

Phelps Helps



Volume 12, Issue 3

Summer 2003

President's Message

We have had many visitors this summer coming to the library researching their Phelps County roots. One was Barbara Liedtke who has provided an interesting story of the Knaggs family. I have wanted to know more about this family. My husband and I took a drive out in a field in northern Phelps County to personally see the family burial ground on the Knaggs homestead several years ago. It is the only private family plot that we know of in our county.

We have also had some visitors from Sweden and Germany this summer.

Our club has purchased a computer for our personal use at the library. Members Dick and Marjorie Dyas have donated 56 genealogy CDs for our use. Thank you so much for your gift. Ben and Dixie Boell have provided their list of CDs and will let members borrow them. A list of the CDs will be stationed near our computer. We have also appointed a committee to purchase additional CDs. Please contact us if you have a suggestion.

I want to thank our volunteers in the library. There are always many projects that need to be done. Your help is very much appreciated. Sandra Slater

Your President, Sandra Slater

Meetings held at the Phelps County Historical Museum on the first Monday of the month at 2:00 PM.

The public is welcome!

NEW! Phelps Helps Web Page location via:
<http://users.atcjet.net/psdesigns>

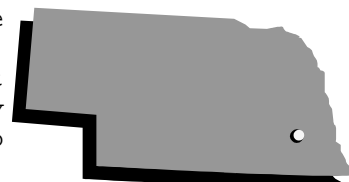


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Nebraska State Genealogy Society Meeting in Holdrege

Nebraska State Genealogy Society will have their officers meeting at Nebraska Prairie museum on September 25th at 10:00 a.m. Anyone can attend their meeting that wishes to. They will also tour the library and museum. We are looking forward to their visit.



New in our Library

CD DONATIONS FROM DICK & MARGERY DYAS

- World Family Tree Vol. 1 through Vol. 22 pre-1600 to present
- World Family Tree Vol. 90 pre-1600 to present
- Automated Archives Inc
- Master Name Index to Automated Archives Inc. CD-ROM
- #27 1850 U. S. Census Index: Illinois, Indiana
- #15 Everton Publishers Computerized Family File Vol. 1 & 2 and "Roots" Cellar Vol. 1
- #164 Mortality Schedules:1850-1880 Broderbund
- #2 Marriage Index: Il, In, Ky, Oh, Tn 1720-1926
- #110 Vital Records: Social Security Death Index 1937-1998
- #118 Canadian Genealogy Index 1600-1900s
- #119 Military Records: Confederate Soldiers 1861-1865
- #177 Ohio Vital Records #2 1750s-1880
- #225 Marriage Index: Az, Ca, Id, Nv 1850-1951
Marriage Index: Ohio 1789-1850
- #236 Marriage Index: Ohio, 1851-1900
- #317 Census Index: U. S. Selected Counties 1850
- #318 Census Index: U. S. Selected States/Counties 1860
- #243 Marriage Index: Indiana 1851-1900
- #351 Roll of Honor: Civil War Union Soldiers
- The Civil War CD-Rom v 1.5 from Guild Press of Indiana Inc.
- #101 United States/Canada Marriage Records for Surnames A-D
- #102 United States/Canada Marriage Records for Surnames E-K
- #103 United States/Canada Marriage Records for Surnames L-P
- #104 United States/Canada Marriage Records for Surnames S-Z
- Family Tree Maker
Version 8 Click Art Images
- FTM Family Finder Index 8.0 Vol. 1 A-C
- FTM Family Finder Index 8.0 Vol. 2 D-I
- FTM Family Finder Index 8.0 Vol. 3 J-P
- FTM Family Finder Index 8.0 Vol. 4 Q-Z
- Ancestry.Com
Military Records: War of 1812 Muster Rolls
- #2 American Genealogical-Biographical Index
- Ancestry Reference Library 98 Edition
- ACD Heritage Quest
- HQ Microforms Film & Fiche Catalog 0009 HQ U. S. Marriage Record Index 1691-1850
- HQ Generation Archives
0114 Indiana Vital Records Death Index

NEW MICROFILM AVAILABLE

Purchased by Holdrege Area Genealogy

- Bertrand Adullam Lutheran church, minutes 1888-1931, membership 1888-1907
- Bertrand Immanuel Lutheran Church, formerly Westlanda Church, Minutes 1883, 1931, membership 1883-1929
- Holdrege, Bethel Lutheran Church, History 1924, minutes 1879-1931
Holdrege Bethel Lutheran Church, membership 1877-1932, ministerial acts 1877-1931
- Funk Fridhem Lutheran Church, membership records 1879-1932, ministerial acts 1879-1942

Harlan County, Nebraska

HISTORY OF THE EARLY SETTLERS OF HARLAN COUNTY, NEBRASKA

From "The Raglan Journal" 1939

The first homesteads were taken between 1870 to 1878 in this community. The most of the pioneers however, came from the eastern states by applying for their homestead papers in the nearest government land office and securing permission to move on the place by paying \$14.00. They then had six months time in which to erect some kind of residence on their place nearly all the buildings were in sod or dugouts. The cheapest material obtainable. However after living on the five years complying with the requirements they then obtained a patent deed on this land. At which time the land became taxed. The earliest settlers gathered along the creeks also as now known as Scandinavia Township. After living here, they realized the importance of a place where they could worship. So in 1879 they had a church built on John Sjogren's homestead, where the congregation is still alive, which is now sixty years of age. Now known as the Immanuel Lutheran Church. Also a cemetery on Swan Peterson and John Johnson homesteads, across the road where now lie pioneers at rest. These early settlers however did not enjoy the modern equipments of today, where with to improve their farms. But they partially succeeded in the breaking of their ground with ox teams and walking sod breakers plows. They then faced a period of experience to find out what crops would be suitable.

Mr. and Mrs. McArthur and family, father of Ben and Hess, move from Boone County Iowa on June 24, 1872 at the home of Ed Whitting, 1 ½ miles south of Emerson Swith, where they homesteaded and lived until 1890. After breaking their sod in 1872 and sowed their wheat in the fall of that year. They harvested this crop with a cradle to cut it and threshed with a flail, their total wheat crop was 14 bushels.

NOTE: The Phelps Helps Newsletter highlights Harlan County in this section. With many of our subscribers interested in and from Harlan County, and since Harlan County is a connecting county to Phelps County, the Phelps Helps will publish history information on Harlan County.

The pioneers through such experience suffered great hardships in 1874 known as the first grass hopper year; grasshoppers that year destroyed all their crops. In some cases made families penniless, so they had to move. Others felt optimistic and would not admit defeat but depended upon that sil-

ver lining, which is always seen in every dark cloud and therefore remained. Among the hardships they had the pleasure of trading with the Indians and hunting buffalo. The last ones seen, claimed to have been in the vicinity of Alma, in the summer of 1876.

Among the most severe hardships on these early settlers was water and fuel. Those who lived close to the creeks were able to get both water and fuel, however others had to drive many miles for water. The first well was known on Walker's Ranch, northeast of Wilcox, where water was sold. In 1874 John Elliot succeeded the drilling of a well and three years later erected the first windmill where one could get all the water free. Where by it received the name Freewater. There was also a school and post office. This being the second school and post office in the district, a few miles east of Ragan. The first post office of this development was located two miles north and two miles west of Ragan, where an honorable monument is now being erected as a tribute to the pioneers. A school house was erected ___ north and 1 mile west on the Swanson Peterson homestead, where children went to school three months a year.

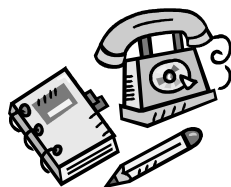
Up until such time as Holdrege was established mail was carried twice a week to those post offices from Fort Kearney and Bloomington. Alma was established in 1871, Holdrege in 1883 and Ragan in 1886 when the St. Joe and Grand Island railroad came through and we located on the homestead of France Johnson. The Blue Valley Land Co. purchased the land

(Harlan County Continued on page 8)

New Members & Their Queries

1. Linda Debban
Box 42
Holdrege, Nebraska 68949

2. Donald H. & Julia Erickson
46 Tall Pines Drive
Jackson, TN 38305
Researching the Glaze
and Erickson families in
Phelps County, Nebraska.



Escapes Death by Miracle

Holdrege Progress—Tuesday, September 7, 1916

**ESCAPES DEATH BY A MIRACLE
LIGHTING KILLS HORSE DRIVEN BY
RURAL CARRIER FRANK HALLGREN
DURING THURSDAY'S STORM**

Mr. Hallgren Slightly Injured But Will Soon Be Able To Resume Duties Frank Hallgren, rural mail carrier on Route One out of Holdrege, escaped death by a hair breadth Tuesday morning when a bolt of lightning struck dead the horse he was driving but left him unhurt except for the shock and slight burns to the right side. Mr. Hallgren was just starting out on his morning delivery. He left the post office at 9 o'clock and was proceeding northward on Sherman Street, a few rods north of tenth street, when the catastrophe occurred. The thunder shower which followed the crack of lighting was of short duration, but the bolt was of unusual severity as the entire neighborhood seems to have been shaken by the force.

L. M. Brockett, who lives at 924 Logan Street, saw the vivid flash of lighting and saw the horse fall in its tracks. He hurried to the relief of Mr. Hallgren not knowing how severe his injuries might be. Mr. Hallgren drives a single horse to a two-wheeled cart. The lightning had struck the cart and it was somewhat splintered by the shock. The electricity was so close as to burn the cotton padding of the back of the seat, and

as the current passed downward, it scorched the driver's side and leg. He was able to pull himself from the vehicle but complained that his feet were numb and Mr. Brockett removed the shoes and made him more conformable.

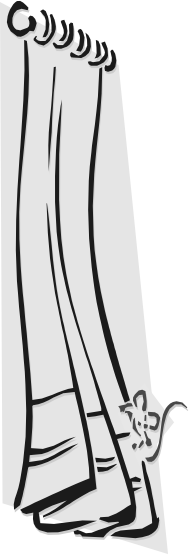
Andy Anderson passed in a few moments with his team and Mr. Hallgren was removed to his home only a few blocks distant. It seems at this time that the carrier's injuries will not confine him to his home more than a few days. He believes his horse to have been killed instantly.

Mr. Halgren is the oldest man in point of service in the rural carrier service out of Holdrege. He has been carrying mail since the establishment of the rural routes out of Holdrege. His route has been served by a substitute for several days, but Mr. Hallgren expects to be in the harness again very soon.



Soddie Privacy Depended on Hanging Carpet Walls

Holdrege Daily Citizen—5 Sep 1967



SODDIE PRIVACY DEPENDED ON HANGING CARPET WALLS

Holdrege Daily Citizen
5 September 1967

"A picture of a sod schoolhouse in the Citizen brings to mind a story of early days with I had always to write for your paper so here it is," Ethel Comstock writes from Orleans.

"My husband's uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Beebe came here from Wisconsin in a covered wagon. Planning for their Nebraska home, she made yards and yards of rag carpet. Why

it was never put down on her floors, I do not know, though possibly the floors were dirt floors, but she used the carpeting for partitions in her soddy, cutting it in lengths to hang from the beams.

"Later the time came when she needed a girl to help her at harvest time so she got a young girl to come here for a few

days. She gave the girl the room that had been partitioned off the kitchen. As soon as it became known in the community that there was a girl at Beebes, she had several callers and many chances to go with said swains.

"One evening she was preparing to go on a date and had taken the kitchen wash pan into her room wash while the lucky man sat in the kitchen, being entrained by Uncle Jim, who was an awful tease. Sitting on the trunk top squirming and rocking back and forth he leaned too far and the carpet partition gave way and he fell right into the room where the girl was getting dolled up. He quickly scrambled out of course, "Mrs. Beebe came into the room at once and found the girl crying. She said "I won't go with him now, he saw me in my underwear."

William Knaggs Family

Compiled by Barbara Liedtke, descendant

WILLIAM KNAGGS FAMILY

One of Phelps Counties earliest pioneers who built the first frame house in Phelps County near the Platte River

William Henry (Sr.) Knaggs was an early settler in Phelps County, Nebraska. He was born before 26 March 1815 in Stepney, London, England, near Bethnal Green, and Spitalfields. He was baptized at Spitalfields Christ Church in Stepney on 26 March 1815. His father was listed as Isaac Knaggs, a weaver in George Street. His mother's name was Elizabeth or Mary.

Little is known of his early life. He is the fifth of seven known children born to Isaac Knaggs and his wife Elizabeth Mary. Isaac Knaggs was known to have been a weaver in London and was known to have worked on George Court, George Street, George Yard, Holywell Lane, and Pope's Head Court. Most of those streets are not to be found in modern times because of the Blitz in World War II London. Holywell Lane is still located in the same place and is shown on the enclosed portion of Greenwood's map of 1827 London. William's known siblings are:

1. William Edwin Knaggs, born 22 April 1808
2. Mary Ann Knaggs, born 01 October 1809
3. Eliza Knaggs, born 18 May 1812
4. Isaac Jackson Knaggs, born 17 March 1813
5. William Henry Knaggs
6. Richard Knaggs, born 05 March 1818
7. Emma Knaggs, born 29 November 1819

There is some confusion as to the maiden name of William's wife. She was Mary Ann Collugg or Collie or Colley. Son William (who later was mayor of Kearney, Nebraska) listed her name as Collugg on his first marriage certificate in Harlan County, Nebraska. On his second marriage

certificate in Kearney, Buffalo County, Nebraska, he listed her name as Collie. The original marriage record of William and Mary Ann has not yet been located.

When William Knaggs was about 35 years old he was encouraged by his sister's son, his nephew Moses Sydenham, to come to the United States. Moses was in search of a better life for his widowed mother, Mary Ann Knaggs Sydenham, and his siblings. He was impressed with what he found in the United States and pitched in wholeheartedly to become an American. Mary Ann and some of her other children arrived in the United States in about 1860. William and his family arrived in New York Harbor in 1862. They found their way to Fort Kearny, Nebraska Territory, in October of 1862.

The name of the ship on which the Knaggs family traveled has not been found, but after arriving in New York Harbor (this from family information), they traveled by train for over two months to reach Saint Joseph, Missouri. The trip took this long because they were forced to wait for trains that were not packed with soldiers of the American Civil War. From Saint Joseph they took a Conestoga wagon to Fort Kearny, Nebraska Territory. Elizabeth Knaggs, daughter to William and Ann, noted how ragged the soldiers looked; they were used to the polished look of the British Army Regulars and could hardly countenance the rag-tag look of American soldiers in the midst of the American Civil War.

William and Mary Ann Knaggs' family including their son William Henry Knaggs (who would later be a mayor and shop-keeper in Kearney, Nebraska), daughter Elizabeth (who later married Major John Talbot of Fort Kearny and lastly of Cheyenne, Wyoming) and his son Richard Knaggs (who worked at Fort Kearny and later farmed nearby and was possibly a missionary) all arrived with him. Another daughter, Anna Knaggs, appears to have arrived after the 1870 census. She

(More William Knaggs on page 7)

(More William Knaggs from page 6)

never married and lived with either her parents or her brother Richard most of her life. She did live alone in Kearney after her parents' and brother Richard's deaths. She is buried in Kearney Cemetery with her brother William and his second wife Bertha Leona Mott.

William (Sr.) and his wife worked at the Fort, he as shopkeeper and assistant postmaster to his nephew Moses Sydenham who was postmaster, and she as the fort's matron (head of nursing staff). After the fort was decommissioned in 1868, he homesteaded on Section 14 in that part of Kearney County that was later became Phelps County in 1873. His home was the first frame house built in Phelps County. The land description is as follows: The Northwest quarter of the Southeast quarter and the Southwest quarter of the Northeast quarter of Section 14, Township 8, Range 18. 80 Acres. The first and second courthouses in Phelps County also appear to be on or very near this land. William was buried there with his wife and at least one of his grandchildren (son or daughter of William Jr. Knaggs and first wife Carolina Helen Musgrove Knaggs). This area is now known as Cottonwood Township.

The family farmed west of Fort Kearny until William Sr. died on 15 November 1891. At that time Richard and Anna were farming in the Williamsburg Township. Anna moved to town after Richard died. Richard never married and is buried with his brother William Jr. and sister Anna. William Jr. had moved to Kearney in the 1880s. Elizabeth married Major John Talbot and moved to Weld County, Colorado and then to Cheyenne, Wyoming. She lived in Cheyenne until her husband died in 1910, and then returned to Kearney. She is buried in Cheyenne with John at Mount Olivet Cemetery. There is some question as to the legality of their marriage. John claimed to have divorced his wife Mary Ann Wyse in Chicago, Illinois, but no record of this has ever been found. Their marriage is also questionable as there does not seem to be a record of it in Weld County in 1873. Mary Ann is buried in Kearney Cemetery. She claimed John as her husband in later censuses, and was awarded John's military pension.

William Henry (Jr.) Knaggs moved to Kearney and became a well-known citizen of that town. He was a shopkeeper and was elected mayor in 1913. He married his first wife, Carolina Helen Musgrove, on 01 November 1876. She disappeared mysteriously in 1889. Their youngest child died as a result of her disappearance, and she was never heard from again. It is not known whether she ran away or was the victim of an accident or foul play. The J. Q. Musgrove (Carolina's family) family were also early settlers in Phelps County. William divorced Carolina before 1896 (after her disappearance). They had two children who lived to adulthood, Emma Caroline and William Henry (III). Daughter Carrie Carpenter died under odd circumstances in a rooming house in January 1914 in Lincoln, Nebraska. Her obituary in the Kearney Hub indicates that she may have been a victim of spousal abuse. Son William Knaggs married Mabel Grace Dye and had 3 children: William Dale Knaggs, Evelyn Knaggs Zehr, and Darlene Knaggs Butolph.

William Henry (Jr.) Knaggs remarried in 1896 to Bertha Leona Mott. Their children were Lillie Leona Knaggs Johnson (Bill Johnson), Marjorie Anna Knaggs Widner (Lovell Widner), James Edwin Knaggs (Leona Angelina Knispel), Julia Francis "Peg" Knaggs Pinkerton (Norris Pinkerton), and Richard Thurston Knaggs (d. as a child.) The Johnson's lived in Greeley, Colorado and Cheyenne, Wyoming. The Pinkertons and Widners lived in Bonners Ferry, Idaho, and James Knaggs' family lived in Dawson, Phelps, and Buffalo Counties, Nebraska.

There are still descendants of the Knaggs family in the Dawson, Buffalo, Kearney, and Phelps County areas of Nebraska today.

Persons wishing to contact a member of this family or researching this family please contact me at barbaraliedtke@yahoo.com.

NEBRASKA!

NEBRASKA

Hi All, Smack in the middle of our great nation, is a state that requires some explanation.

To east and west coasters who'll come right out and ask ya', "Is there anything of interest in the State of Nebraska?"

It's true we don't have mountains all decked out in snow, but we do have the world's biggest live chicken show.

We're the makers of Spam.

We invented Kool-Aid, and this is where the first Reuben sandwich was made.

Our insect, the Honeybee. Our bird, the Meadowlark.

The strobe light, our creation, works best in the dark.

Governmentally speaking, we're a freak of nature.

Since we have the only one-house state legislature.

On Arbor Day, when you plant a tree, remember that it started in Nebraska City.

We were once called a desert, but that name didn't take,

Since we have the country's largest underground lake.

We have the world's largest forest, all planted by hand, And more miles of rivers than any state in the land.

The College World Series calls Omaha "home," And yes, this is where the buf-

falo used to roam.

We were the first state in the nation to finish our Interstate section,

And the first to run two women in the gubernatorial election

We invented 9-1-1 emergency communication,

And we're the number one producer of center pivot irrigation.

Our woolly mammoth fossil is the largest ever found,

And our monumental "Carhenge" is certain to abound.

We have several museums that could be called odd, Dedicated to Chevy's, fur trading, roller skates and sod.

In Blue Hill, Nebraska, no woman wearing a hat, can eat onions in public. Imagine that!

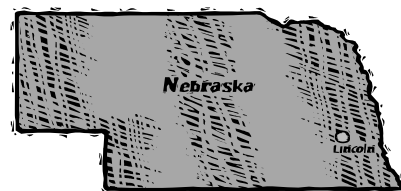
We built the largest porch swing and indoor rain forest,

And anyone who visits is sure to adore us.

So pack up the kiddies, the pets and the wife, and see why Nebraska is called "THE GOOD LIFE."

(Oh gosh -- it doesn't even once mention football?)

(OR that the yellow color of school buses originated in Franklin, NE!)



(Harlan County Continued from page 3)

from the Johnson's and later sold it to the Cross Johnston. Ragan received its name from the railroad attorney. Mr. Ragan. The village developed so rapidly that in 1889 Deckers addition was annexed to Ragan.

The most prominent men in the establishment was James Carroll Cross and Johnson, A. N. Shumard, Francis Johnson and N. B. Decker. Businessmen were - E. L. Clark, druggist; Shaffer, General Merchandise; Cross & Johnson, bank and lumberyard; Mrs. Tilda Thompson, hotel; Lindstrom, meat market; Gust Ferrgsen, livery barn; Dude Brewster, post office; two elevators all established in 1887. A little later A. Carpenter located in Ragan and became a windmill man; James Carrol was also a livestock buyer, the school house and town hall was built later. The first school was taught by Mrs. Bates in the present location of the Everett Sterner home. V. E. Hagtrom

This Week in History 70 Years Ago

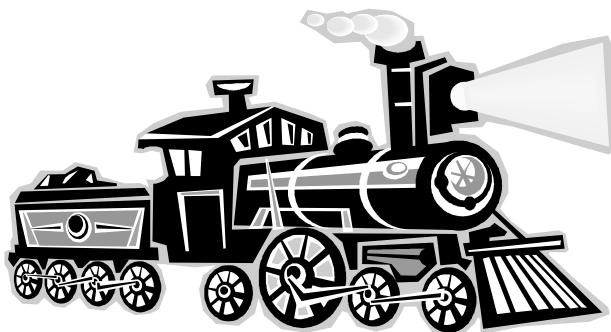
Holdrege Daily Citizen—13 May 1968

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Holdrege Daily citizen May 13th 1968

Seventy years ago 1898

The war spirit was strong in Holdrege and several boys went to Lincoln to enlist. "A rousing sendoff was given to the first three at the Hampton Hotel. The hotel lobby was packed with Holdrege folks who gathered to bid goodbye and God-Speed to Len Rundstrom, T. M. Hilsabeck and Bernard Shelley. The following day word was received that there was room for more men and Ren Roberts, Labert Rodstrom, Elmer Wright, C. Shaffer, J. H. Carroll and G. W. Ham left for Lincoln. An impromptu reception was given on the courthouse lawn for the boys. Al Kennedy, John Trumbull, and Herman Bensel determined later to follow the example of others and left on the 2 a.m. train for Lincoln....Len Rundstrom was fortunate to secure a position as hospital steward with the first regiment. This was rank above first sergeant and paid \$60 a month.....T.M. Hilsabeck was selected as clerk of Co. H".... The Citizen carried the latest war news, including a story on the bombardment of San Juan which lasted three hours. One American killed, seven wounded. The Flying Squadron of Cape Verde fleet, left Hampton Roads headed for Cuba.

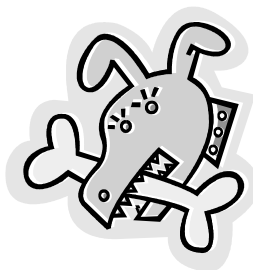


A Mad Dog

17 March 1891

D. W. Hilsabeck had quite a tussle with a mad dog last Sunday. The dog had been running about town. D. W. saw the dog coming down the alley and concluded to put an end to him. He fired at the dog, but failed to kill the dog who made for him. Mr. Hilsabeck had hard work to keep the dog from biting him but at last knocked him down with his revolver and then with a shot sent him to the 'happy hunting ground.'

We have not heard of the dog biting anyone, though the pants of the Messenger boy were a little the worse for coming in contact with the dog.



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Holdrege Area Genealogy Club
PO Box 164
Holdrege, NE 68949