

# Phelps Helps



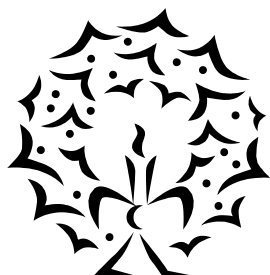
Volume 12, Issue 4

Winter 2004

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:  
[http://  
users.atcjet.net/  
psdesigns](http://users.atcjet.net/psdesigns)



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## President's Message

I hope you all have a very joyous Christmas Season. We have so much to be thankful for. I am always so appreciative that my relatives came here to America to start a new life and to allow me to be an American citizen.

Several years ago I received a Christmas card and have kept it as a keepsake. I hope you enjoy its meaningful message.

"Every time a hand reaches out to help another.... that is Christmas

"Every time people forget their differences and realize their love for each other...that is Christmas.

"May this Christmas bring us closer to the spirit of human understanding, closer to the blessing of peace."

Your President, Sandra Slater

## Library News

### **MORE CDs HAVE BEEN PURCHASED OR DONATED!**

#### **DONATED BY HOLDREGE AREA GENE-ALOGY CLUB:**

Family Search United States  
1880 Census Index(55 CDs)  
MILITARY RECORDS INCLUDING:  
Revolutionary War Muster  
Rolls;  
Civil War Service Records  
World War II & Korean Conflict  
Overseas Interments.  
FAMILY ARCHIVES:  
Marriage Index of Iowa 1851-  
1900  
Immigrants to America 1600s-  
1800s  
Connecticut Family Histories  
1600s -1800s  
Local and Family Histories:  
New England 1600s - 1800s  
ANCESTRY.COM

The Great Migration Begins,  
Immigrants to New England  
1620-1633

#### **DONATED BY AGNES JOHNSON** Ancestry Reference Library

**DONATED BY ELIZABETH SCHLATZ**  
Heritage Quest Magazine, 14  
years, Sept. 1985 to Dec.  
1999

#### **DONATED BY GLENN HARRINGTON** The Swedish Emigrant no. 1 & 2

#### **WE HAVE PURCHASED ANOTHER FILE**

We have outgrown our surname file so we have purchased another four drawer file. These files have miscellaneous information on families in Phelps and Harlan County and holds much of our research information we have collected on our local families.

## ?¿? Query Corner ?¿?

Anna Britta Bergman  
Rödmyravägen 8  
8060 40 Järvjä  
Sweden

Looking for Pehr Person, American name is Peter Engman, born 26 December 1843. He Came to the U.S. in 1865. He was born in Tönsen, county of Bollnäs, Hälsingland, Sweden.

Anna Bergman from Sweden, came to Nebraska Prairie Museum this summer, searching for her relatives. She was sure that Pehr Persson had resided in Phelps County. We were unable to find her relatives. After corresponding with her by email, and doing additional research, we have found that Pehr Persson had changed his name to Peter Engman.

The 1880 census lists Peter Engman, aged 36, residing in Prairie Township, Phelps County, Nebraska. With him is listed his wife Betsy, aged 33

and their children Anna, age 8; Tilda, age 6; and Jenney, age 3. There may have been two sons born after the 1880 census named Albert and Arthur. Peter Engman died in 1886 and his wife Betsy married John Victory Johnson in 1887 Does anyone know of any living relatives here in the United States?

Gloria Marshall Borgink  
41180 Bridges Farm Lane  
Leesburg, VA 20175

I am interested in the family of my great grandparents, Richard and Nancy Matilda Marshall and the family of their daughter Eliza Marshall Phillips and her husband Joseph Albert "Bert" Phillips. The Marshall family lived in Phelps County with their daughter and her family in the early 1900s. I would be interested in corresponding with anyone who is researching this family, especially descendants of Eliza and Bert Phillips.

## Fifty Years Together Joe & Nettie Hammon

This Golden Anniversary took place in 1925 in Phelps County, Nebraska

The Hammons were married February 24, 1875 at Mt. Pulaski, IL

The Illinois sun was slowly sinking behind the tree tops in the distance. The checked shadows played among the branches of the stately trees.

There was a stir and a bustle in the farmhouse near Mt. Pulaski where Nettie Allen lived. She was dressing for the dance. Her curling black hair was being arranged to give the best effect. Her grey dress lay on the bed. It was all ready to be worn. There were yards of material in the skirt as the fashions of the time demanded. At last the desired image met her glaze in the mirror, and Nettie went gaily to the dance.

No doubt, a peep into another bedroom might have disclosed a similar scene. But this time the central figure would have been a young man. Can't you picture him struggling with his necktie to get it to fit just right? Not too tight for comfort, nor yet too loose that it would look untidy. Allow me to introduce this young man as Joe Hammon. He had come to Illinois from Ohio, when just a boy and so consequently was entering Illinois rural society.

Joe saw many girls at the dance, but no one attracted him as did that pretty little curly-headed girl with such a big grey dress. Nothing would do but that he should be introduced to her. Conversation followed introduction and an engagement for the next Sunday resulted from that conversation. Visit after visit followed--usually on Sundays until finally curly headed Nettie promised to be Joe's bride.

*(Hammons Continued on page 8)*

# Harlan County, Nebraska

## To Nebraska in a Covered Wagon

From the Holdrege Citizen, March 14, 1956. Written by Ned Redfern

As soon as weather permits, Grandma Huston, oldest resident of the Ragan community intends to return to her farm near Ragan. "Grandma" has lived on this same place for 72 years. She was 88 years old last February 18 and has been spending the winter with her son J. J. Huston here in Holdrege.

It is only the last four winters that she has consented to leave the farm and let her son take care of her in town. While on the farm she lives alone and does her own cooking. Her house has electric light and a hand pump so she does not have to carry water. Her farming activities now are limited to house plants and she does have a lot of flowers. Her nearest neighbor, Albert Covey, keeps close watch over her and her grandson Charles Huston lives close by.

Fanny Herndon was born in 1868 by Bancraft, Missouri. The family came to Nebraska in the fall of 1881, crossing the Missouri River at Rulo and a ferry boat. Grandma recalls there were two covered wagons and a spring wagon in the party. They brought all of their household goods and livestock as well as their farm machinery.

First stop the family made was at Jake Jones place near Huntley but they couldn't find land there so they moved on to Ragan. They spent at a year at the farm now occupied by Willis Norman, then moved to the Joe Herndon Place south of Freewater Cemetery, where Joe lived until he quit farming.

Fanny Herndon did not like it in Nebraska very well. She was all for going back to Missouri away from the hot dusty plains. One night there was an oyster supper at the neighboring town of Sacramento. Fanny went under protest, with her

**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.

brother Willie, and there she met David Huston, who she later married.

David Miller Huston was born in Bloomington, Ohio, in 1851. The family lived in Pennsylvania and Illinois, coming to Nebraska in 1875, where they settled near Fairmont in the winter of 1876 and 1877. David came to

Ragan where he bought a Preemption northeast of town. Later he took a tree claim on the same section so he had 320 acres together. This is still in the family estate and is where Grandma still lives.

In the Spring of 1884 David Huston and Fanny Herdon were married. Rev. John Hardin, the local Baptist preacher, was the minister. Their wedding supper, wedding night and wedding breakfast was in the home of the bride's parents.

Then the couple had what Grandma calls their "infair dinner", apparently their first meal alone in their dugout home. Probably the bridegroom prepared this meal, as his son Jerry says he was a good cook. After "infair dinner" they went to Alma purchasing furniture to set up housekeeping in the new two-room sod house Dave had built that spring.

Fanny joined the Baptist church while a child and has been active in the church work as long as she was able. She had five children: J. J. Huston of Holdrege; Ella Mills, who died in 1943; John Huston of Santa Ana, California.; Carrie Seick, who died in 1939 and Jesse Huston of Imperial, Nebraska. There are 13 grandchildren and 27 great grandchildren.



## New Members & Their Queries

### 1. Ellen Anderson

P.O. Box 1233

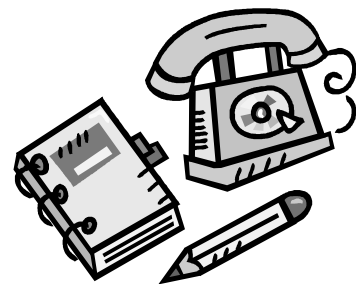
Highland, CA 92346-1233

I am researching Alonzo and Dorothy Irene (Buttermore) Pile family who resided in Salina, KS for 34 years. In his 1946 obituary, these children are mentioned: Cuma (Cumi) Carpenter of Parsons, KS; Doria Richart of Marshall MO; Robert Pile of Melrose, MA. Alonzo and his first wife were married in Nebraska. Can anyone tell me where the marriage took place?

Also researching Rosa Lee Pile who married Edward H. Leney who lived in 1880 in Saunders, NE. Their son George Clin-

ton Leney was born in Nebraska in 1899 and a daughter Bernice Bell Leney in 1902 in Altomont, KS. The parents are buried in Inkom, ID.

Ralph Ben Leney resided in Prairie Township, Phelps County, Nebraska in 1920. Another brother Ernest W. Leney resided in Oklahoma.



## 2-Story Sod House in Phelps County

Some of this information is from a Dover Phelps County Atlas dated 1980

(Does anyone know any additional information about a Munson family that would have lived near the Platte River in Westmark Township in the 1870s?)

This is a story of the only two-story sod house built in Phelps County. It was built in Westmark Township about 15 miles northwest of Holdrege, Nebraska. It may have been built by Andrew and Minka Nyquist although the 1980 Atlas says it might have been built by the Munson family. This piece of land was owned by the Union Pacific Railroad until December 1886 when Andrew Nyquist purchased the land from the railroad. The Nyquists' sold this land of 160 acres with the two story sod home on May 7, 1887 to Charles A. Lyon.

The two story sod house was Mr. and Mrs. Charles. A. Lyon's home for six years. George and Will Lyon were the oldest sons, about two years and two weeks of age when the family moved there. A new home was built in 1894, when the old two story house was tore down.

There are no exact measurements of the house, but it is thought to have been 20 feet wide and 24 feet long with walls 10 feet high. It is believed that there was

a cellar under the house. This is evidenced by the depressions in the ground that still could be seen in 1979. The rooms down stairs consisted of a kitchen, a front room and two bedrooms. There was a bedroom upstairs. It had wood floors and the walls were white washed. A heating stove stood in the front room. Rafters laid on a wood frame at the top of the walls, The sod house had a shingled roof. The roof was not too good as the Lyon boys remember snow on their bed that had sifted down through the shingles.



**2005  
Dues**

## August Holmquist, An Old Coal Miner

(The Holmquist family lived about four and one half miles north of Bertrand, NE)

Date Unknown

August Holmquist had a different beginning to his life than any other old-timer in this section. Prior to coming to Nebraska in 1882, he was a coal miner in the Illinois coal mines. He started as a trapper in the mine shaft, rose to mule driver, and finally to a full-fledged miner. However, he tired of working for someone else, and decided to try working for himself for a while. So he came to Nebraska, a penniless boy with two empty hands and two suits of clothes. He bought a place which he still owns and upon which his son Albert Holmquist now lives, from the Union Pacific railroad company for \$3.50 an acre. Part of the place was covered with nothing but a bunch grass. About the first two years he was here, Mr. Holmquist would have gone back to Streator where he came from if he had had the money.

The first thing he did was to build himself a dugout on his new place. He lived in it for several years, until he was financially able to build a frame house. All through the eighties he had good crops, but with the nineties came hard times. The year 1890 was a very poor year, 1891 and 1892 were good years, 1893 was a poor year and then came the drought of the year 1894. However, Mr. Holmquist agrees with most of the other old settlers in that this was not as complete a failure as the year 1934. That year they got their feed at least, as much of the prairie had not yet been broken. However, there was no corn or small grain.

Very vivid in Mr. Holmquist's mind is the famous blizzard of 1888. He had a brother and sister going to school in the sod school house east of his place. The blizzard started about two o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Holmquist went to the school and got the little folks. The school teacher and several of the pupils spent the night with the Nylander fam-

ily. Those who went north stayed at the home of a family named McDonald. He followed the fence wire to his father's home and carried his little brother, John who was too small to walk in such a raging storm. He was forced to spend the night at his father's home and also the entire next day. When he finally got home, his stock which had been shut in the sod barn welcomed him rather loudly and they were hungry. They had eaten everything in the mangers, and would have started on the sod if he hadn't come when he did.

The worst Indian scare Mr. Holmquist ever received was the spring he came here. He hitched up his team and mules and went down on spring creek for some lumber for a sod stable he planned to build. As it was his first trip into that section of the country and he did not know just how long it would take, he took food for the mules and himself. The man who lived down there then had a homestead. The biggest part was timber. Mr. Holmquist transacted his business and bought the trees he wanted. He then took off his coat and chopped down the trees. By the time he was done chopping and had the trees trimmed and loaded, he was quite hungry. He fed his mules and spread his own lunch out on a stump. He sat down on a log and was clapped on his shoulder, and he turned around to see a big brown Indian. The Indian told him "no runny, no runny, me to hurt you." He leaned over and took the entire lunch, towel and all. All Mr. Holmquist got was what he had in his hand. On another occasion an entire tribe of Indians traveling to the north camped within a mile of his place, but they didn't hurt anyone.

*Merry  
Christmas*

## Holdrege from Holdrege Citizen June 1, 1888

Holdrege, the county seat is but 4 ½ years old, but is a city of from 2,800 to 3,000 inhabitants. It is located at the junction of the B. & M. main line between Chicago and Denver and the N. & C. R. R. between Kansas City and Cheyenne. Being a division station, a substantial brick round house is located here and the B. & M. owns 357 acres of land which they purchased about a year ago for the purpose of building extensive machine shops. A fine eating house has just been erected here and Holdrege is one of the few cities at which the through fast express trains between Chicago and Denver stop. The business men here are young, wide awake and enterprising, and are a unit in working for the advancement of the "Magic City." We have some elegant brick buildings as fine as can be found in many cities four times as old. Already considerable manufacturing is being done, and a half dozen wholesale houses are doing a fine business. Our location makes this a desirable point for manufacturing, and

all classes of manufactories are invited to correspond with our Board of Trade, with a view to coming here and many rest assured of not only a hearty welcome but assistance.

Holdrege in a few months can boast of one of the finest water works systems in the west, costing about \$70,000. Several miles of main are already laid and work is progressing on the reservoir, stand pipe, engine house etc. We have four solid banks, a good number of wholesale and retail stores, carrying large and fine stocks, four church buildings and a new one underway, a magnificent brick high school, with competent teachers, a rustling Board of Trade, three newspaper offices, and surrounding us, as fine a country as there is on earth.

A special invitation is extended to every manufacturer, farmer, and mechanic in the east to visit Holdrege the Magic City.

### DUES ARE DO AGAIN FOR 2005

We are grateful for the wonderful support of our members.

Each year our membership seems to increase. We are now at 67 members.

We hope the efforts of building a good genealogy library and publishing a helpful newsletter helps you to find those missing ancestors.

**Please send your 2005 dues of \$10 to:**

**Holdrege Area Genealogy Club  
Attention Ada Hinson  
Box 164  
Holdrege, Nebraska 68949.**

## Leon Snyder Journal Alma, Nebraska

### LEON SNYDER DAYLOGUE BOOK

1917-1919

Alisa Loeper from Colorado Springs has donated to our library, a Daylogue book owned by Leon Snyder, former resident of Alma, Nebraska. She purchased this book at a flea market in Colorado and was unable to return it to a family member. Alisa has also done some genealogy research in this family. Leon's parents were Joseph and Elizabeth (Zumro) Snyder.

Her wish is to share this information with any Snyder family researchers. The entire journal has been scanned and put up on our web site. The original journal has been donated to the Nebraska Prairie Museum Library. Anyone interested in this information should contact Holdrege Area Genealogy Club, Box 164, Holdrege, Nebraska 68949.



# Fifty Years of Evolution of Phelps County

## Homes Holdrege Newspaper April 24, 1930

From the days of modest beginnings of a few houses obscurely located in the prairie. Phelps County has come a long way to have its fine white farm homes scattered here and there among the thriving fields. The sod house in the illustration, one of the rather early Phelps county homes was built in 1885 by E. G. West, the picture was made in 1900 by C. B. Pope and is in the possession now of C. A. Galloway.

Pioneers, despite the many hardships which they encountered, all say that the days of the sod house were the days of real happiness for them. There were few rules of interior decoration or of exterior architecture that were observed by the builders of these sod houses, but they made good shelters, and good homes, and that was all the pioneers asked for.

Sod houses seem picturesque, quaint, today but in the days when the pioneers came to the treeless plains of Nebraska and needed homes, there was no question of appearance involved in the building of the shelter. The only building material at hand was the sod of which they walked. The simplest tools in the world would suffice and little skill was required to build a shelter from squares of sod. It made windbreak, protection against rain and snow, and a shelter from the sun. Within, there would be the simple furniture brought from better homes in the east, rag rugs, pieced quilts and a few treasures that were readily portable. The prairie housewife could not concern herself so much with the appearance of her home, so long as she had a room over her head, she was more than satisfied.

### Pioneers Made New Gardens

Not a small part of the home-making activities of the prairie pioneer was the making of a garden that first year. More often than not, a small packet of seeds, common vegetables and some of the more treasured varieties of flowers was tucked carefully away among the belongs bought from the old home in the east. When spring came and the ground was broken, much of it for the first time,

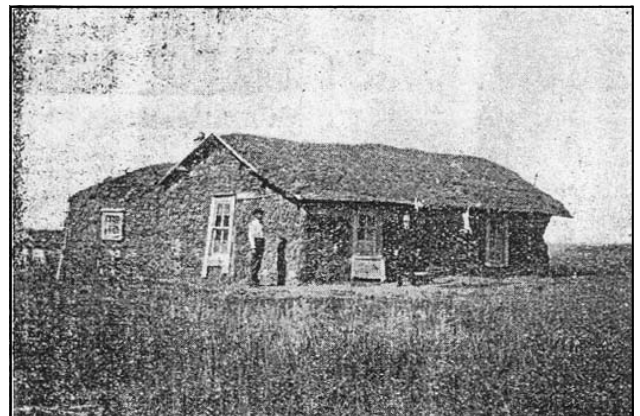
the pioneer homemaker tried to make her garden. She planted her seeds in high faith, often to find conditions unfavorable and her "start" lost. Then it was the kindness of a neighbor could be depended upon. Friends would exchange a few seeds of this variety for a few of another and so whole communities got a "start" of the old fashioned petunias, sweet-scented or lemon verbena, starry white nicotina, four o'clock, and geranium.

Garden seeds were exchanged, too, and the first harvests of string beans, the first "new" potatoes were events in the early prairie years.

The sod house was the scene of just as much happiness, any pioneer will say, as any mansion, either then or now. And there was a spirit of progress engendered in those early homes that made for betterment just as much as any modern "better homes" movement of today. The pioneer families were, for the most part made up of progressive individuals who had come away from old established homes in order to find some new horizon, some stirring experience, something newer and brighter than the old home had to offer.

### Frame Buildings supercede Soddies

As the state began to grow, and the passing of the covered wagon over the prairie trails was more and more past history, frame houses began to supercede the early sod structures. Wood was hauled from the sawmills on the rivers



(Evolution Continued on page 8)

*(Evolution Continued from page 7)*

edges and house-raising were neighborhood events from which time could be reckoned. The new homes were small and crudely put together often, but they represented betterment, and another step in the long progress which the pioneers started when they left the east and set out in their covered wagons for the new lands of the middle west.

With the passing of the years, and the successes of the crops in the rich, virgin soil, low-roofed barns were raised, and red paint began to make its appearance. Lands were bounded with wire fencing and stout posts, roads were worn across the grass lands, and towns grew up where a store, a post office, and perhaps mill could be located.

More years meant more crops and a greater abundance of money. More money meant greater progress. The towns began to grow. Better houses appeared on the



*(Hammons Continued from page 2)*

One day, possibly not very long before the wedding day, Joe went to call on Nettie. He interred unannounced and what a sight met his eyes. There was Nettie and her sister surrounded with dress material and they were busily engaged in making Nettie's wedding dress. Both ladies told him it was bad luck for him to see them making the dress. He fully agrees with them now, for he says he has been taking her sass ever since. The eventful day at last arrived. Nettie was arrayed in her grey wedding dress made in the latest style with a very full skirt and tight waist. Joe was dressed up in a fine chinchilla suit for which he paid fifty dollars. They went to the parsonage and were quietly married at ten a.m. They were attended on by Mr. and Mrs. Lakin. That night the bride and groom went by train to Hartsburg, Ill., where they visited his sister Mrs. Brady.

The first year of their married life was spent in the town of Chestnut, where Joe worked. But farm life seemed more attractive to them and they moved to a farm about two miles from Chestnut. They lived there for three years. While living there, Lillian, their first child was born.

farms. The barns were taller, and wide-floored haylofts surmounted the stables. Cattle filled pens, and fattening hogs too as much attention as the fields.

Farm women learned the value of pin money earned through raising of chickens, and the selling of eggs, butter and cream. When a new rug was wanted for the "front room," the housewife could manage to purchase it out of her own earnings. There has been, from the first something progressive about the women which lived in the prairie farms.

Today, a drive through the Phelps County farming area is a revelation in better homes. There are fine farmhouses, built to accommodate large, prosperous families. There's shade well-tended barnyards. Stock is housed carefully, according to the principles laid down by the specialists from the state College of Agriculture. The women attend the meetings of the extension clubs, learning the newest ideas in home decoration and in the efficient management of household and garden matters.

The progress of the community will not stop with the fine farm homes of today. What will the next step would be hard to foretell, but the people of the prairie will not be content to stop, even with broad gravel highways, solid homes and progressive towns. Homes that have more to offer than ever before is the new ideal. And prairie foresight has always achieved its goal.

*(Hammons Continued on page 9)*



*(Hammons Continued from page 8)*

They moved from this farm to the town of Hartsburg, where they lived about a year and then again went back to the farm. They stayed on the farm until 1888 when they migrated west. By this time three other children, two sons and one daughter had come to cheer their home.

Joe went through in a boxcar with their worldly possessions and one child and Nettie followed later with the rest of the family. The destination of their journey was Yuma, Colorado.

Six months of misery for Joe, were spent here. He experienced some genuine homesickness in those six months that seemed like years. The trip back from Yuma was made in a covered wagon. It seemed that the horses could not travel fast enough for Joe, for he walked most of the way to the Nebraska line. He walked about a half-mile ahead of the horses and on reaching the Nebraska line, he took off his hat and shouted for joy.

The Colorado air seemed to give them all a good appetite because Nettie cooked up a big ham and baked a big supply of bread and they ran short of provisions before they reached Bartley, Nebraska. On reaching this place they visited for some time with her sister Ellen. Hitching the team to the old covered wagon, they again started out in search of a new home. They went from Bartley to Franklin, Nebraska to visit a cousin of Nettie's.

When they left Illinois, they brought a dog with them. He had followed them all the way. He had gone to Yuma and back to Bartley. On the way from Bartley to Franklin, they stopped at Naponee and eat dinner. When they had resumed their journey after dinner, they missed the dog for the first time. While at their cousins, they received word from the brother-in-law in Bartley, saying that the dog has come back there and the family believed it had gone all he way back to Yuma because it was so fatigued and foot-sore and it came from the west. Sometime later someone came to Atlanta, Nebraska to see a man and brought the dog along. He was visiting Atlanta friends at the time that Joe and his family was going from Franklin toward

Loomis, The dog saw the wagon coming down the road, recognized it immediately and ran to meet it. He stayed with them all the rest of his life. Joe, his family and the dog reached Loomis in the fall of 1888 and moved on a farm. While, there, two more children were added to their family group and one was taken away.

One night, quite an exciting event happened. A neighbor invited all his friends to a dance given at his home. Joe and his family went with a neighbor. They had a very enjoyable evening and started home with the neighbor driving, the women and children in the bottom of the wagon and Joe at the back. The wagon partly upset and the neighbor was thrown out. As he fell, he tried to throw the lines to Joe. They caught on the double trees. The team was running swiftly now and Joe was clambering over the women and children in an effort to get the lines. By the time he recovered the lines the team was home, and had run into a haystack.

In 1900, Joe and Nettie moved to a farm one mile west of Atlanta, Nebraska where they lived for thirteen years. From there they moved to Atlanta and lived there a year and a half. While living here, they made a trip back to Illinois and saw many of their old friends and relatives.

Lillian was the first child to be married and it was in her home, at Loomis, that the twenty-fifth wedding anniversary was observed and celebrated with a big dinner.

Big dinners have always played quite an important part in Joe's life--- and so have big lunches and breakfasts.

When Joe and Nettie again removed a farm north of Atlanta, Nettie's health forced them to move back to town where they have resided since.

Time and age have seen fit to withhold their greedy hand from these two loved people, and here is one person wishing them many happy returns on this day on this their Golden Wedding Day.



**A. L. PETERSON'S FREE HAND PEN WORK**  
**From Holdrege Citizen**  
**February 23, 1967**

LOST ART --- Here is an example of free-hand pen work which was common in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Perhaps not "common," but there were many expert penmen in those days who could turn such designs. Such experts with a shading pen are non-existent today their work seems almost unbelievable to the generation, some of them have a hard time even writing legibly. This decorative work was " a flourishing design free off-hand" by Clerk of the District Court A. L. Peterson of Holdrege and was dated 1906. It was loaned to the Citizen by Carl A. Erickson, Rt. 1. Mr. Erickson said it was the property of J. E. Olson who was the father of Mrs. Erickson.

.....  
Holdrege Area Genealogy Club  
PO Box 164  
Holdrege, NE 68949