

# Phelps Helps



Volume 15, Issue 4

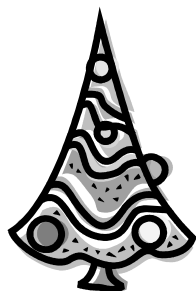
Winter 2007

Meetings 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/psdesigns>



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## Ken Mosman Donates \$ 10,000 to the Genealogy Library

We are very pleased to announce that Ken Mosman has donated \$10,000 for expansion of the Don O. Lindgren Library at Nebraska Prairie Museum. The estimated cost of the addition is \$25,000.

We have developed an

excellent genealogical library and have assisted many genealogists in their search of their families. Our shelves are getting crowded so added shelving will certainly be a big benefit. At times this summer, we have had 12 people working or researching at the

same time. It is very rewarding to see all this activity in the library.

Anyone who wishes to donate to this project can send their donations to Holdrege Area Genealogy Club, Box 164, Holdrege, Nebraska 68949.

## Memorials - May through November 2007

**IMO Faith Achterburg**  
Sandra Slater  
Virginia Lindstrom

**IMO Gwen Benton**  
Deana Fulmer (daughter)  
Lourie Johnson  
Sandra Slater

**IMO Lillian Gustafson**  
Sandra Slater  
Lourie Johnson

**IMO Les Shaffer**  
Margaret Stutheit  
Lourie Johnson

**IMO Lorena Smith**  
Sandra Slater

We have lost some long time members of the Holdrege Area Genealogy Club.

**Gwen Benton** had been a member of our club from almost the beginning. She was a delight to be around and always had a great smile. We will miss her.

**Lorena Smith** has not been able to come to meeting for quite a while. She has always been so supportive of our efforts in the library and many

times she has called to let us know how great our Phelps Helps newsletter was. She was a person of many talents and great story writer.

**Faith Achterburg** was a member for several years along with her husband Al. She was a teacher here in the grade school for several years.

**Lillian Gustafson** was a member of our club for several years. She was a very pleasant kind person.

# Sam T. Schrock Recalls Boyhood in County When Family Lived In Dugout

Holdrege Daily Citizen 1958

Sam T. Schrock is a democrat and German ancestry yet has lived comfortably for 89 years in Phelps County with is preponderance of Swedes and Republicans.

He came from Missouri via an immigrant car with his widowed mother, Magdalena Schick Schrock and two newly married sisters, Mrs. Ed King and Mrs. Will Unzicker. The Schrock sisters had married Nebraska boys with accounted for the family's migration west. Sam was a boy of 13 at the time.

The family, Mrs. Schrock and her three boys, lived in the town of Holdrege several months before taking residence on a farm 5 miles north. Sam remembers vividly the board walks in the village, later to be replaced by hauled in rock, before the coming of cement.

On the farm Sam developed the love and know-how of farming which has marked his more than 80 years. Life was rugged in the dugout which the family occupied for 10 years and breaking the ground was hard work, but Mrs. Schrock was never afraid of hard work and the boys followed her lead. The first year they broke 15 acres of

sod.

Water was precious on the prairie and when the wind blew, the family filled every available tub and barrel. All containers were of wood.

In the day of Sam's youth, school was held two months in the spring and two months in the fall and since spring and fall were busy seasons for farm work, most of the boys received little education. Sam was one of these but he tried to make good use of the schooling he had. To this day he recites with ease a 48-part roundelay naming the 48 states, their capitals and locations, whether on a lake or creek or inland situation. According to the poem, Lincoln is located "on the Salt-Creek"

The Schrock boys went to a sod schoolhouse in District 45, 7 miles north of Holdrege, bringing their own chairs and sitting around a long wooden table in the center of the room.

Sam recalls their first winter in the sod house as a desperate one. The mother had no money with which to buy fuel and with her brothers and their two little white mules he gathered 15 wagon box loads of buffalo

chips. With the addition of corn stalks, they passed the winter in reasonable comfort.

In 1900 Sam rented a half section three miles north of Holdrege and "batched" there two years. In 1903 he married Miss Helen Sauer. The couple celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1953 and now have rounded out 55 years together.

In 1911 the Schrocks bought a "sand hills pasture" farm of 1,000 acres 12 miles north and 3 east of Holdrege but have retained their farming interests of raising wheat, corn, hogs and cattle. Their home is located at 503 Grant.

Sam was interested in a picture of early day threshers appearing in Section 8 of the Citizen's Jubilee edition. "I've run threshing machines just like that," he said. "The grain had to be measured in bushel baskets. That was before the days of belts and oscillators."

During the 30's which were the downfall of many farmers, Sam bought a grinder and mixed his own feed using a scoop of corn, a scoop of cobs and a bundle atlas sorgo. By this means his

*(Schrock Continued on page 4)*

# Harlan County, Nebraska

History of Alma, NE (1906)

In 1875 Frank Shaffer moved a little house from his homestead, near by, which was the first building in the town after it's resurrection. Mr. Shaffer being a member of Alma Town

Site Co. This building was used for county purposes, until John Guyer erected his store in 1877, after which this building was used as a court house until the building of a large court house in 1880.

The second building in Alma was Guyer's log hotel, built in 1875, on block 16, original town. The next building was a little residence of William Downs. For years, there was but little improvement made in the town. The only buildings in the spring of 1879 were three very small houses, a store, the small one story building, with one little room, used as a court house, and a sod blacksmith shop. At this time, the town site consisted of forty acres. About his time, however, attention was being directed to this point, and as the railroad was in prospect, the town began to increase in size. On the 11 day of April 1879, a newspaper was established by Borden & Livingston and called the Alma Standard. The paper did more than anything else to attract attention to Alma as a favorable point for the upbuilding of a town.

Soon an addition of forty acres was made to the town and then forty more. Parties began to buy lots, and about the first of May building commenced. There was now one grand rush for Alma, and buildings were erected in all parts of the town.

While the town of Alma had an existence prior to

**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.

1879, it was principally on paper, and there was not much here to indicate to the passerby that Alma had any real existence. Early in the spring of that year immigration turned its course toward the Republican

valley and Alma began new life anew, and made quite a growth. New business interests sprang up, roads were laid out and streams bridged so that farmers could get to town without going many miles out of their way. The new comers were of enterprising sort, and the older citizens did not lack in courage, so the elements combined moved everything forward. (More of this history on the Alma story in the next issue.)

## **BAINBRIDGE ITEMS - 24 September 1885** **Alma Weekly Tribune**

The fine weather we are having now is splendid on our corn and will ripen it fast. The small grain in the stack is getting dry and in good shape to thresh.

The interest in our Sunday School is holding out well. People, young and old, are attending faithfully every Sunday afternoon and taking active interest in it.

With sorrow we announce the death of little Luella, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Willis, aged one year and eight months. On Wednesday of last week, Mr. Willis and his mother-in-law started for Thomas County, Kansas, leaving his wife and the children here until he could return. On Thursday night after he had gone the little girl took sick. The mother did what she could until daylight to

*(Harlan County Continued on page 5)*

(Schrock Continued from page 2)

cattle feeding program continued to show a profit.

Sam has won the distinction of being the first to use a truck for hauling hogs into Holdrege. This was in 1916 and the truck used has been put in running order and will appear in Holdrege's Jubilee parade.

Other firsts in which Sam has participated through the years was the building of one of the first service stations, the Quick Service, and the first locker plant for Holdrege. Another innovation was the use of parolees from the penitentiary for farm labor. Entered into at a request of a parole board director who was a personal friend, the project was viewed by Sam with misgivings, but the results were successful. One such la-

borer stayed with him for five years.

Sam has many business interests. One is his ownership of the local sale barn which he bought after he had reached his 80th year, indicating that his enthusiasm for enterprise has not lessened with the years.

The basement of the Same Schrock building at the corner of 4th and East Avenues was converted in 1949 into a lounging room for retired farmers and business men, equipped for cards, checkers, dominoes and "Shooting the breeze." Sam spends some time there when he isn't out at the farm which remains his first love.

For the past three months Sam has been on the tractor planting and tending 400 of acres of corn. He has 175 of wheat and

the 200 head of cattle he fed through the winter are being shipped to the market.

Sam drives his own car, reads without glasses and his teeth are his own. He is remarkable virile for his year and looks younger. He is former president of the Hastings Production Credit Association. His love of music has been passed on to two succeeding generations. He and Mrs. Schrock have 11 grandchildren.

Children are Sammy T. Schrock Jr., Mrs. Forest Morrison of Loomis, Mrs. Burton Larson of Axtell, Mrs. Charles Leff of Funk and Mrs. Harlan Hendricks of Holdrege. The first four named are actively engaged in farming.

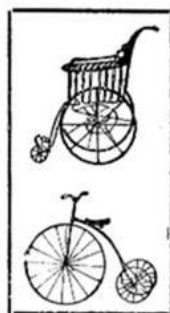
In January 1957, Charles Leff

(Schrock Continued on page 5)



More New China just arrived. More new and novel glassware, including some beautiful souvenirs engraved "Holdrege" on fancy glass, just the thing for gifts.

WOODEN TOYS.  
Our wooden toys have just arrived. We show the largest and best line in the city, including doll cabs and go-carts at 25c, 45c, 50c, 70c, 98c, 1.10 up to 2.00.



Children's chairs and hobby horses from \$1.15 up to \$3.90. Shoo-Flys, rockers and swinging chairs at 70c, 90c, 1.15, 1.40 and 1.80 each. These values can positively not be duplicated.

Have you seen our line of toys from 1c up to the finest. If you have not seen them you will make the mistake of a lifetime if you do not call and look them over before



making your selections. We positively show the largest line of dolls ever shown in Holdrege, our values are such as have never been attempted.

BOOKS.  
We have just received 300 books. The latest in all kinds of juvenile books in board and paper covers. 400 page books good quality binding and paper, at 48c, others from 1c to 98c each

Holdrege Daily Citizen - Marth Brother's Penny Store Ad dated 14 Dec 1900

## New Members

**Phillip T. Doe**  
7140 S. Depew  
Littleton, CO 80128

Researching the John Doe family of Phelps County, NE

**Joe Rhea**  
5316 San Simeon Ct.  
Pueblo, CO 81005

Researching James Rhea who was a lawyer in Phelps County, Nebraska

*(Schrock Continued from page 4)*

was named by the Holdrege Junior Chamber of Commerce as outstanding young farmer of the area. In recognition of his efficient irrigation operations.

In October 1957, Sammy T.

Schrock Jr. was honored as Phelps County's outstanding Conservation farmer for the year, at the state convention of soil conservation districts.

In February 1958, Harlan Hendricks has named by the Jaycees as the outstanding

young man of the county. Hendricks is area specialist for the Great Plains Conservation program and is attached to the area 6 office in Holdrege.

When the Schrock clan gets together, it's a pretty safe bet that they talk about farming.

*(Harlan Continued from page 3)*

ease the babe, and then sent for a doctor, but in spite of medical skill she died on Friday night about ten o'clock, being sick only about 24 hours. Mr. Willis was at once telegraphed too, but it was expected the telegram would get there about one day ahead of Mr. Willis hence he is not expected to return until Wednesday or Thursday of this week. The little one laid away in a metallic coffin to be kept until his return, when it will be taken to their old home in Iowa for burial by the side of deceased relatives. The bereaved friends have heartfelt sympathy of all the neighbors in their hour of affliction, for it is with sad experience that we know what it is to part with our little ones.

George Miller, our village



ALMA IN 1880.

blacksmith has traded his mule team to Mr. James Payne for 80 acres of land.

Andy Hastings started on Monday for Custer County taking his family with him.

Later:—Mr. Willis and Mrs. Charles Jones Willis' stepdaughter, returned from Kansas

Monday night and will start Tuesday night for Holdrege, where they will take the train for Iowa with the corpse.

# Phelps County, Nebraska History

By J.C. Mitchell - Holdrege Daily Citizen, April 4, 1947

On the last day of March, 1876, a party, led by Mr. Beiyon, consisting of about thirty men had an experience, which almost ended disastrously for them. After looking over a great deal of land in both Phelps and Kearny Counties, "the company went to Bloomington where the U. S. Land office was located and nearly all of the men filed on homesteads. Coming back by the way of Franklin, they encountered a blizzard, obliged to stay out in the country with a homesteader over night. In the morning the hungry visitors ate for breakfast all the provisions there host had in the house and he was obliged to go to town for more. At one o'clock the sky cleared and the party started for Kearney. Out on the prairie they were again caught in a storm, this one equally as severe as the one the day before. Beiyon drove by compass and was making progress in the right direction, but the wind was sharp and the snow wet and they were all quickly chilled through. The draws were full of slush and the team floundered and fell when they unexpectedly came to one of

them. The ravines could not be seen, as the whole country seemed to be level, because of the snow that filled the depressions. The prospect of having to spend the night on the open prairie in a storm did not cheer the hearts of the now nearly despairing men. A man named Anderson said, "We might as well stop right here; we cannot get anywhere. This is about as good a place as any to freeze to death." But the others did not think of giving up and pushed on. Soon after they came within sight of a sod house and thither they drove. The place belonged to a German and when asked if they could stay with him over night, he refused, saying that he was expecting four immigrant families from Kearney. But the land seekers would not take no for a reply. The following day the drive over the snow was continued.

Some experiences of Olaf Hedlund as an early settler may be worth while considering, as being typical of what was encountered by all who came to Phelps County while it was still "Wild Prairie." Mr. Hedlund took a homestead in the county

and moved on it with his family in 1876. "He had but few neighbors; a man named Sjogren and another named Hobb were the nearest; more distant were three Wilson brothers on Turkey Creek, to the south of him. When he scanned the prairie around him, there were only sod houses visible within the rim of the horizon.

Hedlund got his sod house ready in the fall and soon had the satisfaction of seeing these long, low structures gong up on the claims all around him. The neighbors were coming. He erected a smithy and did blacksmith work and this gave him so much to do that he hired a man to do the field work on his farm. A government official, who passed his smithy on the Kearney and Orleans mail route, saw the advantage of making the place a station. He named it "Blacksmith" ranch and that name it bore until the railroad came and made all of the overland trails and mail routes in this territory unnecessary. When travel ceased at Blacksmith Ranch, as a public

*(Phelps Continued on page 9)*

# Christmas At The Churches

Holdrege Citizen - December 27, 1901

Christmas services were held at all the English Churches Tuesday evening. When we visited the churches we found that at all four churches the Sunday School folks had made preparations to celebrate the occasion in a proper manner.

## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

At the Presbyterian Church we found the church handsomely decorated. At one end of the platform was a beautiful ever-green Christmas tree, handsomely decorated. At the other end of the platform was Santa Claus' house with its snow covered roof, while from the window steamed an inviting light seeming to say to the children there was good cheer inside. Besides the songs and a solo from Mrs. Wilkinson, there were recitations given by Pearl Moore, Callie Manatt, Harold Clary, Glennie Hall, Harry Burnett, Blanche Gallo-way, Houser Harvard, Florence Titus, Charles McConnaughy, Vivian Taylor, Verna Moore and Clifton Nelson. Frances Pope gave a song. At the close of the exercises the jingling of bells was heard at the door and soon Santa was heard in his house and later he appeared

dressed in his Artic suit made for the occasion. Santa was impersonated by Charles StClair and he made a fine appearance. The classes were then called up and presented with their Christmas treat. After the exercises an interesting event occurred that was a surprise to all but the generous donor F. Johnson called the church trustees together and presented them with the electric

light plant that had just been put in. When it was decided to put in the electric lights Mr. Johnson suggested as he had had dealing with the parties they were getting the material from, they had better let him do the purchasing. They did so and now the church has a valuable Christmas present. There are forty lights of sixteen candle power and now with their

*(Christmas Continued on page 8)*

**A Feast of Holiday Bargains**  
**Saturday, Dec. 14**  
 —AT OUR—  
**GIGANTIC GRAB SALE.**

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**ONLY 25 CENTS**  
**FOR EACH ARTICLE.**

**NOW IS THE TIME TO SECURE A NICE**  
**Christmas Present.**

You will find at the GRAB SALE nothing but useful arti-  
 cles, worth the price and many times more.

Fancy Carving sets and Shaving sets. Silver-plated Knives and Forks. Silver plated Trays and Call Bells. Nickel plated Coffee pots, Tea pots, etc. A Warranted Shotgun. Stevens and other Rifles. Golf Clubs, Golf Balls and Foot Balls. Fancy Razors and Shears.	Magic Lanterns and Mechanical Toys. Ebony and Silver Novelties. Statuary and Stationery. R. R. Trains and Hot Air Engines. Skates, Doll Cabs and Tools. Pearl handle Pocket knives. Mirrors, etc., etc. In all 2000 packages of great merit.
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**Remember Date, Saturday Dec. 14, Only.**  
**EVERYBODY COME.**

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**MAX UHLIG HARDWARE CO.**

Holdrege Daily Citizen -  
 Max Uhlig Hardware ad dated 13 Dec 1901

*(Christmas Continued from page 7)*

church edifice is lighted up it makes as handsome audience room as one could find anywhere. We understand the plant cost over \$100 which makes it a big Christmas present for one man to make to his church. No wonder the generous donor had a Merry Christmas because of his gift.

### **CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

At the Congregational Church the platform was changed into a parlor while on the walls were appropriate Christmas mottoes. In the back ground was a star with pretty festoon in green. It was a pretty scene. The unusual program consisted of songs by the choir, also one from the primary class and a solo by Mrs. A. A. Johnson, Mrs. Lottie Campbell and Susie Brown. Recitations were given by Miss Katie Barrum, Ward Einsel and a large number of the younger members of the Sunday school. Santa Clause in the person of Arthur Campbell made an appearance on the scene in a sleigh and was accompanied by Mrs. Santa generally known as Florence Brown. Santa was a jolly fellow and appeared to feel at

home while he made his speech and directed that the treat he had brought should be distributed to the children.

### **METHODIST CHURCH**

At the M. E. Church the old fashioned fire place was the attraction and an electric light from behind the picture of the Yule logs made a very attractive scene, while the old fashioned window covered with snow carried one back to the Christmas of boyhood days. They gave an interesting miscellaneous program. Those who had recitations were Ralph Wills, Margery Breech, Letha and Mamie Johnson, Arthur Goddard, Pearl Castile, Willie Rugg, Plena Johnson, Willie Norberg, May Stevens, Neal Plummer and

Frary Rhea, while Don Castile had a sermon on the bricks. Solos were given by Edith Parsons, Bertha Graham and Lulu Wills. At this came the distribution of treats to the classes.

### **BAPTIST CHURCH**

At the Baptist Church they had a Christmas tree. We expected to receive an account of the exercises, but failed to receive them.

### **SWEDISH MISSION CHURCH**

The Swedish Mission and Lutheran Sunday Schools had their Christmas exercises last evening.

### **WAMANDER**

#### **CHRISTMAS MENU**

**Holdrege Citizen  
December 21, 1903**

#### **Blue Points**

**Cream of Chestnuts, Bread Sticks  
Roast Goose with Baked Apples  
Escaloped Onions  
Glazed Sweet Potatoes  
Spiced Figs, Celery  
Fruit Salad, Cheese Wafers  
Plum Pudding, Hard Sauce  
Caramel Mousse, Cake  
Nuts, Fruit  
Black Coffee, Roquefort Cheese**



*(Phelps Continued from page 6)*

place and had served its purpose; it had been the post office and stopping place for countless wagon trains, freighters and individual wayfarers. Hedlund says that at one time thirty teams were fed and watered there.”

The names of Frank and Leander Hallgren, and Olof Hedlund remind us of the influence of the Swedish people in the settlement and development of Phelps County, for after the year 1876 the immigration into the county was largely Scandinavian and especially Swedish. After they began to come, the

country was settled fast. “When the homestead land was all gone the railroad land was taken, F. A. Beiyon and Leander Hallgren brought land seekers in great numbers and the plains soon became dotted with both sod and frame houses. From this time dates the real settlement of Phelps County.”

## New Books In The Library

### **Donated By Edna Slater**

Minden High School Reunion Books – 1977, 1982, 1992, 1997, 2002

2000 Mission Alive in the new Millennium – Holdrege United Methodist Church

2001 Sewing Seeds in the New Millennium – Holdrege United Methodist Church

2005 I am the Vine, You are the branches – Holdrege United

Methodist Church

Kearney County Nebraska  
1994 Atlas

### **Donated by Ada Hinson**

Nebraska Blue Book 1968

### **Donated by Sandra Slater**

2003 Holdrege City Directory

### **Donated by**

### **Rose Ann Messersmith**

Index to Hildreth Nebraska  
1886-1986

### **Donated by Agnes Erickson**

### **Johnson**

History of Bishop Hill Colony  
by George Swank

### **Donated by Lloyd and Wilma**

### **Peterson**

The Cornhusker of 1925

### **Given in memory of**

### **Gwen Benton**

Country School Legacy:  
Humanities on the  
Frontier

## Children's Home Book Is Progressing

A new publication about the "Home Kids" who resided at Christian Children's Home near Holdrege, Nebraska between 1889 and 1954 is progressing. Publication date is projected to be June of 2008. There will be over 1,100 children referenced in this publication. The information being used is being provided from many of the former residents of the Children's Home, their family and also from several public records. Any one who has information should contact Ken Mosman at [kfmscn@charter.net](mailto:kfmscn@charter.net) or write to Holdrege Area Genealogy Club.

Ken Mosman, who is writing

and publishing this 200 page hard bound book, will donate the books to Holdrege Area Genealogy Club. Our club will be donating the profit from this publication to the library expansion fund.

Prepublication price will be \$25 plus \$4 for postage and

handling. All "home kids" will pay a special low price of \$20 plus \$4 postage and handling.

Anyone wishing to purchase a book can send their check to Holdrege Area Genealogy Club, Box 164, Holdrege, NE 68949.

### **2008 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE IN JANUARY**

Holdrege Area Genealogy dues will be due January 1, 2008.

We wish to thank our members for supporting us through the years. We encourage you to send your Queries on your Nebraska relatives. We have been successful in connecting other researchers who are searching the same families.

Dues will remain **\$10** for the year and you will be receiving your newsletters in March, June, September and December. Send your dues to **Holdrege Area Genealogy Club, Box 164, Holdrege, NE 68949.**

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