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DENNIS CEMETERY INSCRIPTIONS  
nr. SENECA, NEMAHA COUNTY, KANSAS

with Biographical Sketches

Compiled by Norma S. Ruhl  
Independence, Mo.

1952

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LOS ANGELES FAMILY HISTORY CENTER



Highsmith

Mary Catherine, wife of W(illiam) H(enry) Highsmith d. 4 Dec., 1876  
ae 28 y, 7 m, 10 d.  
 Maria A. Highsmith b. 24 Oct., 1869 d. 29 Oct., 1886 ae 17 y, 5 d.  
 William Henry Highsmith b. 18 June, 1833 d. 1 May, 1901 ae 67 y, 10 m,  
13 d.

Mary E., wife of A(lfred) H. Chilson, b. 18 July, 1850; d. 18 Sept., 1916  
 Clarence, son of A(lfred) H. and M. E. Chilson; d. 3 Aug., 1886, ae 10 m,  
17 d.

Sarah E. Luckey b. 24 March, 1864 d. 7 March, 1896 ae 32 y.

James Fulton b. 30 Jan., 1820 d. 5 May, 1892  
Co. G 4th Ohio Gov.

Elizabeth J., wife of L(arkin) Cordill, d. 25 Feb., 1902  
ae 63 y, 8 m, 1 d.

Larkin Cordill b. 22 Feb., 1838 d. 8 March, 1904.

Joseph W. Romine b. 9 Aug., 1853 d. 18 May, 1901

Perry E. Cordill b. 9 Jan., 1870 d. 1 Sept., 1886  
ae 16 y, 7 m, 22 d.

Mother: G.A.R G. A. Romine b. 4 Feb., 1889  
d. 17 Aug., 1899.

C(harles) W. Romine b. 30 April, 1830 d. 15 Dec., 1886  
James F. Romine d. 30 June, 1876 ae 20 y, 6 m, 28 d.

John W. Romine d. 26 Sept., 1861 ae 5 m, 19 d.

Mary E. Romine d. 10 Dec., 1855 ae 8 (?) m, 7 d.

George M. Romine d. 5 March, 1867 ae 3 y, 7 m, 1 d.

Charles T. Romine d. 10 April, 1867 ae 3 m, 25 d.

Thomas Romine d. 22 Nov., 1855 ae 7 d.

Children of C(harles) W. and C(atherine) A(mn)  
Romine.

Thompson

John Thompson b. 8 March, 1806 d. 3 November, 1869.

Eliza, his wife, b. 8 October, 1811 d. 7 October, 1905

N(icholas) Thompson d. 1 September, 1890 ae 46 y, 4 d.

Sarah Jane Thompson d. 23 October, 1916 ae 73 y.

John Thompson b. 9 January, 1806 (?)

Jno. H. Dennis b. 18 December, 1873 d. 31 January, 1897.

Charity A. Dennis b. 23 August, 1860 d. 7 September, 1861.

Nancy M. Dennis b. 14 May, 1866 d. 14 December, 1866.

Nancy, wife of Elijah R. Huff, d. 23 December, 1866, ae 64 y, 10 m, 26 d.

E(lijah) R. Huff d. 26 February, 1872 ae 80 y, 2 m, 14 d.

Mother: L(ucinda) I. (McGehee) Barker, d. 3 April, 1903, ae 47 y.

Rosa A. (Tate) McGehee b. 14 November, 1863 d. 13 June, 1901  
 (She was the wife of John McGehee, son of Jacob McGehee, Sr.)

Alfred Chilson d. 21 May, 1895 ae 81 y, 2 m, 14 d.  
 Mehitable, wife of Alfred Chilson, d. 4 October, 1892; ae 80 y.

James Fortney b. 28 November, 1872 d. 8 August, 1897.  
 Martha Orena Fortney b. 5 April, 1884 d. 22 October, 1897.  
 Fannie Myrtle Fortney b. 30 August, 1886 d. 14 October, 1886.  
 Erastus Newman (Fortney?) b. 18 Jan., 1880 d. 15 September, 1897.

Rev. Erastus C. Chilson, b. in Geauga Co., Ohio; 25 February, 1840;  
 d. 2 January, 1900, in Vermillion, Kansas.  
 Caroline Chilson 1846 - 1923.

Elizabeth, wife of L. D. Hawley, b. in Paola, Kansas, 25 December, 1846;  
 d. 7 June, 1908.

Brigman (no further data on stone)

W. S. Weeks, Co. C, Iowa Volunteers d. 23 August, 1873, ae 30 y.

John W(esley) Gillaspie b. (18 May) 1852 d. 18 January, 1936.  
 Amanda (Dennis), his wife, 1854-1929.  
 Ralph W(esley), their son, 1873-1914.  
 B. N. Gillaspie d. 25 March, 1886, ae 60 y, 8 m, 3 d.  
 Elizabeth Newman b. 11 December, 1825 d. 20 April, 1897  
 ae 71 y, 4 m, 9 d.

Carrie H. Ford b. 11 March, 1837 d. 1 April, 1908

France Hawley d. 20 April, 1890, ae 72 y, 18 d.

Osborne:

Nellie, b. 25 April, 1900 d. 11 August, 1900  
 Charles Herbert, b. 30 April, 1897 d. 5 November, 1897  
 Children of Joe and Mary Osborne.

R. M. Brown b. 24 July, 1830 d. 5 March, 1898  
 Private, Co. F, 161st Regiment, Ohio Infantry.  
 Louisa Brown 1839 - 1918.

Brown - Meyer

F. R. E., dau. of William and Louisa Mayer, d. 31 December, 1874;  
 ae 8 (?) y, 9 m, 17 d.

(Note:- Where the full name of the deceased or the maiden names were known to me I have added them in parantheses. N. S. R.)

In order to complement the history of this particular group of early settlers of Nemaha County, Kansas pioneers, I've included the obituaries of several of the early pioneers.

Reference: "The Courier-Democrat", Vol XLI, #51, Seneca, Nemaha Co., Kansas, Friday, October 14, 1904.

MRS. ELIZA A. THOMPSON

Eliza Thompson was born October 8, 1811, in Butler Co., Ohio. Her maiden name was Eliza Yeager. She was united in marriage to John Thompson June 20, 1830. Of this union were born six daughters and three sons, of whom three daughters survive. She united with the Baptist church in Indiana and from that time to her death remained a consisted member. She was a sincere convert, a faithful Christian and a beloved mother in Zion. She died October 7, 1904, at Kelly, of stomach trouble. She suffered much during the last weeks of her life, but bore her suffering with much patience and fortitude, often expressing her willingness to depart this life. The funeral services were held in the M. E. Church at Kelly Saturday at 10:00 o'clock, conducted by Rev. Ford, and the body laid to rest in the Dennis cemetery by the side of her husband.

LARKIN CORDILL

Larkin Cordill for many years a resident of this county and one of the earliest settlers of this section, died at his home in Alton, Kansas, last Tuesday of apoplexy, with which he was stricken the Friday previous. Mr. Cordill was 66 years of age at the time of his death, having been born in Indiana, February 22, 1838, in Kosciusko county. He grew up in Indiana, leaving there for Kansas in 1857, settling on Deer Creek in this county. At that time Kansas was little better than a prairie waste, but Mr. Cordill resided here long enough to see it become a prosperous and thickly populated agricultural community. Twenty years ago he removed from Deer Creek neighborhood to the vicinity of Kelly, where he lived until his removal about a year ago. He was married in Seneca in 1859 to Elizabeth J. Culley, who died at Kelly about two years ago. Of this union eight sons were born, of whom five survive: J. C. Cordill, J. W. Cordill and Ralph Cordill of Alton; George Cordill and F. A. Cordill of Denver. He is also survived by one brother, D. C. Cordill of Bern. The body was brought back to the old home for burial which took place at the Dennis cemetery yesterday afternoon at 3:00 o'clock. Rev. George Longbrake of the Universalist church officiating at the service at the grave. Thus passeth another from the rapidly thinning ranks of the early pioneers of this section. Mr. Cordill was an esteemed and respected citizen and his old friends and neighbors will be grieved to learn of his death. ("The Courier-Democrat", Vol. XLI, #20, Seneca, Nemaha Co., Kansas, Friday, March, 11, 1904.)

DEATH OF MRS. ROSA MCGEHEE

Mrs. Rosa McGehee, wife of John McGehee of this city, died at their home in the northeast part of town Thursday afternoon, June 13, 1901, after

suffering with an abscess for about two months during which time she was confined to her bed. Funeral services were conducted from the residence Friday afternoon and the remains were interred in the Dennis Cemetery south of Seneca, where four of her children were buried.

The deceased was the daughter of Daniel Tate and wife of John McGehee of this city. She was born in Illinois, November 14, 1863, and came with her parents to this city about 23 years ago, where she had resided ever since. In May, 1882, she was married to John McGehee. To this union seven children were born, three of whom still survive, Fred, Daisy and Laura, the last being the wife of George Nevill of this city. Her parents, four brothers and two sisters, Mrs. William Jones and Mrs. Ed. Fisher, survive her.

Mrs. McGehee was a good wife and mother, and was always spoken well of by her neighbors. She suffered intensely during her last illness, and death came as a relief. (Courier-Democrat", Friday, June 21, 1901.)

#### MRS. JOSEPH W. DENNIS

Time gathered to his harvest another of the early settlers of Nemaha County last Saturday, in the person of Mrs. J. W. Dennis. "Uncle Joe" Dennis and wife are known and beloved of everyone in this section. Theirs has been an ideal companionship, in which each has been mutually helpful to the other, sharing to the full extent the trials and toils as well as the joys and compensation of a long married life. No one knew them but to admire their simple honesty, charity and neighborly good will. In the long years of pioneer days of northeastern Kansas, theirs was one of the most hospitable homes, and the death of Mrs. Dennis will bring to hundreds a pang of regret and real mourning, even though she went to her long years crowned by years of usefulness and upright Christian living.

Mrs. Mary Ann Dennis, wife of J. W. Dennis, was born in Adair County, Ky., in 1826, and died at her home one mile south of Seneca, April 18th, 1908, aged 81 years, 6 months, and 15 days. Early in life Mary Ann Young removed with her family to De Witt Co., Illinois, where she met and married Joseph Dennis, July 8th, 1847. Ten children were born to this couple, of whom Mrs. Dennis is survived by only three: Campbell W., and Philip Dennis, and Mrs. Amanda Gillaspie. She is also survived by 20 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren. Four children died in infancy and three others, Mrs. Howard Chilson, Mrs. Sarah Luckey, and Mrs. Mary Highsmith passed away leaving families. In 1856, Mr. and Mrs. Dennis came to Kansas, together with Batson Dennis, the father of Joseph W. Dennis, and the four other sons and settled on the farm where they have ever since resided. This land was gotten by them from the government and the only conveyance ever made of it was when it passed from the government to Mr. Dennis. Fifty-nine years ago Mrs. Dennis became a member of the Baptist Church, and was faithful to the doctrines to the hour of her death. This grand old lady was indeed an exemplary wife to the companion left behind and her loss will be almost unbearable. The place of her death was their home before the city of Seneca was platted; to her nearly all the residents of Seneca were new-comers. During the many changes which have taken place in their surroundings they have lived on in the even tenor of their way, living the straight-forward, simple, honest and kindly lives that have earned for them the affection of all who knew them. Last July the sixtieth wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Dennis was celebrated by a reunion of their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren at the Dennis home, the memory of which day will be all the more

sacred now that the crowning jewel of the gathering has gone to her reward.

Her funeral was held at the home and interment made in the Dennis cemetery. Rev. J. H. Rings, of Lincoln, Nebraska, preached the funeral sermon. The sorrowing family have the sympathy of the community in their bereavement, especially the husband to whom for over sixty years she has been such a devoted wife. ("Courier-Democrat" Thursday, April 23, 1908)

#### OBITUARY OF JOSEPH W. DENNIS

Joseph William Dennis was born in Henry county, Kentucky, April 9, 1825; died in Seneca, Kansas, November 11, 1912. His parents were Batson Dennis, a native of same county and state as the son, and Miss Mary Ann Callender of Virginia. The elder Dennis was a farmer; but in 1830 lost his property and moved with his family to Johnson county, Indiana, where in a partnership he again "lost out" and moved to DeWitt county, Illinois. Living there a year the family moved to McLean county, Illinois, where the elder Dennis bought a farm and began life again.

Mr. Dennis (J. W.) began working out when thirteen years old, mostly at farm work, but always near home, and gave all his earnings in support of the family. His first wages were \$9.00 a month and increased to \$13.00; one single month he was paid \$15.00. He was "given his time" when twenty years old, and the next three years cut and split rails at 25¢ a hundred. Most of his time working out he was employed by a man named Wakefield; his son C. W. is named for him -- Campbell Wakefield Dennis. After of age he worked nights burning brick and earned extra \$5.00 with which he bought two ewes that were taken home. From their wool his mother made his winter clothes; summer wear was homespun flax all home-made. From his other earnings Mr. Dennis bought live stock and corn which his father sold for \$100. With this first money he went to Danville, the county seat, and entered eighty acres of government land at \$1.25 an acre, and improved the homestead with a log house. To make a home complete he married when in his twenty-third year, Miss Mary Ann Young of DeWitt county, Illinois, whom he had met on arrival to the state ten years before. She was a native of Adair county, Kentucky. For his wedding suit Mr. Dennis bought a pair of boots and cassinette cloth from which his mother made the clothes. Their house furnishings were a fireplace for cooking and only a few dishes and primitive furniture. His wife "turned in" the bed, a cow and six geese. Wooden troughs for storing lard and the like were hewn from buckeye wood by the young bridegroom. No house furnishing stores in those days that sold on the "installment plan."

But Mr. Dennis was thrifty from the start. He bought another eighty of land and a timber lot, and sold his whole farm for \$1,810. Then he bought another tract of land and built a good house. To help his father he gave him a warranty deed for forty acres off his farm, and when they came to Kansas sold both homes for \$13.00 an acre. This was in 1855.

The Kansas emigrants started with eight teams, and these made up the party: his parents, brother Samuel, John and Jesse with their families, his unmarried brother Batson, his sister, Mrs. Nancy Keenan, his brother-in-law, Thomas Rich and family, and Mart Allison, a young man hired to drive. Mr. Dennis' outfit was drawn by an ox-team and horse-team; his stock was a cow and calf, and he had \$1,800 in gold. His own family were himself and wife and daughters, Mary, Elizabeth and Amanda.

Leaving the company five miles north of St. Joseph, Missouri, in Andrew county with others of the party, they came to Seneca by team, where Mr. Dennis bought the homestead right of his present 160 acre home of Bill Berry for \$75.00, assuming to pay the government price in addition of \$1.25 an acre. This \$75.00 was for "good will." Many others were "jumping homesteads". Returning for his family they left for Kansas May 1, and arrived at the new Kansas home the last day of June, 1856. They found shelter in Lew McGowen's cabin across the road north on the present "George Seeley farm." cabin building was the work ahead for the new arrivals, and after the rest had houses Mr. Dennis built himself a log house 16x18' with one room, in which he lived until 1860, when his present frame house was built. All the immigrants were under shelter long before winter. His son Campbell was born in this log house. Among his first hired men were Uncle Johnny and George Roots, who made 10, 000 rails for him. These were sold to buy food, which was purchased and hauled from the river.

Mr. Dennis began the Kansas life in earnest, and accumulated from the start. He made a rule early and which he never broke -- "keep out of debt." He bought the other three-quarters of his home section, and later a half-section, a quarter and an eighty, until at one time he owned free of debt 1,200 acres. With this land he helped all his six children and a grandson by giving them land for a home, only reserving finally for himself the original homestead of 160 acres. Mr. Dennis' mother died in 1861, when his father came to his home to live and died there in 1875. His wife died in 1908, and the old home has been kept up. In his health he enjoyed going from house to house to visit his children Campbell, Philip, and Mrs. John Gillaspie. They all lived nearby and he went the rounds on foot as long as strength lasted.

Mr. Dennis never attended a public school, but learned to read and write in Indiana and Illinois. He was director of his home school district in Kansas twelve years. His politics was Democrat, but he was a paid-in-advance subscriber to the writer's Republican newspaper from its establishment in 1863, and all during his cashiership of the First National Bank "Uncle Joe" Dennis was amongst its best customers.

Mr. Dennis made a profession of religion in 1868 at a series of revival meetings held in Seneca by Rev. Granville Gates, a Baptist evangelist of Highland, who had come to Seneca to visit the family of the late George Graham. They had been neighbors in New York. He was baptised with others by immersion; and to be associated with his wife in church fellowship, united with the regular Baptist church, then a missionary charge with services in the school house by Rev. Thomas Newton, the pioneer preacher of Nemaha county. He set apart ground on his farm for a graveyard, which is maintained to this day, and where his body lies buried beside his wife awaiting the resurrection promise of the Christ, that He would "come again" and receive unto Himself his disciples, to be with him in the many mansions of His Father's house that He left earth to prepare in the centuries long ago.

The funeral of Mr. Dennis was held at his late residence on Wednesday afternoon at 2:00 o'clock, attended by a large number of Friends and neighbors who respected him in life and met to show their last regards to the departed. The services were conducted by Elder Joseph Ford of Seneca. The pall bearers were George W. Williams, E. R. Murphy, Adam Simon, J.E.H. Ford, George Roots, and Abijah Wells. ("The Seneca Tribune")



## BATSON DENNIS, JR.

Batson Dennis, brother of J(oseph) W(illiam) Dennis and for years among the best known of the old settlers of the county, died at his home in Perry, Oklahoma, Monday. The sad news came in the way of a telegram to J. W. Dennis, but further particulars are not known. Deceased came to Seneca in 1856, residing for a time near Seneca, and later in the vicinity of Oneida, from where he removed to Oklahoma some six or seven years ago. He is survived by three sons, Charles, George and James, all residents of Perry. Mrs. Dennis died at Perry about a year ago. The funeral took place at Perry Wednesday. We hope to be able to give a more complete history of the life of deceased, with details of his last illness, in our next issue. ("The Courier-Democrat", May 20, 1904)

The last sad rites over all that was mortal of Father Dennis was held in the Baptist church this morning. The hour had been arranged for 10:00 o'clock but the funeral did not take place until an hour later, as the train upon which a nephew was to arrive was belated, causing the wait. As the handsome black casket, strewn with many beautiful floral designs, was conveyed to the chancel rail, his three sons, all of his family that survive him, Charles, George and James, together with their respective families, also a nephew, William Dennis of Kansas, sorrowfully followed the bier as the quartette composed of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Merrill, Duey Godlove and Prof. Butts sang softly. Rev. White, pastor of the Christian church, read the 90th psalm, following with prayer, full of divine grace. "Asleep in Jesus" was then sweetly sung by the choir. Rev. Jones, pastor of the Baptist church, of which church the deceased was a life-long member, announced his text and delivered the sermon with much tenderness, portraying to the living, the beauties and glories of a well spent Christian life, and the eternal reward in waiting for the redeemed.

Grandpa Dennis had passed through joyous childhood, happy anticipating manhood through the golden age of maturer lifetime, and was drifting forward into the peaceful recess of old age when the reaper "Death" shot earthward over the mystic sea and signaled the aged wayfarer to the brink of the stream which divides the life from death. Willingly he placed his hand within that of the boatman, and was swiftly borne heavenward while the loved ones were left to mourn. A little mound in Grace Hill cemetery marks the spot where the veteran Christian is sleeping his last earthly sleep.

(Enterprise Times", Perry, Oklahoma)

## ANOTHER OLD SETTLER PASSED AWAY

## JACOB McGEHEE, SR.

The funeral of Jacob McGehee, Sr., aged 73 years, was held at the residence of his son, John McGehee, in the west part of town Friday, Jan. 13th, the services being conducted by the Rev. Leon P. Jones.

Mr. McGehee was an old settler, having lived here for over 30 years. He was born in Nashville, Tenn., in 1826, lived for a time in Van Buren county, Ill. In 1852 he was married to Mary Jane Thompson who died here in 1887. His family numbers ten children, besides grandchildren. Since the death of his wife, he has made his home with his children, until he passed away on Thursday, January 12, at 3 o'clock a.m. He was buried beside his wife in the Dennis cemetery, south of town.

(Note:- Although the following is not exactly an obituary, it does give an account of the circumstances surrounding the death of Jesse S. Dennis. This account was copied from "History of the State of Kansas", published by A. T. Andreas, Chicago, Illinois, 1883.)

page 945:

"The Baughn Tragedy"

On November 12, 1856, four men came to Seneca with a team and wagon, and with three loose horses; the latter, as it was afterward proved, stolen by them at Elwood, in Doniphan County. On the 19th, three pursuers arrived at Seneca, procured writs, and proceeding west, on information obtained, found the thieves encamped on the Vermillion, about ten miles from town. Making no attack, the pursuers returned, obtained the Sheriff with a small force of citizens, and again started out to make the arrest, going out on the North road, the men they were seeking coming into Seneca on the same day by the South road, passing through and stopping a little east of the town. Here they divided: two of them named Jackson and Strange, remaining where they were, and being arrested, while the other two, Baughn and Mooney, started out on foot, eastward. The Sheriff summoned a posse of men, who started in pursuit, and overtook the men they were after, on the Capioma road, at the crossing of the Muddy.

Three of the pursuers, Charles W. Ingram, Henry H. Hillix and Jesse S. Dennis, were in advance of the rest, and on seeing the men rode nearly up to them, Ingram remarking, as they did so, "We have come for you". At this, one of the men, having a double barreled shot-gun, discharged both barrels at Ingram, neither of which took effect. The other one had two revolvers, and shot at both Hillix and Dennis, one shot passing through Hillix's clothing, another striking him just below the shoulder blade, making a severe but not dangerous wound. He returned the fire, but without effect.

Dennis received a bullet in the back, which passed diagonally through the body, through the lungs, and in close proximity to the heart. He was fatally wounded, living only a few moments. The one having the gun, after getting over into an adjoining corn field, again fired at Ingram, who jumped from his horse, thus avoiding the shot. Both men escaped.

A proclamation was at once issued by prominent citizens of Nemaha Co., offering a reward of \$1,000 for the delivery of the bodies of Baughn and Mooney, to the legal authorities of said county within 90 days, a description of both desperadoes being given.

On Jan. 6, 1857, Melvin Baughn, the chief offender in the tragedy was arrested in Leavenworth, on a description or warrant sent from St. Joseph for a gang of burglars who had plundered a store in Wathena a few days before. Upon being recognized as the murderer of Dennis, he was brought from Leavenworth, delivered to the county authorities, and lodged in jail, a preliminary examination having been held and the prisoner bound over to await trial at the next term of the District Court. On Jan. 10 an unsuccessful attempt was made to lynch Baughn, going no further than demands for the prisoner and threats, but being only satisfactorily settled the crowd appointing a Deputy Sheriff to have special charge of the prisoner until his trial. On Feb. 6, Baughn with another prisoner confined in the jail, succeeded in forcing open the doors and escaping, helping themselves to arms and ammunition in the passage of the jail.

Efforts were made at recapture; unsuccessful until June, 1868, and then only due to the fugitive's committal of a lesser crime than the one

for which he was wanted in Nemaha County. On May 25 a house was robbed at Sedalia, Mo; the next day a suspicious looking carpet bag was expressed by someone, to Joseph King, Otterville. Officers there were posted, but in endeavoring to make the arrest of King, wounded him severely, but nevertheless allowed him to escape for the time being, capturing him, disabled by his wound, two days after he was shot. On its being discovered that the prisoner was none other than the notorious Baughn, and after the necessary legal formalities, he was returned to Seneca on June 27, and recommitted to jail.

On August 2 his trial commenced, concluding on the 6th, the jury returning a verdict of murder in the second degree. On the 7th, Judge R. St. Clair Graham pronounced sentence, that on the 18th of September, 1868, the prisoner should be legally executed.

This sentence was duly carried into effect, at 3:00 p.m. of the day mentioned, the condemned man showing extraordinary nerve at the approach of death, and freely forgiving the community who had "tyrannized" over him, attributing their "ill-feelings to ignorance and bad whiskey". It is unnecessary to state that he announced his reconciliation to God.

This ended the Dennis murder case, with the first and last judicial execution the county has seen."

DEC 2 1953

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GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

(Submitted by Norma S. Ruhl,  
907 North River  
Independence, Mo.)