

YESTERYEARS

A publication of

The Jefferson County

Historical Society

April 2026

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Established in 1966, the Jefferson County Historical Society (JCHS) connects people to the history of Jefferson County, Kansas, by collecting, preserving, and sharing artifacts, materials, and information. The society provides education and research, maintains an extensive genealogy library and an online archive of artifacts, and manages and maintains [Old Jefferson Town](#) history museum, a unique collection of historical buildings from various locations across the county.

Follow our pages for news and updates: www.facebook.com/JCHSKS and www.facebook.com/OldJeffersonTownKS

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Explore the resources of the Jefferson County Historical Society website: <https://www.jchsk.com/>

For more information, or to volunteer, contact the Jefferson County Historical Society, P.O. Box 146, Oskaloosa, KS 66066. Contact JCHS for appointments, group tours and events, or chapel reservations: email: info@jchsk.com

In Memoriam: Lucille Theresa Noll (1930-2025)

Lucille Theresa Noll, 95, passed away Oct. 19, 2025, at F.W. Huston Senior Living in Winchester. Born Jan. 12, 1930, in Winchester, she was the daughter of **Albert** and **Lucy Noll**. Lucille graduated from Winchester Rural High School in 1947. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Emporia State Teachers College, later achieving a master's degree in special education reading from the University of Kansas.

She began her 44-year teaching career in a one-room schoolhouse in Oskaloosa. Lucille inspired generations of students and educators alike. For the final 14 years of her career, she served as a Reading Specialist in the Shawnee Mission Schools, retiring in 1992. Although Lucille never had children of her own, she was a lifelong caregiver to many. Lucille returned to the farm to care for her mother and brother as well as overseeing the care of numerous nieces and nephews through the years. She remained on the family farm until age 92.

Lucille is survived by her siblings **Dorothy Beletsky**, **Rita (Richard) Farmer**, **Robert (Elizabeth) Noll**, and **Harold Noll**; as well as by her 27 nieces and nephews, many great-nieces and nephews, and great-great nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, **Albert** and **Lucy (Chmidling) Noll**; her brothers and their spouses, **Leonard (Lois) Noll**, **Lloyd (Norma) Noll**, **Joseph (Shirley) Noll**; her brother **Richard Noll** and brother-in-law **Ronald Beletsky**; and nieces and nephews, **Cheryl Maxfield**, **Deborah Noll**, and **Tony Noll**.

Lucille lived a life of service—devoted to her faith, her family and community. Her legacy lives on in the countless loved ones she cared for and inspired, and in the hearts of all who knew and loved her. She is buried in Corpus Christi Cemetery.



In Memoriam: Shirley Ann Allen (1930-2025)

Shirley Ann Allen, 95, of Valley Falls, Kan., passed away Saturday, Dec. 20, 2025, at Kelly House in Meriden. She was born Nov. 4, 1930, in St. Joseph, Mo., the daughter of **Wesley Theodore** and **Rena Mae (Hammond) Arthur**.

She attended school in St. Joseph, Mo., Kansas City, Mo., Sioux City and LeMars, Ia.; before graduating from Valley Falls High School in 1948. She lived in Oregon from 1955-69.

Shirley retired in November 1993 from the State of Kansas in the Kansas Corporation Commission Department after 24 years of service. She then worked part-time for the *Valley Falls Vindicator* for eight years. She was a life-member of Jefferson County Historical Society and Valley Falls Historical Society.

She married **Morris Glenn Pence** on Jan. 26, 1949. They were divorced. She married **Harold Seth Allen** on Nov. 24, 1955. They also divorced.

Shirley is survived by her daughter, **Linda Jane Bain (Steve)** of Valley Falls, Kan.; 3 grandchildren, **Matthew Bain (Amanda)**, **Carrie Belveal (Brian Slaton)** and **Katie Fisher (Justin)** and 8 great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents; two sons, **Steve Wesley Pence** and **James Dean Pence**; and two sisters, **Linda Stansell** and **Rhesa Newman**.

In Memoriam: Irene Valaire Odermatt Drummond (1943-2026)

Irene Valaire Drummond, 82, of Winchester, Kan., died Jan. 18, 2026, at KU St. Francis Hospital in Topeka. Irene was born Nov. 7, 1943, in Columbus, Neb., the daughter of **George Albert** and **Vila Christensen Odermatt**. She was a 1962 graduate of Robinson High School in Robinson, Kan. She served in administration in Federal Civil Service for the Department of the Army, retiring in 2004 as a GS 12.

Irene married **David Ingham Drummond** on May 30, 1979, at Ft. Leavenworth, Kan. He survives at home. She is also survived by a son, **Jeff (Erin) Gibbs**, Florence, Mont.; a stepson, **Matthew (Casse) Drummond**, Shawnee, Kan.; a stepdaughter, **Christine (Michael) McAuliffe**, Haverhill, Mass.; two brothers, **Gene Odermatt**, Topeka, Kan., and **Marvin Odermatt**, Carney, Ok.; six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren on the way. She was preceded in death by a sister, **Marlene Odermatt**, and a brother, **Dean Odermatt**.



In Memoriam: Roberta Mitchell Curry (1931-2025)

Roberta Mitchell Curry, 94, of Gainesville, Fla., passed away Sept. 21, 2025, after a brief illness. Roberta was born on June 22, 1931, in Dayton, Ohio, to **Robert and Esther (Young) Mitchell**. She graduated from Fairmont High School and went on to earn both bachelor's and master's degrees in Home Economics from The Ohio State University. In 1955, she joined the faculty of the University of Missouri as an assistant professor of textiles and clothing, where she also met her future husband at an event for new faculty. She married **Bruce Curry** in June of 1956.

After moving to Wooster, Ohio, in 1960, Roberta raised their two children before pursuing an opportunity to help start a new fabric store to capitalize on the knit fabric revolution. She was manager and sewing instructor at Fabrics Unlimited (originally Knits Unlimited) from 1973 to 1987. Roberta was a member of First Presbyterian Church, serving as Deacon, Elder, and as both President and Treasurer of Presbyterian Women. She was one of the inaugural members of the adult handbell choir formed in 1965, and in 1970, founded and directed the youth handbell choir. She was also a Brownie and Girl Scout Leader, President of the Wooster High School Band Parents, and chaperoned many band trips, including the Symphonic Band's European tour in 1976. After moving to Gainesville in 1988, she joined the First Presbyterian Church and was an active handbell musician there until retiring in 2015 after 50 years of ringing. Roberta was also an engaged member of the National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution, serving as Secretary and on various committees. She was also active in Colonial Dames of the XVII Century, also serving that organization as Secretary. She was a life member of the Jefferson County Historical Society. She and her husband, Bruce Curry, donated the Curry House to Old Jefferson Town.

She continued to be active with needle and thread until her death, contributing to the making of more than 10,000 reusable, washable menstrual and incontinence pads distributed locally and around the world by North Florida Sewing Center. During the pandemic, she made hundreds of face masks for family and friends.

Roberta is survived by her husband of 69 years, **R. Bruce Curry Sr.**; daughter, **Elaine (Allen) Turner** of Gainesville, Fla.; daughter-in-law, **Janice Curry** of Overland Park, Kan.; grandchildren **Mallory Curry, Mitchell Turner, Robert (Jordin) Curry III, Allen Turner Jr.**; and great-grandson **Bo**. She was preceded in death by her parents and son, **Robert Bruce Curry Jr.**



In Memoriam: Robert Bruce Curry Sr. (1929-2026)

Robert Bruce Curry Sr., 96, of Gainesville, Fla., passed away Jan. 26, 2026. Born Sept. 24, 1929, and known to all as "Bruce," he was raised on the family farm near Winchester by **Neil and Isabel Curry** and attended a one-room school through the eighth grade. Bruce graduated from Winchester High School with the class of 1947 and from Kansas State University in 1951 with a B.S. in agricultural engineering.

Bruce began his career as a civil engineer with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in Grand Island, Neb. He served in the U.S. Army Chemical Corps at Fort Detrick, Md., during the Korean War. He earned a master's degree in irrigation engineering from Colorado State University in 1955 and accepted a faculty position at the University of Missouri, where he met his future wife at an event for new faculty. He married **Roberta (Mitchell) Curry** in June 1956 and went on to earn a Ph.D. in agricultural engineering in 1960.

Following graduation, Bruce was appointed assistant professor of agricultural engineering at The Ohio State University, stationed at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center in Wooster. He served as associate chair of the department and retired from Ohio State in 1987. From 1987-96, he was a visiting professor in the University of Florida Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering. He authored or co-authored more than 100 publications.

In 1967, Bruce took sabbatical leave to Cambridge University to begin work on modeling biological systems and published his first paper on dynamic simulation of plant growth in 1971. He authored SOYMOD, a detailed simulator of the soybean plant, and he was a co-founder of the Biological Systems Simulation Group, studying plant growth systems and impacts of climate change on agriculture.

A lifelong member of the Presbyterian Church, Bruce served at various times as an Elder, Deacon, and Trustee in Missouri, Ohio, and Florida. He was a life member of the Jefferson County Historical Society. He and his wife, **Roberta Curry**, donated the Curry House to OJT.

Bruce was preceded in death by his parents, son **Robert Bruce Curry Jr.**, and his wife of 69 years, Roberta. He is survived by daughter, **Elaine (Allen) Turner** of Gainesville, Fla.; daughter-in-law, **Janice Curry** of Overland Park, Kan.; grandchildren **Mallory Curry, Mitchell Turner, Robert Bruce (Jordin) Curry III, Allen Turner Jr.**; and great-grandson, **Bo**.

In Memoriam: Janice Rogers Hehn (1946-2026)

Janice Hehn, 80, of McLouth, passed away peacefully in her home on Feb. 21, 2026. Janice was born Feb. 18, 1946, in Topeka, Kan. She was preceded in death by her parents, **James “J.C.”** and **Meryle Rogers**, and her brother, **Virgil “Butch” Rogers**.

She is survived by her husband, **Arnold L. Hehn**, McLouth; her children **Jeffery (Becky) Hehn**, and **Pamela (Brian) Carleton**, McLouth; her grandchildren: **Timothy (Kelsey) Scarlett**, Eudora, Kan.; **Matthew (Monica) Scarlett**, Lincoln, Neb.; **Emily (Eric) Hinostrza**, Tonganoxie; **Joshua Welsh**, McLouth; and **Trevor Carleton**, McLouth. She is also survived by her great-grandchildren: **Tyler Scarlett**, **Emanuel Hinostrza**, **Jacob Scarlett**, **Elicia Hinostrza**, **Spencer Scarlett**, and **Madison Scarlett**.

Janice graduated from Winchester Rural High School in 1963. She married Arnold L. Hehn in Oskaloosa, on July 17, 1965. Janice earned her Associate of Science (Nursing) from the University of the State of New York while working at USD #342 as a custodian. She was a registered nurse for 20 years, helping countless patients through different agencies.

She was a true cowgirl through and through. She cared deeply for her family, friends, patients, and community. She was an avid horse rider. She was a member of the Lucky Spur Saddle Club, Iron Horse Saddle Club, the Petticoat Council, American Quarter Horse Association, and an organizer for the annual Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Trail Ride Fundraiser at the Circle S Ranch, to name a few. She was also one of the founders of the McLouth Patriots’ Day Parade. Her farm and her grandchildren were her pride and joy. She will be greatly missed.

In Memoriam: Elizabeth Bilderback Pruett (1938-2026)

Elizabeth “Betty” Bilderback Pruett, of Atchison, Kan., was born July 11, 1938, in Leavenworth, Kan., to **James V.** and **Mildred Christian Bilderback**. She died peacefully on Feb. 25, 2026. When she was young the family returned to Atchison where Betty graduated from Atchison High in 1956. At the age of 48, she graduated with honors from Emporia State University.

She worked at Ferrell Gas for 25 years, the Atchison City Water Works, Department of the Army at Ft. Leavenworth, and the State of Kansas at the Youth Center.

She married **Dale Harness**, and they were later divorced. She married **William Henry Pruett** in 1968. Henry preceded her in death on Oct. 1, 1998. Her parents and brothers, **Larry Bilderback**, **Charles “Chuck” Bilderback**, and **James Bilderback**, also preceded her in death. She was a charter member of Atchison County Genealogy Society, the Jefferson County Genealogy Society, Atchison County Historical Society, and a lifetime member of Friends of the Atchison Library. Survivors include a son, **Dennis Harness**, and several nieces and nephews. Her hobbies were quilting, string crochet, reading and email friends. Betty was laid to rest at the Leavenworth National Cemetery.



In Memoriam: Roberta E. Hagemann (1922-2026)

Roberta E. Hagemann, 103, Ozawkie, died on Wednesday, Mar. 25, 2026. She was born May 25, 1922, in Eskridge, Kan., the daughter of **James Oscar** and **Edith C. Fullerton Oyler**. She graduated from Topeka High School in 1940 and earned an Associate of Arts Degree from Washburn University in 1984. She married **Albert R. Hagemann** on Dec. 18, 1941, at Leavenworth, Kan.

She was employed as an account clerk by the State of Kansas Motor Vehicle Department in the 1950s. For 27 years she worked with her husband as bookkeeper and office manager in his business ventures and had also been an Avon Representative.

She was a member of Rock Creek Bible Church, Meriden. She was also a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Daughters of the American Colonists, United States Daughters of 1812, Daughters of Union Veterans, and the Jefferson County Historical Society. She served six years as a member of the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature and on the Advisory Council of the Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging. She had been a regular volunteer at the Jefferson West Elementary School in Meriden for over twenty years.

Survivors include her nieces, **Kathy Lewis** of Oklahoma, **Lori Stark** of Washington, and **Florence Deeter** of Topeka. She was preceded in death by her husband, Albert R. Hagemann; her son, **Dennis Hagemann**; grandson, **Travis R. Hagemann**; her sisters, **Mildred Reagan** and **Rosalie Galletly**; and brothers, **James Oyler** and **Edward Oyler**.

From Cincinnati to St. Louis to Leavenworth and Oskaloosa, 1861

By **Ida May Smith Van Cleave**

(My sisters and also a brother have asked me to write the history of our trip up the river from Cincinnati to St. Louis and from St. Louis to Leavenworth in the year 1861.)

In the summer of 1860, **James Smith** developed the wanderlust to move to the new state of Kansas, a home country rich in possibilities. He was living at the time on a forty-acre farm situated on a corner of his father's land. He finally told his good parents of his desire to settle in Kansas, for he hoped to accumulate greater wealth in the new country than was possible on his small farm in Ohio which his father had given him. Grandfather [**Thomas William**] and Grandmother [**Elizabeth Richey**] **Smith** gave him their consent to the sale of his farm so that he might have money with which to buy land in Kansas.



Ida May Smith Van Cleave

Father went to Kansas in October 1860 to purchase a farm. He traveled by rail to St. Joseph, Missouri, and then to Leavenworth, where he took the stage to Oskaloosa, some thirty miles from Leavenworth. In this vicinity Father found five families who had moved six years before from the home neighborhood in Ohio to Iowa. After three years in Iowa they had come to Kansas. There were the **Conwells**, the **MacFarlands**, the **Barnes**, the **Fiacomes** and the **Hamiltons**. All had comfortable homes built of native lumber. A saw mill had also been established in Oskaloosa.

These old friends gave Father a warm welcome upon his arrival, and he in turn told them the news concerning friends and relatives in the Ohio neighborhood. They took him to Lawrence and drove him about the country. The view was an inspiration to one who had lived in heavily timbered Ohio all his life and Father was very much pleased with the outlook. Oskaloosa seemed homelike to him also, because so many old acquaintances lived there. Then, too, the land in this locality had been tested and would grow any kind of farm product. There was an abundance of water for stock, and timber for firewood and rails with which to fence the fields. Wire had not yet been invented in 1860.

At last Father decided to buy a 160-acre farm five miles northwest of Oskaloosa. Twenty-five acres had already been broken and fenced and there was a good log house on the property. A colony of congenial people from Iowa had settled in the neighborhood; they had been in Kansas three years when Father arrived. And so Father bought the farm and returned to his family in Ohio with wonderful visions for the future.

The year of 1861 was a historic chapter in the lives of **James Smith** and his good wife, **Nancy [Jane Morrison Smith]**. They were determined to become pioneers of the new state of Kansas, just admitted to the union, and carefully laid plans for this venture. Father, Mother and we children spent the winter with Aunt **Lu** while preparations for the journey were being completed. Father commenced in December to collect varieties of fruit trees—apple, peach, pear, cherry. He buried the slips in the ground during the winter, took them up in March and packed them in small wooden boxes. Packages of garden seed filled the crevices. Currant bushes, grapes, seed corn and seed potatoes as well as shrubbery, were also prepared for the journey. I shall never forget Mother's Damask rose and flowering almond bush; lilac and snowball slips were also packed. The morning of March 28th, 1861, found the plans completed and everything ready for the journey.

With their three little girls—**Ida, Eva, Alice**—and three-months-old baby **Charles**, Father and Mother took leave of the familiar scenes at Grandfather Smith's farm home and bade their relatives goodbye. It was a trying ordeal for Mother to leave a comfortable home and all her loved ones to migrate to the new state. The relatives in turn were sad to think that we would move so far away that they could not see us every few days. A thousand miles was a long distance sixty-five years ago.

But at the last the boxes of household goods, trunks, chests, wooden crates and even a keg of apple butter were loaded on Grandfather Smith's farm wagon. Uncle **Thomas Smith** and Grandfather drove the team and wagon to Mansfield, Ohio. Father, Mother and we children followed, riding in a spring wagon drawn by old Dobbin, a good, quiet family horse. At the railroad station tickets were purchased to Crestline, Ohio.

We stopped in Crestline over Sunday to visit **Grandmother Morrison**, her daughter **Rebecca** and several cousins. **Great-grandmother Morrison** was a pioneer settler of Richland County, coming with her husband from Tennessee while Ohio was still molested by Indians. She sympathized with her great-granddaughter who was going to Kansas as a pioneer for she knew the privations to be endured. The visit with relatives at Crestline was an enjoyable farewell to James and Nancy and their little family. Monday afternoon we left Crestline by rail for Cincinnati.

At Cincinnati we went aboard the steam boat "Lebanon" and were assigned our state rooms. Father and Mother were restless at the dock. They were anxious to reach their new home for it was now the first of April. The day we left Cincinnati, Fort Sumpter (*sic*) was taken. This news caused quite a stir among the passengers for it meant that war between the North and South had been declared. That night Mother took us children out on deck to see the beautiful lights of the city we were leaving behind.

The next day we traveled at a good rate of speed, stopping only a few times to unload freight or allow passengers to go ashore. We children were in wonderland. The cabin of the boat was a long room with a sleeping apartment on each side called "state rooms." These were furnished with upper and lower berths similar to those of the modern pullman. The cabin was lighted at night by large lamps which hung from the ceiling.

At a long table in the center of the cabin, three meals were served each day to all first class passengers by waiters wearing white caps, white jackets and white aprons. Us little girls marveled at the big trays of meat and vegetables which they carried. Each one was assigned a permanent place at the table during the journey. Oranges or apples were served for dessert in the evening and sometimes we had pancakes with maple syrup for breakfast.

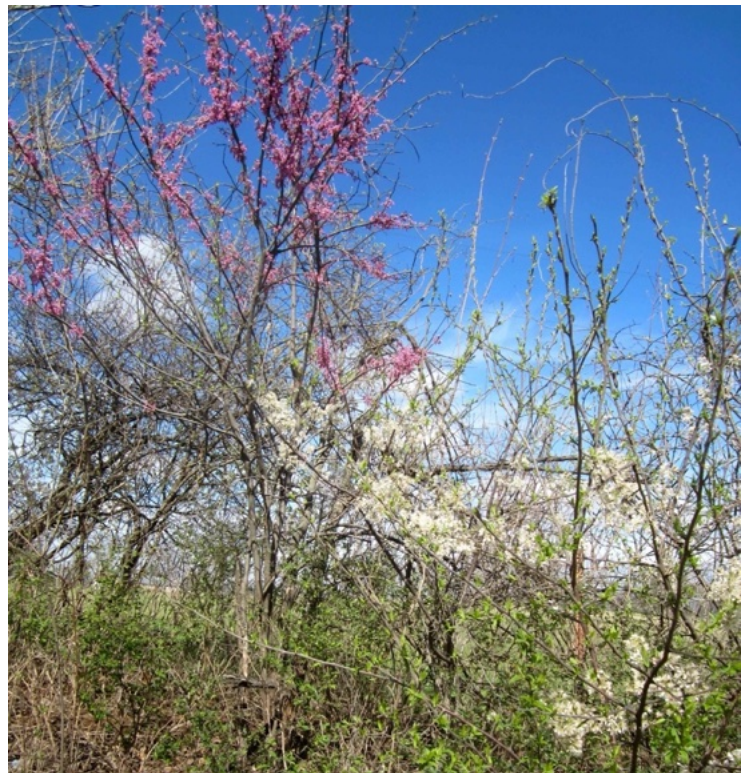
We little girls enjoyed ourselves immensely. Each day Uncle **Sam Morrison** who was going west with us would take us upon the upper deck. We saw the ferry boats which crossed to the Kentucky shore and the many boats passing up and down the river. Southern flags floated in the breeze at the towns along the Kentucky shore. The busy boat hands who loaded the freight sang and cheered the crews who passed. "Dixie" was a favorite song. By the time we reached St. Louis, Eva and I had learned the tune and several verses which we sang for our own amusement.

The captain of the boat, who was a good friend of Father's, was very kind to the little Smith girls. He always had something to say when we went on deck and often filled Eva's apron pocket with candy. Of course, **Alice** and I always had our share, too. We were the only small children on the boat during the trip to St. Louis. We met many nice people who talked to us and usually asked our destination. We answered that we were going to live in Kansas. In those days a young couple with a family were considered worth while when they had the courage to move to a new state where homes and farming industries were undeveloped and schools not yet established. Consequently, the Smiths were among the distinguished passengers bound for "The Garden of Eden," a name Father gave our new home after his first visit to Kansas in October 1860.

We reached St. Louis a week after we left Cincinnati. There we changed boats for Leavenworth. The trees and shrubs along the shore were green with new leaves. We also saw plum trees white with blossom and beautiful redbud trees. Mother thought the redbuds were wild peach trees at first. We passed small towns every few miles but the boat did not stop at all of these. Here and there we saw farmers plowing—sometimes with two horses but more often with one.

Our trip to Leavenworth was completed in four days. Uncle **David Smith**, Father's younger brother who had come on three weeks before with Father's team and wagon and Sambo, the big Newfoundland dog, was at the dock to meet us when the boat landed. **Mr. Lancelot Conwell** with his team and wagon was there also. We landed on the 24th day of April, 1861, and spent the night at the Old Planter's Hotel. The next morning at half-past five we began our drive across the country to Oskaloosa.

It was a long tiresome trip for a warm April day. Mr. Conwell put the cover on his wagon to protect us from the hot sun and wind. The wagons were loaded with boxes of household goods and some farming implements. The horses traveled at a moderate pace which made Father laugh and say that Conwell was afraid that he might over-heat his team. Later he found that his friend was considerate of his horses because good teams were scarce in the new country, although Indian ponies were plentiful.



Redbud trees and wild plums still bloom in April on Jefferson County's rural roadsides.

We stopped with the **Conwells** over Sunday and Monday afternoon. Father took Mother and his family to the new farm which was to be our home. We little girls were too young to understand the many dis-comforts which Father and Mother endured in order to care for their little family in the one-room log house. The team and wagon were lodged in a makeshift log stable near the house. A spring in the woods some distance from the house furnished us with water for all purposes. Uncle **Sam Morrison** took the team and plowed ground for corn. Father cut some poles down in the woods and with Uncle Dave's help, built a chicken house. Then Uncle **David** helped Father set out the fruit trees. They plowed furrows in the ground just east of the cabin and drilled the peach seed. The orchard flourished. By 1868, peaches were quite plentiful in our neighborhood northwest of Oskaloosa. Father and Mother enjoyed sharing their fruit with neighbors and gave many of them seed to plant.

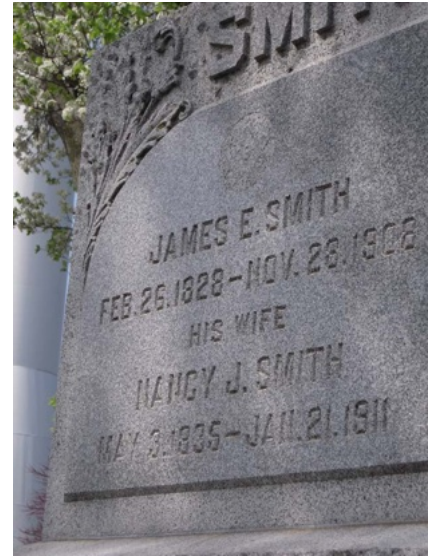
The currant slips which were brought from Ohio made a row of bushes on two sides of the garden. These currants bore fruit the second year after they were planted and made our first pies in early summer. We found the farm well provided with wild gooseberries, blackberries, raspberries and elderberries at the edge of the timber on the upland. The prairies were carpeted with lovely wild flowers, many of which have now disappeared. In 65 years, the fields of beauty have become grain fields to enrich the farmer's pocketbook.



[Ed.: James and Nancy Smith brought four small children to Kansas in 1861. Five-year-old Ida May was the eldest. Six more Smith children were born in Jefferson County. The family farmed the land James had purchased northwest of Oskaloosa for more than 40 years before retiring to town. James died in 1908. Nancy died in 1911.

Ida married William Stanley Van Cleave in 1880. They worked in the mercantile business in Oskaloosa for 15 years before moving to Kansas City, Kan., with their four children. Stanley died in 1923. Ida died in 1927.

James and Nancy Smith and Stanley and Ida Van Cleave are buried in Pleasant View cemetery, Oskaloosa. Many thanks to Jenny Coss for contributing Ida May Smith Van Cleave's story.]



“Declaration 1776” Exhibition at Old Jefferson Town

An exhibition developed by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, “Declaration 1776: The Big Bang of Modern Democracy,” visited Old Jefferson Town from March 14 to April 12 this year. Seven vinyl banners explored the impact of the Declaration, drawing from primary sources, including historical documents, speeches, and paintings. An eighth banner depicted Kansas as it might have been 250 years ago and hinted at its future. **Jenny Coss** coordinated the event for the Jefferson County Historical Society, whose volunteers contributed complementary displays honoring local history. Presented by Humanities Kansas, the exhibition drew groups and individuals from Jefferson County and the area as well as more than 300 school children.

The banners covered the Declaration's origins, its relation to the Civil Rights movement, implications for global liberty, the rights of people of color and of women, the international spread of democracy, and the document's legacy. The Kansas banner imagined the landscape of two and a half centuries ago and mentioned the profound changes brought by European-American settlement. Complementary exhibits included a slide show featuring the Indigenous Kanza people who lived in the area and another of historic photos from the JCHS online archives. A highlight was the display covering “Oskaloosa's Petticoat Council,” six women who were elected to govern the town in 1888-89.

Watch the Jefferson County Historical Association's website for more exciting events:

<https://www.jchsk.com/2026eventsamerica250>

Temperance and Prohibition

Whiskey Shops

From the Kansas Jeffersonian, Grasshopper Falls, June 24, 1863

We intend to *say* just what we *mean* and *mean* just what we *say* on this subject, and never take it back. We consider the liquor business the greatest curse a country ever had. Scarcely a prairie hamlet on our western frontier but contains a licensed or an unlicensed doggerly dealing out death and damnation to its victims. But the would-be gentlemanly whiskey vendor says, the infatuated beings will have it! Does the druggist consider their suffering excuse for yielding to the demands of the deluded man who asks for strychnine to commit suicide?

We don't believe that any law under Heaven can make such a trade honest? We shall fight it like we would jayhawking, for to tell our opinion frankly, we look upon the man who sells whiskey to the drunkard for gain, as meaner than the common thief or highway robber. We don't want a dollar's worth of patronage from the whole rumselling and drunkard making fraternity. Thank God, we are able to live without it, and if we didn't feel able to *live* without it, we certainly wouldn't be reckless enough to *die* with it, and meet the victims of the unallowed traffic, face to face, arrayed against us at the final judgment.

What little we have to contribute to the world's welfare, we had a good deal rather give *now* towards drying up the fountain heads of this death stream, than leave it to an orphan assylum (*sic*) when we die; we would strike at the cause rather than the effect.

Law and Order League

From the Winchester Star, Feb. 17, 1893
(from the files of **Raymond Riley**)

At the close of the temperance meeting on last Saturday evening, addressed by **Miss Amanda Way**, an organization was effected, to be known as the Law and Order League of Winchester. A board of officers were elected, consisting of president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. A constitution has been adopted and the society starts out with a membership of something over 40. Any person, signing the constitution and paying the sum of one dollar can become a member. Every one who has the welfare of the community and State at heart, is hereby urged to join in this movement. The object is the preservation and enforcement of our laws, more especially those in favor of prohibition and against gambling, or in other words, it is proposed to shut up the joints and other dens of vice that have existed in the community some time past. It is hoped that there will be no necessity for prosecuting any one—but the society will not hesitate to do so should occasion arise. The membership fees and other moneys raised by the society will be used for this purpose.

From the Oskaloosa Independent, Apr. 30, 1897

There are hopeful indications of a temperance and prohibition revival in the State. The State Temperance union is actively at work, and the newspapers are devoting space to the subject. The question of having State dispensaries established to handle liquor for lawful purposes is being agitated, and some strong arguments presented for that method of doing away with drug store and other joints and the sale of impure liquors. The opponents of the law have had their innings long enough, and it is high time that a change was made and the friends of temperance and law and order and public welfare be given a chance.

Who opened that bottle of **HIRES** Rootbeer?

The popping of a cork from a bottle of Hires is a signal of good health and pleasure. A sound the old folks like to hear—the children can't resist it.

HIRES Rootbeer

is composed of the very ingredients the system requires. Aiding the digestion, soothing the nerves, purifying the blood. A temperance drink for temperance people.

Made only by
The Charles E. Hifes Co., Phila.
A package makes 5 gallons.
Sold everywhere.

Leedy Against Prohibition

The Governor Evades the Question by Making a Railroad Speech Scoring the Temperance People at the Mass Meeting of Citizens Held at Topeka Monday Night. The Prohibitionists Getting Their Just Reward.

From the Valley Falls New Era, May 22, 1897

At the temperance mass meeting of citizens held at Topeka Monday night **Governor [John W.] Leedy** was present and made a manuscript speech, scoring the temperance people, and putting in some licks on railroad legislation. Prominent people in all parties denounce him and his do-nothing policy in regard the enforcement of the law. Following are brief extracts from the speeches:

“My opinion is that the failure to enforce the prohibitory law is largely chargeable to the executive committee of the State Temperance union, . . . but, unfortunately, an organization capable of so much fell into the hands of the agents of the corporations, who proceeded to make of it a political weapon instead of an instrument for good.

“I believe it is my duty to do what I can to enforce the laws against corporations as well as to enforce the prohibitory law, and I have started in to do what I can in that direction and I do not propose to be diverted from my purpose by any howl that can be raised about the prohibitory law by men who are put forward by the corporations to do the screaming.”

—**Governor J.W. Leedy.**

“This question is one of good citizenship. Under our law, the state, not the municipality, is the unit of power. The oath taken by every officer is co-extensive with the geographical limits of the commonwealth.” —**James A. Troutman.**

“The news will go through the entire country that the Governor of Kansas has arrayed himself against the movement to abolish the saloons. Drive out the joints. . . . I tell you, men and women, in spite of what you have heard to-night, and with or without the support of the governor and police board, we will enforce this law. We haven’t begun to fight yet. We have just wakened up.” —**H.G. Larimer.**

“I believe that if I were governor of Kansas I would drive the saloons out, or leave enough wrecks in my path to show what I had done. The governor has sworn before God Almighty that he will enforce the law. It seems to me that if I were governor of Kansas that instead of abusing the temperance people, I would denounce the violators of law.”

—**Wm. A. Peffer.**

“Governor Leedy did not appoint a man to the railroad board who he was not sure favored the strict enforcement of the maximum freight law, if it passes. . . . We should join hands and rise above partizanship when it comes to a question of enforcing the law.” —**Mrs. Annie L. Diggs.**

“I strongly suspect that the popular sentiment of Kansas thus aroused will so assert itself that officers will be compelled to execute the law or vacate their positions. I have faith in the convictions, the determination and final success of the temperance men of Kansas.” —**Bishop John H. Vincent.**

*[Editor’s note: The Kansas legislature passed a constitutional amendment prohibiting the “manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors” in 1880. Enforcement was lax, and loopholes allowed sales to continue. **Carry Nation** of Medicine Lodge, Kansas, began a saloon-smashing campaign in 1900. In 1917, Kansas outlawed home consumption of alcohol. In 1919, the 18th Amendment to the Constitution made prohibition nationwide until its repeal in 1933.]*

Two Pints of Corn Liquor Put Another in Jail

From the Valley Falls Vindicator, Sept. 17, 1926

Charges of possession, transportation and a nuisance of liquor were filed against **J.M. Strosnider**, of Kansas City, Kansas, in the district court at Oskaloosa this week.

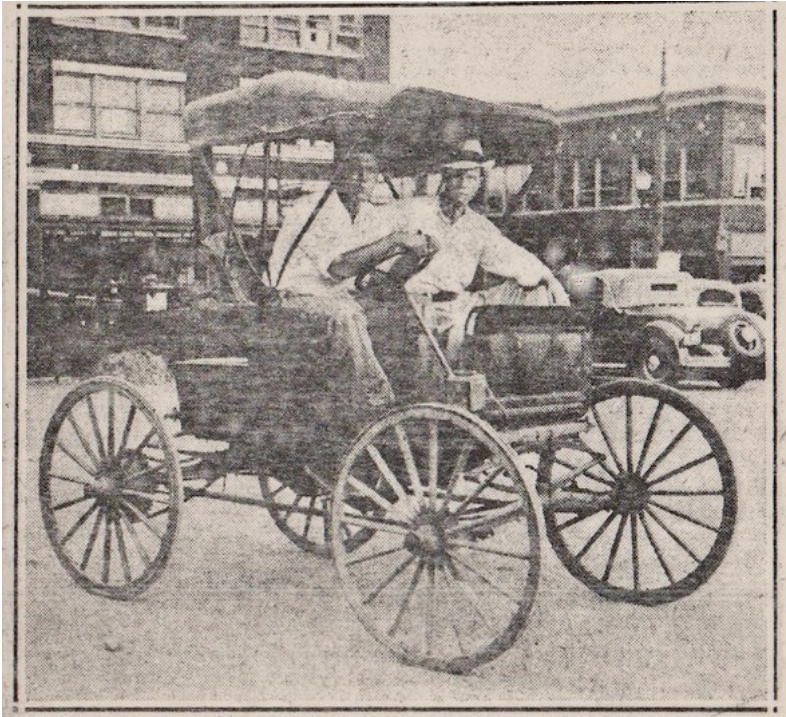
Information brought to the sheriff’s office led **Sheriff Hamm** to make a rapid trip to the old **Inverarity** farm, five miles southeast of Oskaloosa, where he found a Chevrolet car occupied by a woman giving her name as **Mrs. J.M. Strosnider**. According to the officers, Mrs. Strosnider admitted that there was liquor in the car as soon as she was questioned. Her husband was not present, having gone over to the farm as a prospective purchaser.

A pint of corn liquor, part of which was already poured out by Mrs. Strosnider, who said she did not want her husband to drink it, was taken. When Strosnider arrived on the scene he appeared under the influence of liquor, officers say, and another pint of whisky was found in his pocket.

Mrs. Strosnider returned to Kansas City and her husband is in jail waiting the next term of district court. His bond is set at \$1,500.

The Horses Are Under the Seat

From the *Kansas City Star*, July 24, 1934



Ralph Curry, Winchester, Kas., recently purchased this horseless carriage from a farmer near Winchester in whose barn the vehicle had stood twenty-five years. Curry is at the wheel, which is on the carriage's right side, while **Homer Montgomery**, Smithville, Mo., sits beside him.

The car was built in 1903 by the Elkhart Carriage and Harness Manufacturing Company. It is propelled by a 2-cylinder, air-cooled motor, with chain drive. It will travel twenty-five miles on a gallon of gasoline. It can run two hours without overheating.

Curry was visiting Smithville when the latter [Montgomery] suggested they bring the horseless carriage to Kansas City. It was put in a trailer for the highway trip and unloaded at the edge of the city. The highway patrol stopped the vehicle and asked where the license was. Curry told the patrol that he had none, that he had tried unsuccessfully to learn the horse-power, and that the motor was not numbered. The patrol escorted him into the city.

The Womanless Wedding

From the *McLouth Times*, Nov. 13, 1924

(Contributed by *Leanne Chapman*)

The "Womanless Wedding," as enacted by the men's class of the United Brethren church school, assisted by the young matrons' [class] at the high school auditorium last Thursday evening, was a great success, considered from any point of view.

In an artistic way the men certainly pulled a big surprise—it was current comment that any number of the players in their wedding party gowns, and millinery, their rouge, ruffles and curls, their smiles and curtsies, made better appearing ladies than their spouses. The bride was everything that a bride should be, even to the dimples and the blushes.

In a financial way the men rather hold it over any other aggregation pulling for public patronage, the receipts at the door being around \$137. The auditorium was packed, floor, balcony and standing room. Of the proceeds of the entertainment, one hundred dollars is to go to the Otterbein Home for Old People and Children, at Dayton, Ohio.

Mr. and Mrs. J.E. Bond are teachers of the two classes which conducted the Womanless Wedding.

The Womanless Wedding

Will take place at McLouth High School Auditorium Thursday evening Nov. 6.—8:15 o'clock.

one thousand nine hundred twenty-four

THE BRIDE	Jay Bond
THE GROOM	Wesley Robinson
FATHER OF BRIDE	Alfred Burgert
MOTHER OF BRIDE	Milton Nichols
UNCLE OF BRIDE	Harold Steeper
AUNT OF BRIDE	Orval Carey
GRANDFATHER	George Grace
GRANDMOTHER	Bert Baer
A GUEST	Andy Luce
A NEIGHBOR	Eric Steeper
JILTED SWEETHEART	Clarence Beck
COLORED NURSE	Cecil Luse
BABY SISTER OF BRIDE	Richard Steeper
BROTHER OF BRIDE	Clarence Edmonds
RING BEARER	Ray Groshong
TRAINBEARER	Fred Garrett
BEST MAN	Emmett Thompson
FLOWER GIRL	Earl Chapman
COLLEGE CHUM OF BRIDE, (Pianist)	Galen White
BRIDESMAIDS	Ellof Petterson and Walter Bradford
MINISTER	Clay Morrow
TWINS	Clyde Chapman and Ray Shoemaker
USHERS	Alvin Means and Edgar Grace
JIGGS AND MAGGIE	John White and Harry Harker
UNCLE JOSH	Charlie Fowler
AUNT SAMANTHY	Clyde Reese
CHARLIE CHAPLAIN	Howard Chapman
BARNIE GOOGLE	Dan Jeffries
SUNSHINE	Jack Steeper

ADMISSION 10 and 25c

The Cottons of Oskaloosa

In early January 1888, brothers **Henry Cotton**, **George Washington Cotton**, and **John Cotton** moved with their families from Platte County, Missouri, to Oskaloosa, Kansas. Before the Civil War, the brothers had been enslaved in Missouri. George Cotton married **Surilda Ann Holland** in Platte County in 1882. By 1888, they had three young children.



That freezing January, the older family members and the young children traveled by rail to Jefferson County. Two of the younger men and two boys, ages 15 and 17, drove a wagon from Missouri, bringing the family's stock and goods to Kansas. Acquaintances near Stranger Creek offered them shelter for the night, but they thought it best to drive on to Oskaloosa. The *Oskaloosa Independent* alleged that a jug of Missouri whiskey caused them to arrive with frostbitten toes.

The Cotton families settled in Oskaloosa and allied by marriage with the prominent Black families of the area, including the **Gaines, Holland, Bell, Nichols, Todd, Burnett, Irwin, Moss, Hampton, and Tompkins** families.

George Washington Cotton's eldest son, **Van Cotton**, married **Elsie Irwin**, daughter of **James Henry Irwin**. Born on Christmas Day, 1864, at Oskaloosa, James Irwin is thought to have been the first Black child born in Jefferson County.

A family reunion in 2002 invited descendants of Henry, George, and John to Oskaloosa to attend. At that time, no descendants of the Cotton brothers lived in Jefferson County.

Dorothy Jerolene Cotton Reynolds

Dorothy Cotton was born Jan. 30, 1912, in Oskaloosa, to **Van** and **Elsie Mae Irwin Cotton**. Her paternal grandfather, **George Washington Cotton**, had shepherded his family to Oskaloosa from Platte County, Missouri, in January 1888. Dorothy graduated from Oskaloosa High School in 1929 and attended Kansas State Teachers College in Emporia. She trained as a nurse in Chicago. As a woman of color at that time, she worked as a licensed practical nurse. She married **Leonard F. Reynolds** in 1939. They lived in Kansas City, Mo., with their sons, James and Henry, and Leonard's son, **Leonard Jr.** They divorced, and Dorothy and her sons moved back to Oskaloosa.

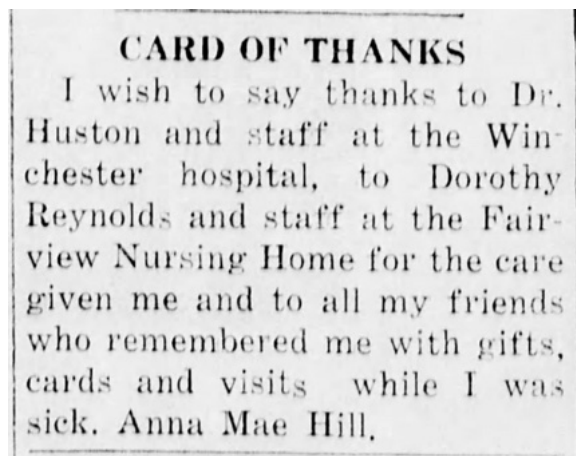
Dorothy Reynolds served as director and administrator of Fairview Nursing Home near Oskaloosa from 1956 until her retirement in 1970. The nursing home was on Fairview Road, east of Oskaloosa. The 1904 building had originally housed the Jefferson County Poor Farm. Reynolds was one of the earliest women of color (possibly the first in the state) to serve as an administrator in a Kansas nursing home. The skilled nursing offered at Fairview Nursing Home complemented the care of the Jefferson County Memorial Hospital, which opened in Winchester in 1956.

Dorothy was a member of First Southern Baptist Church in Oskaloosa and a former member of the AME Church in Oskaloosa. She volunteered at the Oskaloosa Thrift Store for many years. She provided genealogical information for more than 3,000 Black community members to the Jefferson County Historical Society.

James Van Reynolds, Dorothy's older son, served as a U.S. marine in Vietnam. He attended Washburn University, where he discovered a love of acting. He has appeared in numerous films, plays, and television shows. He won a Daytime Emmy Award in 2018 for his portrayal of Abe Carter on "Days of Our Lives."

Warren Henry Reynolds also served with the U.S. marines. He followed Dorothy into a career in nursing, combining his skills in technology with patient care.

Dorothy Cotton Reynolds died at home May 3, 2002. She is buried in Pleasant View Cemetery in Oskaloosa.



From the Oskaloosa Independent, Feb. 23, 1967

Nortonville Base Ball Season, 1886

From the Nortonville News, July 9, 1886

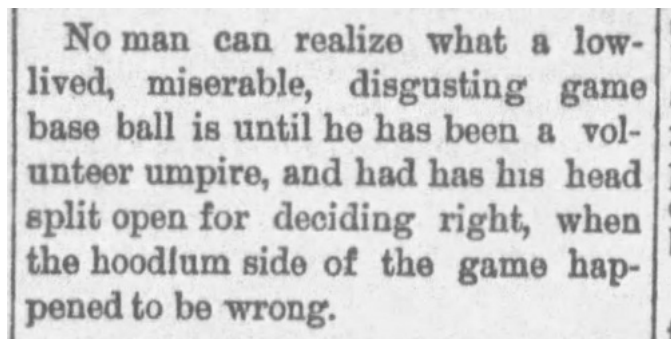
The game of base ball played here last Monday between the Valley Falls and a picked nine, was a most interesting one and closely contested, but finally won by the visitors by a score of 19 to 22, the picked nine allowing them to make nine tallies in a single inning, which turned the game. The picked nine was composed of four young gentlemen who are with the surveying party of our new railroad, and five young men from the country surrounding Nortonville. The surveyors are very fine ballists and enjoyed the sport hugely, although finally defeated. Inasmuch as there is no regularly organized club here, a picked nine of any kind was permissible. Everything passed off in a good-natured manner and the Valley Falls people, of whom quite a large number were present, went home happy.

Sunday Base Ball

From the Nortonville News, Aug. 6, 1886

This whole country has gone crazy on Sunday base ball. Last Sunday while **Elder Motter** was coming over from Winchester, he viewed from a distance four separate games in progress. Guess we'll have to call in some more evangelical help in order to break the thing up.

"**Shorty**" **Schreiber** is fast developing an original pitch. He stands square in his box, clasps his hands over his head, swings his arms seven different ways, spits on the ball eight times, wipes it on his pants three times, and just as the batsman thinks he is going to throw to 2d, Shorty shoots the ball across the plate, and the umpire says "one strike."



No man can realize what a low-lived, miserable, disgusting game base ball is until he has been a volunteer umpire, and had his head split open for deciding right, when the hoodlum side of the game happened to be wrong.

From the Nortonville News, Aug. 6, 1886

Picked Nines

From the Nortonville News, Aug. 13, 1886

A game of bass (*sic*) ball between picked nines is usually so bad that it leads one to believe that the players were "picked before they were ripe."

We understand that the Oskaloosa club would like to play a game of ball with a Nortonville nine. Our boys should get together, practice up, and snow the buttermilk nine under.

Married or Not

From the Nortonville News, Aug. 20, 1886

A lively game of ball was played last Tuesday between the married men and the single men. Some how or other the married men were beaten, owing probably to the superior playing of the single men. The game opened promptly with the married men in the field. Easy balls from the pitcher, a couple of muffs, several wild throws and an error gave them nine tallies. When the married men took hold of the willow there was determination on their faces and fire in their eyes, but somehow they didn't exactly get on to **Schreiber**'s balls. We are opposed to such monkey business, anyhow. The benedicts, however, got in six runs, and felt pretty good. When the married men again took the field there was great fun for the audience. **Sam Pardee** had two dollars' worth of fun, but refuses to pay a cent. **Harris**, of the married men (Harris is not married, understand, but was playing on that side) caught an elegant foul fly, but as he caught it on the ground the umpire refused to declare it out. When the pitcher gave a little tippy-up, the batsman knocked a nice fly to **Elliott**, of the married men (P.S.—Elliott is not married yet, but a little more training with the married men will settle his case) who promptly muffed it, and though we may have been somewhat excited at this point, yet we verily believe the single men made four tallies on this break and the breaks that followed. **John Bates** was quietly sneaking to second when the pitcher threw the ball to **Perry** of the married men (Perry is neither married nor single) who became rattled and in pawing around through the atmosphere for the ball he lost his balance and fell right on top of Bates. Singularly enough the umpire refused to declare it out. This brilliant play afforded the audience great amusement, but still they refused to pay anything. One by one the players on the side of the married men went home, till the audience was consumed in furnishing substitutes, and the married men worked manfully to keep the score of the opposition below 100. This was done with the greatest of ease as the single men, count as they would, made only 97! Five innings were played and the married men were just showing up their staying power when the game stopped. We verily believe that if the full nine innings had been played, which could have been accomplished before 12 o'clock that night, the score would have had decidedly a different aspect. Look out for another game, as the benedicts are riled up.

Going to Church

Thomas and Ella Hull Fulton and their family attended the Reformed Presbyterian or Covenanter church in Winchester. Ella and her son Stewart chronicled their memories of those Sabbath days for the Winchester Star.

Going to Church When I Was a Boy

From the Winchester Star, Oct. 2, 1942

The minister came from Ohio as a pioneer and preached for a while in the Methodist church, when they did not have services. And by writing back east to his friends and other parts of the country, quite a few families of the same faith organized the Covenanter Church. His name was **Rev. Dodds**. That was the year of 1868, and a church was built. The location was donated by Rev. Dodds. Families came from Ohio, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Pennsylvania, New York and Michigan.

In the year 1876 Rev. Dodds resigned and **Rev. D.H. Coulter**, with his wife, was called from Iowa to carry on the work, and all my young life was under Rev. D.H. Coulter.

As years went by, and as we had two sermons each Sabbath, the horse sheds became necessary to be built. As a rule two members would build together, and all families had a horse shed to drive in.

At first we came in farm wagons, then the spring wagons, and the surrey that had a top on it. Also the road cart and top buggy. There were John Deere, Studebaker, Bradley, IXL, Hessie, Stutz and Walker spring wagons. We were as proud of a wagon as you would be of a V-8 today.

We also had our dogs, and they would come to church, also, and at lunch time we would throw out a piece of meat or bread and the show was on—sometimes two rounds and sometimes three, but a good dog fight. Not much blood was shed. This did not happen very often, however.

Most members were farmers and they came from two to seven miles and to stay for afternoon service; it was the custom to bring our lunch with us. Some had a church basket used for that purpose only. They were fine looking. Others had just the common open ones. But everyone seemed to enjoy themselves—also their lunch. I often wondered how our mothers got us all ready for church and lunch, too, and be at Sunday school at 10:00 a.m.; for us it was a five mile drive.

But that was the custom of those days and father and mother felt it was their duty to take interest in the children in church and school and the home and to honor the Cross of Christ and make good American citizens to go on with the work.

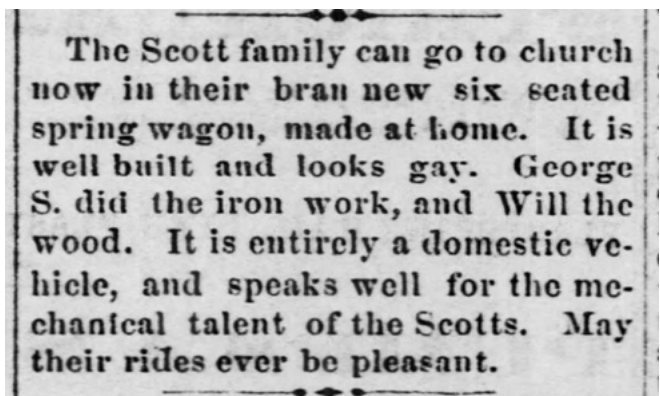
W. S. F. [William Stewart Fulton]

Going to Church Years Ago

From the Winchester Star, Apr. 23, 1926

As we came out of the Covenanter church last Sabbath and saw the families get into lumber wagons to go to their homes we had a backward vision of the many large families of parents and children that used to worship there in the old church, when **Rev. Josiah Dodds** and **Rev. D.H. Coulter** were the ministers. Grand men they were. Rev. Coulter baptized and married and buried some of our children, and indeed it was an education to sit under his ministry. We see the large families of **Currys** load up for home, and the **McCreas** and **Steuarts** and **Reynolds** and **Weirs**. We had two sermons besides Sabbath school, and sure the day was full.

Now Pa Fulton was one of the faithful ones and always took pride in being there on time. So the little farm team was got out early and Ma and the children loaded in hay and comforts in the bottom of the wagon—over rough roads and mud and snow we went. Ma held the baby under the comfort, with the other small boys and girls close to her. Pa drove quiet and silent and slow. It would never do to hurry the one team that worked in the field on work days. The boys talked. One could see and tell the make of the windmills and engines in sight. Another could ask questions about everything and say no, why, Ma, and Ma and the children talked and endured this for many years, and Pa did the driving slow and quiet.



From the Valley Falls New Era, Apr. 24, 1875

We had an interval of 15 minutes between two sermons and we took a lunch. We can see some of those big lunch baskets yet. It made no difference how busy the day Saturday, some kind of lunch had to be prepared for church on the Sabbath. Three things that must be done by Saturday night was to fix baby's clothes, Pa's shirt ironed and the lunch for church prepared. One time the flour was short and we finished out the cookies with corn meal. Now, we intended to keep those cakes out of sight, when one boy said, "Ma, those corn cakes are good, I want another," and a smile went around. How children do give us away. This same boy, when asked by the minister how he spent the Sabbath, said, "Well, Pa went to church and **John** and I slid on the cellar door,"

It was hard work going to church in a lumber wagon and Ma could never get reconciled to the two long sermons—and on special occasions seeing the sun set as we sighted home.

One time there were ten or twelve families west of Crooked creek that came to the old church each Sabbath in our farm wagon. Every two weeks those families had prayer meeting from house to house—sometimes almost overflowing the little house. But we took out the beds, blacked the little stove, washed the one window, put clean aprons on the babies and made ready. But gradually times grew better and we had better ways of going. Shorter sermon, for which we were truly thankful. But few are left that were in the procession west of the creek. And we have no desire to go that way again. But though hard, I believe it paid.

Mrs. [Ella Hull] Fulton

Rev. L. Prentice at the Lutheran Church

From the Kansas Jeffersonian, Grasshopper Falls, Dec. 23, 1863

Colored Preaching.—**Rev. L. Prentice** will address his African brethren, at the Lutheran Church in this place, on Sunday morning next, at 10 1/2 o'clock. Mr. P. is of the M.E. Church North, and has the reputation of being a very eloquent negro preacher. He believes that the white man's God is also the God of the black man, and that there will be no "n----- pews" in the great sanctified Church on High.

Gum-Chewing

From the Oskaloosa Independent, Apr. 3, 1875

It is our deliberate opinion that this city excels in the refined and progressive art of gum-chewing. There are young ladies of our acquaintance who can chew gum fluently in two or three different languages, and are daily becoming more proficient. We firmly believe that they must sit up nights to practice. Last Sunday evening, at church, a young miss sat behind us, immediately to the right, and a small boy just to the left of us, and two more thoroughly active persons we never saw. The sound of the conflict could be heard distinctly above the words that came from the pulpit, and oh! how we enjoyed the services!

CHURCHES.

BAPTIST services two Sabbaths per month; Sabbath school every Sabbath at 12 m. Rev. G. Gates, Pastor.

CONGREGATIONAL. Rev. Levi B. Wilson, Pastor. Services every Sabbath morning at 10:30, and evening at 7 o'clock. Sabbath school at 12, m. Prayer meeting, Thursday evenings. [vlnl]

METHODIST. Rev. S. M. Brough, Pastor. Services at 10:30, a. m. and 7 p. m. Prayer meetings, Thursday evenings. Sunday school at 9 1/2 a. m.

CATHOLIC Church. Services the 4th Sunday of each month. Rev. Father Peter Kassius, Pastor.

COLORED Methodist. Services once every month. Sunday school every Sabbath at 3 p. m. Rev. Daily, Pastor.

GERMAN Evangelical Church. Meets the usual place on Coal Creek every Sabbath. ———, Pastor.

From the Valley Falls New Era, Apr. 17, 1875

[Ed.: **Ella Galena Hull** and **Thomas Henry Fulton** married in 1870. Their first child, **Stewart**, was born a year later. They farmed and raised nine children near Boyle. They moved to Winchester in 1911. Ella wrote local news and historical columns for the Winchester Star and Valley Falls Vindicator. Her lively descriptions of pioneer life in Jefferson County attracted many readers.]

CLUB MODERNE

JOE MERELLO Presents



LUCILLE ELMORE

The female "Edgar Bergen"

From the San Francisco Chronicle, May 14, 1943

she performed in "The Follies of 1917," for the benefit of the American Red Cross.

She performed in 1923 in Valley Falls with a Topeka company called "The Aeolian Entertainers." The *Valley Falls Vindicator* wrote, "Miss Elmore showed her skill in impersonating first, a very small girl and then an old-fashioned minister."

Lucille Elmore, Ventriloquist and Petite Comédienne

Lucille Gertrude Elmore was born in Winchester, Kan., Apr. 14, 1897, the daughter of **Freeman P.** and **Rose Etta Van Ness Elmore**. Her parents married in Winchester in 1887. Rose Van Ness was considered a young lady of beauty and culture and an accomplished pianist. Freeman, Lucille's father, was cashier in the Bank of Winchester, the town's first banking institution. The family moved to Topeka when Lucille was three.

Lucille grew up with two brothers, **Dick** and **Leo**. She graduated from Topeka High School in 1916, where she excelled in theatre and drama. In 1915, she played the title role in "The Puppet Princess," a short play about a doll princess come to life.

Lucille attended the University of Kansas, where she was a member of Chi Omega sorority. As "one of the fifty most popular girls" at KU,

In 1922, Lucille began a career on the Chautauqua Circuit, where she developed a ventriloquist act. She joined "Stepping Stones," a touring musical comedy revue, appearing on the road and on Broadway. She soon formed her own company, "Lucille Elmore Revue," which toured the United States and Canada. Later she toured the U.S. and Canadian west coast, entertaining the troops during World War II, as "Lucille Elmore and Her Whiz Kids."



CHRISTMAS FUN—Two of the servicemen who were guests of the Advertising Club at its Christmas luncheon yesterday at the Palace Hotel grin at the wisecracks of the dummy assisting LUCILLE ELMORE, one of the many entertainers on the program. The men in uniform are J. C. EDGINGTON, seaman first class, and ROBERT DORSEY, electrician's mate third class.

From the San Francisco News, Dec. 16, 1943

The puppets with which she performed reminded audiences of **Edgar Bergen's** puppet, Charlie McCarthy. The *San Francisco Examiner* reported in 1943 that she was one of the stars of the city's night life. "**Joe Merello** at his Club Moderne struck oil with his new show. **Lucille Elmore**, the female Edgar Bergen, has, to say the least, an unusual act. She uses two dummies, a boy and a girl."

Lucille was also known as the petite comédienne. In 1943, the *Pasadena Star-News* reported, "Miss

Elmore, less than 5 feet tall, portrays children and the aged to perfection. She impersonates a mechanical doll that has just stepped from the toy shop shelf, an old-fashioned girl in a hoop skirt, a belle of the gay nineties. Miss Elmore is also an able ventriloquist and carries on a lively conversation with two animated companions. She also changes character directly before the audience by changes in costume."



LUCILLE ELMORE
At Club Moderne.

From the San Francisco Examiner, May 21, 1943

Lucille returned to Topeka in 1946, entertaining patients in Veterans' Administration hospitals with her "living dolls" and volunteering with the Red Cross. In 1948, she performed at the Jefferson County 4-H Club National Achievement Banquet in Ozawkie. The *Winchester Star* reported, "Miss Elmore is a popular international known entertainer. She entertains from coast to coast and is always scheduled several months in advance."

Lucille Elmore died in Topeka March 27, 1985. She was survived by a niece, **Mrs. Robert T. Hill** of Oakland, Cal., and three nephews: **Glenn Elmore**, Vestal N.Y.; **Dale Elmore**, Tucson Ariz.; and **Wayne Elmore** of Topeka. Lucille is buried in Mount Hope Cemetery in Topeka. An account of her 50 years in show business is filed in the Topeka Public Library.

—Jane Hoskinson with research assistance from Leanne Chapman

Summering at Oskaloosa

From the Oskaloosa Independent, July 15, 1910

Alf. Jackson says that most of the colored people who went away to the city to work have returned to Oskaloosa. "The colored people," says Alf., "come out to Oskaloosa for the same purpose that the white folks go off up to the lakes and other summer resorts. Oskaloosa is their summer resort when it gets too hot at Kansas City." **Ben English**, who is now at Los Angeles, is expected home about Sept. 1.

Murder of Green L. Robinson, 1876

(Contributed by *Leanne Chapman*)

From the Oskaloosa Independent, Sept. 30, 1876

On Sunday morning last there was an affray near Nortonville, between two neighbors, resulting in one shooting the other. An old resident named Robinson had some stock which broke into a neighbor's field and damaged his growing crop. This led to bad feeling, which was intensified by an older grudge or disagreement. On Sunday morning the parties met, the stock having been in mischief again the previous night. Words passed, and then the neighbor shot Robinson, inflicting a dangerous if not a fatal wound in the abdomen. Robinson had a club in his hand, and the other man said he was struck and nearly knocked out of the buggy before he shot, and then in self defense. Robinson said he did not use the club until the pistol was drawn on him, and then only to defend himself.

From the Oskaloosa Sickle, Sept. 30, 1876

On Sunday last **Green Robinson** and Mr. Terry, of Nortonville, had a quarrel about something and Robinson attacked Terry with a club, when Terry shot him through the body. Robinson has since died.

From the Oskaloosa Independent, Oct. 21, 1876

The preliminary examination of **Ward Terry** for the shooting of Green Robinson, in Jefferson township, commenced at Nortonville on Tuesday last, before Esquire **J.R. Hall**.

From the Oskaloosa Independent, Oct. 28, 1876

The suit pending before Sqr. Hall of Nortonville, against Terry for the shooting of Green Robinson, was postponed on last Tuesday, (17th inst.) and set for Tuesday of this week (24th inst.)

We learn from **Capt. Johnson** that Terry, charged with killing Robinson, was acquitted in the trial at Nortonville this week, upon the testimony of the prosecution, no witnesses for the defence being produced.

From the Oskaloosa Independent, Nov. 4, 1876

Ward Terry, charged with killing Green Robinson, at his preliminary trial last week before J.R. Hall, Esq., at Nortonville, was acquitted, no evidence upon the part of the defence being produced. The witnesses upon the part of the prosecution, some dozen in number, testified to the statements of Mr. Robinson just before he died, which was about as follows: Noticing Mr. Terry that morning dogging his (Robinson's) cattle, he walked out and met him, and told Terry if he did not cease doing it, he would break his cane over his head. At that Terry jumped out of his buggy, and on the opposite side from where Mr. Robinson stood, at the same time producing a revolver, Robinson following around and striking Terry on the arm (some witnesses say one and others say two blows,) when Terry fired and Robinson fell. We understand Mr. Terry makes an entirely different statement, but the prosecution on their own motion, had him acquitted without offering any evidence.



*Emily Ostrander and her children, Korben and Kamden, discovered this headstone beneath bushes on farmland southeast of Nortonville. The property was owned by Green Lee Robinson from the late 1850s until his death in 1876. Ostrander's family now farms the property. Three broken headstones were found: **G.L. Robinson, T.V. Robinson** (d. 1889), and **Mary Rose** (d. 1883), wife of **William Rose**.*

Champions All

By Janice Bower Tompkins

My mother, **Margaret Evelyn Champion Bower**, used to mock-complain that she had given up a lot when she married my dad and became a mere Bower. After all, a Bauer is only a peasant farmer, but SHE had been a real Champion, and her family had been in America practically forever—well, more than 380 years.

Our first American Champion is well documented. One of Mom's direct-line ancestors, **Thomas Champion** of Ashford, Kent, left England in the spring of 1634 on the ship *Hercules* of Sandwich. He was accompanied by an unknown person simply identified as "a servant." In March 1634 both he and the servant had received certificates that they were known to be upstanding folks from **Edmund Hayes**, vicar of Kent, where Thomas had last lived. The pair sailed for New England in April. If our birthdate for Thomas is correct, he was 19 years old. (We think he was born in 1615 and was baptized in Lenham, Kent, on February 18, 1616, and that his father was named **John Champion**.) They were part of the Great Migration from Europe (1620-1640).

The early Champions were dissenters. Religious dissenters. Somewhere along the way they became Quakers; more formally, they were members of the group called Society of Friends—folks who didn't want to get along with the established Church of England. Or they might have been Calvinists in the beginning who converted to Quakerism. A letter written in England in 1628 sets forth grounds why these groups "have resolved to go to New England."

The grounds stated include: "dislike of church ceremonies, the regimen and government of the Established Church, and some points of doctrine defended by authority."

The folks who made their way to Hempstead, Long Island, in the 1600s include our Champion, **Jacocks**, **Washbourne** and **Williams** ancestors—all thought to be Quakers. Our **Thomas** married **Frances Jacocks** at Hempstead in 1642. He was 27; she was probably 22. Hempstead had a theocratic town-council system, with the Presbyterian Church having the most influence. Quakerism was discouraged.

As early as 1655, Thomas Champion's name is listed as a property owner in Hempstead. By 1673 Thomas Champion, his son **John Champion** and their families are officially listed as residents of the town of Hempstead, New York. Their names (as well as those of our **Whitehead** and **Ellison** kin) appear on a list of Hempstead freeholders in **Vanderkamp's** translation of the old Dutch records.

Hempstead was in fact in Dutch territory in the New World, though our ancestors were English. The original patent for the town (issued by the Dutch governor **Kieft** in 1644) stated that farmers should pay taxes to New Amsterdam and eventually pay one-tenth of their farm produce to the government—the tax to begin 10 years after "the first general peace." Ratifying patents for the town were issued by two succeeding Dutch governors, who had bought the territory from the Indians. Europeans and Indians in the area mostly got along with one another. The deed signed by six or seven Indian sachems was signed July 4, 1657, and gave boundaries for the land involved. "Signed" is probably not the proper word, since each of the sachems marked an "X" with a notation as to whose X it was.

The Champion family was still around Hempstead in 1659, according to *Onderdouw's Annals of History*, when some of them (and more of our kinfolk, one **William Jacocks** and **Daniel Whitehead**) testified against a dishonest innkeeper named **Richard Brudnell**, who constantly overcharged his tavern customers and stole from his neighbors. Brudnell was found guilty and was fined.

About 1677, the Constable of Hempstead made a valuation of the assets of the Hempstead residents, but for some reason Thomas's son John Champion was not included in the list. His name, however, appears in the list of folks who were in default and had "neglected or refused" to give city officials the proper information. Since Thomas hadn't responded to the Constable and overseers of Hempstead, they "guest" the value of his Hempstead property to be 100£ sterling. Thomas' lack of response to the Constable may have been because the Champions had moved away from Hempstead without selling their property.

According to the book "Sketches of the First Emigrant Settlers in Newton Township, Old Gloucester County, West New Jersey," when the Quakers decided to establish a Quaker colony in the 1670s in West New Jersey, some of our folks had gone along. **John Fenwick** established a Quaker colony near what is now Salem, N.J., bringing in a shipload of Quaker families in 1675. Two years later another shipload of Quakers arrived, establishing the settlement of Burlington, N.J. Gloucester County was thus established as a Quaker colony. The **Thomas Champion** family emigrated to Tuckahoe in Cape May County (old Gloucester County), New Jersey.

How did these folks acquire land? According to **Ruth Crawley Champion**, Quakers emphasized equality and the personal ethics of early Christianity. They and their Dutch and Swedish neighbors actually paid for the land they got from the Indians. No, they didn't buy Manhattan for \$24.00 worth of beads. Instead:

“In 1677, a deed signed by six Indian chiefs included the upper half of Old Gloucester County [N.J.]. In exchange for the land, the settlers traded 46 fathoms of duffields, 30 blankets, 150 lb. powder, 30 guns, 30 bars of lead, 30 flints, 200 fathoms of wampum, 30 kettles, 7 anchors of brandy, 30 knives, 36 rings, 30 pair of stockings, 30 looking glasses, 30 needles, 30 tobacco boxes, 10 pewter spoonfuls of paint, 1200 fish hooks, and 144 pipes.”

—Ruth Crawley Champion's book, *The Champion Family: 350 Years in America*, p 6.

(Note: Duffield was a type of coarse woolen cloth or canvas—think of “duffle” as in duffle bags. A fathom is a linear measurement of about six feet.)

Thomas Champion, the emigrant, is thought to have died in 1682 at the age of 67. His wife, **Frances**, died in 1668/67 (by the Quaker calendar). She was 48. The Champions had four known children, including our ancestor **John**. The early lineage is easy to remember because it's **Thomas, John, Thomas, John, Nathaniel**. Handy to remember but still very confusing. (Especially if we're right about the Emigrant Thomas Champion being the son of John Champion. That would make it John, Thomas, John, Thomas, John, Nathaniel.)

John, the son of the emigrant Thomas, married twice. His first wife was **Sarah Washbourne Williams**, who came from Hempstead. They were married about 1673, and they had nine children.

Our Champions keep cropping up in those early records. On May 13, 1700, a fellow named **Henry Franklin** consigned to **John Champion** of Hempstead, Queens County, Long Island—that's our guy!—a tract of land lying on the north side of Cooper's Creek in Waterford (now Delaware) Township, Camden County, New Jersey, “to which place the said John Champion removed. This tract contained 330 acres of land.” The deed calls this farm Livewell.

“The first regular ferry over Cooper's Creek was established at the foot of Schoolhouse Lane on 1 Dec. 1702 (according to Ruth Crawley Champion, p.7), by our John Champion.

Livewell was close to a spot where the road from Burlington to Philadelphia crossed Cooper's Creek, a spot where drovers often had trouble in crossing the stream. Minute books for Old Gloucester County show that John Champion complained of the frequent inconvenience he endured in setting people over Cooper's Creek near his house. The county grand jury proposed that John Champion be compensated in all seasons for this service of getting folks across the creek, and they set the fee for ferriage at two pence per head for two persons together, and three pence for a single person traveling alone. Apparently those fees were only for folks afoot. A man and horse should pay five pence. There was no established charge for a carriage because such luxuries were not generally available until the time of the American Revolution. Most travelers were on horseback or afoot. Or they traveled by water because the roads there were very primitive. Funerals were frequently attended in boats and bodies of the deceased were taken from Cooper's Creek to the Old Newton Graveyard by water.

Our **Sarah Washbourne Williams Champion** died at Cooper's Creek in April 1718. That same year, John Champion divided his landed estate between his sons **Robert** and **Nathaniel** by a line running from the creek into the woods. John married **Martha Walker** Jan. 12, 1719/20. They had no children. He died in August 1727, at the age of 80, at Livewell.

Former Governor of Kansas Speaks at Winchester

From the Winchester Star, Sept. 21, 1900 (from the files of Raymond Riley)

[Ed.: George Washington Glick (1827-1911) was a member of the Kansas house of representatives from 1864 to 1869. He was a Kansas state senator from 1873 to 1879. He served as governor of Kansas from 1883 to 1885. He owned and operated Shannon Hill Farm outside Atchison.]

Ex. Gov. Glick opened the campaign at Wilhelm's hall Tuesday evening. A good crowd was out to hear the honest old Kansan, but a large number who came to town left before the speaking began on account of the threatening condition of the weather. Mr. Glick was introduced by chairman **Ryan**, of Boyle. Mr. Glick chiefly dwelt on the peril of imperialistic government as seen from the democrat point of view. The money question was touched and then the trust question was taken up and it was pointed out to the farmer, the merchants, the manufacturer and the laborer, how these concerns were destroying the rights of individuals. Mr. Glick is not a spell binder; neither is he a silver tongued orator. He is a plain honest farmer, who knows the people's wants; a man whose name is woven into the history of his adopted state and whose every heart beat is true to the people he hopes to represent.

Ladies' String Band

From the Winchester Star, June 11, 1897
(from the files of Raymond Riley)

Winchester is the only town in the county that has a ladies' string band. This band is composed of the following ladies:

Misses Bell Barns, Myrl Carley, Amelia Denneler, Nellie Colman, Mrs. Sadie Stoeffler and Mrs. Jim Gibson, guitars; **Misses Mary Weir, Lynda Elliott and Grace McKemey,** mandolins; **Miss May Wilson,** harp; **Misses Nannie and Mary Young,** and **Mrs. Maud Coppinger,** violins; **Mrs. Lillie,** pianist.

From the Oskaloosa Independent, July 9, 1897

The celebration at Winchester last Saturday passed off nicely and quietly, and seemed to be a pleasant day to all. There was a good attendance and a pleasing program of speeches, songs, music by the Oskaloosa band and by the ladies' string band of Winchester. Not the least pleasing feature of the program was a song by **Miss Jessie Brown**, with two or three score children, waving flags, joining in the chorus. The parade consisted of the Oska. band on foot, followed by the ladies' string band in a decorated float, and then a float containing tastily dressed young girls representing the states of the Union, Miss Jessie Brown being the Goddess of Liberty. The main feature of the day's program was the ball game in the afternoon between the home team and Emporia team. A good-sized crowd witnessed it and it was probably one of the most interesting games ever played on the grounds, being hotly contested throughout. . . The concert advertised for evening was interfered with because of the approaching storm and the Oska. band was released from duty after playing some half dozen pieces, that they might get home before the rain. They report a good time and nice treatment by our neighbor folks.

Old Jefferson Town's Bandstand

The bandstand at Old Jefferson Town was built in 1973. It is a replica of one built in 1906, which stood on the southwest corner of the Jefferson County Courthouse square in Oskaloosa. The original bandstand was destroyed in 1960 by a tornado, which also severely damaged the old courthouse. Bands once played in the bandstand on the courthouse square every week in the summer.

Live music is performed in the replica bandstand during special events at Old Jefferson Town. The bandstand also makes a special setting for weddings and a popular backdrop for photographers.

4TH OF JULY
 Celebration at
WINCHESTER, KAN.,
JULY 3rd, 1897.

Grand Procession will form at 10:30 and march to the grounds headed by TWO BRASS BANDS

PROGRAMME:

Song.....	By The Choral Union
Prayer.....	Rev. C. E. Holcombe
Reading Declaration of Independence.....	J. L. Forsyth
Music.....	Ladies' String Band
Oration.....	"My Country"
	Elder H. I. Bryant
	DINNER
Music.....	Oskaloosa Band
Song.....	Choral Union
Address.....	Rev. D. H. Coulter
Music.....	Ladies' String Band
Song.....	Goddess of Liberty With 44 Young Ladies
Toast.....	"Why We Celebrate"
	Rev. C. E. Holcombe
Song.....	"Star Spangled Banner"
	Choral Union
Toast.....	"Winchester"
	L. Wilhelm
Song.....	by Twin Sisters, Daisy and Lillie Jeffries
Music.....	Ladies' String Band
Music.....	Oskaloosa Brass Band

From the Winchester Star, July 2, 1897



Photo courtesy of the Jefferson County Historical Society.

Around the County

(Contributed by *Leanne Chapman*)

Christmas Entertainment

From the McLouth Times, Jan. 1, 1904

The Christmas entertainment at the Methodist church Christmas eve was thoroughly enjo[y]ed by the children for whom it was particularly int[er]esting. The music was good, the little folks acquitted themselves nicely; the special feature were the tableaux, which were very fine. There was a tree tastefully trimmed, and filled with eighty little stockings which were filled with candy and nuts, and Santa Claus (**Arthur Chapman**) arrived with a sack of oranges, and the treat was distributed among the Sunday school children and the other children who were present.

A Leap Year Party

From the Kaw Valley Chief, Mar. 28, 1884

Miss Gurtie Surber, Miss Mollie Spangler, Miss Cora Norwood, Miss Etta Smith, Miss Susie Colvin, Miss Mattie Wilson, Miss Carrie Fauble, Miss Aggie Bouton and Miss Belle Armstrong, gave a leap year party at the residence of **Dr. Surber** on Friday night of last week. The fair ones according to the usages of Leap year escorted the young gentlemen to and from the party. The evening was a pleasant one to all and reflected credit on the young ladies.

Lovesickness

From the Jefferson County Tribune, May 27, 1910

There are several cases of lovesickness in town so bad that they have to be set up with and while the symptoms may not lead to such fatal results as "cyanide" yet the victims show loss of appetite—drowsiness about breakfast time and finally several June weddings will follow unless the girls get so old and haggard looking from sitting up late that the bloom of youth will fade and the bridegroom will escape.

Triplets

From the Winchester Star, Sept. 20, 1889

Hurrah for Jefferson county and for Jefferson township in particular. **John Howard**, who lives south of town, is entitled to the \$500 reward offered by the state for triplets. **Dr. Lemon** reports triplets born to **Mr. and Mrs. Howard**, Tuesday, September 17, all girls, and mother and children all doing well. This is the first triple birth that has ever occurred in Jefferson county.

Peanut Roaster

From the Nortonville News, July 10, 1891

Harry Lillie bought a fine peanut roaster of Janssen Bros. last week. It is a daisy and Harry has had to keep it busy to supply the demand for fresh roasted peanuts.

From the Nortonville News, Sept. 4, 1891

George Gehrett has taken charge of Harry Lillie's confectionary while Harry is attending fairs with his peanut roaster.

From the Nortonville News, Oct. 9, 1891

One of the neatest apparatus that we saw at the fair was a peanut roaster, run by Harry Lillie of Nortonville, Kansas. It was run by gas, was a rotary cylinder machine, and cooked the best peanuts we had ever eaten. Mr. Lillie was the chief center of attraction to the youngsters, for these cunning little judges soon found that peanuts roasted on this machine, were better than others. The association awarded him the first premium on his machine.—*Landmark, Cammeron, Ma.*

Uncle Billy Ricketts

From the Oskaloosa Independent, Apr. 30, 1909

"**Uncle Billy**" **Ricketts** died yesterday afternoon at his home in Meriden, and the funeral will be held Sa[tur]day. Mr. Ricketts was a well-known character and of considerable intellectual ability. When a boy, he was one of 500 boys who hauled the corner stone of the Washington Monument to its place from the depot.

Children Die in Fire

From the Valley Falls Vindicator, Dec. 17, 1941

Williamstown.—While their mother walked half a mile from their 4-room house to get the mail, three small children of **Mrms. Clarence Wales** burned to death Tuesday. The children were **Ray** and **Ruth**, 2-year-old twins, and **Clyde**, 1-year old. Four other children of the family were in school. The father was at work on a WPA project 5 miles away. The house, two miles northeast of here, was secluded from the highway. Mrs. Wales reported she left the children asleep in the house and walked to the mail box. On her return she found the home in flames. She s[u]ffered burns on the face in futile attempts to rescue the children.

Quilt

From the Oskaloosa Independent, Oct. 16, 1875

Mrs. Samuel Corn had a quilt on exhibition 143 years old! It was made in Scotland and is well preserved.

Local Boys Appear at Slot Machine Hearing

From the McLouth Times, June 18, 1925

Oskaloosa 'Kindergarten' Gives Valuable Evidence Before Special Master McDermott

Eight small boys ranging from six to fourteen years of age did something that older men could not do at the hearing for the slot machines at Topeka last week. They stopped court while the crowd satisfied its curiosity as to the purpose of bringing in the "kindergarten."

This same "kindergarten," named by some facetious attorney connected with the case, furnished perhaps the most valuable information of the week at the slot machines hearing. All other evidence was submitted by youths of 16 to 25 years of age. The impression made by the group of small boys was significant in regard to the outcome of the slot machines investigation.

What will happen to a witness who tells a lie, thus perjuring himself, was ably shown by an 11-year-old boy, who explained to the court's fullest satisfaction that he understood the meaning of an oath.

When **George T. McDermott**, special master in the investigation of the operation of slot machines in Kansas, appointed by **Judge Pollock** of the federal court, asked **Emmett Cox**, one of the group of boys from Oskaloosa, if he understood what was meant by taking an oath, Emmett replied he did.

The Liars Miss Heaven

"What will happen to you if you don't tell the truth on the witness stand?" asked McDermott.

"I won't go to Heaven if I don't," replied Emmett, and he was promptly sworn in with no more questions.

Will Slot Machines Stay?

His testimony, with that of the other boys from Oskaloosa, was taken in the special proceedings in which George H. McDermott is gathering evidence in regard as to whether slot machines shall be allowed to operate under a permanent injunction in Kansas, or shall be regarded as a gambling device and ousted.

In bringing such small boys who testified as to how they had played, and how much money they had lost, **Sheriff Arthur Hamm**, of Jefferson county, made a spectacular play.

From Six to Fourteen Years Old

Lawyers and officers at the hearing professed amazement that boys from six to fourteen years of age could play slot machines. **George Brady**, 14, testified he had over sixty packages of mints and was about a dollar ahead. Emmett Cox said he played a nickel, received eight slugs and still had three in his pocket. All the other boys had lost money in the machines.

County officers believe that in showing how children play the machines and lose money, they are producing forceful evidence for the abolition of the devices.

Boys Enjoyed Themselves

The boys had a big time. They visited the statehouse and all the interesting places in Topeka, got stopped by a traffic cop, and then testified in a regular court. What brought their cup of happiness to the overflowing point was the \$4.80 all[o]wed each one for mileage and fees.

"Gee, boy, I bet some o' them other kids wisht they'd o' come up, now." Such was the common expression on the journey back to Oskaloosa.

The boys who testified in the hearing are **Amos Leech**, 11, **Billy Leech**, 9, **Philip Inverarity**, 10, **Chester Inverarity**, 6, **Donald Parker**, 14, **Emmett Cox**, 11, **George Brady**, 14, and **Donald Green**, 12.

Notice

From the Perry Mirror, June 15, 1922 (Contributed by Janice Bower Tompkins)

The County will pay a bounty of 5¢ each for gopher scalps and crow heads and 1¢ for crow eggs, when delivered to County Clerk, with satisfactory evidence that they were taken within the boundaries of Jefferson County. By order of the Board of County Commissioners. **Arthur Haynes**, Chairman.

Early Reminiscences of North-Eastern Kansas in 1857

by Isaac Maris, Chapter VI

The Nortonville News, Friday, July 3, 1903, Page 1

In my humble effort to present some of the early happenings in northern Kansas it will readily be seen that I must of necessity omit a great many things that might be of interest to some, and only in as brief a manner as possible present such as would be of general interest to all.

In the great excitement over the discovery of gold in California in 1845 and 1850, thousands of men were soon on their way to the Pacific coast in search for gold. Many of them from the east and northeast naturally crossed the Missouri River at St. Joseph and at once began their travel over what was called in my boyhood days "The Great American Desert," with its vast plains and territory between them and their coveted destination. In passing through the territory of Kansas, especially the eastern portion, many of the travelers were delighted with its beautiful rich, rolling prairies and fertile valleys, and later made their future home here.

A bend or curve of the Missouri River locates Atchison, the farthest inland city on the east border of the state, and it has had quite a history. Just at this point [I] will state a few things only that happened in those dark and perilous times during 1855 and 1856 when the pro-slavery and free-state men were engaged in a hard and desperate hand to hand conflict. At Hickory Point, a little town in Jefferson

Isaac Maris

By Liz Leech

Isaac Maris, a young Quaker, came to Kansas Territory in 1857 and settled about three miles north of Nortonville, in Atchison County. He had come from Ohio to help Kansas become a state free of slavery. He married **Alma Louise Buten**, a Seventh Day Baptist, the year after he arrived. Maris remained a Quaker and his wife a Seventh Day Baptist, but the couple helped organize and guide young peoples' Bible schools and teacher conventions for other Christian branches. He also was called the "the Pioneer Preacher" for his widespread ministry, filling in for preachers of other denominations around Northeast Kansas. He and his neighbors were involved in the Underground Railroad and wrote historically precious letters for the Kansas Historical Society about nearby enslavers, how many slaves they owned, as well as the people who worked to help the enslaved liberate themselves through the Underground Railroad.

County, [near] Dunavant was fought one of the

hardest battles north of the Kaw river. On the morning of the 12th [likely a day or two earlier] of September 1856, Atchison Guards [along with men from South Carolina and other southern states] composed of pro-slavery men, and [pro-slavery militia leader **John Robertson**] as their leader, while on the way to Leocompton, burned the store of **Captain [Rufus] Crosby** at Valley Falls [also burned were the books and materials of the town doctor, **Lorenzo Northrup**], and then returned to Hickory Point, where they joined the force of **Captain [H.A.] Low**, also a pro-slaver, whose property was threatened by [free-state leader **James H.] Lane**. Here they fortified themselves in several small buildings, the best being a blacksmith shop, and awaited an attack. Gen. Lane with **John Ritchie** as Chief of Staff, arrived on the spot about 11 o'clock September 13, and finding he could not dislodge the enemy without artillery, sent to Lawrence for reinforcements. The Lawrence company, under [**J.A.] Harvey** and provided with a four-pound cannon, proceeded directly to Hickory Point, and on the morning of Sunday, the 14th, encountered the force assembled under Lane and Robertson.*

* The two Jefferson County events noted by Mr. Maris, the Battle of Grasshopper (Valley) Falls and the Battle of Hickory Point, were part of a series of skirmishes between pro-slavery and free-state men that made up the bulk of outright fighting in Jefferson County. Here are two other events and supplemental information. Before the pro-slavery attack on free-state businesses at Grasshopper Falls in September 1856, free-staters destroyed commercial property and otherwise harassed pro-slavery leaders in Osawkee (now Ozawkie).

Meanwhile, newly arrived (with a group from Chicago) free-state military leader **J.A. Harvey** and his men joined with militia ("**Stubbs**") from Douglas County, Leavenworth County and some from Jefferson County (**Simeon Hull**) to help Leavenworth County free-staters under attack by pro-slavers from the area and from Missouri and several southern states. Harvey's troops concentrated on Easton and Alexandria (no longer a town), and started back for Lawrence Sept. 10, camping near Round Grove (McLouth area), Jefferson County. **Jesse Newell**, who had a steam-powered sawmill at what would become Oskaloosa, entered Harvey's camp and told Harvey about a group of South Carolinians and Kickapoo Rangers (pro-slavery) camped out along Slough Creek, a couple of miles north of Oskaloosa. Harvey ambushed the sleeping group, took equipment and horses, and let the pro-slavers go. A key triumph for Harvey's free-state partisans was capturing the pro-slavers' big red "Southern Rights," "South Carolina" flag, now held by the Kansas State Historical Society. (Source: Jefferson Jayhawkers and Forgotten Freestaters, **Liz Leech**)



The Battle of Hickory Point, Sept. 14, 1856, the Second Day, from a sketch by William Breyman, a participant, shown in the foreground with a caisson and team of horses. Col. J.A. Harvey is mounted; in the foreground above him is Capt. J.C. Bickerton, also mounted. Lieut. Pratt with ramrod near cannon "Old Sacramento." (Image courtesy of JCHS)

The Blacksmith shop referred to above was a log building standing alone in an open space. I was in it a year or more after and the door was just riddled. The logs were split and shattered almost to shreds and the anvil on its side all battered and bruised. Territorial Governor, **John B. Geary**, who had been here but a short time, issued a proclamation at Lecompton September 16, 1856, stating that he had a sufficient force of government troops from the regular army at his disposal to give full protection and safety to all. He ordered all forces in the territory to disband, which they readily did and in a short time peace was restored.**

** After the Battle of Hickory Point, which was won by free-staters, Harvey and his troops returned to Newell's Mill (the future Oskaloosa) to rest. Osawkee pro-slavery partisans had gone to Lecompton, the territorial capital, and persuaded the pro-slavery government there to send U.S. troops to Jefferson County to stop the free-staters' attack. The U.S. troops found Harvey's men resting by **Jesse Newell's** sawmill, arrested about 100 of them and imprisoned them at Lecompton for several months. Many escaped the makeshift prison, but the bulk eventually was pardoned. (Source: Jefferson Jayhawkers and Forgotten Freestaters, **Liz Leech**)

The leading pro-slavery men up to this time in Atchison were **David B. Atchison**, United States Senator from Missouri, **Col. Peter T. Abell** and **Capt. J.H. Stringfellow**. These men in a convention assembled in Atchison, in a resolution adopted, said: 'We greatly regret and deplore many things that have been said and done during the past two years, and let us now forget the past only as we can amend it in the future by doing all we can to build up Atchison and Kansas in all their interests.' This was largely carried out by Dr. J.H. Stringfellow.

Within the next two years Atchison grew amazingly. One single [wagon] train, that was sent out by Messrs. Hockaday, Burr and Co. in the summer of 1858, consisted of 105 wagons, 225 men, 1000 oxen, 200 mules, 50 horses and 465,500 pounds of merchandise, goods being purchased to supply a chain of stations which that firm had located between Atchison and Salt Lake City. Near this time the Butterfield over-land stage route from Atchison to Denver was established.

During the first two years or more of the Civil War a class of bold robbers and their sympathizers were quick and on the alert to take advantage of existing circumstances and get in their lawless work.

They became so bold and daring that the laws were inadequate to bring them to justice. In June 1863 the law abiding citizens of Atchison county were obliged to rise up in their might and band themselves together and by so doing if possible stamp out such a wicked and disgraceful state of affairs. They were obliged in a few cases to resort to very rigid and severe treatments, but they were sufficient to cause the robbers and their sympathizers to disband at once and nothing of that character has occurred in our county since. In the spring of 1866 a new era opened before us.

Now shall our bright Kansas grow mighty apace,
Rejoicing in glory to run her high race,
And from each hill and valley an alter shall rise,
And the song of the free shall ascend to the skies.

During this summer a good district school house was built on the [Seventh Day Baptist Lane, north of Nortonville] Lane and many more in the country. The log cabin and one room frame house soon gave place to larger and more commodious dwellings. The Kansas State Sunday School association was organized in Atchison in November 1860, and the writer being a charter member, has taken a great interest in its work and held various offices of trust from its organization to the present time.

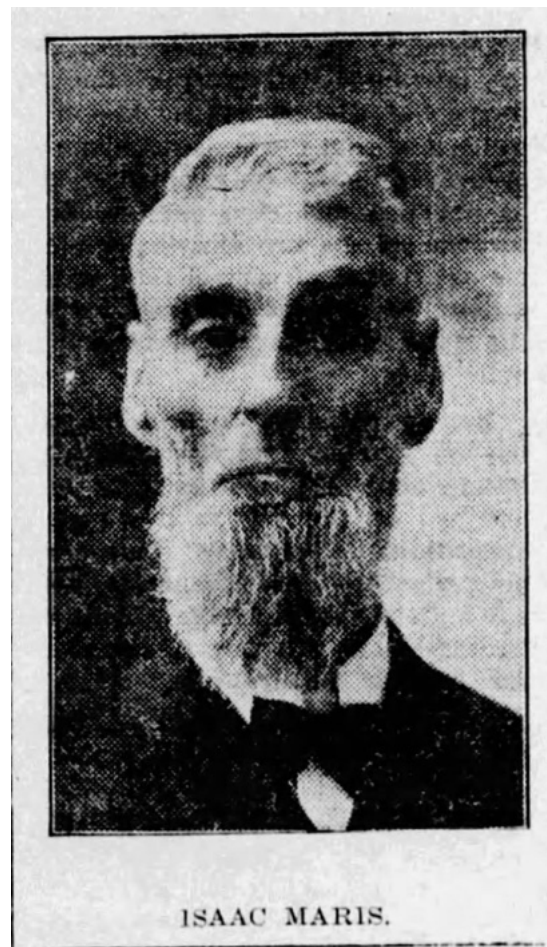
In 1871 the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railway company was graded from Atchison to Topeka and in the early spring of 1872 trains were running upon it. Nortonville, located on a high rolling prairie just across the county line, in Jefferson County, very nearly in the center of a tract of land five miles wide and seven long, with little exception belonged to parties in the east, they having secured it from the Government at land sales in 1857. These lands were quickly secured by persons wishing to make themselves homes. Nortonville is fortunate in being located in a community of industrious and well-to-do farmers. It has gradually grown year by year and has the credit, as given by the railway officials, as doing the most business of any town between Atchison and Topeka.

At the state election in November 1880 when the prohibition amendment to the constitution was submitted, 92,302 votes were cast for it and 84,304 against it, a majority of 7,998 votes for it. The

Legislature in 1881 confirmed it and on May 1st it became a law. Every true Kansan should feel grateful for what has been accomplished in our fair state from its early history to the present time. The large number of railroads traversing our state, the telegraph and telephone lines, electric street car systems, the free delivery of U.S. mail, all largely brought about during the past fifty years [written in 1903], or one short life time. The tide of prosperity and growth, accompanied by Divine Grace has each year swept farther inland. Our state has had its victories and defeats, we have our personal losses and gains but—

“Behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadows,
Keeping watch above his own.”

[An excerpt from **Mahlon Oliphant's** poem, “The Land Above.”]



From the Atchison Daily Globe, Mar. 24, 1915

This issue concludes the articles kindly contributed by Isaac Maris. The writing has been appreciated by the News editor and News readers.—The Nortonville News