

YESTERYEARS

A publication of

The Jefferson County

Historical Society

April 2023

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For more information, or to volunteer, contact the Jefferson County Historical Society, P.O. Box 146, Oskaloosa, KS 66066, email, oldjefftown@gmail.com

In Memoriam: Kenneth M. Kramer

February 5, 1951 – April 1, 2023

Kenneth M. Kramer, 72, of Lawrence, formerly of McLouth, died Saturday, April 1, 2023, at Lawrence Memorial Hospital. He was born February 5, 1951, at Lawrence, the son of **Audean F. and Clara Maye Grace Kramer**. He attended McLouth Public Schools and was a 1969 graduate of McLouth High School. Kenneth started his career in law enforcement working as a correctional officer at Lansing Correctional Facility before serving 28 years as a Jefferson County Deputy, retiring in 2005. He also worked many years in Kramer Family Construction. He was an active member of the Pleasant View Grange in Ozawkie and a lifetime member of the Jefferson County Historical Society.



Survivors include four brothers: **Kevin (Margaret) Kramer**, Lincoln, NE; **Kerry (Sandy) Kramer**, McLouth; **Kelly (Sherry) Kramer**, Five Point, AL; **Kris (Mary) Kramer**, Lawrence; two sisters: **Audeana (Russell) Connel**, Leavenworth; and **Glenda (Ray) Wilk**, Topeka; and many nieces and nephews and extended family. He was preceded in death by his parents; one brother, **Morris Ray Kramer**; and a sister, **Sue A. Kramer**.

Memorial contributions are suggested to Jefferson County Sheriff's Department to purchase stuffed animals for children in time of crisis. Send in care of Barnett Family Funeral Home, P.O. Box 602, Oskaloosa, KS 66066.

New to the Genealogical Library at Old Jefferson Town

My Experience with John Steuart Curry and His Widow, by Don Lambert

John Steuart Curry: Inventing the Middle West – brochure from exhibition at Nelson-Atkins

Samuel Reader's Diary – brochure from KSHS

The Settlement of Towns and Cities, by Donna M. (Noble) Ward

Geographical Survey of Oskaloosa, by Donna M. (Noble) Ward

The Phone Book, Oskaloosa, Valley Falls, 1983

County Seats and Courthouses in Kansas, by Donna M. (Noble) Ward

Customs: A Century of Foods in Our Family, by Donna M. (Noble) Ward

A 150-Year History: St. Mary's Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Valley Falls, Kansas

Protecting Kansas Wildlife: True Stories of a Kansas Game Warden, 1964-1990, by Bill E. Hill

Hunting and Trading on the Great Plains, 1859-1875, by James R. Mead

Rock Creek, Kansas News, 1903 and 1904, by Gary Bowen

Steam at Its Worst, by Gary Bowen

The Smith Brothers, Meriden, Kansas, by Gary Bowen

The Hurley Family Murdered near Meriden, Kansas, by Gary Bowen

An Outlaw's Demise in Meriden, Kansas, by Gary Bowen

The Cottonwood Milling Station and Cookbook, by Gary Bowen

Mt. Florence: a Kansas ghost town, 1857-1973, by Gary Bowen

The Meriden Community Library Calendar, 2001, by Friends of Meriden Community Library

The Meriden Antique Engines & Thresher's Assoc., Meriden, Kansas, by Gary Bowen

Dr. Marlin S. McCreight's Day Books, 1901-1945, Oskaloosa physician

A Trip Through Europe and the Orient, by Henry and Lydia Kimmel

(Digital copy only — see images at <https://oldjeffersontown.catalogaccess.com/library/11616>.)

Print copy of original 1856 survey maps

Daybook of Dr. R. G. Henry, Oskaloosa dentist

Journal of Dr. R. G. Henry, Oskaloosa dentist

Biography of Jennie Smith Davis

Receipts for property tax payments for Eli & Asenah Yoders, 1867-1907

Two Women and a Goose: “Hospital Hannah” and Crowd-Funding in the 1950s

The *Valley Falls Vindicator* explained its January, 28, 1953, headline: “ ‘Two Women and a Goose Make a Market’ is an old saw. The Jefferson County Memorial Hospital Committee is making this idea work in a profitable way in the Winchester community.

“The Hospital Committee opened a Thrift Shop. The clubs and organizations in the community are cooperating in its operation. Each week, two women from an organization keep the shop open daily from one until four-thirty, and the group in charge for the week sponsors a food sale and bazaar.

“The Thrift Shop has been open only two weeks, but seems marked for success, not only from a financial standpoint, but county spirit.”

Seven years earlier, a committee of Jefferson County business and professional men met to discuss the possibility of building and operating a local hospital. The group included **Dr. F.W. Huston** of Winchester, **Dr. Frederick Epps** of Valley Falls, **Dale Stark** of Perry, **Rev. Vincent Hall** of Nortonville, and **Harry L. Hampton** of Oskaloosa. The men had been studying the issue since July 1946. They concluded that a 30-bed hospital would serve Jefferson and adjacent counties adequately, with a minimum cost of \$150,000. The major issues were location, finance, and hospital staffing.

A hospital corporation, established in 1950, recommended funding based on stock subscriptions and donations rather than taxation. Four locations were offered: Oskaloosa, Valley Falls, Winchester, and a site northeast of Oskaloosa. The final decision was to be based on the availability of financial support and running water. The Winchester community was central to the area to be served and believed it could provide the best support. Winchester supporters had already donated \$15,000.

In May 1951, Winchester citizens formed a committee to gather financial pledges from local residents. Members included **Dorothy Hiebsch**, **Mrs. Gib. Manville**, **Neil Curry**, **Mrs. Paul Hensleigh**, and **Jim Everett**. Dorothy Hiebsch was assistant postmaster at Winchester and an occasional columnist for the *Winchester Star*. She and the committee began fund raising immediately, with a goal of \$165,000 for construction. Equipment and supplies looked likely to require about the same amount again. Stock shares sold for \$100 apiece. Smaller amounts were accepted as donations.

By March 1952, Winchester was the front-runner for the site of the new hospital. Writing for the hospital committee, Dorothy Hiebsch urged, “Here are things you can do: 1. Subscribe all you can, this does not all have to be paid this year, some may be paid next year. (A few hundred dollars invested in a hospital will do much to improve our county and our people’s health for years to come.) 2. Interest your club (or individuals) in furnishing a room, the room will be so designated in the hospital. 3. Interest all your friends in the project.”

Thrift Shop News

From the Winchester Star, Feb. 5, 1954

Among our novelty items is a frozen whistled tune donated by a good old citizen. It was so cold this week that his pucker didn’t make a sound. But the first warm day we’ll have music out of the air with no effort. Any bids? Yep. You’re right. We’d sell anything to build that Hospital.



THRIFT SHOP at Winchester, whose proceeds go to hospital fund

From the Winchester Star, June 26, 1953

In December 1952, **Dorothy Hiebsch** and **Ruth Sedlak** reported that plans for a hospital Thrift Shop were complete. All labor and all merchandise would be donated. Six local clubs had pledged support, and the shop planned to open January 6, 1953. And “**Hospital Hannah**” was born. During the next phases of planning and construction, the Thrift Shop drew in customers and donations, adding to the hospital fund by an average of about \$100 each week. Hospital Hannah’s regular column, “Thrift Shop News,” appeared in the *Winchester Star*, often on the same page as a column detailing “Hospital Construction.” The *Valley Falls Vindicator* reported, “Those who could not afford to buy stock in the hospital now feel a part in it, in that they are able to contribute articles of clothing, household goods, and food items. It is a good outlet for outgrown children’s clothing.”

In addition to the usual thrifty fare, the shop provided such services as taking subscriptions for nearby daily newspapers with a 20 percent commission going to the hospital fund, selling Huey’s Hybrid Seed Corn, offering rides to Leavenworth for shoppers, making pies and cakes on order, making buttonholes, selling concessions at softball games, and supplying hot chicken pies to the high school alumni banquet for a donation of \$1.25. Former Jefferson County residents sent boxes of donations from other states.

“Hannah’s” ingenuity gave new life to appeals for contributions and volunteer work. In a letter to “Mr. and Mrs. Jefferson County Mann (Av, his average wife)” she wrote,

“Dear Jeff and Av:— ‘Long time, no see!’ Have missed seeing you in town, but realize how busy you are now with corn planting, chickens, gardening, etc.

“Our thanks to Jeff for his recent help in pouring cement on the service tunnel. Isn’t it gratifying to see the bricks going up?

“We have a small Frigidaire that would be just the checker for Grandma Mann. . . Give her our thanks for the nice rugs she sends us.

“Jeff, so many people have papers and magazines for us. We realize the price is low but a few dollars could be gathered in that would otherwise be hauled to the ditch. Can you give us the use of your truck for newspaper drive?

“Find enclosed our love to you both and the kiddies.”

Last Call !!
Your Betty Crocker or General Mills, Inc., coupons are needed to help purchase the silverware for our Jefferson County Memorial Hospital. We would appreciate your turning in your coupons as soon as possible so our silverware may be purchased. Please leave coupons with **Velma Baker** or **Dorothy Hiebseh** or mail directly to the Thrift Shop, Winchester, Kas.
Thanks,
Rose O’Neill, Comm.

From the Winchester Star, Apr. 23, 1954

Hospital construction began in March 1953. Much of the labor and material came from volunteers. **Roy Baker**, a road contractor from Valley Falls, donated aggregate for the concrete and hauled it to the site. The construction schedule followed the farming schedule. Cement work began immediately after the farmers had finished sowing their oats. Women volunteered to feed the workers a noon meal in the basement of the Reformed Presbyterian church and clipped coupons to purchase silverware.

In June, the hospital committee reported, “the walls keep going up and the material keeps coming in. This week brick has been hauled from St. Joe and cement from Leavenworth. The cut stone that will be used as trim will be brought from Manhattan very soon now and will be put into place by the masons.

“The oldest man yet to appear on the crew, **John Sherwood** who has passed his four score years, helped with the dismantling for a full half day. At the same time young **Joe Popsipil**, who is not yet a teen-ager, was helping his father tend the brick masons. It’s everybody’s Hospital and everybody can find a job he can do.”

In its first year, the Thrift Shop earned \$3,761.28 for the hospital fund. The hospital building was enclosed, and inside work began. The local 4-H club began a Hospital Acres project, growing corn on empty lots and donating the proceeds to the hospital fund. Catering events like the Rural Carriers Banquet and the Winchester Horse Show added to revenues. The Hospital Board began to consider adding elder care to its mission. The Thrift Shop earned \$2,244.59 for the hospital fund in its second year.

In 1955, **Hospital Hannah** added medical equipment and supplies to her calls for donations. Women’s groups volunteered to sew sterilization jackets, patient gowns, and pillowcases. New goose down feathers were donated for pillows. The Hospital Board began purchasing surgical instruments and linens. Hannah wrote, “Many folks are dedicating a part of the Hospital to the memory of loved ones, with inscribed plaques that remain thru’ the years a lighted candle in the dark, dismal existence of suffering humanity.” A reception room in memory of Winchester artist **John Steuart Curry** had already been established. Hannah provided a list of hospital facilities available for dedications.

By early 1956, the Thrift Shop had contributed a three-year total of \$8,809.05 to the hospital fund. Stock sales and pledges brought in larger amounts, but Hospital Hannah’s efforts united the community and the county in the cause. She wrote,

“we have proceeded on the basis of outright gifts and fortitude, reaching the astounding figure of nearly ninety thousand dollars.”

Jefferson County Memorial Hospital opened formally on February 21, 1956. About 1,000 people registered to tour the 25-bed facility and attend a dedication ceremony. The medical staff included members of the Jefferson County Medical Association: **Dr. F.W. Huston** of Winchester, **Dr. R.R. Snook** of McLouth, **Dr. James Pike** of Oskaloosa, **Dr. John Griffith** of Valley Falls, **Dr. Willard Madison** of Nortonville, and **Dr. J.C. Gilroy** of Perry. The administrator was **Jack Mitchell** of Nortonville. **Fern Reichart** was the receptionist.

Memorial plaques on the doors were unveiled, including a dedication to **Hospital Hannah**.

HOSPITAL ACRES
Date.....
I am sincerely interested in the Hospital effort, and hereby pledge the yield of..... acres of my 1954 crop of to the Hospital Fund, to be paid at the time of marketing, or by December 31, 1954.
.....
Signature

From the Winchester Star, Jan. 29, 1954

Hospital Hannah believed strongly in the generosity of community and the power of “commoners” to get things done. She wrote, “One Jefferson County man remarked that ‘there’s nothing that a bunch of women can’t do, once they set their heed to it. And the sooner we men recognize that fact the better off we will be.’ Let’s get behind the wheel and steer our course toward the mark, that we might fulfill the expectations of our male co-workers.” She summed up the spirit behind the new hospital: “Our great pride is justified by the fact that here is a project free of Government funds and taxpayers’ dollars; built on the old-fashioned principle of individual initiative.”

The new hospital continued to receive the support of the county and the advocacy of Hospital Hannah. An expansion was completed in 1965. Long-term care and assisted-living facilities were added in the 1970s. In March 2009, the hospital became the **F.W. Huston Medical Center**.

In December 2008, a thrift store called “Hospital Hannah’s” opened a few blocks from F.W. Huston Medical Center in Winchester.

Dorothy Trower Hiebsch, “Hospital Hannah,” was born December 30, 1912, at Iantha, Missouri. She married **Victor Hiebsch** in 1934. They had two children, **Lavonne** and **Ronald**. She died January 31, 1994, and is buried in Wise Cemetery in Winchester.

Praise for Hospital Hannah

From the Winchester Star, Jan. 1, 1954

Dear **Mrs. [Irnie] Byrn**:—

I am wondering if you may have a budding journalist on your staff. I refer, of course, to Hospital Hannah. Although she keeps her identity well concealed, her weekly column does reveal many interesting things about herself.

Her faith in her fellowman shows up in almost every issue. She knows people and she believes in them. She’s had the same doubts and fears, the same ups and downs, but she likes best to recall the joys and happiness which are common to all of us. She knows the value of worthwhile friendship and she wants everyone to enjoy that privilege.

H.H. believes in “by the people, for the people and of the people.” Her little column is doing much to restore the faith of some of the older generation by showing us how people are again shouldering their own responsibilities.

And H.H. feels that her little Thrift Shop has a definite mission in your little town. What is more, it would seem that she has proved her point to many doubting Thomases. The little shop evidently meets a community need as well as serving a community project. This was the result of the faith of Hospital Hannah.

My hat’s off to Hospital Hannah. Wish there were more like her in this old world. — P.E.G.

— Jane Hoskinson

Sources

Valley Falls Vindicator, Feb. 20, 1952; Jan. 28, 1953; Feb. 3, 1994

Winchester Star, Nov. 15, 1946; May 18, 1951; May 25, 1951; Mar. 14, 1952; Mar. 28, 1952; Apr. 18, 1952; May 30, 1952; Feb. 13, 1953; May 1, 1953; May 22, 1953; May 29, 1953; Jun. 5, 1953; Jun. 12, 1953; Jun. 26, 1953; Jul. 17, 1953; Oct. 23, 1953; Jan. 8, 1954; Jan. 29, 1954; Feb. 5, 1954; Feb. 19, 1954; Jan. 14, 1955; Feb. 18, 1955; Mar. 18, 1955; Mar. 25, 1955; May 27, 1955; Jan. 6, 1956; Jan. 13, 1956; Jan. 27, 1956; Feb. 24, 1956; Mar. 23, 1956



JEFFERSON COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, WINCHESTER

Nearing completion in 1955. Will have memorials to John Stuart Curry and others. 25 beds, cost \$135,000. — Inde. Pub. Co.

From The First Hundred Years of Jefferson County, Kansas, 1855-1955

No Harrigans¹ Here, But Jefferson County Had the Hurleys

By Rick Nichols

In a feature story that appeared in the *Topeka Capital-Journal* in September of 1997, **Kim (Hurley) Benson** said this in describing the paternal side of her family as her ancestors battled to hang in there and hold on in rural Kansas in the early 1900s: “They were Irish. They were real strong-willed and stubborn.”

The occasion for the newspaper piece was the planned publication of a book Kim had written with **Lila McCabe** in exploring the mysterious fire that occurred 100 years ago this spring at a farmhouse southeast of Meriden, after which three badly burned bodies reported to be those of Kim’s great-grandfather, **T.A. Hurley**, her great uncle, **Ernest Hurley**, and her great aunt, **Genevieve Hurley**, were recovered from the ruins.

Thomas Andrew Hurley was the patriarch of the Hurley family, which was a rather large family, and he was either 84 or 85 at the time, depending on which of the two dates of birth (November 8, 1837, or November 8, 1838) put forth by the 1995 book *Thomas Andrew Hurley, His Descendants and the Related Families of Metzger and Stout*² is accurate.

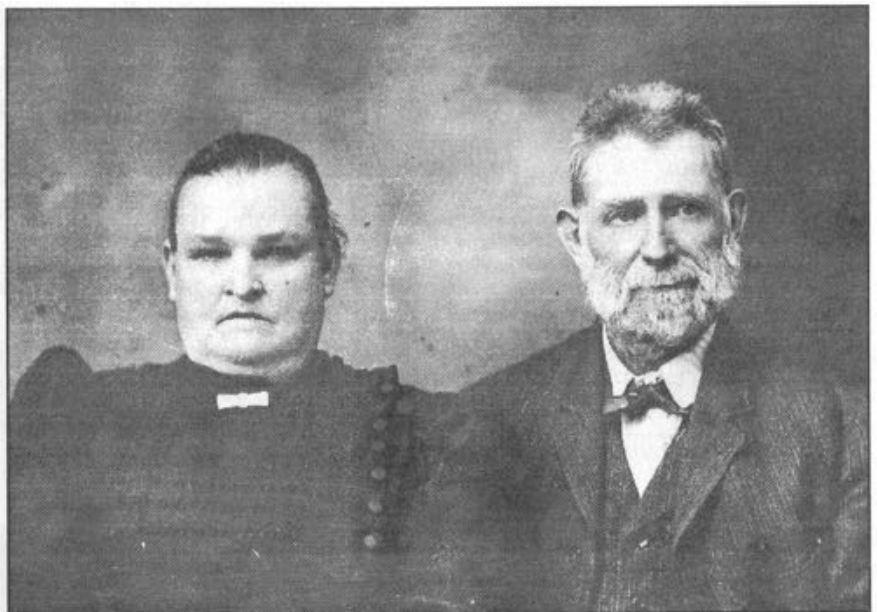
But Ernest was only 28 and recently married at that, while Genevieve, who actually may have lived to see another day, was 41.

Ernest and Genevieve were but two of the 16 children that resulted from the union of Thomas and his wife, **Mary Elizabeth Metzger**, the daughter of **Eli Metzger** and the former **Harriet Stout**.

According to the book, Thomas was born in Ireland, possibly in County Cork, and came to America in 1852. That was the final year of the Irish Potato Famine, which killed an estimated one million people and forced another million to leave the country in search of a better future.

The book states that Thomas may have reached the United States as a stowaway on a ship or traveled with his aunt to Chicago or lived with her in St. Louis. In any event, he was in Kansas Territory prior to the Civil War and hauled freight along the Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley military road for a period of time. He also worked in the gold fields in Colorado Territory before settling in Kansas for good.

During the war, according to the book, Thomas served with Company B in the Fourth Regiment of the Kansas State



Tom and Mary Hurley

Militia, which saw duty from Oct. 10-25 in 1864 in deterring Confederate **General Sterling Price** from entering Kansas.

The book states that Thomas met Mary either in Easton in 1858 or in Mount Florence, which was roughly a mile south of present-day Meriden. Both Easton and Mount Florence were situated along the military road.

Born in Pickaway County, Ohio, in 1849, Mary left the Buckeye State for Illinois with her family and from there went to Kansas Territory in the 1850s. According to the book, her father’s family came from Wuerttenburg, Germany. In the early 1700s they bid farewell to the fatherland and eventually made their way to Pennsylvania. Later, they moved again, leaving the Keystone State for Ohio. Her mother’s family hailed from the Palatine section of Germany and, like the Metzgers, arrived in Pennsylvania in the early 1700s. Then it was on to Ohio for them as well when Ohio was still developing as a state.

On April 16, 1865, just a week after **General Robert E. Lee** surrendered to **General Ulysses S. Grant** and only two days after **President Abraham Lincoln** was assassinated, Thomas and Mary tied the proverbial knot in Lawrence. They purchased 104 acres of land from the Kansas and Pacific Railroad in 1870 and at one point were the owners of 234 acres of land. At the time of the fire the Hurley farm encompassed 154 acres, most of it located to the north of Rock Creek, the balance to the south.

Mary passed away Aug. 24, 1914.

¹ According to Wikipedia, the song “Harrigan” was written by Irish-American entertainer **George M. Cohan** for the 1908 Broadway musical “Fifty Miles from Boston” and is considered “an affectionate homage to **Edward Harrigan**, a previous great Irish American contributor to American musical theater.”

² *Thomas Andrew Hurley, His Descendants and the Related Families of Metzger and Stout* was the work of **Lucius Metzger “Mike” Hurley**, the father of **Kim (Hurley) Benson** (now **Kim Benson Andrews**), and **Stanley Steele Funston**, Kim’s second cousin.

Andrew Jackson Hurley (1866-1924) was the oldest of the Hurley children. He never married and “worked as a farm laborer on various farms” in Jefferson County, according to the book. He was a member of the Methodist church in Grantville. The obituary that appeared in the Dec. 26, 1924, issue of the *Oskaloosa Independent* had this to say about him: “He was of a kind, friendly disposition, and his friends were legion.”

The oldest girl in the family, **Margaret “Maggie” Hurley** (1868-1946), married **Benjamin Bowlby** on Nov. 27, 1896, in North Topeka and was his second wife. They had no children and moved from Meriden, where Ben had served as the town’s mayor, to Topeka in 1925. According to the book, the Bowlbys’ Jefferson County home was “one of the handsomest in Meriden.”

Next came **Catherine “Kate” Hurley** (1869-1929), who married **George Baker** on Oct. 24, 1893, in Fairview Township. They produced two sons and four daughters. According to the book, the Bakers farmed in Fairview and Rock Creek townships before relocating to the Maple Hill area in 1921 to farm there. They moved to Topeka about 1925.

The second son was **George Washington Hurley** (1871-1925). He left the family home when he was young and later lived near Steamboat Springs, Colo., where he hunted and trapped. For 15 years he called Colorado’s Yampa Valley home and helped with the growing and harvesting of crops there. He never married and, according to the book, was living in Gary, Ind., with one of his sisters at the time of his death.

The fifth child was **Helen Hurley** (1872-1876), who apparently went by Ellen, according to the book. She was originally buried in Olive Branch Cemetery but was later reinterred at Rose Hill Cemetery in the Newman community because the construction of Perry Lake was going to leave the former resting place under water.

The third son was **Eli Martin Hurley** (1873-1959). On April 14, 1900, he married **Lula Olga Gardner**, who bore him three sons and four daughters. The Hurleys farmed in Jefferson County until 1910, when they headed west to Dickinson County. They resided on a farm in the Abilene area and later, on one in the Talmage area before settling in Abilene in 1926.

Then followed two twin girls, **Molly** (1875-1941) and **Mary** (1875) **Hurley**.

Molly married **Dan W. Pepper** on Dec. 25, 1896, in Topeka. They farmed in Fairview and Rock Creek townships before relocating to Dodge City in 1905. Dan worked for the Santa Fe Railroad in Dodge City, but when railroad employees went on strike in 1922, the family moved to Gary, Ind., as Dan was unwilling to cross the picket line, according to the book. In Gary, he was a machinist for the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railroad.

The Peppers produced a son and two daughters.

Mary was originally buried in Olive Branch Cemetery but was later reinterred at Rose Hill Cemetery.

Daughter No. 6 was **Elizabeth Harriet “Libby” Hurley** (1877-1964). She became the wife of **Jacob Fredrick Beisecker** in Topeka on Oct. 11, 1900. They were engaged in farming in Kaw, Kentucky and Rural townships until they moved to the capital city in 1926, where Jacob was employed by the Street Department. Libby was a member of Central Park Christian Church in Topeka and belonged to the Royal Neighbors for 57 years, according to the book.

The Beiseckers were the parents of three sons and three daughters.

The fourth son was **Thomas Jefferson Hurley** (1878-1955). According to the book, when T.J. was 14 or 15 he was part of his uncle Ben’s threshing crew. Later, he traveled to Steamboat Springs to hunt and trap with his brother George during the winter months, and during the summer he helped care for horses in Yampa Valley. Later yet, he was employed at the Santa Fe Railroad’s roundhouse in Dodge City and was a fireman aboard Santa Fe steam engines traveling between Dodge City and La Junta, Colo.

On May 20, 1920, T.J. married **Helen Worth Balch** in Dodge City. In the spring of 1921, according to the book, he moved from Steamboat Springs to Dodge City, and later that same year he landed in Newton. He was a machinist and an “Ox welder” at the Santa Fe Rail Mill in Newton, and later in life he worked at Larned State Hospital.

The Hurleys had two sons.

The fifth son was **William Harrison Hurley** (1880-1943). He served stateside in the Army during the Spanish American War and in 1900 was a farm laborer in Dickinson County, according to the book. Later, he was employed as a boilermaker by Carnegie Illinois Steel Company, Gary, Ind., and was working in Gary when he was killed in a mill accident. However, there was some suspicion at the time that his death was no accident.

William Harrison was married twice, first to a woman by the name of **Mabel** and then to a woman by the name of **Bertha Lynn**.

The 12th child, **Genevieve Lucille Hurley**, was born in 1882 as **Nancy Jane Hurley**, Nancy Jane being the name of an aunt on her mother’s side of the family who had passed away in December of 1879 after giving birth to twin girls. Musically talented, she taught school in Meriden, McLouth, Oskaloosa and Kansas City, Kan., before she left the classroom prior to 1920 to help care for her aging father on the family farm.

She was active in the life and work of the Methodist church in Thompsonville and was a member of the Rural Hope Club as well.

Next came a child who was stillborn. The book does not give a gender for the little one, but he or she was originally buried in Olive Branch Cemetery and later reinterred at Rose Hill Cemetery.

The next to last girl was **Nora Irene Hurley** (1886-1972). She taught rural school in Kaw Township before tying the knot with **Ralph Baker**, a rural mail carrier, on Sept. 2, 1906. Ralph was a cousin of the aforementioned **George Baker**, according to the book. The Bakers farmed in Fairview and Rural townships but eventually made their home in Williamstown, where Nora was a correspondent for the *Perry Mirror*.

A member of the Baptist Women, Nora relocated to Perry about 1962.

The Bakers produced three sons and four daughters.

Nellie May Hurley (1888-1959) was the last girl. After graduating from high school, she taught at a rural school and then was a teacher at the school in Meriden for two years, according to the book. And it was while she was teaching in Meriden that she and the school principal, **Earl C. Pugh**, a 1910 graduate of Ottawa University, fell in love with each other. They were joined in marriage on June 13, 1911, in Lawrence. Earl worked at the school during the 1911-1912 school year, then accepted a job with the U.S. Patent Office in Washington, D.C.

Nellie was a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Washington and the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

The Pughs were the parents of three sons and a daughter.

And the final child was **Ernest Ray Hurley**, who wed **Helen Cook** on March 30, 1923, in Topeka, and stood to inherit the 154-acre Hurley farm on the death of his father. He was active in the life and work of the Methodist church in Thompsonville and was a 32nd degree Mason. According to the book, he longed to answer the call after the United States entered "the great war" (World War I), but the promise he had made to his mother shortly before her death — to care for his father until he died — kept him on the farm.

Three Burn In Home

From the Meriden Message, May 18, 1923

A terrible tragedy, involving a mystery which may never be explained, occurred early Monday evening, when **T.A. Hurley**, aged 86, his son, **Ernest**, and daughter, **Miss Genevieve**, were burned in the flames of their own home, five miles south of Meriden.

Miss Genevieve Hurley was a teacher in the Oskaloosa schools fifteen years ago, and at McLouth prior to that time, and was highly regarded by her acquaintances in this community.

Wednesday's Capital gave the following account, which is correct in most details, according to the opinion of local officials.

A bit of caked blood and the fact that two shotguns were found in other than their usual places form the slight clues upon which Jefferson county officers are working in an effort to solve the mystery of the deaths of T.A. Hurley, 86, Ernest Hurley, 28, and Genevieve Hurley, 41, whose charred bodies were taken from the ruins of their home five miles southeast of Meriden, yesterday morning.

At about 7:30 o'clock Monday evening fire was seen at the Hurley home by neighbors. By the time aid reached there the house was half consumed. All the doors were locked and attempts to rescue the persons inside were fruitless.

The persons who lost their lives were: the father, his youngest son and one of his daughters. The two children, of a family of thirteen, had been operating the Hurley farm of 154 acres and making a home for their aged father.

When the bodies were recovered yesterday morning by **C.H. Peebler**, undertaker of North Topeka, and his assistant, **C.H. Carter**, that of the father was found in his bed and the son on a cot in the same room. The body of the daughter was found in the ruins of the parlor. She usually slept in a room above the parlor, it was said.

Near the body of the woman was found a shotgun with a cartridge in the chamber which had been exploded. Another shotgun was found beside the bed of the son. **Alonzo Myers**, fiancé of **Genevieve Hurley** and a frequent visitor at the Hurley home, declared it is said, that he frequently had seen both guns behind the door of the kitchen.

Only the smouldering torsos of the three persons were found, the remainder having been consumed by the flames. The body of the woman was almost entirely burned up. The body of the father was found to have a quantity of caked and clotted blood beneath the head and marks on the bed clothing beneath him may have been made by blood.

The bodies of the two men had portions of their attire clinging to them, when they were recovered, indicating that neither had actually undressed for bed when they had gone to their bedroom. The remains of the woman were so badly burned that it was impossible to ascertain as to whether or not she had prepared for retiring.

The bed on which the father was found was near a north window, and as the draft Monday night was from the north, this is supposed to account for the fact that it was not charred as badly as the others. The bed from the room occupied by the daughter was found upside down over her remains.

When the bodies were taken from the ruins of the home an inquest was held and the coroner's jury returned a verdict of "Death from unknown causes."

The remains of the three persons who died in the fire were brought to Topeka and prepared for burial at the Peebler undertaking rooms in North Topeka.

Neighbors of the Hurleys declared the farm house was ablaze in all the rooms when the fire was discovered and expressed astonishment that it could have spread so rapidly. **Mrs. Benjamin Bowlby**, 823 Topeka boulevard, Topeka, another daughter of **Mr. Hurley**, explained this, declaring that an air pressure gasoline lamp was used in the parlor of the home and that it usually was placed on a table near the entrance of the bedroom used by the father and son as well as near the foot of the stairway leading to Genevieve Hurley's room.

She declared that **Ernest Hurley** was extremely careless in turning out this lamp, giving the control screw a quick turn with his finger and not looking to see whether the lamp was fully extinguished. It is entirely possible, according to Mrs. Bowlby, that this lamp may have set the blaze.

Relatives and friends of the Hurley family scout any theory that the death of the three could have been the outcome of a quarrel. They declared it had been planned for young Hurley to occupy the farm with his bride of a few weeks and that the daughter had planned to marry **A.F. Myers**, who lives near Perry. This marriage was to have taken place within two weeks, when the young couple would have the place and make a home for the father.

Young Hurley married **Miss Helen Cook**, daughter of **Charles Cook**, of Rock Creek, on Easter Sunday. The bride was teaching school at Florence and all the new furniture for the home had been purchased. **Miss Hurley** was making plans with Mrs. Bowlby last Saturday for the issuing of the invitations for her wedding.

It was declared by the investigators that the fire was started within the house. The home was an eight-room structure, with a second story over the front portion. The father and son had been in the habit of using a bedroom just off the dining room on the lower floor, where their bodies were located.

The blood found beneath the aged man's head had so matted about the base of the skull that it had preserved the hair from the fire. How the blood came where it was found is a matter of conjecture as the body is entirely too badly charred to determine whether any wounds were inflicted before the fire attacked the body.

The father came to the United States from Cork, Ireland, when a lad of 16. He settled on the farm near Meriden in 1867. His wife died nine years ago.

There were six sons and seven daughters in the Hurley family. The living of these are: **Andrew J. Hurley**, Grantville; **George W. Hurley**, Steamboat Springs, Colo.; **Eli M. Hurley**, Abilene; **Thomas J. Hurley**, Newton; **William H. Hurley**, Gary, Ind.; **Mrs. B. Bowlby**, Topeka; **Mrs. D.W. Pepper**, Dodge City; **Mrs. Kate Baker**, Maple Hill; **Mrs. Elizabeth Beisecker**, Williamstown; **Mrs. Nora Baker**, Lecompton; and **Mrs. Nellie Pugh**, Mount Ranier, Md.

Genevieve Hurley, who lost her life in the fire, had been a school teacher for seventeen years. For nine years she taught school in Jefferson county, and for eight years she was a teacher in the Kansas City schools. She quit her professional career when her mother died nine years ago and with Ernest Hurley made a home for their father on the home farm.

Funeral services for the three fire victims will be held at 2 o'clock Thursday afternoon at the Meriden Methodist church. Burial will be in the Meriden cemetery.

The Remains of the Day

By Rick Nichols

With what was left of three bodies believed to be those of **T.A. Hurley**, **Ernest Hurley** and **Genevieve Hurley** visible, three men and the coroner's brother, a doctor, were questioned by Jefferson County Coroner **J.M. Marks** the morning of Tuesday, May 15, 1923, in connection with the mysterious fire that had destroyed the Hurley farmhouse southeast of Meriden the night before.

The three men without a medical degree who were present for the coroner's inquest at the Hurley farm were **Alonzo Myers**, who had been courting Genevieve Hurley for a while and was to have married her in about a month, **Henry Kelch**, a neighbor of the Hurleys, and **Harvey Barry**, another neighbor of the Hurleys. The answers provided by them and the doctor, **G.W. Marks**, were heard by the coroner and the six coroner's jurors, **Charles Gramse**, **H.A. Ploughe**, **Irl Baker**, **Fred Metzger**, **Albert Metzger** and **John V. Ferrell**.

Myers told the coroner he had visited the farmhouse two evenings earlier and at that time "the attitude of all seemed fine." He also told him he had seen two shotguns behind the kitchen door, one of which he later observed beside the body of Genevieve Hurley and the other next to the bed occupied by T.A. Hurley.

Kelch, who lived half a mile west of the Hurleys, said he stepped out onto his porch, thought he saw a fire and then called Barry, who told him the fire was at the Hurley home. He also said he heard “several explosions like shot gun shells.”

Kelch described the Hurleys as “nice ordinary people” and said he knew of “no family trouble.”

Barry, who lived a quarter of a mile northeast of the Hurleys, said that after taking Kelch’s call, he went over to the Hurley home and found the house “all ablaze” when he arrived. He also said he heard “several light explosions like gun shells.”

The doctor told the coroner he had examined the bodies “but could not decide whether foul play had been done.” He also told him he believed the three Hurleys were dead when the fire started and that it was unlikely any shot could be found inside their bodies, “as lead melts at a comparatively low temperature.”

The jurors ultimately concluded that **T.A. Hurley, Ernest Hurley and Genevieve Hurley** “came to their death by causes unknown.”

ALONZO MYERS

From the *Oskaloosa Independent*, Oct. 22, 1936

Alonzo Francis Myers, known locally as “Lon” Myers, prominent farmer of near Thompsonville, died Friday, October 16, at Christ’s hospital, aged 66 years, He had been in declining health for some time.

Funeral services were held Sunday at the Thompsonville Methodist church, where he was a member, and burial was at Meriden cemetery.

Surviving relatives include his wife, **Mrs. Anna Myers**; a son, **Roy Myers**, and a daughter, **Mrs. Elsie Worthington**, of Perry; two brothers, **O.C. Myers**, of Topeka, and **Joe Myers** of Denver, Colo.; two sisters, **Mrs. Bertha Hauserman**, Junction City, and **Mrs. Rose Widau**, of Osawatomie, Kan.; and seven grandchildren.

HENRY KELCH

From the *Perry Mirror*, March 24, 1960

Henry Kelch of Perry, age 79, passed away Saturday. Services were at 10 a.m. Tuesday in St. Theresa Catholic Church at Perry. Burial was in Mount Calvary cemetery. Rosary was at 7:30 p.m. Monday.

From the *Oskaloosa Independent*, March 24, 1960

Meriden Notes

Henry Kelch, a former resident of Meriden, died at a rest home at Oskaloosa on Saturday.

HARVEY BARRY

From the *Topeka Daily Capital*, Nov. 2, 1965

Services will be at 2 p.m. Wednesday at Parker Mortuary for **Harvey F. Barry**, 75, who was dead on arrival Sunday at a Topeka hospital after he was stricken at his home, 1405 N. Central. Burial will be in Mount Hope Cemetery. . . He was born May 5, 1890 at Williamsport, Pa., and moved to Meriden at an early age. He had lived in Topeka since 1943. He was a member of Kansas Avenue Methodist Church. Survivors include his wife, **Mrs. Lilly Barry**, of the home; a son, **Virgil Barry**, 2219 Maryland; a daughter, **Mrs. Charles Moffitt**, Oskaloosa; two brothers, **Calvin Barry**, 2516 Maryland; and **Chester Barry**, New Castle, Colo.; four sisters, **Elda Barry**, Oxford, Ohio; **Mrs. Allen Judd**, Floral Park, N.Y.; **Mrs. Duane Darland**, Buhl, Idaho; and **Mrs. L.P. Dye**, Kansas City, Kan.; and four grandchildren.

DR. G.W. MARKS

From the *Valley Falls Vindicator*, Oct. 25, 1939

Dr. George W. Marks passed away this (Wednesday) morning at the Stormont hospital in Topeka, at the age of 59 years. He had been seriously ill for some time and was taken to the hospital about a week ago. His condition was apparently slightly improved Tuesday, but early this morning the family was summoned and he passed away about 7:30. Funeral arrangements are incomplete at the time of going to press, pending word from relatives at distant points.

Baseball Detection: Identifying Jefferson County's "Colored Players"

Excerpted from **Mark E. Eberle's** monograph, *Integrated Baseball in Kansas During the Sport's Era of Segregation, 1865-1945* (2022). Monographs. 33. https://scholars.fhsu.edu/all_monographs/33

A Player Unknown and Miller

(page 50)

There were two players on integrated teams not identified by name in 1887. The team in Belleville had an unnamed "colored gentleman" who played in a home game against Concordia. Unfortunately, newspapers in both cities provided few details and no box scores for their teams. As a result, no other information about the player was published, other than the fact that he could not hit curve balls.

The other unnamed player was a member of the Oskaloosa town team who played in a game with McLouth. In this instance, a likely surname could be deduced. The McLouth Times published box scores for two games between Oskaloosa and McLouth.

OSKALOOSA		R	O
J. Sands, 1b	.....	3	2
F. Brown, ss	.....	1	4
Smith, c f	.....	1	4
Robinson, p & 3b	.....	1	2
J. Brown, 2b	.....	2	3
J. Wilson, lf	.....	3	1
J. H. Brown, c	.....	3	2
Brusenback, rf	.....	0	5
R. Wilson, p & 3b	.....	1	4
	.....	15	27

Oskaloosa's team for the first game. Five players, **J. Sands, Brown, Smith, J. Wilson, and R. Wilson**, appear in both lists. From the *McLouth Times*, July 1, 1887

In the notes for the second game, which was played in Oskaloosa, the *McLouth Times* reported that the "colored player excited attention" and struck out "a couple of times." The first statement suggests that Oskaloosa had no Black players who "excited attention" during the first game in McLouth. Thus, the five players who appeared in the lineup for Oskaloosa in both games were presumably white. . . A sixth player (**Conant**) can be eliminated . . . because he made no outs, and the Black player struck out twice.

Information published in Oskaloosa newspapers about two of the remaining three players indicated that they, too, were white. **Henry "Harry" Morley**, who built homes, schools, and other buildings, had been an officer in the Union Army and played for the Oskaloosa team previously. **Fred** and **Adam Sable** moved to Oskaloosa to run the local creamery. Frank was a member of the A.O.U.W. (Ancient Order of United Workmen), a fraternal organization exclusive to whites, which eliminates either of them. The remaining member of the team was **Miller**, the left fielder, who was presumably the unnamed "colored player." As added support for this assumption, there were several local Millers whose race was listed as Black in state and federal censuses, including young men. However, which one of these Millers played left field for Oskaloosa in July is unknown.

At right: The second game, from the *McLouth Times*, July 1, 1887

BASEBALL.

A Number of Games With Varied Results.

The return game between the first nine of Oskaloosa and this city took place at the county seat last Saturday, at which the capital boys came out one ahead, by a score of 21 to 20, which was better than was expected when the boys went over there. All of the men and boys were so busy that only seven could be persuaded to go over, to help amuse the Oskaloosa fellows.

Below will be found the result of the game:

McLOUTH.		R	O
Conahan, c & 1b	.....	3	2
Witt, lf	.....	3	2
Trower, p	.....	2	2
Shamp, 3b	.....	2	3
Taylor, 2b	.....	2	3
Goetz, ss & rf	.....	0	4
Karr, c & 1b	.....	2	2
Osborne, c f	.....	2	2
Kirkham, ss & rf	.....	4	0
	.....	20	21

OSKALOOSA		R	O
J. Sands, 1b	.....	3	2
Morley, 3b	.....	2	3
Smith, c f	.....	3	2
Miller, lf	.....	2	2
Brown, c	.....	3	2
J. Wilson, ss	.....	2	2
R. Wilson, p	.....	3	1
Sable, rf	.....	0	4
Conant, 2b	.....	3	0
	.....	21	18

SCORE BY INNINGS.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Oskaloosa,	5	2	1	2	4	7	8	—21
McLouth,	1	5	2	3	5	3	0	—20

Umpire, Bernstein.
Time of game, 2 hours.

DIAMOND DUST.

Bernstein, the Oskaloosa umpire, is well qualified for the position, and gave satisfaction.

The colored player of Oskaloosa excited attention.

Oskaloosa is now re-organizing her first nine club this week.

Grant Trower was pleased to fan out the colored player a couple of times.

The Oskaloosa club did not come over here to play yesterday, because Sands, their first baseman, had cut his finger.

The "kids" have organized a base ball club, as an example that would be well for the older boys to follow.

It is expected that the town "kids" will play a club at the school house north of town on Sunday next.

The small nine came down from Oskaloosa last Saturday to play the return game with the nine here. There was a large crowd of spectators out to the ball grounds to witness the game. The McLouth boys won the game by a score of 22 to 27. The next game between these clubs will be played in Oskaloosa one week from to-morrow, and it promises to be a good one, as each club have now won a game.

English and Todd

(page 108)

During the mid-1890s, Oskaloosa (northeast of Topeka) had two Black players on its town team, perhaps for only one game each. In 1896, **English** was “Oskaloosa’s colored pitcher.” His first name is uncertain, but the player might have been **Walter English**, a native Kansan. The 1900 census listed his birthdate as November 1879, so he would have been only 16 if he pitched for Oskaloosa in 1896. He was the oldest of the three brothers. Unfortunately, he pitched against the team from Winchester and pitcher **Luther Taylor**, who would soon be pitching for the New York Giants of the National League (1900–1908). Winchester easily won the game, 13–0, which fortunately lasted only 90 minutes on a day when the temperature reached 104°F.

The following year, the two clubs met again with a similar result. However, neither English nor Taylor played. On this occasion, the Black player was **Todd**, perhaps **Lewis Todd**. The 1900 census included Louis Todd, a local farm laborer, who was born in Kansas in July 1878. The 1910 census listed Lewis Todd, farmer, born in Kansas about 1877. There was another possible candidate. The 1900 census included **George Todd**, a servant, who was born in Kansas in March 1875. Whether it was Lewis or George, he was kept busy. Oskaloosa imported a white pitcher from St. Joseph, Missouri, but he was ineffective. Winchester had 19 hits. “Mr. Todd, Oskaloosa’s brunette left fielder, climbed wire fences and chased balls until his tongue hung out; he came in for a brief rest while three of his comrades batted; then he went out to run balls for another inning.”

William and Charley Hayden

(pages 152-153)

In August 1917, the Valley Falls town team was short a player for a game against Horton. “**Hayden**, the colored player” served as a “substitute” in right field. He batted leadoff and had one of only two hits for Valley Falls, who lost 4–2. Valley Falls would have been shutout had it not been for Hayden’s hit, “a home run in to the pond in right field, with a runner on ahead of him. Some hit!” Yet, it was not enough to earn him a regular spot on the roster.

Hayden’s first name is uncertain, but there are two possible candidates—brothers **William** and **Charley Hayden**. According to the 1900 census for Meriden, about 12 miles southwest of Valley Falls, William and Charley were born in Kansas to **George** and **Fannie Belle Hayden**. Valley Falls was listed as William’s birthplace on his 1917 and 1942 draft cards. No place of birth was included on Charley’s 1918 draft card.

The year of William’s birth moved progressively back in time. According to the 1900 census, he was 4 years old and born in February 1896, which was the same year reported in the 1905 state census. This seems likely to be accurate and would make him 21 years old at the time of the game in 1917. However, his draft registration card completed in 1917 listed his birthdate as 4 February 1894, which conforms to the 1920 and 1925 censuses. His draft card in 1942 gave his birthdate as 3 February 1892, which was the year given on the 1940 census, the Social Security Death Index, and his grave marker in 1980.

Charley’s birthdate also varied, but not to the same degree. The 1900 census reported he was born in October 1898. That year was consistent with his ages in the 1905 and 1910 censuses. On his 1918 draft card, his birthdate was reported as 16 October 1897, and that year was consistent with his ages given in the 1915 census and his 1924 obituary. Thus, Charley was 18 or 19 years old at the time of the game in 1917. This suggests either William or Charley could have played for Valley Falls’ white town team that day in right field, the position often given to substitutes of unknown skills (and pitchers on their off days).

In April 1917, Charley enlisted with a Black unit in the Kansas National Guard and did not serve in Europe. Given his age, he did not have to register for the draft that year. William, on the other hand, registered on 5 June 1917 but was not immediately called. On 4 July 1918, as World War I continued to deplete the rosters of baseball teams across the United States, a player named Hayden was part of the battery for Valley Falls in a game against Larkin, the second time a player named Hayden had integrated the team. Whether he was the pitcher or catcher is unknown.

Two weeks later, **Will Hayden** was among a few Black residents of Valley Falls on his way to nearby Camp Funston. He served as a bugler in Company L of the 805th Pioneer Infantry in France, where he also played baseball. However, he was not selected as a member of the regiment’s Bearcat baseball team, which won all 10 of its games against outside teams. After 10 months of service in France, Hayden returned to Valley Falls in July 1919. The following month, the white Valley Falls catcher was injured when a foul tip struck his throat, forcing him to leave the game. “Will Hayden, who played ball in the army teams in France, took **Wiley**’s place behind the bat.” A similar situation arose in August 1921, when Will Hayden replaced the injured Valley Falls catcher in a loss to Meriden. Thus, while it is uncertain which Hayden played for Valley Falls in 1917 and 1918, William was identified as the player to do so in 1919 and 1921 as a catcher.

In all four instances, the white town team in Valley Falls only fielded a Black player as an occasional substitute, not as a regular member of the team.

Both Haydens played baseball a few more years after the war for segregated ball clubs. In 1921, one of them pitched for the Black team in Oskaloosa, about 12 miles southeast of Valley Falls. Given that the limited information indicated Will was usually a catcher, **Charley** might have been the one to pitch for Oskaloosa. In 1921 and 1923, the Black team in Valley Falls had a battery of Hayden and Hayden, presumably **Will** behind the plate and Charley on the mound. The duo also played for the Topeka Cubs in 1922, and Will played for the Topeka Giants in 1924. Both Topeka teams were composed of Black players.

Off the diamond, little was found about either Hayden. In October 1908, young Willie and Charley were found delinquent by the county court, but the judge gave them parole. Charley violated parole, and in December, he was ordered to be sent to the Kansas Industrial Boys School at Topeka. Opened in 1881, it was a vocational educational facility for boys under 16 years of age who were convicted of a crime. According to the 1910 census, 11-year-old "Charlie" Hayden was still at the facility, but he was back in Meriden in December 1910. He was in trouble again the following summer, when he and another boy tried to derail a work train by placing spikes and stones on the track. He was returned to the school. In 1915, Charley was working at a grocery store in Meriden. His 1918 draft card listed his occupation as farm laborer, with his home still listed as Meriden. In 1924, a notice in the *Valley Falls Vindicator* reported the death of **Charley Thomas Hayden** from pneumonia on April 16. He was living in Atchison but died at William's home in Valley Falls. He was reportedly returned to Atchison for burial.

William was in Atchison in 1917, working for the Missouri Pacific Railway (according to a city directory) and at a grain elevator (according to his draft card). He was living with his parents and Charley. By November 1919, William had married **Faye Fulton** and was living with her family in Valley Falls. They were reported in Valley Falls in the 1920 and 1925 censuses, and he was working as a laborer. After that, virtually no information regarding William was found in newspapers, censuses, or other digital records, other than his residence in Atchison in 1935 reported in the 1940 census.

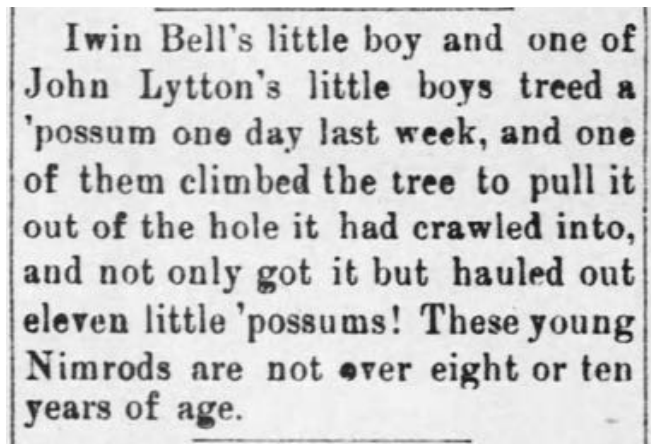
William's move to Atchison sometime between 1925 and 1935 probably followed his divorce from Faye noted in the 1940 census. He was still living in Atchison at least through the 1950s. During that time, the 1950 census and city directories indicated he worked primarily for car dealers as a porter or car washer. No obituary was found, but **William John Hayden** died on 31 May 1980 and was buried at Leavenworth National Cemetery.

— Eberle, Mark E., "Integrated Baseball in Kansas during the Sport's Era of Segregation" (2022). Monographs. 33.
https://scholars.fhsu.edu/all_monographs/33

Items of Local Interest

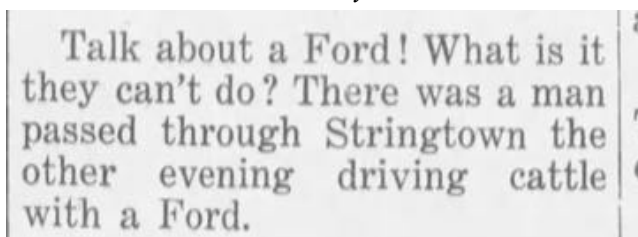
(Contributed by Leanne Chapman)

From the Oskaloosa Independent, June 2, 1894



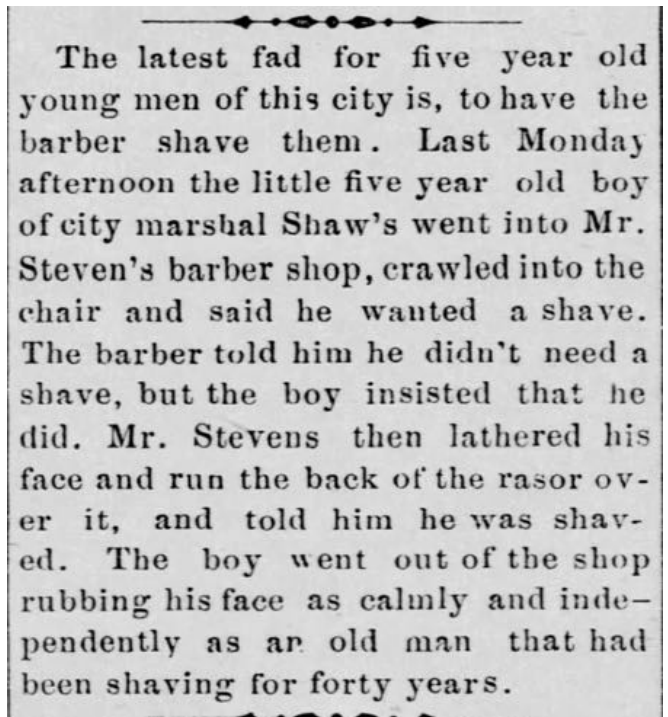
Iwin Bell's little boy and one of John Lytton's little boys treed a 'possum one day last week, and one of them climbed the tree to pull it out of the hole it had crawled into, and not only got it but hauled out eleven little 'possums! These young Nimrods are not over eight or ten years of age.

From the McLouth Times, July 7, 1916



Talk about a Ford! What is it they can't do? There was a man passed through Stringtown the other evening driving cattle with a Ford.

From the Oskaloosa Times, Sept. 7, 1894



The latest fad for five year old young men of this city is, to have the barber shave them. Last Monday afternoon the little five year old boy of city marshal Shaw's went into Mr. Steven's barber shop, crawled into the chair and said he wanted a shave. The barber told him he didn't need a shave, but the boy insisted that he did. Mr. Stevens then lathered his face and run the back of the razor over it, and told him he was shaved. The boy went out of the shop rubbing his face as calmly and independently as an old man that had been shaving for forty years.

Ewing Moxley: Trader in Kansas Territory

By Wendi M. Bevitt

Recent historic background for an archaeological investigation in Sedgwick County, Kansas prompted a look into the life of **Ewing L. Moxley**, a trader among the tribes in that area.

Moxley and his trading partner **Edward H. Mosely** were among the first Euro-Americans in Sedgwick County, Kansas. Moxley's background is rather hazy. He is potentially born prior to 1837, the son of **Judge Solomon R. Moxley** of Lincoln County, Missouri, but that remains to be proven (Goodspeed Pub. Co. 1888: 583). His partner Mosely was an Indiana native (*Medicine Lodge Cresset* 1886). The two were noted as first meeting in Coffey County, Kansas, around present-day LeRoy (Mead 1986: 139; *Medicine Lodge Cresset* 1886). Apparently, Mosely and Moxley attempted farming, but on account of the drought found a more profitable business in trading. It is highly probable that their early introduction to trading could have been by utilizing trade along an Osage trail at the nearby Burlington Crossing (Burns 2004:75).

In 1857, the two were among the first settlers in Sedgwick County and established a mercantile or trading post on the Little Arkansas River where an Osage trail crossed. The pair capitalized on the buffalo hunting in the area and would sell the surplus of their hunts as well as other trade goods to the inhabitants of the surrounding area (*Medicine Lodge Cresset* 1886). This was the first "ranch" in the county along with one established by **Bob Duracken** a few miles away, but it consisted of little more than a cabin on a claim but was profitable for the pair.

By 1858, Moxley was in Butler County in the Chelsea area. Chelsea, now defunct, was an up-and-coming town in this period and was at this early date the county seat of Butler County (Mooney 1916: 54). Butler was among the first 36 counties established with the organization of Kansas Territory.

Even with his travels, Moxley's home base was in Jefferson County, Kansas. In 1857, with the sale of the Delaware lands in that county, Moxley purchased the northwest 1/4 of Section 19, Township 8 South, Range 20 East for farming purposes. He is noted as working with two other settlers of the area, **George W. Crump** and **Joseph Hicks** to establish a territorial road from Crump's land in Section 9 of the same Township/Range to Osawkee (now near modern-day Ozawkie) (State of Kansas 1861:317).

When the war erupted Moxley ran what famed buffalo hunter **James R. Mead** called a "side show" to the Union army, picking Confederates off their horses with his Sharps rifle or Navy revolver and taking their horses for his pay (Mead 1986: 140; Moxley 1865). Moxley met his end while attempting to swim some of his contraband stock across the Kansas River at nearby Lawrence. His short but varied career gathered a sizeable estate valued at \$1,200.99 and no one around to claim it (*Oskaloosa Independent* 1863; Moxley 1865). He had limited contact with his family at the end of his life, and his final resting place is unknown (Moxley 1865).

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Hunting and Trading on the Great Plains, 1859-1875, by James R. Mead, is a recent acquisition at the Jefferson County Historical Society's genealogy library. See page 3 for other new acquisitions.

Ida C. Barnes, M.D. (1861-1911)

Ida Charlotte Barnes was born near Rock Creek in Jefferson County, Kansas, on January 23, 1861. She was the first surviving child of **Jared Pierpont Barnes** and **Sarah Eveline Reed**. Her father came to Kansas Territory from New York in 1857, hoping to start a business in Leavenworth and support the free-state party in Kansas. After exploring opportunities in the area, he purchased 200 acres near Rock Creek in Jefferson County. In the 1857 Ozawkie land sales, he bought 12 lots and built a house. He returned to New York in 1858 to marry Sarah Reed. They lived in Ozawkie for a year, then moved to their farm near Rock Creek. Their first child, **Emma**, was born and died in November 1858. The couple raised six more children, **Ida** (1861-1911), **Gertrude** (1862-1921), **Frederick** (1867-1919), **Eugene** (1869-1921), **Mabel** (1876-1917), and **Maud** (1876-1920). The family valued education. Their children all received college training.

Ida Barnes earned her A.B. degree from Kansas University in 1883 and received her teaching certificate that year. She taught school and Sunday school in Valley Falls for several years. She was active in the Parlor Literary society and the Baptist church. In 1887, she enrolled in the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, the second institution in the world established to train women in medicine. She graduated in 1890 and won a year-long residency at the Woman's Hospital of Philadelphia, completing postgraduate work in electro-therapeutics, X-ray, and radium. She returned to Kansas in 1891, first seeing patients at her family's home in Valley Falls.

In July 1891, the *Oskaloosa Times* reported, "We have always thought women doctors were just the thing in certain emergencies. Jefferson County has one in the person of Ida C. Barnes, formerly of Rock Creek, but now of Valley Falls. She is a regular graduate of the Woman's Medical College at Philadelphia. Miss Dr. Barnes, we understand contemplates locating in Topeka."



Ida Charlotte Barnes, M.D.

DR IDA BARNES AND WOMEN
The New Women a Product of New Responsibilities and Environment.

Dr. Ida C. Barnes is a believer in the new woman. "I do not see," said she to a reporter, "that the new woman is very different from the old. Women have come to think differently of many things and she has found that she has duties outside of the narrow sphere in which she has been kept.

"Women have been unnoticed by men in a business way, and I suppose they would not be so apt to make a success of business because they have not been educated in that line, but with proper education I do not see why they should fail oftener than men.

"You have noticed that women do not take the same interest in state affairs as they do in those of the city and I think the reason is because they have been given no responsibility in the affairs of the state.

"I do not expect to see women forsake their home to go into business as a mass. They are only learning to feel their responsibility."

From the Topeka State Journal, June 26, 1895

Dr. Barnes opened her medical office at 732 Kansas Avenue in August 1891. She took special interest in women's reproductive health and lectured on home nursing, physical culture, and preventive medicine. She advocated for women's suffrage and lectured on women in medicine to the Topeka Equal Suffrage Association. She chaired the executive committee of the Kansas YWCA for more than 12 years. Dr. Barnes also served as physician to "The Waifs' Home" for neglected children. The Waif's Aid Society president was **Charles M. Sheldon**, author of the best-selling novel, *In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?*

In 1892, **Jared Barnes** purchased a house at 13th and Clay in Topeka, where he lived with his four daughters. His sons remained in Jefferson County, maintaining the family farming operations. **Sarah Reed Barnes** had died in Valley Falls in 1888, while her daughter Ida was attending medical school in Pennsylvania. All the Barnes daughters were active in Baptist church activities.

In September 1895, the *Topeka Daily Capital* reported, "A family traveling across the country in wagons, are camping out on a vacant lot near Quinton Heights. Tuesday night a woman took suddenly ill and it was feared she would die. Several doctors were hurriedly sent for, but they refused to go because they feared they would not get their pay. Dr. Ida C. Barnes was the last one asked and she attended the woman at midnight. Score one for the women."

Topeka boasted a number of women M.D.s during the 1890s and 1900s, including **Dr. Mary E. Stewart, Dr. Lydia A. Muma, Dr. Debora K. Longshore, Dr. Maggie L. McCrea, Dr. Frances Storrs, and Dr. Sara E. Greenfield.** Dr. Maggie McCrea grew up in Winchester and practiced medicine there, as well as in Topeka and later in Sterling, Kansas. **Dr. Ida Barnes** was a charter member of the Western Association of Obstetrics and Gynecology and served as treasurer of the Kansas Medical Society in 1895. In 1896, she was elected president of the Topeka Academy of Medicine and Surgery.

In 1901, Dr. Barnes moved her medical office to 726 Kansas Avenue. She continued to practice medicine and lecture to medical and women's groups. Until a few months before her death, she was called upon regularly to treat patients, especially girls and women.

Gail McDaniel wrote of Dr. Barnes in *Kansas History*: "The only woman listed in **James L. King's History of Shawnee County**, Barnes was in King's words 'the leading woman physician and surgeon of Topeka ... who combines professional skill with attributes which made her an esteemed and beloved member of her sex'." King praised her skill in alleviating pain and summed up, "She is a lady of most enlightened views and of great force of character."

Dr. Barnes died July 21, 1911, in Topeka. Her pallbearers were prominent physicians. She is buried with her parents and sisters in Valley Falls.

— Jane Hoskinson

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Oskaloosa City Band at the Fair

From the Oskaloosa Sickle, Sept. 9, 1882

The Oskaloosa City Band has the finest band wagon in Kansas. You will see it at the fair. It is bran new, painted vermilion red, striped with golden yellow, with ornamental painting at the proper places, and lettered on each side—

OSKALOOSA CITY BAND.

There are eleven belonging to this band and all good players.

This is what the Register says of our band:

The Oskaloosa Cornet Band are furnishing music for the fair and are the recipients of many compliments for their timely stirring music. They are all gentlemanly fellows, and don't you forget it, and look well in their fine new uniform.

The band boys say they were treated well at the fair, and that to **Eli Evans** and **Ed Hutchins** they are under many obligations for special favors.

During the fair, Sept. 6, 7 and 8 special trains will run between Leavenworth and Oskaloosa, arriving at the fairgrounds in the morning, where passengers can get off, and return to Leavenworth late in the afternoon. Reduced fare will be given. Everybody go to the fair.

Aurora Borealis

From the Independent, Oskaloosa, Kansas, Sept. 12, 1860

A beautiful exhibition of this phenomena was enjoyed by the people in this locality, on Thursday evening last. The lights were first visible about 8 o'clock, commencing with the gradual rising of spires of variegated light in the North, and gradually increasing in brilliancy, and extending until the whole Northern heavens, from North-East to North-West were covered, being much the most brilliant in the North-West, and rising to an altitude of 45 degrees, or more, above the horizon. About 9 o'clock a brilliant white light, in the shape of a rainbow, extended across the heavens, covering about the same area at about 22 deg. A heavy cloud bank immediately underneath, and the moon at the North-Eastern terminus, combined to give it a very beautiful effect. But this was far exceeded in a few moments by the rapid shooting up, in the North-West, of brilliant streaks of light, of almost a blood-red color, which gave to the whole a magnificent and fearful spectacle. We do not wonder that the ancients were startled out of their propriety by this most extraordinary phenomena. It was the most wonderful exhibition of Aurora Borealis we have ever witnessed.—*State Record.*

Controversial Elections Valley Falls “Tied Up”

From the Winchester Star, Oct. 2, 1925

Topeka, Sept. 25.—A town row in Valley Falls may compel the state of Kansas to step in to force the city to pay its bills. The city has a mayor and council money in the bank and plenty of vouchers and warrants and quite a flock of expense items, which are due but cannot be paid.

J.T.B. Gephart was elected mayor of Valley Falls last spring. The usual council for cities of the third class was named and the row started at the first meeting. Mayor Gephart named a man to be city clerk and another to be city treasurer. Under the law the city clerk must issue the vouchers and the city treasurer must issue the warrants to pay the bills of the city.

But the councilmen were not of the same belief as the mayor. The town had been torn asunder by the Ku Klux Klan. The council, which is controlled by the klan, refused to confirm the appointments of the mayor.

The mayor's city clerk appeared at each meeting and wrote the minutes, but he was not a legal officer. Some time ago the city council proceeded to elect its own city clerk and treasurer but the mayor read the council the law and pointed out that only the mayor could make the appointments and the council could not.

So the city has two city clerks and two treasurers and none is able to do a thing. Neither side has the books and records, which are still in the hands of the old city clerk. In the meantime, the bills are piling up and people are becoming disgusted. The business men are refusing to sell supplies to the city.

The entire situation has been laid before the attorney general. It may be the troubles will be ironed out shortly but unless the city stops the row on its own account the state soon will be forced to proceed against the council.

Valley Falls is the town that held two Decoration Day services last May, one klan and one anti-klan.—
By a Staff Correspondent, Kansas City Times.

Perry: “Once More All Is Quiet Along the Delaware”

From the Oskaloosa Sickle, May 11, 1878

Perhaps the most important piece of news is the Council matter, which has excited some little interest in town. On April first the regular city election was held, at which the following officers were elected: Mayor, **James Durbin**; Councilmen, **Jas. Trumbull, Geo. Norwood, Jas. P. Carson, Jerry James, and L.H. Bouton**; Police Judge, **N.J. Stark**. The old council, having all been candidates for re-election, and having been beaten, it seems tried to avoid, by some means, giving the certificates of election to the new board. The time appointed by law went by and no canvass was made. On the following Friday, the time for the regular Council meeting, all the newly elected officers were present and demanded their certificates of the Clerk, but only one member of the old board was present, and still no canvass; then came a writ of Mandamus, commanding the Mayor and Council to canvass the votes in three days, by order of **John T. Morton**, Judge 3d Judicial District, State of Kansas. The three days went by and still no canvass was had. At last Judge M. wrote to **J.H. Bennet** which he (Bennet), sent to the parties most interested, with some advice of his own, and you ought to have seen the dust fly. The City Clerk was absent that day and they could not find him. But they were on the alert early in the morning and the votes were canvassed and certificates issued, just one month after the election was held. The new council is now organized and they have appointed **W.H. Spangler** City Clerk, and once more all is quiet along the Delaware.



Street Scene, Perry, Kansas. Courtesy of Jefferson County Historical Society.

Old Settlers “Speaking Meeting,” 1882

From the Oskaloosa Sickle, Sept. 16, 1882

The old settlers had a little “speaking meeting” in the shade of the agricultural hall [at the county fair].

Judge Hopewell was chairman and **J.N. Insley** secretary. Short addresses were made by **J.L. Speer, W.N. Allen, T. Critchfield, J.W. Roberts**, and others. We hope this may be the beginning of regular meetings of the old folks—meetings which shall be made useful in collecting historical matter.

The Dry Year

The Oskaloosa Independent, Aug. 24, 1878

Original Sketch Written for the Independent.

Early Recollections of Kansas

By **J.H. Bennet**

The dry year has fairly gone into history. In these fast times eighteen journeys of the earth around the sun has accomplished such wonders as no one ever saw who has lived always "back in the States." The distance from now to the dry year, is farther than thirty-six years back in any of the agricultural counties in New England, and the remembrances of that year, are fairly worthy of the title "Early Recollections."

The farmers in this county were anxious as early as June 15, 1860, about the success of their crops. The drought was fitful in its effects. Some neighborhoods had many fields of good corn; some were dotted with good and bad; and in some were only sickly struggling attempts made on behalf of this crop. Many fields were similarly diversified. Wheat was a failure. A few fields were cut, eventually, barely paying threshing. Oats were a total loss. I lived at Grasshopper Falls at the time and from a careful comparison of the range of business and prices, I think that actual confidence in the success of the crop was not lost before that date. We had not yet raised wheat or potatoes enough for home consumption. There was some corn and oats sold in our town that week. Corn was 25 cts., Oats 50 cts. Our flour was of course brought from abroad at a cost of \$4.50; and our potatoes at cost of \$1. White beans were worth \$1.25 per bushel, but I do not remember whether they were Kansas grown. These, with eggs at 10 cts. and butter at 10 cts., would seem to indicate a tolerable prosperity. And in this connection I notice two remarkable and entire changes in what may be called necessaries. At that time pickled pork, what is now quoted as barrel meats, was a staple of trade at Grasshopper Falls, retailing from the brine at 11 cts. per lb. At that time kerosene was unknown to the trade. Now pork from the barrel seems to have lost its place from our stores, and kerosene rules everything in the way of furnishing lights. On Thursday, June 7, 1860, I mounted the white pony in the early morning for quite an extended trip. [I have half a notion to erase that sentence, Mr. Editor; I realize that **Mr. Patrick** with his eagle eye and never failing memory is watching me, and it may have been the 6th.]¹

¹ **Mr. Bennet** refers to **Albert G. Patrick**, a newspaper man who came to Kansas Territory in 1856 and delighted in sparring with Mr. Bennet over the dates in his published remembrances.

Drouth

After a "flying call" to Oskaloosa in August 1860, *Independent* editor **John W. Roberts** wrote from his home in Ohio, "With Kansas in general we are well pleased. Its soil is magnificent and will maintain a fabulous population. The drouth of the present season is unfortunate, but will not be as disastrous as many suppose. . . The drouth of the present season will be severely felt by the inhabitants, many of whom will doubtless seek the States to spend the winter; but . . . it is doubtless the best thing for the present and future health of the territory." Roberts believed that crop failures would force down land prices, inducing "many men of means" to settle in Kansas as a result.

Despite the drought, **J.N. McFarland** of Oskaloosa managed to raise an 80-pound pumpkin, and sugar cane crops flourished. But in October, a meeting chaired by **Richard Hull** of Jefferson Township, organized a relief committee to adopt a plan "for the feeding and clothing of the destitute and necessitous families of the county." Wheat, potato, and corn crops had largely failed, leaving people with less than a three months' supply of staples to see them through nine to twelve months of famine. Stockmen were selling their animals at a sacrifice, and farm laborers were out of work. In December, the committee reported that provisions on hand would not last more than ten days.

The committee asked advice of **General S.C. Pomeroy**, who had been observing conditions south of the Kaw, along with **Thaddeus Hyatt** of New York and **Judge W.F.M. Arny** of Kansas. Hyatt had already donated \$1,500 and Pomeroy \$400 for relief of counties in southern Kansas. Pomeroy advised the committee to send agents to "the States" to solicit contributions of provisions, clothing, and money for paying railroad freight. Each township was to send a relief agent east.

By early January, township agents **Noah Leaverton**, **Joseph Speer**, **James Monroe**, **Dr. David Dickinson**, and **J.H. Bennet** had organized relief societies in Illinois and Ohio. Provisions began to arrive by rail in Atchison, but extreme conditions continued to threaten everyone's livelihood.

(From the *Independent*, Oskaloosa, Kansas Territory, Sept. 5, 1860; Oct. 24, 1860; Oct. 31, 1860; Dec. 19, 1860; Jan. 9, 1861)

I crossed Peters Creek near the present crossing. On my left, and west of Peters Cr., **Laken** had commenced opening that large farm. On my right was a small rickety improvement where now **Vandruff** lives, and just a little beyond that **Mrs. Zilor**. Out where **Jonathan Wright** lives, **S.H. Dunn** had quite a little home; and one of the **Weisers** just south of him. A well travelled road ran nearly north-west from Vandruff's house, over that knoll leaving the Potato Hill and the present site of that quarry about equidistant to the right and left, and running near the center of the bottom to the sharp bend in Cedar due south of **Jack Bruntz'** house, then close to the bank until within a few rods of Cedar Falls. The Falls looked nearly the same that they do now. From there the road ran nearly northwest, aiming for the top of the hill about forty rods east of where **O'Neil** lives. About half way there were two little log cabins, noted for 40-rod whiskey, against which the puritans of our town at times made holy war. Upon one of these crusades old **Judge [Azell] Spalding** was wasting his eloquence in vituperating the "man trap," when a quick spoken little old French gentleman interrupted him with, "If you don't like it what maketh you patronithe it tho much?" **Philip Allen** then lived on the **Bruntz** place, and had big hopes of making his crop. Old **Dr. Deaver's** place near where the school house is, had begun to wilt. **W.H. Long** had something of a field on **O'Neil's** place. **Blake's** was the most thrifty looking of all those improvements; but trees were scarce. A little west of north on the next rise **Isaac Edwards** had a show of trees. Blake and perhaps Long had a few sickly looking specimens of cottonwood. The prairie was pretty, in its primitive want of clothing, but I like it better now; and the contrast is truly wonderful.

I shall not take my reader with me on that journey, but only relate some of its more prominent incidents. The day became intensely hot, and even in balmy weather a long ride over bare prairies is tiresome. I was very, very thirsty when I rode to the door of a little frame house, an outlier of an incipient settlement. I could see a barrel on a little summer sled, and was sure I should not be refused. A bright little woman who blushed faintly as I made my request, said quietly, "Don't go to the barrel, this is nicer." *This* proved to be a large white pitcher which as I lifted it tinkled with chunks of crystal ice; and this a hundred miles from a city, and a mile from any neighbor or tree. As I left this building I saw sharp blue lightning to the north, and a tremendously black cloud which grew and spread the quickest I ever witnessed. I almost immediately fancied, and was then sure that this cloud was the center of a whirlwind, and in about the time it takes me to write it, there grew out of the lower side of this cloud a protuberance that assumed the shape and motions of an elephant's trunk about a half a mile long, extending earthward until the lower end disappeared below the horizon. The circular and spiral motion of the cloud, or spray, or water, or whatever may have been its substance was plainly visible. It was moving east very rapidly, and in less than twenty minutes became a gray mass streaked here and there with lightning. It was about twelve miles from me at one time, and struck the earth with full-force near a little town in Brown County, called Powhattan, doing considerable damage.

"Dear Friends"

In January 1861, **Phoebe Atkins** of Oskaloosa wrote, "I can tell you we are in a starving country or would be if it was not for what the other states are a doing for us." On one day, she had observed 75 wagons returning from Atchison, where they had gone in the hope of finding provisions. She wrote, "I can't hardly look out of doors but what I can see from one to 3 or 4 and some 12 to 15 teams either agoin or acomin from Atchison and they all are on the same erand and that is to get some thing to keep them from starving." (KU Libraries Digital Collection, <https://digital.lib.ku.edu/kansascollection/1032#page/1/mode/1up>)

I visited that day, Holton, Elk City and Circleville, and stopped at night at America City. There was another settlement on the head waters of Soldier Creek, which had a name that I have forgotten. Every farmer I talked with used the expression, "After we get some rain I shall" &c., but I don't think one of them had any fears of what eventually followed that summer. I met one hog buyer that day. In four weeks time there was scarcely a stock hog in the whole region.

Within the week of my journey there was one little rain in Jefferson county. It commenced Friday evening June 8, and drizzled nearly all night. The ground was not wet down through, but it must have gone four or five inches. I believe this was the last rain that had any perceptible effect upon the crops of this county. The heat increased. The river stopped running. The deep holes where water had not evaporated were covered with a green scum an inch thick. The bottom of the brooks were white hot sand. Great seams opened in the earth

wherein a man's body might lie. Insects and creeping things were scarcely known among us. Little song birds disappeared. God stayed the rain. The bright and glorious summer sun put on a face of melted brass, and gazed down upon the parched earth with a lurid stare that swallowed up every little cloud and sent the winds whirling with madness and scorching heat across the prairies, killing the smaller animals outright and sending the scared kine [cattle] bellowing with affright and pain to secluded dells and stagnant pools of water for relief from the burning heat.

The prayer of **Thaddeus Hyatt** for rain was on everybody's lips.

“Cover thy sun, O, God!
O cover it with thy hand!”

On Monday, July 9, about midday, while lying stretched on a lounge, a gust of air come into the open door, so hot that it seemed to make the lungs crackle and collapse and brought me to my feet with a loud cry of “House-afire.” During a rapid examination I tho't I was breathing flame. I gasped and sighed but no relief came. Satisfied there was no fire, although suffering intensely from heat and suffocation, I endeavored to rouse my physical and mental faculties to meet the exigency. It required an effort. A faint fear of hurricanes or an earthquake troubled me for a moment. I shook that off after a while, and examined the effects of the *simoon*.² In ten minutes or more, the system appeared to accommodate itself to the increased heat, and went on with its usual functions, except a strong tendency to gasp for breath, and some drowsiness, with a desire to remain in a quiescent state. Animals were variously affected. Chickens and pigs felt it most, and I doubt not some died. Cattle suffered more with fright than heat. Horses did not seem to notice it.

The rise in the thermometer was less than I tho't, averaging only ten or eleven degrees. It went from 99 1/2 to 109 1/2, and at one time stood 110 1/2, out of the wind. The wind came nearly from the south, and continued for four hours with little variation, when it suddenly shifted and grew cool.

The reason of the phenomenon is as mysterious to me now as it was then.

A few personals to wind up with. The INDEPENDENT was started that year. **John F. Hinton** was Sheriff, **John Gill Spivey**, **W.M. Allen**, and **John W. Day** were Oskaloosa lawyers. **A.J. Francis** stood at the head of the legal profession in Osawkee, **Judge Spalding** at the Falls.

Railroads were not. Nortonville, Rock Creek and Meriden had never been thought of, Grantville, Newman, Perry, Williamstown, and North Lawrence were not born then. Rising Sun was the pride and glory of Kaw Bottom.

At Oskaloosa, **Dr. Buckmaster**, old **Tommy Moore**, **Dr. Gamble**, **Terry Trapp**, **Jesse Newell**, **Frank Finch**, **M.R. Dutton**, **W.C. Barnes**, and **Jacob Boucher** were prominent citizens. **A.J. Pierce**³ had just commenced his immortal career. **Black Carson** kept *the* store of the town, **Jo Fitzsimmons** was Post Master.

At the Falls, nineteen persons comprised the entire advertising community on the 14th of July; **Crosby & Bro.**, were the old reliable store keepers and are now. **A.J. Gunn** was prominent in that line. **John Whiteman** was plasterer, **Dwight Hillyer** a druggist. **Lewis Stafford** run a Tin Shop. **Jas. A. Mann** was captain of the Democrats. **Billy Butts** was Post Master.

Simoon

On July 11, 1860, **John W. Day**, local editor of the *Independent*, Oskaloosa, Kansas Territory, wrote, “On Monday afternoon last this region of Kansas was visited by so extraordinary a wind storm as to seem out of the course of nature, except on the burning deserts of Africa. So suddenly did the storm come up, and so hot was the wind that many persons at first supposed some building near by them was on fire. Others, though the weather was very warm, closed their doors and windows to keep the scorching air out of their houses. For some time the inmates of our dwelling took refuge in the cellar from the oppressive heat of the almost scalding wind. The leaves of plants were literally parched up and killed, as if by a heavy frost.—Three years ago the wind at times blew very warm about the middle of the day, but never before has it been our misfortune to experience such severe blasts of heated air. Every breath we drew seemed to almost dry up the vital moisture of our lungs, and leave only an inward burning sensation.”

² Oxford's languages defines a simoon this way: “a hot, dry, dust-laden wind blowing in the desert, especially in Arabia.”

³ Perhaps the American photographer, **A.J. Pierce**.

Robbery and Murder, 1865-1866

Robbery—Co. Treasurer's Safe Blown Open.

From the Oskaloosa Independent, Dec. 30, 1865

On Wednesday night of this week the safe of the County Treasurer of this county was blown open and the contents abstracted by some villains as yet unknown. Fortunately there was not a large amount of money on hand, the Treasurer, **Mr. Gephart**, having brought up his accounts and cleaned everything out on Saturday evening last. The exact amount on hand is not ascertained.

This is a bold robbery, and only by good luck the county is saved a heavy loss. But until the county has proper buildings and a reliable fire- and burglar-proof safe, such things may be expected to befall us. The wisdom of providing against such attempts is so manifest that only the willfully blind can fail to see it. It is not only a work of economy, but of necessity. This thing of getting along without proper county buildings is, emphatically "penny wise and pound foolish."

Another thing. So long as men are tolerated in a community who are known to get their living by dishonest means, who are known to engage in unlawful transactions, these things may be counted on. Every effect has its cause; and while dishonesty is rampant and the lawless acquisition of property is not punished, but the outlaws left unmolested, it is folly to expect any thing better than such events as this one. Public sentiment must not only disapprove of such outlawry, but the public must protect itself against it. Without such action as will secure the ends of justice in the punishment of the criminals, it is useless to hope for better things. If the guilty can be reached by law so reach them; if not, community must be protected by its own reserved rights. "Self-preservation is Nature's first law."

Anti-Thief Meeting.

Citizens composing the very 'bone and sinew' of this township, met at the Treasurer's office to day (Friday) to take into consideration the robbery committed on Wednesday night. **W.C. Ball** was called to the chair and **H.F. Woolley** appointed Secretary. The meeting was addressed by **Messrs. Cooper, Gephart, Day, Critchfield, Allen**, and others, and a determination to put away the thieves out of the community was resolved upon. Some of these are known, and have been and will be arrested.

It was resolved that all who are now with the honest part of the community, are against it, and that any man who defends the thieves or denounces the movement to 'clean them out,' shall be considered one of them and be dealt with accordingly.

A long series of crimes and threats led to this action of our citizens, and the robbery only led public sentiment to a focus. *Every man must now show his hand.* The people are determined that right shall prevail.

From William G. Cutler, History of the State of Kansas, pub. A.T. Andreas, Chicago, 1883

"On the night of December 27, 1865, the county safe was robbed. The Treasurer, **S.C. Gephart**, had just made his settlement with the county, and had but little money on hand, but this was all taken. It was never know[n] positively who committed the robbery, but several parties were suspected of having been implicated, and were warned to leave the country, which they did. Some time afterward, while some of the outhouses on the property that had been occupied by **W.L. Deming** and **Peter Dittman**, two of the men driven away, were being pulled down, some of the money was found. This was the only clue to the robbers."

Horrible Murder.

From the Oskaloosa Independent, July 7, 1866

A letter to the Indianapolis (Ind.) Herald, dated, Edinburg, Ind., June 22, contains the following account of one of the most horrible murders on record:

"This (Friday) morning, about nine o'clock, a young man by the name of **Peter Dittman**, formerly a veteran soldier, went to the house of **Mr. William Cash**, who lives in the south part of the city, and on making inquiry for a **Miss Martha Bennet**, was told that the woman was in the house, when Dittman entered, and passing through the front room, came to where Miss Bennett was sitting. Here a conversation commenced with the above named persons, which in substance was about this: Dittman requested Miss B. to take a walk with him, when she begged to be excused, stating that she had some washing to do. Here his demands became more peremptory, and Miss B., was seen to rise up and go toward Dittman, (who it seems from testimony, had threatened to kill her,) and implore him in the most earnest manner not to do so, picturing to his memory how long she had loved him; how much she had sacrificed for him; friends, virtue, everything. At this moment, witness testified that he pushed her from him with his left hand, and drawing a navy revolver, aimed it at her breast. She caught his arm and pushed it downward, the bullet passing through her thigh. Getting loose from her grasp, he again aimed at her breast, when she threw up her hand, and received the shot in the forearm. Rendered powerless, the murderer, without heeding her pleadings, went on with his hellish work.

“Aiming at her head, the ball took effect near the ear. The fourth struck directly above the left eye. The fifth passed through the right cheek. Here he stopped firing and commenced deliberately (*sic*) beating her with the revolver, and stamping her with his feet. Not yet having glutted his vengeance on the lifeless body, he deliberately set her clothes on fire!

“It would be proper to state here that no person but **Mrs. Cash** and her little son were at home at the time, and Mrs. Cash’s health was so delicate that it was sometime before she could give the alarm for help. However, some ladies in the neighborhood came to her assistance, and succeeded in putting out the flames, after her body had become sadly burned, and her appearance too horrible for description.

“The murderer, after this fiendish act of brutality, went out at the back door and into a saloon delivered up the revolver he had borrowed for the occasion to the

proprietor of the saloon one **Mike Maffit**; called for a drink of whisky into which he poured a quantity of poison from a paper he took from his pocket and drank the contents; but the poison was an overdose and the wretch vomited up the whole thing, and was soon well as ever—was arrested, a true bill of murder in the first degree found against him, and he was taken to Franklin and placed in jail. The wretch and his victim were brought up in the same family as brother and sister, and had lived together for a long time as husband and wife.”

This is the same couple that lived in this place last fall and winter with **Mr. W.L. Deming. Pete Dittman** was supposed to be one of the parties who robbed the county safe, and was one who had notice to leave the State forthwith; and he and the woman left accordingly. Had he been hung then instead of being banished, as some desired, this fearful murder would not have occurred. It is now evident he was not worthy to live.

The Work Of Ghouls

From the McLouth Times, Jan. 18, 1895

The grave of **Mrs. J. L. Babb** has been robbed and by whom?

On the afternoon of December 24th last the mortal remains of Mrs. J.L. Babb, who resided a mile and three-quarters southeast of this city, were laid to rest in Union cemetery, where it was supposed she would await the call of her redeemer on the morning of the resurrection. But alas! Such repose for her remains was not to be, for as now proves to be the case, some ghoul or ghouls in human form, ruthlessly and with sacrilegious hands, tore the remains that had been so tenderly laid away, from the silent tomb on the night after the funeral.

As to who did the deed, it is quite certain that a stranger who had been stopping here for several days, must have been one of the parties, but who he was, where he came from or where he went is the mystery. He arrived in the city on the Wednesday evening prior to the death and burial. He arrived here just at night with a team hitched to a light spring wagon, in which was what appeared to be a long box covered with a sheet that was closely stropped to the side of the vehicle, a spade and pick could be seen in the wagon. He drove up to **[James L.] Wray’s** stable, where the hostler assisted him in unhitching the horses and while leading them into the stable, one of them stepped down off the sidewalk a distance of about eight inches. The man at once set up a howl that the horse was lamed and damaged by the step and threatened suit for damages. Mr. Wray claimed that the horse was not injured in the least and offered to choose one arbitrator, the owner of the horse to choose another, and they two the third and he would abide the decision. This man would not accede but continued to stay. On Sunday, the day Mrs. Babb died, Mr. Wray told him to take the team and leave and he would call the livery bill settled, but he refused to budge an inch. On Monday, the day of the funeral Mr. Wray again told him to take his team and leave, but he would do nothing until after dinner, when he hitched his team to the wagon, and tied them to a hitch rack near the barn until about three o’clock, when he drove away.

It is reported that he was seen in the cemetery the afternoon after the funeral. It is now supposed that he was there taking bearings so he could go in the night to the grave and steal the body without much trouble. It is also reported that the stock freight which passes here mornings at 2:47, and arrives at Tonganoxie about an hour later picked up a long box at that station and shortly after daylight Christmas morning the wagon that had been here was seen backing out of a livery stable in Tonganoxie, and after the team was hitched up was driven away, since which time no trace of it has been found.

There is a rumor current that a young doctor left here the same night of the resurrection, but we give this as we hear it, whether true or false we cannot say, but this we do know that the friends opened the grave and found nothing but an empty coffin, the body of the loved wife and mother having been taken away.

Extracted by James Laird

(Contributed by Leanne Chapman)

Polio in the Life of Wilma Houston Thompson

By Gerilyn Thompson Rowlinson

Born in Boyle, Kansas, in January of 1920, Wilma grew up on the family farm on the corner of highways 59 and 192. She described her life as fun! She attended #9 School (just across the road) after approval was given by the board for her to start school a year early. The story goes that they thought she was a smart girl and would “do just fine.” In 1937 she graduated from Winchester High School where she was on the girls’ basketball team (at 4’9” and 80 pounds), was a cheerleader, won second in the county for declamation, performed readings at various school events and civic group meetings, was involved in activities at the Reformed Presbyterian church in Winchester, and graduated second in her class.

During her childhood the Houston family, like many others, went to **Charlie McNeal’s** store in Boyle on Saturdays. The ladies chatted and did handwork, the men talked and played checkers, and Wilma wrote plays, recruited her friends to perform in them, and charged their parents admission to see them. Her interest in drama continued into her high school years and she was offered a scholarship in theater arts from what is now KU. However, she attended Strickler’s Business College in Topeka and later worked at Kansas State College in the extension office and then for the cavalry at Fort Riley. She met **Bill Thompson** at **Mrs. Anderson’s** boarding house in Manhattan where they were both staying at the time. Bill was attending Kansas State College but left due to lack of funding and moved to Pennsylvania. After a “mostly by mail” courtship, Bill and Wilma married in Sharon, Pennsylvania, in 1943. For a while they both worked at Westinghouse. Bill was drafted into the Navy and they moved to Washington, D.C. Wilma went home to Kansas where their first child (**Gerilyn**) was born in 1944. At the end of the war, they moved back to Manhattan and Bill completed his course work in electrical engineering. After his graduation in 1949 they moved to St. Louis where they bought a home in Affton and Wilma gave birth to **Dennis** in 1949 and **Kerry** in 1951. I write all this so you understand that there was nothing unusual about Wilma’s life, noting that would indicate that she was more susceptible to the polio virus than anyone else. She had a very happy life, a life much like many others of her generation. Her aspirations were like any other young woman’s. She wanted to build a happy loving family.

In August of 1952, when Kerry was 18 months old and Dennis was not yet 2½, the family visited the Houston farm for a week. Our family loved it there. **Ava Houston** (Wilma’s mother) was probably the best cook in the world and there were animals to keep us kids busy. Even helping **Everett [Houston]** as he did the chores was an adventure for us. The tractor rides, horse rides, gathering eggs, milking cows, the threshers, the garden, cherry picking, plenty of spaces and places to explore on the farm — the freedom it afforded us was exhilarating. I do not recall that we visited anyone other than our Houston grandparents nor did we visit any stores. Of course, I was 7 at the time and my memory may be faulty. However, on our last day Wilma did our laundry. It was a very hot day, and the wringer washer and tubs were in the basement. Laundry was hung on the line to dry in the fresh air. Doing laundry was hard work in those days. Wilma (Mom) was tired I am sure.

The next day we drove home. There were no safety restraints for children in those days and the drive usually took about 9 hours. We were normal squirmy kids in the car and didn’t necessarily sit still! Both of the boys took turns in our mom’s lap and were often very close her as she entertained, soothed, or tried to get one or the other to sleep. I noticed that she did not feel well. I don’t know if it was discussed or if I just noticed that something was different. When we arrived at Wentzville we stopped to visit Kansas State College friends. My mother chose not to eat with us but tried to sleep on the couch. I was very concerned and asked the host why he couldn’t help her since he was a doctor. He laughed and said he was a vet. I remember being worried because this was so unlike her. She was always so busy cooking, cleaning, reading to us, taking care of us, sewing, etc. This was not the mom I knew. As I recall she was experiencing a high fever and aches, much like flu symptoms.

The next day, August 6 (Bill’s/Dad’s 33rd birthday), when I came home from playing with a friend, an ambulance was in our driveway and my mom was on a gurney being loaded onto it. She was taken to St. Anthony’s Hospital where we were not allowed to visit. I cannot remember if her stay was 3 weeks or 3 months, but it seemed forever. She was in an iron lung because she was unable to breathe on her own. When a custodian knocked the cord to the iron lung out of the outlet it went unnoticed for some time. This story might have had a very different outcome, but she surprised all by being able to breathe on her own. I visited my mom in the hospital only once after she was out of the iron lung and was no longer considered contagious. I remember being anxious — wanting to see her so badly and yet a little worried that I might get polio. There were warnings about the dangers of polio everywhere in those days — don’t get chilled after swimming was a major theme. My brothers were too young to make a hospital visit. On an earlier occasion my dad had us wave from outside the hospital window where she could see us from her wheelchair.

Wilma came home a wheelchair-bound quadriplegic (paralyzed from the neck down) despite the fact that the doctor had told my dad that she would be okay. Photos were taken in our home to be published in the newspapers for publicity purposes regarding polio. And, one day at the end of a school day the students were handed a pamphlet that accompanied a card with pockets to insert dimes. I was quite surprised to see a photo of my mother in the iron lung on that pamphlet.



Gerilyn Thompson Rowlinson donated her mother's leg and wrist braces to the Jefferson County Historical Society in 2022. They are on display in the Tibbott Building at Old Jefferson Town. Photo by Ardie Grimes.

Once home, Mom was in a rehab program at the hospital. A van came to get her several times a week and she had physical therapy, occupational therapy and whirlpool baths. The truth about occupational therapy was that the therapist made the projects, not Wilma. She had no ability to use her arm or hands to complete any of the projects. She may have worn metal and leather leg braces in therapy, but I don't remember that they were used at home. There was no need for them as she had no muscle tone and standing was impossible. The leg braces were designed to adjust to foot movements and allow for bending of the knee. They were supposed to offer stability and reduce pain (which my mom never had as far as I know). They were not an effective tool for my mom, and I don't remember them in use after those first therapy days. The damage to her spinal cord was just too severe. Hospital therapy lasted for a year or so when it was decided that there was no progress, and it would end. There may have been a few therapy sessions at home as I remember someone strapping her to a big black "standing board," but she could not maintain a standing position on her own. She had no control over any body movements and felt very vulnerable to falling — at the mercy of the therapist.

I recall that my dad made a big wooden tray to fit across the arms of the wheelchair so my mom could enjoy a drink with a bent glass straw (providing the straw stayed put) — or read a newspaper if someone turned the pages for her. There was a time when my mom attempted to hold a stick with a rubber tip on it in her mouth to turn pages in a book propped up on a stand on the tray. It was very unsuccessful as 10 pages turned or no pages turned as that system allowed for no control. And, of course, it is a long time to have a stick in the mouth. My mom

was never able to walk or use her arms/hands in her lifetime. Any time she changed position it was because someone moved her arms, her legs, or her body. She did, a few years before the end of her life, manage to pull herself forward just slightly to adjust her back in the wheelchair, could sort of thrust one crossed leg off of the other (if in an outstretched and crossed position), and let it plop on the available leg/footrest of the wheelchair. She could wiggle one arm to fall off of the arm of the wheelchair into her lap. She could not necessarily determine the landing point of either foot or leg, but it was a little relief for her. Of course, the last three years of her life, even these small skills were gone.

We survived by having ladies come to our house to stay with Wilma during the day, fix meals, clean, do laundry. Our dad always had breakfast ready for us kids. He took care of all Wilma's personal needs, bathing, getting her dressed in the morning, getting ready for bed at night, feeding her. (The lady fed her at lunch time.) Then he went to work. We kids took more responsibility as we grew older. For most of her life my dad lifted my mom into and out of the car, into and out of the bath, into and out of the bed. It was only much later that they purchased a wheelchair accessible van. You may find it humorous, but for many years we washed her hair by placing her on an ironing board and washing her hair in a sink. Later we had counters that allowed for her to lie on them. For the curious, my mom definitely could feel a shot in her arm, and pinches, blood draws, etc. Paralysis did not mean lack of feeling as some think. She could feel pain, caresses, or itches just as anyone could. Her body functioned just like every other woman's. Unlike some polio patients, she was not in need of constant medical care nor was she misshapen although fingers curved a little in one hand. In her late 60s she had cataracts removed and she saw a doctor for a minor stomach discomfort. Other than that, she had few colds. Sometimes we had to push to help her cough, but she was blessed to be healthy despite paralysis.

The brain was not affected by polio. She did the New York Times crossword puzzles (even Sunday) by keeping the answers in mind until someone walked by and would fill the words in for her! She kept many things in mind that we mobile types would probably write down. She was a great organizer. She knew how to give directions precisely and in a sequence that provided information in a way that could be understood without the need for the listener to be shown. She painted great verbal pictures. And, although she did not go many places she could vividly visualize what was described to her. **Wilma** made sure, from a wheelchair and even without movement, that we completed homework, memorized Bible verses, practiced piano, completed projects for Scouts, etc., and did what was expected of us around the house. We were taught the value of a dollar, the importance of doing the right thing, doing our best, responsibility, hard work, respect for parents — like many kids in the '50s. TV came into our home after Wilma came home from the hospital. Her favorite show was “Playhouse 90” — a live drama presentation every day. Our lives were pretty much what everyone else’s were in the '50s . . . except our mom was paralyzed. Many buildings, including churches, were not wheelchair accessible. Steps and narrow doors, and other impediments were everywhere! Crowds were a nuisance. So, she was at home most of the time. Our vacations were almost always to the farm in Kansas with two exceptions — a **Houston** sisters’ reunion in Michigan and in Arkansas. We don’t know why no one around her contracted polio. Viruses are unpredictable, but we are very grateful that the polio vaccine has made it possible to see a polio-free existence for most of the planet today. It is not the life anyone hopes for themselves.



Wilma died at home in 1995 after a trip to St. Louis from Tempe, Arizona (where they moved in 1968). During our visit with family members she contracted a bronchial virus that was going around. Upon our return to Tempe she was hospitalized and immediately placed on a ventilator with a trach. Her time in the hospital ICU and in an intensive rehab facility was about six months. She was very close to breathing on her own but just could not quite make it. She was cared for at home by my dad and a live-in helper during weekdays. I helped by staying on weekends and preparing food, etc. She lived at home for a little over two more years — paralyzed and unable to speak because of the trach. The death

certificate called the cause of death Post-Polio Syndrome. She is buried in the Reformed Presbyterian cemetery in Winchester where she is beside her parents and near her **Houston** grandparents as well as an aunt and uncle **French**. She is home. Winchester was always home to her — the place she was most comfortable in this world.

We know that polio made our mother’s life different, and therefore, all of our lives different, but our parents worked hard to make life as normal as possible. It was suggested back in 1952 that we kids should be sent to live with others and mom placed in a facility. I am so grateful to my dad for being brave enough to keep us all together. I never once heard my dad complain about taking care of my mom and my mom tried to make things work with the least inconvenience to those around her. I am not sure what my mom would have thought of as her greatest regret, but I think it might have been the inability to touch the people she loved, to hold and hug her little boys and her grandbabies. The world sort of passes you by when these things happen, but my mom and dad were amazing. Not everyone could do what they accomplished together. Though we didn’t speak love so much in our family, we surely saw it lived out every day of our lives.

Hospital Notes

On July 31st, a free clinic for Polio Shots was given at the Jefferson Co, Memorial Hospital. The age groups were 6 months to 1 year and 10 yrs, to 19 years. 163 children were innoculated.

On AUGUST 14, from 1 to 3 p. m, all those who received their 1st shots may receive their 2nd.

From the Winchester Star, Aug. 10, 1956