

Phelps Helps



Volume 13, Issue 4

Winter 2005

Phelps Helps
is a quarterly newsletter
published by the
Holdrege Area
Genealogy Club
in Phelps County
Nebraska.

Meetings are held at the
Nebraska Prairie
Museum
on the first Monday of the
month at 2:00 PM.

The public is welcome!

Visit us on the Web!
Phelps Helps Web Page via
<http://users.atcjet.net/p/psdesigns>



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Holdrege Area Genealogy Club Receives Two Grants

We are pleased to announce that our organization has received two grants. The first one was a \$100 matching grant for Becton Dickinson. John Bowley donated \$100 for our new computer and requested we apply for a matching grant from BD. We were accepted and received a check in November.

The second grant application applied for was from the Phelps County Foundation for a \$1500 grant to buy area newspapers on microfilm. The grant is a partnership grant where two thirds of the grant would be paid by our club and the foundation would pay for a third of the grant. We were notified that our request for purchasing these microfilmed newspapers had been approved.

This was our first time to apply for grants. We wish to thank John Bowley and Patti Simpson for their encouragement to apply for these grants.

Keep Warm Pedaling Bicycle with Luggage

Holdrege Progress Newspaper—5 January, 1942

Officers didn't know his name but a 48 year old cyclist spent the night in the city bull pen last night.

He arrived in Holdrege late yesterday evening and commenced an immediate search for a warm place to sleep, which ended in the city bull pen.

On his way from Hollywood to Michigan, the cyclist didn't mind the cold as he took off on his way east this morning when the temperature stood at 14 degrees below zero. He had already forgotten how many days he had been traveling and apparently all he could remember that it was fairly warm when he left California.

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New Books On Our Shelf

From Jack Frear

- Kearney County, Nebraska Atlas
- Franklin County, Atlas

From Dick and Marjorie Dvay

- Atlas of Furnas County in Nebraska 1980
- Atlas of Furnas County Nebraska 1964
- Platte Book of Harlan County Nebraska
- Nebraska Place Names by Lillian L. Fitzpatrick

- Landmarks of the West, a Guide to Historic Sites by Kent Ruth
- Who's Where in Your Genealogical Records, a filing and "finding" system by J. R. Goble

From Harry and Evelyn Dahlsted

- A Survey of American Church Records

From Dale and Lillian Samuelson

- Transactions and Reports of the Nebraska State Historical Society Vol. III & IV

Methodist Church Comes to Holdrege Written in the Holdrege Citizen, October 9, 1933

Methodism, as so many religious groups, antedates the founding of Holdrege in the vicinity by seven years. Circuit riders visited the community when it was a part of the Bloomington Circuit. The first Methodist sermon, preached in Holdrege in an old unfinished store building, the minister was using the work bench for the pulpit. That was in 1884. Rev. John E. Carmichael organized the first class of 25 members, only one of whom resides in Holdrege and served a term of five months.

In the summer of 1884, a church was built 28xby 50, the first to be established in Holdrege and located at the present site of Nelson Apartments. By the close of 1888 the congregation had purchased a lot and in the spring of 1889 they had erected the first church.

Later the edifice was remodeled and the south wing added. Other improvements have been added. On December of 1916, the preliminary campaign was launched for funds for a new church. By May 1, 1917, the contributions had reached and quota and the contract for the building was let. On April 28, 1918, a dedicatory service was conducted at the present location w at Sixth and West Ave. In 1925 the frame church was built and the present brick building erected at a cost of \$25,000.

Among the contributors of the first building fund was William Thaw, father of Harry K Thaw and to the second Dwight Morrow, father-in-law to Charles Lindberg.

During 46 years, 12 ministers had been installed as pastors, and during the same period 709 people have united as members. The church has an active membership of 182, which the Rev. Harry W. Hansen now serving the third year of is pastorate.

On the twenty-five pastors that have served Holdrege Methodist church, Rev. George S. Morrell occupied the pulpit the longest period, being appointed in 1926, and serving until 1932. Rev. Earl F. Bowen, the present pastor, was appointed to succeed Rev. Morrel and is the twenty-fifth in line.

Harlan County, Nebraska

**DIRECTORY FROM THE
ORLEANS PROGRESS,
Friday June 28, 1895**

Doings of a wide-a-wake
Town Gathered by a
wide-a-wake Paper for
Wide-a-wake Readers

CHURCHES

F. M CHURCH - Preaching every Sunday in
Lutheran Church at 11:00 o'clock p.m.

M. E. CHURCH - Preaching every Sabbath
at 11 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. General Class
meeting the first Sabbath of every month
at close of morning services. General
prayer meeting on Wednesday evening of
each week at 8:00 o'clock.

Children meeting every Saturday after-
noon at 3:00 o'clock. Probationers'
meeting second Tuesday evening each
month at 8:00 o'clock. The public is
cordially invited to all our services.
Benj. S. J Haywood, Pastor

M. E. SABBATH SCHOOL - Union Sabbath
School meets at the M. E. church every
Sabbath morning at 10:00 o'clock.

UNION SABBATH SCHOOL - Union Sabbath
School meets at the Presbyterian Church
each Sabbath morning at 10 o'clock.
Mrs. T. H. Manning, Supt.

CATHOLIC CHURCH - Preaching each alter-
nate Sunday at 9:30 a.m. Benediction
each Sunday of preaching at 3:30 p.m.
Rev. L. J. Harrington, pastor.

SOCIETIES

Y.P.S.C.E - The Endeavor Society meets
at the Presbyterian Church each Sabbath
afternoon at 7:00. Meda Jennings, Pres.

J.C.E. - The Junior Endeavor meets at
the Presbyterian Church every Sabbath
afternoon at 3:00. Lyman Hayard, Leader.

EPWORTH LEAGUE - Devotional meeting
every Sunday evening at 7:00 o'clock at
the M. E. Church. Business meeting

NOTE: The Phelps Helps Newsletter
highlights Harlan County in this
section. With many of our sub-
scribers 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.

first Tuesday evening each
month. Cabinet meeting on
call of president. All
young people are cordially
invited. H. R. Esterbrook,
Pres., Gertrude Bayard, Sec.

A.F & A.M. - Melrose Lodge
No. 60 meets every Saturday
evening on or before full
moon at Masonic Hall. Visit-
ing Brethren are cordially invited. W.
H. Banwell, W. M., John A. Randall,
Sec.

MELROSE CHAPTER NO. 79 - Eastern Star
meets every Tuesday evening on or before
full moon at Masonic Hall.

K.O.T.M. - Orleans Tent No. 48 meets the
first and third Thursday evening of each
month at Lorimer's Hall. Visiting
Knights cordially welcomed. N. E. Conk-
lin, R. K., J. Ellis, Com.

M.W.A. - Orleans Camp No. 755 meets
every first and third Thursday evening
of each month at Lorimer's Hall. A.
Wicken. V.C., J. M. Coulter, Clerk.

G.A.R. - Whitehead Post No 114, depart-
ment of Nebraska, meets on the Saturday
evening after the full moon, each month,
visiting comrades cordially invited. G.
W. Coon, Ajt, Stephen A. Morgan, P.C.

SONS OF VETERANS - McBrien Camp No. 54,
meets the first and third Monday eve-
nings of each month at Lorimer's hall.
August Sasse, Jr., C. C., Arthur Main,
1st. Sarg.

W.R.C. -Whitehead Relief Corps No. 4, of
Orleans, Nebraska, meets the first Sat-
urday in each month at 2 p.m. Mrs. Lun-
cina Banwell, Pres. Mrs. Julia F. Main,
Sec.

New Members & Their Queries

Dianne C. Bunning
97075 N. Bank Rogue River
Gold Beach, OR 97444

My Grandfather George Dwight Butler, a pharmacist was born in Auburn, July 7, 1887, to George Henry Butler and Emma Richards Medlyn Butler. He went to North-Western University College of Pharmacy if you can provide additional information.

(Chicago) 1908-1910. His Nebraska Pharmacy Registration No. is 4041. He was living in Funk in 1915 when he married my Grandmother Vera Matilda Josephine Granlund My Dad George Donald Butler was born in Wymore March 12, 1916. Please contact me

Return to Phelps After Gold Quest and Taking a Homestead

Holdrege Citizen—October 9, 1933

W. E. Hymer Tells of Dangers From Claim Jumpers When Homesteading in Lake Township

When W. E. Hymer was a boy, he was very interested in hearing his father John B. Hymer relate incidents of his and his brothers overland trip from Rushville, Illinois to California in 1850, with two covered wagons drawn by eight oxen each, accompanied by ninety-eight other ox teams.

How they ferried their wagons across the Mississippi river and swam their oxen at Keokuk, Iowa, where John B. Hymer was towed across the river by a brindle ox by hanging onto the tail of the ox and the same occurred on the Missouri river a Council Hill two miles above the present city of Council Bluffs. This procedure was followed on all streams enroute.

At the time Nebraska was a part of Louisiana Purchase from France by Jefferson and was inhabited by Indian Tribes and now white settlers in what is now

the state of Nebraska, west of the Missouri river.

Their route had led them up the south side of the Platte River and when about 15 miles west of Fort Kearny, which was north of the present location of Holdrege.

Their caravan, about two miles long, was stopped by an Indian chief and ten bucks who rushed out on horseback from the willows on the bank of the Platte River and pointed to a cloud of dust some miles south. One of the bucks who spoke very poor English, made the captain of the caravan to understand that the dust, which was one-half in width, was caused by a herd of buffalo running to the Platte River and would not stop for the caravan to pass as the buffalo in front would be crowded onto the ox teams and trample them down.

The captain of the caravan rushed back, stopped half the teams and rushed the rest ahead and by the time the buffalo reached them,

there was a space a half mile between the two divisions through which the buffalo that consisted of about seventy-five thousand passed.

The calves following the herd were pretty well fagged out and one ran into a bunch of willows, John B. Hymer caught it. His brother Edison rushed with a rope and he tied it around the calf's neck. John B. Hymer crowded another calf into the willows and caught it also.

His brother-in-law, Michael Staniford, brought a roper and they led the two young buffalo calves and presented them to Ephriam Jackson, (1 male and 1 female) who was driving a team of two cows, he took them through to California and about two years later returned overland with his cow team and two buffalo, which was the nucleus of his buffalo herd, to his home in Missouri.

John B. Hymer had always understood that this part of Louisiana Purchase was

(Gold Continued on page 5)

Kinner Sells Building to Brown Brothers

Holdrege Progress Newspaper—January 9, 1942

A business enterprise which celebrated its early birth in the day when Holdrege was wearing "Swaddling Garments" will begin a new existence, the business of some fifty years ago retiring and being replaced by an altogether new line.

Willis Kinner consummated a deal the first of the week whereby he sells to the Brown Brothers Implement Company, dealers in John Deere farm implements, the Elk-horn property located at Fourth Avenue and Arthur Street.

Kinner was one of the earliest Sale and Livery barn owners in Holdrege, being employed as a young man in the earlier enterprises of that nature soon after graduating from school.

His first connection was with the Old "Chidester" barn which was located on Grant Street directly east of the present Auditorium. Later he purchased the Elk-horn property and moved it from this location on East Avenue to the present location on Fourth and Arthur. It was a

large wooden structure in those days and early in 1911 was destroyed by fire and immediately replaced by the present brick building.

Among the early owners of this property were Ed Valeen, A. J. Danielson and Nelson and Moline. It was from the latter partnership that Mr. Kinner acquired the property.

In 1907, Mr. Kinner sold an interest in the business to E. J. Smith, father of Mrs. Chauncy Mitchell, and this partnership continued until 1912 when Mr. Kinner purchased the interest of his partner.

It is the intention of the new owners to occupy the building after it is properly remodeled to suit their business—and to conduct their growing implement line at this location. They are now housed in a large barn which was formerly a dray barn located in the rear of the Long property on the corner of Fourth and Arthur.

(Gold Continued from page 4)

a part of the Great American Desert and that it was two sandy for the production of vegetation of any kind, but instead he found a very deep alluvial soil especially in what is now Phelps County.

These stories told to W. E. Hymer, son of John B. Hymer interested him to the extent that he always wished to go to Nebraska and when he became twenty-four years of age, he and his wife and two children Otis, age two and Katie, age one and one-half months immigrated to Nebraska where he took a homestead one mile north of the south line and three miles west of the east line Phelps county.

After filing on the homestead at the U. S. Land office at the village of Bloomington, he started with his family for his homestead and when within eight miles of the same he learned that the bodies of Mrs. Haroldson and four children were found buried in their night cloths on Mr. Haroldson's Homestead which was occupied by the name of Richards who claimed that he had bought the mule team, cow, hogs, wheat and implements and had taken the family to Kansas.

Mr. Haroldson's body was never found. They also found the body of one of the neighbors, a Mr. Anderson, a bachelor from whom, Richards said he had bought four hundred bush-

els of wheat, team and homestead.

While the men were looking for Anderson, Richards unhitched one of Anderson's horses from the wagon and skipped out, leaving the outfit at Bloomington. He was later found in April in Ohio, brought back and convicted and hung in Minden.

Because of other depredations on the frontier, he passed a mental resolution to protect his family at all cost. There were no peace officers in those days. When he arrived at his homestead, which had a dugout 9 feet by 11 feet, made by a cowboy, he went two miles to a lake to get

(Gold Continued on page 8)

Memorable Holdrege Events Recalled by Tannis Johnson

From the Holdrege Citizen Souvenir Historical Edition June 1958

Tannis Johnson was son of Frank Johnson who owned a large department store on 4th and West Avenue in Holdrege, Nebraska for many years.

My early recollection of pioneer life in Holdrege extends back to 1900. My father moved his store from the original building which he built in 1884, known later as the John Staudt building (present location the Schrock building) to the one around the present First National Bank. Our family lived over the store. There were three children, my two sisters and myself.

I can vividly recall the Saturday night baths in the wooden washtub for which mother heated water over the kitchen range, a far cry from the modern bathroom and conveniences which we have today. Living over the stove, Mother had her problems, their trading. Without warning Father would bring up a customer with his entire family for dinner. How she managed to have food ready is still a mystery to me.

I did not get any reins from my father until my return from the University. My attendance in college was only three semesters. Father was afraid that with two and one-half more years of college influence I would not care to come back to the store in Holdrege. He incorporated the business, giving me \$1500 in stock, just

the amount that my additional years in school would cost him. Think of it! In those days \$40 per month was sufficient - \$3.50 per week for board, \$8 per month for room with very low tuition. What a contrast to today's cost of college education.

I think the readers of the Citizen would prefer to hear about my antics in Holdrege during the latter years. Born out of necessity to keep Holdrege from being smothered by Kearney and Hastings, the Brown-Ekberg Co., then our leading competition, joined with me in selling the Holdrege citizens the creation of a liberal fund for town promotions. Sixteen thousand dollars was subscribed. Every business and profession was allocated a percentage. The F. Johnson Co. subscribed 20 per cent: the Brown-Ekberg Co., 10 percent; others 5 percent; and on down to 1 percent of the total. When a project was considered a meeting was called a vote was taken and each subscriber knew through his established percentage what the cost would be to him.

Think of offering a thousand dollar prize for the largest pumpkin raised during the year. I often think of Bob Perry's remark. "If they want to put in 20 percent, I'll put mine down the drain too."

Today I reflect upon those happy days in Holdrege.

Now I realize that my time and energies were devoted to many foolish projects-exciting, refreshing, yet nothing that added to anything substantial. How many remember the "Diving Horse"? Just to add to a bit of the color we offered \$100 to any local girl that would ride the horse from the high platform to the canvas pool of water. A Miss Perry from Atlanta entered. Without experience it was a dangerous feat. Frankly we would have much preferred not to take the risk, but we could not withdraw the offer. Due to jealousy on the part of the professional girl rider, the girth was partially cut. Consequently Miss Perry was separated from the horse and hit the water ahead of it. A tragedy might have occurred but it was good showmanship, but ending tragedy.

Then there were the wonderful automobile and style shows where \$2000 were spent on decorations aloe-Sousa's band concerts, three or four times - John McCormick who played to a \$7000 house yet for awhile refused to go on because he thought I was bally-hooting his concert with Desdune's band which led the China Trade Boosters from the train to the auditorium or the concert Madam Alda who was ordered out of the Evans Hotel by Lee Luke because she complained her room was not ready for her at

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(Johnson Continued from page 6)

8:30 in the morning when she arrived on number 2.

The recalling of these instances is for the purpose of showing that the life of the promoter has many exiting moments. Today, the happy memories consist chiefly in the loyalty of the businessmen in Holdrege who stay with me, no matter how "brainstormed" was the idea.

And now the fiftieth anniversary celebration. With the old surge of the Holdrege Spirit (Did you know in 1885 it was called the Magic City?) spontaneity was ripe in all ages and groups. The Sod Busters were organized to provide the fun. Another group was secretly organized. "The "Night Riders" whose mission was to harass outstanding members of the Sod Busters. For three weeks previous to the celebration, kidnappings took place. Doc Harding was the first one to be taken from his home at night to Fleischmann's Grove, tied to a tree and at his feet were scattered Sod Buster Buttons. Even I did not escape - hooded, large men took me from my home - a gunny sack over my head, securely tied I was loaded in a car and

dumped on a street in Bertrand. Royal Hanson, the sheriff, had to call a halt to the activities for fear someone would state a real kidnapping.

The major parade sponsored by the celebration was emblematic of the early history of the county. Without my knowledge, or any of the other man in town, the women in Holdrege organized their own parade. A takeoff of the men, it was as good as the official parade and without cost.

Then on the last Saturday Mrs. D. J. Fink, who came from a pioneer family, organized a school parade. Every School District in the county was represented by floats. Early students, then much older, rode as passengers. To many, and to me, this was the greatest achievement of the entire celebration for it was contributed by the folks living in their school district. I only wish Mrs. Fink could read this tribute: may in that other world she can.

In the early part of the Tri-county movement I was very active, associated with George Kinsley of Minden and C. W. McConaughy of Holdrege. Unfortunately for me I attended

a senate committee hearing in Washington which was arranged by Senator George W. Norris. The meeting was publicized in the Omaha papers and my name was included as one of those attending from Nebraska. So many land owners were so violently opposed that rumors were spread that I was to be met at the train by a mob.

Father had just passed away in the previous December. The following morning my sensible old mother called me to her home and reminded me that I was responsible for the business and asked me to retire from the Tri-County activities, due to the intense feeling against irrigation. I do not suppose that many feel the same way now for this project that has meant so much to Phelps County and they do not realize today the price the early promoters had to pay so that the present generation could enjoy their benefits.

I know that others contributed money and their time in the projects which Holdrege sponsored. We all worked together unspurtingly to keep Holdrege in the sun and, at the same time, had a lot of fun doing it.

(Gold Continued from page 5)

water. Antelope were plentiful around the dugout daily. Frequently coyotes got scent of the cooking and paid them a visit.

He had to go thirty miles to Kearney to get coal and passed but two houses on the way. It was eight miles east to Keene post office on stage route to Denver. Mail came once a week. Two soldiers with rifles rode on the stage for protection against the Indians.

A man by the name of Shipp, wife and children came from Indiana drawing a two wheel cart, filed on a homestead about two miles east of the present Sacramento.

Five families lived in a dugout about 40 by 50 feet near the present town of Oxford. The cows and horses were kept on the side of the room and the five families lived on the other side of the room.

A one armed man by the name of Shilling had a dugout about thirty feet square, three and four miles west and south of present Holdrege. He put down a well about one hundred and twenty-five feet deep in the center of the room.

Fred Johnson located on the homestead and two and one-half miles south of the present Sacramento, on which he had a well bored one hundred and twenty-five feet deep. When the wind was from the north, the air would rush down the well at a terrific rate and but little water could be had from the

well, when the wind was from the south and air would rush up and blow a plank off of the top of the curbing and the water would be about eight feet deep in the well.

Wild horses and buffalo were plentiful about 100 miles west. People hauled wheat from Kansas one hundred and fifty miles to Kearney, the nearest railroad and sold it for fifty cents a bushel.

In 1879 the land subject to homestead had been practically all settled. Oliver and Jerry Sands built a general store and W. E. Hymer built a hardware and farm implement store on the opposite side of the street, both on government land. A post office established named by W. E. Hymer called Sacramento. He chose this name because of his father made a trip to Sacramento, California, to the gold diggings.

This was located two miles south of the present Sacramento, Phelps County, Nebraska. The settlers were summoned and erected a sod school house nearby, also Sands built a sod house nearby, also Sands built a sod house and Hymer a frame house. Hymer also erected a sod warehouse 80 feet by 70 feet, with a door wide enough to drive a team into.

In 1880 Hymer drew a line from Juniata about 40 miles east and north of Sacramento to Oxford about twenty-five miles south and west and wrote the general manager of the Burlington Railroad at Omaha describing the contour and the rich soil in

the county and stated that they could shorten their route to Denver by more than thirty miles (which they recently reached with their road) by building a road from Juniata to Oxford.

While Hymer was in Kearney a day or so later, Mr. Bicknell, the agent said to him, Mr. Holdrege of Omaha, general manager of the railroad was here and asked me if I knew him. I told him I do very well. A week later Hymer received a letter from Mr. Holdrege requesting an interview.

Mr. Hymer went to Omaha and conferred with him and a short time later the surveyors ran a line from Juniata to Oxford which was later changed. When Mr. Holdrege received the engineer's reports, he again wrote Hymer stating if he would be in Omaha soon he would like to have him drop in at his office.

At this interview he told Hymer that it was against their rules to state in advance their plans to build a line for the reason that another railroad might beat them to it, but that he felt under obligations to Hymer and stated that they were going to from Juniata to Oxford, but that Hymer should say nothing to anyone in regard to the matter.

Hymer asked him if he would advise him to buy real estate along the proposed line. He asked what price it could be had for. When Hymer named the price he said buy all you can get at twice the figure.

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(Gold Continued from page 8)

When Hymer returned home he bought one tract of 960 acres and one of 16 acres and the day the engineers arrived to stake out a town, he asked Captain R. C. Phillips, secretary of the town site company what the name of the city should be.

"Magic City" would be good" said Phillips but Hymer had another name in mind. He wanted to honor the general manager of the railroad which was responsible for the town's existence.

That was how Holdrege was named

Phelps County has Bumper Apple Crop from Holdrege Newspaper, September 1909

That Phelps County can raise apples with the best of them was well demonstrated yesterday when two wagon loads of red beauties were bought in by two different farmers living in the northeastern part of the county.

William Hucka drove in early with about 70 bushels of apples grown on his farm and equal to the quality and flavor of any

apples ever shipped in here. A little later D. C. Blackburn arrived with a big load of the same luscious fruit grown on the Popular Land Fruit and Vegetable Farm, located 12 miles north of Funk, of which he is manager. Mr. Blackburn assures us that there will be an abundance of home-grown winter apples of the very finest quality this year. Each of these two gentlemen will

have many hundred bushels of apples to sell.

Here in town even, the apple trees have borne better than in many years and many owners of a few trees have had apples to sell. It is estimated that several hundred bushels of apples were grown in the city just on the trees located in the back yards.

Preserve Your Family History

This information from Furnas County Genealogy Society newsletter, October 2005

The Allen County Public Library would like to remind you of a long-standing service. For many decades individuals who have not had a desire to officially publish their Genealogy exchange for the privilege of allowing them to make one copy for their collection, they provide the compiler of the work with one complementary, bound copy for his or her collection, they provide addition to returning the original master copy.

It is a great way to make sure your work is preserved and available for future generations of researchers. In addition., having a copy of their library ensures that your work is secure from disaster that might , heaven forbid, befall your personal library.

If you are interested in taking advantage of this service, just mail your unbound "Master Copy" to Steve Myers, Assistant Manager, Historical Genealogical Department, P. O. Box 2270, Fr. Wayne, IN 46801-2270. Make a note that simply reads, "Photocopy Exchange Program."

2006 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE IN JANUARY

Holdrege Area Genealogy dues will be due January 1, 2006.

A big thank you to our members for supporting us through the years. We encourage our members to send in Queries on their Nebraska relatives.

We have been successful in connecting researchers who have the same relatives.

Maybe it can happen to you.

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