



# Madison County Genealogical Society



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## Family Gatherings

### Higbee Family Gathering

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Higbee and Sharon of Chicago, Ill., Capt. Ronald Higbee of Port Newark, New Jersey, Mr. and Mrs. William Holmes of Scottsbluff, Mr. and Mrs. Homer Higbee and family of Central City, Mr. and Mrs. Tyler Higbee, Mr. and Mrs. Leland Higbee and Nancy, and Mrs. Lucy Higbee were Sunday dinner guests at the David Higbee home at Norfolk.

This was the first time in seven years that all members of the Higbee family have enjoyed being together. Source: Meadow Grove News, Thursday, September 19, 1946, page 1.

### Meet After 51 Years

Mr. and Mrs. Frank P. Flood of Oakland, Calif., have been the guests of Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Lang in Battle Creek the past week. Mr. Flood is a brother of Mrs. Lang and the two had not met for fifty-one years. It was indeed a happy reunion of brother and sister. Source: Battle Creek Enterprise, Thursday, September 18, 1947, page 1.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kirchhefer of Fremont, Illinois spent the weekend at the home of his sister, Mrs. Mina Botsford. This is his first visit for 13 years. Before moving to Illinois he lived at Tilden.

Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Langston and their daughter, Lucile, of Crescent, Okla., are visitors at the Wesley Phillips home, coming here via the auto route. Mr. Langston is a brother of Mrs. Phillips. Source: Meadow Grove News, July 31, 1925, page 1.

## Family Reunited Twice in Past 16 Years

Mr. and Mrs. William Flesner, Battle Creek, and ten sons and daughters during the holidays were able to hold their second family reunion in the past sixteen years, at which all were able to be present. One reason for the reunion was the presence of a son, Pvt. Vernon Flesner, radio operator in the army air corps at Elgin Field, Fla.

Those in the family are: Mrs. Herman Praeuner, Mrs. Carl Tiedgen, Mr. and Mrs. William Flesner, Mrs. Alva James, and Mrs. Marvin James, all of Battle Creek; Mrs. Otto Schilling, Norfolk; Vernon Flesner, Elgin Field, Fla.; Mrs. Albert Praeuner, Madison; Victor Flesner, Battle Creek; Mrs. Gerhardt Carson and Henry Flesner, both of Columbus.

Source: The Norfolk Daily News, Tuesday, January 6, 1942, page 3.

## **OFF TO THE FATHERLAND**

### **Battle Creek Couple Start on Belated Honeymoon Trip to Germany**

Married about three years ago, Mr. and Mrs. Oswald Uelner, both employed for some time on a farm northwest of Battle Creek, left Thursday morning on a belated honeymoon trip which will take them to Germany. They will spend at least two years at the old home where Mr. Uelner's father anxiously awaits return of the son who left Germany as soon as possible after the big war. That they will stay two years is not determined so much by their own inclinations as by the laws of the fatherland. Mr. Uelner has not completed his American citizenship and he will not again be eligible for a German passport until he shall have spent another two years on the old soil. Mrs. Uelner was formerly Miss Dora Mantey, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Mantey, living northwest of Battle Creek.

Necessity urges that the trip be made at the least possible expense, said Mr. Uelner, so he reshod old Lizzie, took a few of the wheezes out of her innards, anchored her weakened frame as best he could, provisioned her well for the trip to New York, loaded in bride and baggage and rattled merrily away. Oswald figures that if he cannot sell her (the car, not the bride) for the price of a night's lodging for two after he gets to the big city, he will find a place near the docks where he may park her and escape without being prosecuted for unloading junk on the pavement. Until the intrepid honeymooners return two or three hence, "Viel Gluck!"

Source: Battle Creek Enterprise, Thursday, October 2, 1930, page 1.

## **Girl Appeals to Sheriff to Find Parents Has Not seen Brothers or Parents in Sixteen Years.**

Who is there in Madison county who recalls a family by the name of Mohl, at one time, residents of Norfolk. The present whereabouts of this family is sought by Sheriff Smith in answer to a pathetic letter from 20 year old Lucille M. Laurent, Lexington, Nebr.

Miss Laurent, prior to her adoption was Lucy Mohl. When but four years of age she, with a brother, Ernest, were taken by Sheriff Smith to an orphanage at Lincoln, Nebr. The two children were separated and the sister writes that she has not seen or heard from the brother in sixteen years.

A six month old baby whose first name the girl does not remember was left with the mother at the time Sheriff Smith took the two older children to the home at Lincoln.

The foster parents of the girl are both dead, she writes Sheriff Smith. "I have no one but myself to make a living for the girl writes," and I would like to find my real parents, so please help me out all you can.

Thus far Sheriff Smith has been unable to learn the whereabouts of the parents, Robert and Augusta Mohl.

"I have inquired of a number of older settlers but no one seems to remember the family," Sheriff Smith said. "Families living neighbors to them in Norfolk have since passed away," Sheriff Smith said. Source: Madison Star-Mail, June 28, 1928, page 1.

## **Story in Star-Mail May Reunite**

## **Family Separated 16 Years** **Norfolk Editor has knowledge of Parents Whereabouts**

Efforts of Sheriff Smith to locate the parents of 20 year old Lucille M. Laurent, Lexington, may bear fruit.

As the result of a story printed in the Star-Mail two weeks ago, Marie Weekes of the Norfolk Press, has volunteered information that may lead to bringing the girl and her parents together.

A few weeks ago, Miss Laurent wrote Sheriff Smith a letter asking his help in locating her parents and brothers whom she has not seen for 16 years. The girl, it will be recalled, was placed in a Lincoln orphanage when but four years of age. A short time later she was adopted by a family at Lexington. Now that her foster parents are dead, she is anxious to learn whether or not her real parents are still alive.

Recalling the court trial that led to the separation of the children from their parents, the Norfolk editor writes:

The Press editor recalls little Lucy Mohl now known as Lucille M. Laurent and already she has apprized Lucy's uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Will Christian than whom there are no kinder, greater hearted people of Lucille's whereabouts and her desire to know about her family. The press editor recalls the day the court decided that the Mohl children should be given over to the state for it was to the state home for dependent children and not an orphanage these children were sent. It was a pathetic scene in the court house at Madison when these children were parted from their mother. Another family by the name of Williamson was before the court the same day. Burr Taft was county commissioner. James Nichols was county attorney and while the evidence was such as to show the children's best interests would be served by the separation it was a tragic scene and the present republican candidate for congress was among these who was loath to permit the children to be taken from their parents. Indeed, it was through his efforts the baby boy was left to the mother.

"The brother, Ernest, was a promising young chap, intelligent, studious and we imagine he will be found to be a brother entirely worthy of his sister's prideful devotion. The baby brother, Arthur, is with their mother in Texas. Rumor has it that the father, Bob Mohl, is dead. He worked for Mr. Estabrook here for many years in the produce business the latter conducted and went with him to Texas.

"Norfolkans who recall little Lucy Mohl will be glad to know she is the fine young woman they expected her to be." Source: Madison Star-Mail, July 12, 1928, page 6.

## **Girl Finds Mother Is Alive In Texas**

Lucille M. Laurent, twenty year old Lexington, Nebr., girl, in whose behalf a search for her parents was made by Sheriff Smith, is in Norfolk at the home of an uncle, the Star-Mail was informed today.

A letter printed in the Star-Mail three weeks ago and subsequent comment in the Norfolk Press, led to locating the girl's uncle, an employee at the Norfolk City Water Plant.

Through the uncle, Miss Laurent learns that her mother is alive and resides in Texas. The father, according to Sheriff Smith passed away several years ago.

Unusual interest was displayed in this case, following the publicity given it three weeks ago. May witnesses at the hearing in county court here sixteen years ago, recalled the scenes which resulted in placing three of the children in an orphanage home at Lincoln.

Mrs. Marie Weekes, editor of the Norfolk Press, was one of those present at the hearing and it was largely through her efforts that the relatives of the girl were found. Source: Madison Star-Mail, July 19, 1928, page 8.

### **Norfolkan to be Reunited with Son he thought Dead**

Ten years ago on May 19, 1930, James Montague, now 72, Norfolk, who hadn't heard from his son, Jim, for some time, read in a Sioux City newspaper that the bodies of three unidentified murdered youths, about 19, had been found in a vacant lot in Brooklyn, N. Y.

As his son was about 20 years old and was living in New York city at that time, the father thought young Jim might have been among the slain trio. As time passed, and he didn't hear from his son, the Norfolkan became more and more convinced in his mind that the boy had been killed.

He wrote a number of letters to Brooklyn and New York city authorities and to the bureau of missing persons, but was unable to find any trace of his son, Finally, after many months had elapsed, Montague gave up his son as dead.

### **Mourned for 10 Years**

For almost ten years he mourned the loss of the boy.

His sadness now has turned to joy and anticipation because he has received from his "dead" son a letter saying he was coming to Norfolk to visit in July.

The forthcoming reunion between father and son resulted from the latter's having to go to a New York city hospital for emergency treatment several days ago.

At the hospital, the young man was asked to sign a card giving the name of a relative. He wrote down the name of his sister, Anna Montague, and gave her address as 414 North Tenth street, Norfolk, Neb. He didn't know his sister was married and her name is Mrs. Larry Meenan, and that she is now residing in Los Angles.

### **"Couldn't Believe It"**

When the card reached Norfolk, postal employee, knowing Anna Montague no longer lived in this city, but is the daughter of James Montague, delivered it to the father. That was James Montague's first information his missing son was alive. "I could hardly believe it because I had given him up as dead," he stated.

Overjoyed, Mr. Montague's first thought was to write to a niece, Miss Grace King, in New York city asking her to go to the hospital to see young Jim, He sent her an air mail letter and at the same time sent a telegram to the bureau of missing persons, asking it to get in touch with the young man.

In a few days, the father received a letter from his son who stated that about ten years ago he lost his job and "started to drifting around." He also wrote that he put off writing to his father and as the months went by it became harder and harder to break down and write home, and as a result he just neglected to let his parent know his whereabouts.

Young Jim also promised his father he would be home in July for what probably will be the happiest day in James Montague's life.

Source: The Norfolk Daily News, Friday May 31, 1940, page 2.

## **AGED FATHER MISSING FIVE YEARS; FOUND**

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**ILLNESS BRINGS CHILDREN TO BED SIDE OF MAN WHO KEPT NAME SECRET**  
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The identity of Robert Meyers, 60, who for some time dealt in cattle and hogs here, became known last week when Iowa relatives learning of his serious condition in a Norfolk hospital, came here to look after him.

Meyers, whose real name is Pettitt, came to Madison about six months ago from the Adolph Knapp farm, where he was employed for some time. While in Madison, he bought live stock on a small scale and in more than one instance, after making a small down payment, was unable to raise sufficient money and consequently was forced to call off a number of deals.

While the man's acquaintance in Madison was somewhat limited, people with whom he was associated in business transactions, suspected that Meyers was not his real name. This belief was substantiated last week when a son and daughter from Mount Damon, Iowa, came to Madison after having been advised by hospital authorities at Norfolk that their father was in a critical condition.

Until he was taken to Norfolk about a month ago, Meyers refused to talk of his past life or of his relatives. So far as it can be learned, he kept no correspondence with them, until he was urged by the nurse in charge of his case at Norfolk, to allow her to advise his children of his condition. This he consented to do and the son and daughter left Iowa immediately for Norfolk. They came to Madison after the father had told them of certain belongings he had here.

The man left his home in Iowa about five years ago and was not heard from, with but one single exception, until a short time ago, when he consented to have the family advised of his illness.

While in Madison, Meyers kept his livestock at the Jess Reeves place in northeast Madison and when his children arrived here, they found a vast amount of almost valueless articles of household equipment, and obsolete farm tools. Aside from telling local people that he owned a valuable quarter section of Iowa land, he had little to say concerning his past.

Through a telephone message to the Cameron hospital at Norfolk last night, the Star-Mail learned that Meyers was recovering nicely and that his son and daughter had returned to their Iowa home some time ago.

While in Madison, Meyers roomed at various places. "He seemed to be a well meaning man", said Joe Hide, at whose home the man roomed for about two weeks. "I was not at home when he made arrangements to occupy the room, but his first remark to me on the following day was that he was Irish. When I asked him his name he told me it was Meyers, I remarked that that was not an Irish name. This seemed to bother the old gentleman and it was then that I had my first suspicion that Meyers was not his real name," Mr. Hide said.

Source: Madison Star-Mail, Thursday, February 8, 1927, page 1.

A look The Norfolk Daily News paper on Saturday, December 22, 1906 on page 3 showed many families planning on spending Christmas together. Excerpts of the families and their information follow:

### **Plan Christmas Dinner**

Social Activity All Bent in One Direction

To be many Family Reunions

There has been very little doing in a social way during the past week in Norfolk, because of the necessary holiday preparations.

It will be a merry Christmas in the true sense of the word so far as Norfolk is concerned, judging from the festive family dinners that have been planned for the day. So filled with the Yuletide spirit has the past week been that there has been little doing in a social way. Santa Claus has

secured a corner on everybody's time and the monopoly has been worked for all it was worth. Society has spent a large part of its time during the past few days in shopping, and none has cared to put in much time outside the home.

### Among the Christmas Diners

Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Kiesau will spend Christmas with their parents at Waucon, Iowa.

The family of C. S. Bridge went to Fremont to be guests of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bridge.

W. P. Logan family went to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Willis McBride of Elgin.

L. C. Mittelstadt had family dinner with relatives present from Laurel and other points.

The families of A. N. Anthes and Mr. and Mrs. Smith will enjoy Christmas dinner in their home on Norfolk avenue.

Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Burnham will entertain Mr. and Mrs. W. N. Huse and son Gene.

Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Zutz expect their son Herbert home from New Ulm, Minn., where he is attending college, for the holidays.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Baum enjoyed Christmas dinner at the home of Mr. and Mrs. D. Baum.

Judge and Mrs. I. Powers expect their son Isaac Powers, jr., remembered in Norfolk as "Bud," for Christmas dinner.

Mr. and Mrs. E. P. Weatherby and Mrs. Warrick went to Omaha to spend Christmas with Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Shoemaker.

Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Mathewson had a New Year's dinner for their families instead of one on Christmas.

Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Bullock and son, Clyde, were guests of Mr. and Mrs. D. S. Bullock.

Mr. and Mrs. P. Stafford will enjoy a family dinner at home with their daughter, Miss Genevieve Stafford.

Mr. and Mrs. Nels Hansen, 409 Park avenue entertained Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Groesbeck, Mr. and Mrs. E. Markel, and Mr. and Mrs. M. V. Avery at a Christmas supper.

Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Matrau will entertain at a family reunion. Mr. and Mrs. Eller and Dr. and Mrs. McKim will be here from Lincoln and Miss Hammond will be here from Stuart, as guests.

Miss Parish of West Point, sister of Mr. C. P. Parish, and Fred Parish of Lincoln, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. P. Parish will spend the day together.

Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Shaw entertained C. E. Doughty and family, L. E. Wallerstadt and family, M. D. Wheeler and family, and Mrs. Otto Tappert and family at a dinner on Christmas day.

Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Losch of West Point entertained at a family dinner Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Tucker, jr., of Carroll and Mr. and Mrs. N. A. Huse of Norfolk.

Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Tracy entertained the Koenigstein families for dinner. Among those present will be Mr. and Mrs. J. Koenigstein, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Koenigstein and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Ludwig Koenigstein and Dr. and Mrs. R. A. Mittelstadt.

Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Witzigman will give a family dinner. Among the guests will be Mr. Witzigman's mother, Mrs. Carolina Witzigman of Dyersville, Iowa, his sister, Miss Kathyne Witzigman of Wausau, Neb., and his brother, John Witzigman of Battle Creek.

Mr. and Mrs. George B. Christoph had as guest Mr. and Mrs. George H. Burton and Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Burton of Waucon, Iowa. Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Burton are parents of Mrs. Christoph and Mr. Burton of Norfolk.

The family of Rev. J. J. Parker of Plainview, formerly of Norfolk, will enjoy a reunion on Christmas at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Scott in Kearney. Mrs. Scott was formerly Miss Lillian Parker. Mr. Parker and children, Mr. and Mrs. Hauser of Neligh and others will be present.

Mr. and Mrs. Wynn Rainbolt will entertain at a family dinner. Among those present will be Mr. and Mrs. N. A. Rainbolt, Mrs. Kingsbury, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Bucholz and children of Omaha, Rev. and Mrs. J. C. S. Weills, Jack Weills of Lincoln, Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Reynolds and children.

Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Gow entertained Harold Gow, Mr. Temple, Miss Temple and Miss Beulah Temple, and Leonard Hageland. The Temple's were from Wayne and Hageland was from Lincoln.

A dinner will be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. P. F. Bell for Mr. and Mrs. Carl Jenkins of Madison and Mrs. Jenkins, her son, Fred and daughter Gladys. There is also a probable dinner at the home of Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Hardy for Mr. and Mrs. P. F. Sprecher.

The family of M. L. Ogden will enjoy an unusually pleasant Yuletide dinner. Preston Ogden attending Moody institute in Chicago, Glen Ogden attending Wheaton college are here. Mr. Ogden's mother is a holiday guest, likewise, from Illinois.

A Durland family dinner will be given in the home of Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Durland on the Heights. Among those present will be Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Durland, Miss Laura Durland, Miss Dorothy Durland, and Charles Durland, Miss Elvira Durland, Miss Josephine Durland, Miss Etta Durland; Mr. and Mrs. G. F. Durland of Plainview and five daughters; Mr. and Mrs. Burt Mapes and children.

A Luikart family dinner will be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Luikart in Tilden. Miss Stella Luikart, Miss Cordelia Luikart, Roy, Ralph and Carl will all be present from Norfolk.

Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Butterfield will entertain at a large family dinner party. The guests will be: Mr. and Mrs. George D. Butterfield and daughter, Edith; Dr. and Mrs. P. H. Salter, Miss Dorothy Salter and Master George Salter; Mr. and Mrs. John R. Hays; Mr. and Mrs. G. B. Salter; C. B. Salter; and Spencer Butterfield, who had just returned from college near Chicago to spend the holiday vacation at home.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Johnson and Dr. and Mrs. C. S. Parker will entertain at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Johnson, 1225 Koenigstein avenue, at family dinner. There will be present Mr. and Mrs. O. J. Johnson and family; Mr. and Mrs. J. Storrs Mathewson and daughter; Mrs. W. H. Johnson and children; Mrs. A. J. Johnson. W. H. Johnson, who has been spending the winter in Colorado Springs, will be in Denver for Christmas.

Supreme Judge and Mrs. J. B. Barnes will enjoy a family dinner on Christmas with two of their sons present. John B. Barnes, jr., is expected from Casper, Wyo., where he is now practicing law, and A. Kimball Barnes is expected from Kearney where is private secretary to Supreme Court Commissioner Oldhan. Guy. W. Barnes, who has a position in the Ames sugar factory, will not be home for the holidays and is not expected until after February 1.

A large family dinner will be given at the home of Mrs. Mary Davenport. There will be present: F. E. Davenport, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Davenport and son, Mr. and Mrs. T. E. Odiorne and family, Mr. and Mrs. B. C. Gentle, Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Greene, all from Norfolk. Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Davenport and family from Sioux City. Mr. and Mrs. John Davenport, and Mr. and Mrs. Richardson, all from Elgin. Mr. and Mrs. George Davenport and family, and Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Pilger and family, all from Madison.