricultural community, we became deeply interested and involved in all phases of farming and cattle raising, also acquiring the Chevrolet franchise. Willard served for several years as Highway Director for this district and for nearly ten years was gone, off and on, in the wintertime as a speaker on the Knife and Fork Club circuit.

We had early drilling for gas in the county but it was a discouraging attempt. The dust years of course reduced any activity along these lines and the hard times saw the town and county dwindle in the '30s to less than half the population it had when we came in 1928.

Perhaps the best of all these years, in looking back, has been watching the rewarding of those who had faith in the country and did stay through the bad years--the prosperity of the good years in farming and the real development of the gas and oil in Morton County.

Willard died suddenly in February of 1959, but we have both felt it a wonderful privilege to live and work in the high plains country, and especially Elkhart.

Real Down-to-earth People

By Georgia Tucker Smith

I am afraid I used the stories most interesting to me, about pioneer days, in my book "Leave it to Miss Annie". However, I shall mention a few things that especially impressed me.

One was my teaching five pre-school children and the first, second and third grades in the small one roomed Baptist Church. Two men teachers taught the other grades in other buildings. One was up over a pool hall and I think the other was in a store building.

Three of the pre-school children were Doris Hogan, Myrtle Posey and Rex Blackburn. The two girls lived side by side next to our house and knew me so well that discipline was a hard thing to make them understand. Doris left her seat so many times that first day that I had her come and sit by my desk. Nothing could have pleased her more. Myrtle immediately started for my desk too. I had her return to her seat, hold up her hand and wait until I gave her permission to speak. When I did, she said, "Can I come up there and sit by you too?" I had to change my form of punishment.

Then one day when I talked to this class about growing things, I asked each of them what kind of a flower he or she would like to be. To my surprise, Rex said, "I don't want to be a flower and just stand still and grow, I want to be a tumbleweed and just roll and roll and roll."

We had to make our own entertainment. Mr. and Mrs. Billy Blackburn organized an orchestra of several members. She played the piano, he the violin, Cecil Smith the cornet and I the flute --to begin with. Others were added later. We seldom played for the public but we surely enjoyed practicing together. Ted Smith played trombone in this orchestra. At Christmas time there was a tree and a varied program in Mr. Blackburn's store. Everyone gave of what talent he had. After the program there was dancing. The costumes ranged from evening dress and pumps to cowboy outfits, boots and spurs. Of course there were programs in the churches too, at Christmas time.

Then the skating rink was built across the street from our house and a few of us, who were not supposed to dance, stayed after the skating was over, closed the big double doors towards our house, and danced to the music of the player piano.

Then, in the summertime, there were always picnics, although we had to go many miles to find trees. Of course we could always go to Point Rocks and though there was seldom water in the river, we at least had a windbreak at the Point. And, for a few years, we were honored with a Chautauqua in Elkhart.

These are some of the things I remember of the "early days". I enjoyed it all; and I feel lucky to have had this experience in a pioneer town that brought so many real down to earth people together.

Bank Robbers Find Elkhart Citizens On Their Toes

(Taken from newspaper reports and court records)

It was around mid-day, July 14, 1932, that the spectacular case had its beginning. Don Welsh, who was then in business with his father, Dan Welsh, operator of the Welsh Hardware Store, noticed two strange men walking toward the First National Bank about three doors away.

Closely watching the pair as they entered the bank, Welsh saw both men draw guns from their pockets. Rushing back into the store, he explained to his father as he reached for his high-powered Winchester deer rifle. Knowing that the bandits would probably head south toward Oklahoma to make their get-away, Welsh went up the alley where he had a good view of the street south of the bank. Meanwhile, inside the bank, R. M. Clogston, vice-president, Jim Pate, assistant cashier, and Bob Bundy, another bank employee, were making business transactions with customers, when the bandits, guns in hand, shouted, "This is a stick-up." Clogston and Bundy, as well as one of the customers, were ordered to go into the vault. Pate was ordered to sit still at his desk, while other customers were ordered to go into the bank office. One elderly man, who was hard of hearing, did not understand their commands and started to reach into his pocket to get a handkerchief. Thinking he was going for a gun, one bandit struck him on the head with a gun. The force of the blow caused the gun to go off, and the elderly man slumped to the floor unconscious. Besides a deep gash on his head, he suffered a broken hip when he fell.

Welsh heard the gunshot report just as he lifted his rifle from its wall rack in his hardware store. The bandits, later identified as Ray Majors and Fred K. Cody, hurriedly scooped up approximately $850.00 and raced to their get-away car. As Majors jumped into the car, a shotgun was jolted out of the front seat onto the floor with such force that it went off, the blast striking the driver, a Frank Albertson, on the right leg.

The loot from the bank was thrown into the rear of the car. Albertson, although wounded, started driving south at a fast pace and Welsh opened fire with his rifle. Also opening fire on the bandits was Reed Garten, another of Elkhart's vigilantes. Both men had to fire with caution as some of the townspeople stepped into their line of fire, but Welsh got one clear shot at them and heard the powerful slug hit the bandit's car. It was later learned that the bullet struck the already wounded Albertson in the left leg.

Sheriff Walter Ford, upon being informed of the daring robbery, moved quickly with the assistance of Willard Mayberry and other townsmen, to form a posse to search for the bandits, but the gangsters had thrown sharp-pointed roofing nails out the car window onto the road and the tires of the possemen's cars blew out as they drove over the road. However, about half of the stolen money was found along the road where it had blown out of the bandits' car and was returned to the bank. The search for the bandits was resumed. Following one lead after another, the posse, led by Sheriff Walter Ford, tracked down all of the three bandits. Albertson and Cody pleaded guilty in the District Court at Richfield and both received long terms in the State Penitentiary at Lansing, Kansas. Majors, pleading "not guilty", elected to stand trial. He went to stand trial before Judge F. O. Rindom in the Richfield Courthouse early in September. The jury found him guilty as charged.

A motion was filed for a new trial and the hearing date was set for September 23. An appearance bond was set at $40,000.00. On the date set for the hearing, the motion was denied. Majors was given a life-term sentence in the penitentiary. After serving five years of his sentence, Majors, who had suffered nineteen gunshot wounds during his violent career, died quietly behind prison walls, closing the last chapter of his life, having once been critically wounded by Cody, his partner in crime.

Early-day Experiences

By Zinnia Frieholtz

H. W. Frieholtz, wife Zinnia, and children came west in a covered wagon in the fall of 1905 and homesteaded a quarter of land in the Panhandle of Oklahoma. We landed there almost penniless, financially, but we had managed to hold onto enough money to file on the land, which was to be our future home.

We had to stop on the way out and work for a couple weeks cutting wood for a farmer, to buy grain for the horses, as well as food for ourselves, in order to make it through. We came from Ochelata, Indian Territory.

Zinnia's parents (Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Horner) came out a couple years later and filed on a quarter over in Morton County, Kansas.

One of their neighbors from back east came out a year later and stopped at our house to ask where they were located; and that they too wanted to file on a homestead if there were any more available. Hank told them that they might find a quarter to file on over in Kansas; and that my father could give them more information on getting located, than he could.

They were driving a team, and asked the children and I to go along to show them the way, which we were very anxious to do, for there was nothing like going up to see Grandma and Grandpa. They had moved west for the purpose of being where they could see us more often.

When we got to their place, no one was at home. We saw tracks and followed them to the Cimarron River, and there met a sight that stunned us all. My father's little iron-wheeled wagon was stuck in the quicksand in mid-stream. I was so frightened I couldn't say a word; I could only see my dear parents floating helplessly down that swift and swollen tide. Little Mildred, four and a half years old, said, "Mamma, is Grandma drowned?" with tears trickling down her cheeks. Then, with excited voice, Bill said, "Oh look Zinnia! There they are, and they see us and are walking down here; we don't see your daddy, but your mother is with them and will tell us all about it." She told us that she and daddy were both working at the Combs ranch and that daddy was out in the field and was all right. Such a relief!

Mother said they had come over the evening before and thought they could ford the river, and drove in. One of the cowboys saw them, and knew that it was too deep to cross and went to them. He found them marooned out in the deepest part, trying to get the team loose from the wagon so they could swim out, but they were going down in the quicksand.

He helped mother up on the horse, behind him, and told daddy to hold onto the lasso that he threw to him, and by holding on, he managed to wade out behind them. They saved the horses by a hair's breadth. The water barrel, and everything loose in the wagon bed, floated away. The bed would have only daddy tied the bed to the running gears before driving in.

The wagon was left where it was stuck until the river ran down low enough that they could dig it out with shovels.

This and many other early day experiences I don't see how we ever lived through. Yet there seems to always be a few left to tell the tales of long ago. Even to the dust bowl days when the wind blew so hard that you had to hold your hat on in the house, and burn kerosene lamps tiying to penetrate the dense darkness that prevailed during the huge black rollers that lasted for hours and sometimes days at a time. One day I came home and found that my whole ceiling had fallen in from the weight of the heavy sand that had accumulated for years past. I will never be able to forget about the hardships the early settlers endured, along with many lives lost in the building up of a new country from the raw, so others might enjoy the modern conveniences in the homes that we have today. However, the past, we like living in Kansas, where we and the wind blow together, and pioneer spirit stands the test in all kinds of weather.

Early Hotel Service in Elkhart

By Edward Denning

My mother has asked that I give you what little information she may have concerning her residence in Morton County.

Her first night was spent here in April, 1915, camping out by the old Sid school house. My father and she were looking for farm land and did purchase some south of Rolla and North of Wilburton, spending some time in the summer of 1915 on the place south of Rolla, then returning to Kinsley. In 1917 she took over the operation of what is now the Morton Hotel and operated it for one year, again returning to Kinsley. In June, 1920, she took over the then Farmers Hotel and has operated it since as The Elkhart Hotel.

The hotel originally consisted of two separate buildings, the Annex which stood where the Sinclair Service Station now stands and which partially burned in 1929, the remaining part being moved to its present location next to Cities Service, having been

remodeled into an apartment building. The Hotel itself originally contained a dining room for guest service; this burned also in 1929. Probably seventy-five people could be seated at once, at long tables, served family style. For days on end, some three hundred or more were served at each meal in shifts. There were no sanitary facilities in the hotel, a long wooden trough metal lined with a cold water faucet being used by dining room guests to wash in. (They were supplied with tin wash basins). The rooms all contained a crockery wash basin and water pitcher, along with the old under the bed necessity. The outside sanitary facility was a two compartmented job of about six holes, which was on the west side and cold as the devil in the winter. There was no heating system in either building, except a large pot bellied stove in the office of the main building. Many a time the water pitchers in the rooms were frozen solid. One thing that was necessary was a goodly supply of bed covers in winter. The stove had a sand filled base under it, which was used by the customers who chewed tobacco. My mother got rid of that in a hurry. She was the second natural gas connection in town, having installed a hot water room heating system.

The thirties were terrible, the dirt being as bad inside the building as out due to its openness. During that time, the price of rooms just about hit bottom. Anywhere from ten cents to fifty cents, just about what could be gotten. One recollection was that in front of the hotel, the street being unpaved, the wagons kept the sand churned six inches or so deep continuously. However, there must have been a leak in the water system out there, as no matter how dry it would get, there was always a small mud hole there. Myself, I used to wonder about it a lot.

In those days, Richfield was quite a town, as also was Wilburton--both having restaurant, bank, post office, and most of the facilities of towns in this country. Rolla, if anything, also seemed larger then than now. There also seemed to be someone living on every quarter section of land in the county. We had lots of neighbors south of Rolla, and in walking distance. My dad brought as I believe, the first tractor to Morton County in 1915, breaking a lot of land out by custom hire. I do know my folks red Chevrolet car was a crowd attracter that year, everywhere they stopped, a group would gather around to look it over. However, the few model Ts about were much more dependable over the roads we had then. I imagine a team was used about as often coming to Rolla from the farm as was the car, the sand was just too deep to negotiate.

The People "Had a Mind to Work"

By Mrs. J. E. Burks

Our family being among the first to establish a home in Elkhart, Kansas, I shall be glad to tell of a few incidents that occurred there. It was thrilling news when we learned of the

Santa Fe railway building the "cut-off" from Dodge City, one hundred twenty miles southwest, and was to establish a new town, later to be called Elkhart.

My husband owned and operated a weekly newspaper, the Carthage Enterprise, at Carthage, in Texas County, Oklahoma, ten miles southwest of the present town of Elkhart. Carthage was an inland town which was soon moved to this new town. The newspaper press and office supplies were moved there. It was the town's first newspaper and was known as Elkhart Enterprise; the first edition was printed May 8, 1913. Later it was consolidated with the Richfield Monitor and re-named The Tri-State News.

A town lot sale had been held on April 29, 1913, and people came from far and near to establish homes and businesses. One of the first and most welcome business was a restaurant which was first started in a tent; the owner, operator and cook was a Mrs. Farmer, who also supervised the building of a much needed hotel.

The people desired to have churches and schools and they "had a mind to work" and soon established both. The Methodist Church had as their first pastor, Rev. J. R. Lathrop, the church being located where their present church now stands. The First Baptist Church had as their first pastor, Rev. A. W. Idhe; they built a church where their present church now stands. Other churches were soon built and the church buildings were used for school rooms until school buildings could be erected.

First telephone exchange, Clyde Gilmore, owner.
First telephone, with phone No. 1, was in the Real Estate office owned by Frank Nason.
First Bank was the Morton County Bank, owned by Mayo Thomas. The first lady cashier was Miss Lela Beck, who later became the wife of Rev. Roscoe Jerrell, Pastor of the M. E. Church.

The Nazarene Church was organized in early 1914, a frame building moved in and placed where their present church stands. Their first Pastor was Rev. Ray Poole. It was in the year of 1915 or 1916 when a tent meeting was being held just south of their church, with Rev. C. B. Fugget preaching. A group of robed "Klu-Klux-Klan" marched in one evening, and in appreciation of straight preaching, left an offering of three hundred dollars and marched out. Those were years that are remembered by early settlers as happy ones.

As time went on, many humorous incidents occurred. A young man who was a lover of animals, had a small menagerie which was a delight to all the children. Among these animals was a monkey which often ran loose. He once spied a small girl with a sack of candy and jerked it from her hand. She began to cry. When the owner, Raymond Drewery, heard of it, he replaced the candy in a larger amount. Little Mary Frances was happy again and when someone asked where she got so much candy, she replied, "The monkey's daddy gave it to me." At another time the same little girl was

asked what she thought about her daddy running for sheriff, and she replied, "I don't want my daddy to run for the sheriff, I faid he fall down."

Dr. Tucker and W. E. Frank, the blacksmith, having moved to the new town from Postle, Oklahoma, their wives were well acquainted. One day Mrs. Frank told the doctor's wife that Mr. Frank had had his first patient in competition with the doctor--she later explained that Mr. Frank had welded a brace on a man's wooden leg.

The Most Unforgettable Character I Met as a Child

By Myrtie Burks Spears

As I think of Morton County, I remember the happy days when the Burks family would go to visit the Ketchum family at Richfield and how we children would run and play in the corridors of that dear old famous Court House--and how cool it was inside there on a hot summer day ----

But I wish to write a tribute to

The Most Unforgettable Character I met as a child.

I attended grade school in the old frame school building in Elkhart. There was a kind and patient man who was the janitor of this building. His name was Mr. Chas. M. Shaw. Every weekday thru the winter months it was full of boys and girls going to school. At recess the children liked to run and play as the children today. Mr. Shaw, as he was called, seemed to watch over each one to see that they didn't get hurt while playing on the school grounds. Along with others, I would invariably run outside at recess without thinking I would need a wrap. I well remember seeing Mr. Shaw coming with an armful of wraps and helping us to put them on. Sometimes it was a coat, sometimes a hood to cover our cold ears and sometimes it was overshoes. Then off to play we went till we heard the bell that Mr. Shaw rang. I wonder if the same old bell ever rings now?

I can well remember when I was in the third grade. I broke an arm. This concerned Mr. Shaw and he helped to supervise my play that I didn't fall and break it over after the cast was taken off. I doubt if I would be alive today had it not been for this most understanding soul. I think of him and of all the children he has held in his arms, the jokes he's laughed at, the kids he's spoiled, the kind deeds he's hidden. I feel, as I am sure many others do, that the children that knew Mr. Shaw are more understanding, generous and loving than we would have been if he hadn't lived among us.

Mr. Shaw was the grandfather of Mrs. Thelma Salmon of Elkhart.

History of the William Willis Martin Family

By Mayme Ward Martin

Among the early settlers of Morton County is William Willis Martin, who came here in 1887, and no one better deserves extended mention in a history of this section, for his career has been full of interest and his achievements are well worth recording.

He was born near Ottumwa, Iowa, October 10, 1855, where he grew to manhood and was married to Mary Elizabeth Hill. He and his wife and two children moved first to Harper County, Kansas, where he proved up a pre-emption claim. This trip was made by rail. After a few years he and his family moved to Meade County, Kansas. After living there a short time, they moved to Morton County, near Richfield, traveling in a covered wagon, and there they put down roots. Their possessions were two span of mules, two cows and seven children, but through their industry and good judgment, they prospered. He and his sons freighted from Syracuse for several years, using four to six head of mules, pulling a wagon and a trail wagon. Then Mr. Martin engaged in stock raising of cattle, horses and mules.

Mr. Martin was very public-spirited and was always interested and active in anything that was for the good of his community and county. He was a loyal Republican and in 1902 was elected a member of the State Legislature, representing both Morton and Stevens Counties. He served his community in other ways, such as school board member for several years, township assessor, and for many years was a member of the Board of County Commissioners, serving with J. W. Beaty, J. E. Carpenter, J. C. Kilburn, John Campbell and Frank Stout.

He was a charter member of the Morton County State Bank and for years was one of the directors. His son, Harley, was cashier of the same bank about twelve years.

Both he and his wife were members of the Methodist Church. Mr. Martin was a life member of the board of stewards. Most of their children were also members of the same church.

The following children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Martin, six girls and four boys: Mrs. May McAdam, deceased; Elmer Martin (E.C.); Mrs. Pearl Dean; Harley A. Martin, deceased, who married Ina Harvey, daughter of Rev. George Harvey, pastor of the Richfield church at that time. Harley had three daughters, twin girls, and one later child who died in infancy. Harley and his family moved to Elkhart in 1913, where besides working in the bank, he worked for a while in the Port of Entry, and in the Elkhart Mill with J. E. Heintz. Harley worked tirelessly to help build the Methodist Church from the time it was just a "basement" until the time when it became the beautiful structure it is today, and until he moved from Elkhart. He was superintendent of the Sunday School and was a member of the choir. He was never too tired to do whatever he could for the church. While a young man, he attended a business college in Salina.

Other daughters are Mrs. Ethel Sipes; Mrs. Laura Norris; Mrs. Clara Van Gundy, and Mrs. Maud Dean. His son, Walter T. Martin, like Harley, was devoted to his church. He came to Richfield when eight months old, united with the church at fifteen years of age, became superintendent in his early twenties, and served in that capacity for thirty years; he really is a lifetime member, besides holding other offices. He was always interested in the betterment of the schools and served on the school board of District No. 6 for many years. The youngest son, Roy C. Martin, deceased, united with the church at an early age, but moved his membership to Wyoming where he later moved.

May McAdam served several years as Register of Deeds of Morton County. Elmer C. Martin served two terms as County Clerk. Clara Van Gundy served two terms as County Treasurer for herself, and two terms for her husband.

Early Day Events Around Elkhart

By Velma Bingham McClung

When I was approached during the Centennial year about writing something of interest in regard to the pioneer days of Morton County, I felt there were others who could far surpass me in writing events of Morton County. However, my Mother and I are pioneers and homesteader of a quarter section of land in the Oklahoma territory (which became a state in 1907) just across the line south of Elkhart about fifteen miles.

We moved to Elkhart, Kansas with the lot sale and watched the railroad come into Elkhart in May, 1913.

Mr. and Mrs. William Young, my stepfather and mother, came to Elkhart before the railroad arrived. He was employed by a company in St. Louis, Missouri, who were experimenting on the use of the prairie yucca plant, or more commonly called soap weeds. When word reached the east that a railroad was being built into the prairie country of Southwest Kansas, they sent a representative out to look things over, and Bill Young was chosen to ride the country and buy soap weeds.

The farmers were supposed to dig the plant and deliver it to town for shipment to St. Louis. The experiment proved unsuccessful financially as the freight charges were too excessive for the profit received.

It was proven that by-products, such as rope, cord of all sort and soap could be manufactured from the yucca plant, but the distance from the factory made cost prohibitive. The experiment proved satisfactory in regard to the farmers who owned sandy land as it was an incentive to them to clear their land for cultivation and get paid for the plants. The yucca plants have long been a source of usefulness, as in the early day they were dug and stacked to dry and used for fuel along with the cow chip.

I hesitate to elaborate on too many of the early day customs in Elkhart as I feel there are lots of others who will remember and are more capable than I to bring back memories of the past for the readers to relive.

When a group of old timers get together and start reminiscing, it is really a love feast.

I hope I am not getting old but I wonder if the youngsters of today have as much real fun as we had in the early days of Elkhart.

Our first High School was composed of a group of corn fed youngsters from the surrounding prairie communities who had finished the eighth grade, in some cases two or three years prior to entering high school. Most of these youngsters were willing and eager for the opportunity to go to school. The principal recreation for the boys of the communities had been chasing jack rabbits, digging out prairie dogs, pony racing and herding cattle. Therefore when the High School coach organized a basketball team, these boys were already in shape. Elkhart had an undefeated basketball team for several years. We took part in the Cimarron Valley track meet in 1917 and won many firsts, including the mile race, the half mile, the shot put, the discus throw, the pole vault, and high jump and all the dashes. We had one boy, namely Lawrence Green, who must have made it hard on the jack rabbits as he would be almost to the finish line by the time the crack of the gun ceased. I don't recall that he ever lost a dash race in High School. We also won first in the reading contest.

The first High School Junior-Senior banquet ever held in Elkhart, and no doubt Morton County, was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Davis, who was the High School Superintendent. There were two seniors and six Juniors. Mrs. Davis and the mothers of the Juniors prepared the meal. In all of these years I have never seen a more gala affair or a more beautiful banquet.

Georgia Tucker Smith, now an author in her own right, made the menus. They were in book form with a tiger lily painted in water color on the cover. The dining room and table was beautifully decorated. I can close my eyes and see it all as if it were only yesterday.

Flora Lamkin McClung and I were Juniors. We had been running errands all day in preparation of the event that evening. About 4:00 P. M. Mrs. Davis called us and said, "Girls, we have to have milk to finish the dinner and I do not have a drop; see if you can find some."

This wouldn't be any task at all today, but it must be remembered milk couldn't be purchased in grocery stores. There were no frigidaires, not even any ice boxes. There wasn't even a dairy in Elkhart and it was difficult to keep milk sweet. Several families had cows and they had milk customers and that was the way Elkhart was supplied with milk. It might have looked hopeless to the women in the kitchen, but they didn't take into consideration the nerve of two desperate young girls.

We knew where the people who sold milk kept their cows during the day, so we took our bucket and went to the pasture. We crawled under the fence and were trying to decide which cow looked as if she would be friendly, when I spied a big fat bull. I said to Flora, "Can you milk?" She shot back at me very indignantly, "Can you?" I said, "Yes, but I would lots rather be on my feet if that critter starts this direction." So we took turns milking and watching the bull. We delivered a bucket of milk to the ladies for the dinner, but when we told them where we got it, they were amused but a little perturbed too. They kept wondering whose cow we had milked and what those customers would do without milk that night. We assured them the day was young and no doubt there would be plenty of milk by evening. Strange to say, we must have had a calloused conscience as it didn't bother us a bit and our only thought was for the success of our first Junior-Senior banquet. It was a success and a lovely banquet and I will always have pleasant and amusing memories of it. I do wonder whose cow we milked--maybe Flora knows.

Memories of the More Recent Years

By Mrs. Charles Ketchum

The Ketchum family, Charles, Ida and three small children, Ethelyn, Kenneth and Carl, came west in 1915, first to Baca County, Colorado, where we filed on a quarter section of land, said to be the only piece of land in the county that had not been filed on. We had the experience of living in a dug-out and of using cow chips for fuel, but not for long.

When our children became of school age, we found that we were too far from school--and in May of 1919, we moved to Elkhart. We now had four children; our son, James Rex, was born while we lived in Colorado. The town of Elkhart was six years old at this time and was growing rapidly. We appreciated being within walking distance of school, churches, and good places to shop. Plans were underway for a Hospital, and street paving. Several buildings were under construction.

In the fall of 1922, Charley was elected to the office of Clerk of the District Court. We then moved ~~to Richfield.~~ We enjoyed the work in the office and met many fine people. ~~We~~ found it very interesting to listen while the early settlers told of their experiences as pioneers. During our stay there, the two story, eight-roomed school building was replaced by a new structure with ~~room for the grade school~~ students, high school and a roomy gymnasium.

We had lived at Richfield less than a year when our son, J. L., was born. He was born in Elkhart. We now had five children; one girl and four boys. There was never a dull moment at our house. We lived north of town on a farm and kept some chickens and livestock. The older boys helped do the chores and sometimes they rode the calves all around in the corral.

One evening the two older boys helped Rex, who was six years old, to climb up on one of the calves, and then the calf refused to budge--the boys thought of a plan--they twisted the calf's tail --the calf did move and Rex landed so hard, an arm was broken. Charley and a neighbor were soon on the way, taking Rex to the Doctor. Two sober looking little boys went quietly to their room and went to bed. After a while I heard them giggle, and inquired of them as to what could be so funny--they said they were sorry that Rex was hurt but that I just should have seen that calf move out when they twisted his tail.

In October of 1927, we moved back to Elkhart. On April 18, 1934, death came and took our oldest son, Kenneth. We shall never forget how the people (our friends and neighbors) shared our sorrow and did so much to help us.

We now have been residents of Morton County forty-two years. There have been many changes during that time. I wish it were possible to give the names of all the wonderful people who have lived in Morton County and had a part in making it into what it is today. We can remember when some of the roads were little more than trails that led us out across the prairie in the general direction of the next town. These have been replaced by surfaced highways. The tri-state area, once spoken of as "the dust bowl" is now proudly spoken of as the "oil hub".

One evidence of the growth of the population is the fact that even though the school plant has been enlarged from time to time, there is always a need for more room.

Just recently I was told that an Elkhart lady decided to retrieve her Revere Ware coffee percolator from storage, and use it again; and as she placed it over the burner on her gas range, her small son said, "Mother, it sure will be fun to watch you make coffee without a plug-in."

No doubt this little boy would find it interesting if we could show him a movie film of the pioneer lady while she kept a "chip" fire going and prepared a meal for her family (and perhaps some guests) over a small, two-hole "topsy" stove. And the farmer's small son who goes to the field with his father and rides in an enclosed cab that is equipped with radio and air conditioner, would find it interesting if he could watch the early pioneer walking behind a team of horses, hitched to a plow by which he turned the sod in preparation of his first crop.

(Data for the following was compiled in 1937 by E. M. Dean - now deceased - and Bertha Hjort, and narrative written and herein submitted by Bertha Hjort).

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 pastures 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 five hundred miles from the Missouri River by the old Santa Fe Trail and two hundred sixty miles from Santa Fe, New Mexico. Point Rocks is almost the height of the surrounding country. The sandstone bluffs are one hundred eight feet high and jut clear up to the river. The Mexicans called Point Rocks, Mesa Blanco, which means white rock. It was so named 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 City 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 Barney Gow. This was located on Section 35, Township 32, Range 40, and was named for Barney Gow, a buffalo hunter, who had built a dug-out 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 on 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 some time during the night, and since a one 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 armed 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 killing 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 service 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 horse 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 Holden Cattle Company started the "1881" Ranch on the Cimarron in 1883, moving here from Barber County. Their brand was "1881", hence the name. S. H. Farrar was president of the 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 the water rights.

In 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 bottoms were covered with a grass that was superb. It was a prairie hay which cured and kept through all changes of the 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 one thousand 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 the 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 pre-emptions, 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 windmill gaunt against the sky. This class of settlers purposed 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 the 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 geographic 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 the town. The church has a seating capacity of about five hundred and the acoustic 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 town.

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 drought and failure--the weather was fatal to all plant life; seed could not germinate in the dry soil; the grass actually crackled when walked over. A solitary waste reached out into 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 Oklahome 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 envisioned 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. Fire guards were plowed about every homestead, but during high winds the flames leaped a great distance. Fires were almost a monthly occurrence, and on those 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 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 this 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 south-

west 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 can not 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 window panes unendingly; food

gets filled with it, clothes weigh heavy and smell choking, and there is a grittiness about people's skin 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 many. Some yet have a pure unbounded 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 alternation 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.

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EPILOGUE

The rains did come and once again Morton County prospered, and the changes from 1937 to 1961 are many.

In the 1940s, bumper crops were produced in sharp contrast to the "dirty thirties." The past decade has seen some good years and some not so good. A "black blizzard" on February 19, 1954, caused much concern; at times hail losses have been great; and although the average rainfall in Morton County is slightly over seventeen inches, at times two or three plantings of crops have been washed out. But through it all, the brave spirit of the pioneers triumphs, and today's citizens face the windy days, the dusty days, the wonderfully good days, with quiet serenity, and appreciate the cool, cool nights.

In 1951, the discovery well of the Greenwood Field was drilled in the Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 14, Township 33, Range 42. Since 1953 oil and gas production has gone forward steadily and has added considerably to the growth of this county. The assessment figures for 1961 show Morton County as having a population of 3479.

Tucker Hospital, which served well in its day, has been replaced with a new, modern county hospital; new homes are continually being constructed; old business buildings are being replaced or remodeled; and the entire county is experiencing another building boom.

Irrigation wells have been drilled in various parts of the county and bumper crops are raised year after year. Thus Morton County is again living in an era when all nature seems to smile.