

ELLSWORTH COUNTY OLD SETTLERS ORGANIZATION

including dates of

1860 – 1910

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Old Settler's Organization

In *The Ellsworth Reporter*, May 22, 1880, was a story about a group of citizens who had decided to organize to “recall the memory of our early struggles,” and to transmit “to those who may come after us and enjoy the results of our labors and privations, the history of our trials.” Any male who had settled in Ellsworth County prior to Jan. 1, 1870, was eligible. The first officers were President: Henry V. Faris; Vice-Presidents: Gen. Elijah Johnson, Robert Hudson, and Benjamin Sweet; Chaplain: C. Sternberg; Treasurer: Ira W. Phelps; Secretary: C.C. Sprigg; Executive Committee: Perry Hodgden, Leo Herzig, H.R. Hoesman, R. Schermerhorn, and John Quinlan.

The following dates of settlement were given for those in attendance:

Elijah Johnson – Aug. 10, 1866	H.T. Anderson – Sept. 14, 1855
L.R. Johnson – Aug. 10, 1866	George Campbell – Apr. 10, 1866
B.A. Wood – Nov. 15, 1866	D.B. Long – Sept. 7, 1866
Owen O’Connell – Dec. 24, 1865	H.V. Faris – Sept. 20, 1860
Robert Hudson – Apr. 4, 1866	Perry Hodgden – May 15, 1867
T.J. Buckbee – Aug. 9, 1867	F.D. Melville – Jul. 25, 1866
James McKeever – May 1869	Perry Campbell – Apr. 4, 1866
Daniel Reardon – Aug. 1, 1870	Charles Robinson – May 15, 1866
M. McCune – May 1866	John A. Stockum – Aug. 20, 1866
J.F. Dyer – Oct. 10, 1867	George Huycke – Jun. 20, 1867
C.C. Sprigg – Jul. 12, 1867	C.R. Davis – Aug. 1866

In the files of the Ellsworth County Historical Society archives, under “Old Settler’s” is a handwritten book apparently written in 1897 which recalls the first meeting as being in 1876. The book stated that there was no record left of that meeting and no record of the membership or transactions of the meetings. The book goes on to state that “On or about September 10th, 1888” a meeting was called to reorganize. That meeting was held at the place “now owned by the Faris Bros.” D.B. Long was elected president and Theodore Sternberg was elected Secretary. However, no meeting was held for several years. At the request of D.H. Hudson, a basket picnic was held in his grove to reorganize on September 1897. The group decided to meet annually. H.V. Faris and Theodore Sternberg talked about the early Ellsworth settlement. Officers elected were President: H.V. Faris; D.B. Long, secretary and Theodore Sternberg, treasurer. In August, 1898, an executive meeting was held and George Huycke was elected Vice-President and Frank Sternberg was elected Treasurer. (His brother, Theodore, had been called by “Uncle Sam” to be the paymaster for the United States in the Philippines because of the Spanish-American War.) Mr. Monroe Hodgden offered the use of his grove for the future meetings. This grove was one mile south of Kanopolis, southeast corner of section 35 and southwest corner of section 36, Ellsworth township. Membership requirements were changed to include anyone locating in Ellsworth County prior to and including the year 1880. Rev. John Connor, the first Methodist minister to work for the church in Ellsworth county recalled his pioneer life in the county. The secretary, D.B. Long, also noted that at some of the other meetings (apparently not recorded), the first Governor of the state of Kansas, Charles Robinson was present and spoke. Also, then current Governor John A.

Martin, and Senator, P.B. Plum had also been present and spoke to the group. Mr. Long noted that he hoped that from this meeting on there would be a record of the Old Settler's meetings. He signed his name and the notation, "Secretary for 1898."

At Hodgden's Grove, Oct. 7, 1898, the next meeting was held. The only officer present was the secretary, D.B. Long. The weather was "cold and dank." However, those at the meeting sat around the campfire and told stories of the early times. There were 13 new members.

The annual Meeting for 1899 was held at Hodgden's Grove with another poor turnout due to bad weather. No new officers were elected.

August 8, 1900, the meeting was held at Hadgden's Grove, near Kanopolis. Rain early in the day cooled the air and settled the dust so that the day was very pleasant. According to Mr. Long there were many "well filled baskets" spread out on neat white table spreads in the cool shade of the grove. Young and old settlers did "ample justice to the fried chicken, pies, and cakes that disappeared like dew before the morning sun." Mr. Henry Faris, the oldest settler in the county, presided over the meeting. The address was given by Hon. George W. Martin, Secretary of the State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas. The following address was written in *The Ellsworth Reporter*:

I walked into Kansas about the first of April, 1857, and in 1861 located in Junction City, which was the jumping off place for several years. Kansas in the 50's and the early 60's presented two views – one of beauty and grandeur and the other barrenness and desolation. The former never faded, while the other occasionally worried the homesteader, struggling for subsistence. No portion of western Kansas at any time ever looked so desolate as did Johnson and Douglas county when I walked across them 43 years ago. There were a few scrubby trees in the ravines, and the dreary blackness which follows a prairie fire covered the earth. Today in those two counties there are nearly 600,000 fruit trees, almost 6,000 acres of artificial forests miles and miles of hedge, to say nothing of the great growths of native after the suppression of fires....The first railroad track was laid in Ellsworth county about May 1, 1867, and on the 6th of June following the most important excursion party that ever visited the state arrived at Clear Creek, then the end of the track about four miles east of Ellsworth. This party consisted of such men as Simon Cameron, Benjamin F. Wade, John B. Henderson, John P. Usher and numbered about 150 in all. They held a meeting and Simon Cameron presided, and they resolved among other things that the road was "a miracle of labor, art, and capital." When the old settler recalls the speedy and flimsy work and the farcical inspection in order to receive the government subsidy for each 40 miles, this sounds very much like a joke. Competition and rigid business rules and not subsidy has developed the marvelous line we have today. A miracle, that no one then possibly contemplated is the fact that the government has got its money out of these great trans-continental railroad schemes.....My old friend and neighbor, V.J. Lane, editor of the Wyandotte Herald, had the contract for grading the railroads by this point. He had 20 men employed. When he came to organize his work his first appeal for advice and assistance was made to Mr. V.H. Faris, at whose place he was royally entertained until he could establish camp.....

Hon. H.L. Pestana told of his early experiences in Ellsworth county. The Kanopolis Boys Band furnished music. A letter was read from Luther R. Johnson. He listed the

names of the first settlers on Thompson Creek (names not listed in the notes.) 66 new members were enrolled. The membership was “to perpetuate the memory of those who risked their lives in the dangers and hardships incident of the settlement of a new country, of which the settlement of Ellsworth County was no exception.” New officers: President – George Huycke; Vice-President – H.G. Andres; Secretary – D.B. Long; Treasurer – H.V. Faris and the executive committee – William F. Kline, I.A. Hopkins, and August Feistle.

The next meeting of The Old Settler’s Organization wasn’t until Sept. 23, 1905, at Hodgden’s Grove. Fried chicken, pies, cakes, and pickles were consumed in such a manner as to show that in the last five years the appetites of the old settlers were as vigorous as ever. The meeting was presided over by H.G. Andrews, vice-president. The letter from L.R. Johnson about the first settlers on Thompson creek was read. Judge Humphries of Junction City, the first Judge of the district, spoke about the present and future of Kansas. Hon. I.E. Lloyd spoke about his experiences as a candidate for the County attorney. Maj. Theo. Sternberg spoke about the big watermelon at the Centennial and the election of 1876 “but he forgot to mention about his bareback ride when chased by the Indians.” Mr. Reynolds recited a poem by Sol Miller on the Kansas home and he also spoke. Hon. H.L. Seaver also spoke. H.V. Faris reminisced about the snowstorm of 1860. J.R. McLaurin donated lumber for the picnic. The officers elected were: George Huycke – president; H.G. Andrews – vice-president; D.B. Long – secretary; H.V. Faris – treasurer; executive committee – W.F. Kline, A. Fistel, and Abe Essick.

In *The Ellsworth Reporter*, July 16, 1906, was an advertisement for the Old Settler’s picnic “Refreshment stands and ice water will be on the grounds, “ perhaps a barbecued ox: “No gambling devices or cheap shows will be permitted on the grounds.” The meeting was held Aug. 3, 1906. Note was made in the minutes that Mr. Monroe Hodgden had given the use of the beautiful grove as long as no intoxicating drinks or gambling devices were on the grounds. There was an early morning a heavy rain but it had cleared up by 11 o’clock. The barbecued ox failed to show however. Talks were given by Maj. Sternberg, Prof. Fairchild, Hon. L.H. Seaver, W.B. Helm, D. B. Long, M.M> Sherman, Rev. J.S. Essick, Rev. A.T. Allen and Hugh Leath. Officers elected were: H.V. Faris, president; J.M. Essick, vice-president; D.B. Long, secretary; Maj. Theo. Sternberg, treasurer; and W.F. Kline. Abe Essick and A. Fistel, executive committee. Mr. M. Hodgden was elected and honorary member. A person who had resided 25 years in Ellsworth was eligible to be a member of the Old Settler’s Organization. The sale of refreshments was done to get funds for the organization. \$35 was turned into the treasury this year. It was hoped that the organization would grow so pioneers of Ellsworth County who “battled Indians, drought, hot air, grasshoppers, chinch bugs, green bugs, cyclones, floods and wolves of all kinds to make this county a fit place for happy and prosperous homes...should receive recognition of those who now enjoy the fruits of the labor and privations of the first settlers of Ellsworth County.” (D.B. Long was secretary and George Huycke was president.)

Aug. 23, 1907. The meeting was again held at Hodgden’s Grove. After a picnic lunch the Kanopolis Italian String band furnished music. H.V. Faris presided over the meeting. Rev. J.R. Tercy asked the blessing. Many of the old settlers who had died were remembered. Hone. Joseph L. Bristow, Salina, gave the address. He was made an honorary member. New membership requirements of 21 years residence in Ellsworth

County was passed. Maj. Theodore Sternberg talked and also offered a resolution that the Old Settlers urge all Kansans to ask the W.K.D.C. to procure a suitable Santa Fe Trail marker to be placed on the grave of Colonel Henry Inman at Ellsworth. The resolution was adopted. Hugh Leith also gave a talk. The officers elected were: Abe Essick – pres.; W.F. Kline, vice-pres.; D.B. Long – secretary; Theo. Sternberg – treasurer; J.M. Essick, A. Feistel, & A.H. Barwell, executive committee. (This meeting was reported from a newspaper clipping pasted in the notebook. There were no handwritten notes.)

1908(?) A newspaper article was pasted in the notebook but no date was noted with the article. The article states that the picnic was again held at Hodgden's Grove, one mile south of Kanopolis. Ira E. Lloyd, Ellsworth, Harry Pestana, Russell, and Major Sternberg, Kanopolis spoke. Officers elected were W.F. Kline – pres.; George Huycke – vice-pres.; H.V. Faris - sec.; Maj. Sternberg – treasurer; I.E. Lloyd, H. Bardwell, George Huycke, Abe Essick, and W.S. Faris were executive committee members.

Aug. 26, 1909 was written up in a letter that was attached to the notebook. H.V. Faris was secretary for the day because the regular secretary was absent. W.F. Kline presided. Hon. I.E. Lloyd gave the address. There was a large crowd. Officers elected were: W.F. Kline – pres.; Geo. Huyke – vice-pres.; H.V. Faris – secretary; Theodore Sternberg – treasurer; Rev. J.F. Tercy – chaplain; executive committee – I.E. Lloyd, W.S. Faris, Abe Essick, Peter Hammil and A.H. Bardwell.

There were no other meetings noted in the notebook.

In the August 3, 2000 *The Ellsworth Reporter*, stated that 75 years ago on Aug. 13, 1925, was a report about the annual old settlers picnic. It was held Aug. 6 at Hudson's grove on Thompson Creek. A band concert, foot races, three-legged races, wheel barrow races, sack races, home talent carnival, fish pond, etc. were the amusements of the day. Is this the same Old Settler's picnic or the Hudson picnic????

A group of obituaries follow in the notebook: During the past year, the reaper of death has been in our midst and many of our worthy old settlers have fallen, and gathered home where parting shall be no more.

O'Donnell – The first to fall was our worthy citizen Hon. Harry O'Donnell who died August 23, 1907 on the last anniversary of the old settlers reunion. Dr. O'Donnell was born in Ireland in Oct. 1864. Located in Ellsworth in April 1884. His death was a blow to the whole community as he was loved by all who knew him.

Mrs. Howard – Martha J. Howard was born in Ireland March 1824. Died Aug. 28th, 1907. Age 83 years and 5 months. Mrs. Howard came to Ellsworth County in 1869. She was a very sociable kind neighbor, and while a great sufferer for the past 15 years she was much loved for her happy disposition.

Cunningham – Mrs. Mary E. Cunningham was born in Ohio in 1833. Located in Ellsworth Co. in 1870. Died Nov. 19th, 1907, age 74 years. She was a sister of H.V. Faris, the oldest settler of Ellsworth County.

Brown – James Brown born in Ireland. Located in Ellsworth Co. in 1877. Died Nov. 15, 1907.

Bruner – Mrs. N. Bruner born in 1840 in the state of Illinois. Came to Ellsworth in 1886. Died Dec. 4, 1907.

Evans – Carles Evans born in Indiana located in Ellsworth in 1878. Died Jan. 21, 1908. He was a good lawyer and a true friend.

Robins – James Robins located in Ellsworth Co. in 1878. Died April 1907. He was a successful farmer and stock man.

Beebe – Sarah Beebe located in Ellsworth Co. in 1867. Lived in Kansas City the past 5 years. Died in California in May 1908.

Cleverdon – Dick Cleverdon and wife both died since our last reunion. They were both old timers.

Howard – Edward Howard of Kanopolis. Have no record.

Seaver – Mrs. M.H. Seaver, wife of Rev. W.R. Seaver was born in Massachusetts, April 5, 1822. Died in Enid, Oklahoma in April last, age 86 years. Mrs. Seaver was the mother of Hon. S.H. Seaver.

Hank – Mrs. Celia N. Hank was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, May 2, 1842. Came to America in 1851. Located in Ellsworth in 1871. Died Jan. 27, 1908, age 65 years, 8 months, and 25 days.

Andrews – Mrs. H.G. Andrews was born in Ohio in 1849. Came to Ellsworth in 1873. Died April 29, 1908. She was a good neighbor and loved by us who knew her.

Easterly – Evaline Easterly, wife of Martin Easterly, was born in New York State. Located in Ellsworth 1874. Died March 27, 1908.

Jury – Mr. Jury was born in Pennsylvania in 1848. Located in Ellsworth County in 1878. Died Jan. 27, 1908.

Griffith – (This area was blank.)

Sparks – Ruben Sparks, Jr. was born in Ellsworth County. Died June 26th, age 25 years.

Westfall – B.S. Westfall was born at Phelps, Ontario County, New York, Jan. 20, 1865. Located in Ellsworth Co. in 1886. Mr. Westfall was a man of great business qualifications. Was president of the Central National Bank and interested in several other banks. His loss is felt by the businessmen of the whole community.

McKeown – W.H. McKeown was born in Newbury, New York, May 27, 1847. Came to this county in Nov. 1877. Died June 11, 1908. He was an excellent citizen and respected by all his neighbors.

Boileau - Mrs. Alexander Boileau was born in Ohio in 1841. Came to Ellsworth Co. in 1877. Died April 10, 1908.

Humphrey – Alice Humphrey was killed by accident July 27th in Kanopolis.

The List of Old Settlers Died During the Past Year

Mrs. Charles Flanders	July 30, 1910
Paul Reame	July 6, 1910
J.M. Baker	July 3, 1910
Henry Krieder	July 3, 1910
Mrs. Elizabeth Essick	April 22, 1910
Edward Jones	
Ben Earl	
George Markel	May 16, 1910
Andrew Kipp	October 23, 1909
Mrs. Ellen Reardon	October 23, 1909
Mrs. C.F. Jennings	Nov. 23, 1909
Absolon Gilkison	Sept. 14, 1909
Mrs. Mary McGrudy	Nov. 23, 1909
Mrs. S. Smith	Sept. 27, 1909