

# Phelps Helps



Volume 15, Issue 3

Fall 2007

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

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## New Additions to the Library

### Donated by Warner Carlson

- Nebraska State College, Kearney, Nebraska 1957, 1858, 1959, 1960
- Loomis School year books, 1947, 1948, 1977, 1981, 1984, 1988,1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005

### Donated in Memory of Gwen Benton

- Genealogical Bulletin Jul.-Aug., Oct.-Nov. 1993, Nov.-Dec. 1995

- Koscisko County Indiana Newsletters and Miscellaneous Information
- The Report, Ohio Genealogical Society

### Donated by Joseph C. Rhea Jr.

- Ray - Rhea

### Donated from the Funk School

- Mustang – Funk 8th grade year books. Have all books between 1974 through 2007 except 1983-1984.

### EDITORS MESSAGE

The children at the Christian Children's Home came from all over Nebraska and several Midwest states. We wish to thank those of you who responded to our request for information on some of the "Home Kids" who were at the Orphan's Home in Holdrege Nebraska. Four of our members had ties to the Children's Home and have contacted Ken.

Ken Mosman who is writing a book about the Christian Children's Home has interviewed several family members. He has a listing of over 1,100 children who once resided there. Most of this information has been collected from newspaper articles and school and Federal Census records and public records on the internet.

Ken will give a program about this history to any organization that would be interested. You can write Ken at 2018 Arrowhead Drive, Holdrege, NE 68949 or email him at [kfmscn@charter.net](mailto:kfmscn@charter.net)

# Welcome New Members!!

**Norma Tolo** is researching the LOGAN family in Phelps County, Nebraska. You can contact Norma at:

Email: normagranttolo@aol.com  
 Her address May through October:  
 1753 Fairview Beach Road  
 Alexandria, MN 56308

Her address Nov through April:  
 11022 No. Indigo Drive #120  
 Fountain Hills, AZ 85268

[Norma Tolo] I am interested in contacting any descendents of

August and Charlotta Logan or any of their three sons John M., Ray F., or Harry A. Logan. Charlotta was my great-great Aunt. I think she was a sister to Augusta Carolina, my great grandmother. August's son was Gustav Johnson whose daughter Elsie Johnson Grant was my mother.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Caroline Keep Tomlinson**

13045 Triumph Dr.  
 Poway, CA 92064

I am wanting information on Carl Gust Freed and his wife Ruth Juanita \_\_\_\_\_. They had a daughter Pauline Valeria Freed born 20 Nov 1903 in Nebraska. Carl was a carpenter and resided in Holdrege for several years. Carl and Ruth Juanita were divorced sometime between 1908 and 1910. I am especially interested in finding Ruth Juanita's maiden name and their marriage and divorce papers.

## Home Coming Edition

Holdrege Progress, December 28, 1916

**GEORGE A. ARNOLD**

Atlanta, Iowa, December 16th To the Holdrege Progress: In compliance with your request for a few lines on the early settlement of Phelps County, will say that George W. Price, Father Magill, his sons, Wesley Frank and Samuel, Loring Phelps, Mrs. Hyatt, mother of May Hyatt W. Hammond, Silas Emil and Henry Emil and myself all took homesteads in Anderson Township in the fall of 1879. We erected the proverbial sod houses, in which some of us lived for fifteen years or more. At that time there was no railroad in the county, hence Kearney was our trading point and post office for several years.

Phelps County at that time was simply a large unbroken prairie country; hence nearly all roads ran diagonally from one place to another. It was here and at that time when we homesteaded, endured and experienced genuine pioneer life.

Yet no one complained, for in fact every one was calculating and expecting more or less hardships. But none could tell or anticipate just when or how these hardships would fall upon them. But I want to say right here, when they did come they were met and bravely borne without a whimper. The first hardship that fell upon us was the Prairie fire in December 1879, that came from the west and

reached from the Platte to the Republican River, and practically burned every thing before it that was not protected by fire guards. Another hardship was our fuel question, as we, or the most of us, were all too poor to buy coal, hence we depended, first on willow saplings; cut and hauled from the Platte river, second, prairie hay, corn stalks and buffalo chips. These hallow saplings made very poor fuel, and at times were difficult to get on account of deep snow on the islands where they grew.

The summer of 1880 was exceedingly dry, hence little grain of any kind was grown, and this dry

*(Edition Continued on page 3)*

# Harlan County, Nebraska

Written by Elizabeth Schlatz

Harlan County had several Indian scares during the early days, previous to 1870. What is now Harlan County was the natural home of countless buffalo. Here there were the best pastures and

wild grasses and many streams of clear running water. There was much game abundant including fur bearing animals. This area was only relinquished after a large number of the Indians, women, children and ponies were captured. The Indians committed some atrocious deeds. But we should remember that the Indians suffered injustices because they were afraid of losing their best hunting grounds.

During the winter of 1871-1872 the settlers had a very hard winter with cold weather and snow storms, Buffalo hunters were out in the storms and several froze to death. Some left the buffalo meat and went to what was Walker's Ranch.

One of the first deaths in the county was John McBride at Alma, Nebraska when he was shot and killed by soldiers during a drunken fight on July 4, 1871.

In the summer of 1871, Mrs. Gilbert Parish gave birth to the first white child in the county. The second white child was born to Mrs. Levi Schrack.

Supplies were hard to come by as the nearest train was

**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.

at Grand Island. Corn and hay was hauled in but in spite of this half the cattle died.

Sioux Indians lost their favorite hunting grounds after the U. S. surveyors were killed near the mouth of Sappa Creek. When

hearing of the slaughter of the surveyors, General Carr designated Buffalo Bill Cody as Chief of the Scouts and along with Major Frank North and his regiment of Pawnee Scouts put an end to the Indian troubles in the Republican Valley. He then followed them and completely annihilated them on the Platte River. During this time Buffalo Bill Cody broke his leg. He and his horse spent the winter in a cave south of Republican City. A settler and his wife provided him food and he was safe from the Indians.

Harlan County was named after Thomas Harlan. The placement of the county seat brought conflict to the area as the towns of Napoleon, Melrose, Alma and Republican City wanted to have the county seat in their community. In 1871, the district Judge decided by virtue of the first election that Alma became the County Seat.

In 1879 Alma continued to progress when the railroad came up through the Republican Valley. Progress of the area slowed when crops suffered from a drought.

*(Edition Continued from page 2)*

summer was followed by that notorious blizzard of 1880-1881. These blizzards commenced about Christmas and for ten straight weeks we had a blizzard every week lasting from two to three days, and they "were full grown and vigorous too". The snow got

so deep it was impossible to get anywhere, and when our flour and meal gave out, we had to resort to whole wheat and corn hominy for our food, and to our hay stacks for our fuel, and even this hay was to wet and the latter part of winter from the snow blowing into it, we could hardly burn it. The writer well remembers calling George

Price about the first of March and finding him sitting by the cook stove where he was placing hay in the oven to dry and then when fit to burn feed it to the stove through the end door, while Mrs. Price was cooking a meal on the top of the stove, and I heard no complaint either; only Mr. Price said---

*(Edition Continued on page 8)*

# The Samuel Shipp Family

Origin of this article is unknown

On May 8th 1878, Samuel Shipp traded part of his furniture for a four wheeled hand wagon. This was loaded with a few choice possessions and with his wife and baby started walking west to the "Land of Opportunity." They said goodbye to their home state of Pennsylvania and proceeded over the Allegheny Mountains, moving at the rate 8 miles per day. They slept in stables going through Ohio or vacant houses they found along the way, or in the tent Mrs. Shipp contrived to make out of their bedding materials.

On July 5th they reached Fort Wayne, Ind. The long trek had been telling on his wife and the care of the baby, so they stopped there for a short time, recovering from the sickness which Mrs. Shipp was complaining of.

Then on again...and through eastern Illinois they made 27 miles a day on good prairie roads. A man who befriended him in Forrest, Ill., gave him a horse (valued at \$100) which helped speed their travel. Without difficulties they reached Burlington, Iowa, but here his wife became ill again. The doctor who cared for his wife helped find a job for him in Henry County at Rome, Iowa. He began work August 22, but became poisoned someway and lost his eye sight so couldn't work. He rented a house and sent for his

wife from Burlington. Their first child died there on October 16, 1877.

On Feb., 13 1878, his wife gave birth to their third daughter. They decided to try and get to Nebraska again, but found their horse mired down in a swamp after hunting for him for three days, so this stopped their plans for traveling for awhile. He found work on the railroad and on June 18th, received a pass to Hastings, Nebraska where he joined a friend named Walker. He helped him get work at grading on the railroad. After working a month he took out papers on the SW 1/2 section 32, Township 6, Range 17 in Phelps County, Nebraska. This was south of the Oscar Post office.

He worked for Simon and Martin until September 1, 1878, and then brought his family to his claim in Phelps County. Since it was late to begin crops he returned instead to the railroad. He could get no pay so they made a dug out on their claim in Phelps County and spent the winter there. Early in the spring of 1879 he began work for another grading company, but again was cheated out of his pay. In March of 1879, he returned to the claim and plowed up about four acres of prairie. He built a 6X8 dwelling house, on the claim in 1878 but in October of 1878, it was burned out by the prairie fire.

Neighbors helped the Shipp's build a new sod house 14 by 20 and friends from the east sent them \$100, with which he put in 3 windows, two doors, a board floor and a shingle roof, and put down a well which cost him \$30. Later Mrs. Ship accepted a three months teaching job in a private home, receiving \$20 a month. This helped put the family back on their feet and gave them a good start with their prairie life at last.

It is unknown where the Shipp family went after they left Phelps County. They were still in Divide Township in 1880. The Census lists Samuel age 50, his wife Lydia J. age 24, daughter Mary J. E. age 6 and daughter Mary E. age 2. Lydia's father Henry Masaka, age 85 and his wife Mary E. age 42.

# Holdrege Business Roster of 1887 continued from previous issue...

*(This information came from the Souvenir Historical Edition in the Holdrege Daily Citizen in June of 1958)*

**Harry Stern** operated a large wholesale liquor business.

**J. F. Both**, contractor and builder constructed some of Holdrege's finest residences. He settled in the country near the Oscar post office in 1879 and moved to town in 1886.

**Stewart French** was another firm of contractors and builders.

*Holdrege had six hotels in 1887:*

**John Ormond** operated the Holdrege House on East Avenue, which later was known as the Selma Hotel. A native of South Wales, he came to Holdrege from Illinois. The Holdrege House had 20 rooms for guests.

**J. B. Johnson** was manager of the Arlington Hotel on Third and West Avenue;

**E. E. Hampton** was owner of operator of the Hampton House on Fifth and East Avenue.

**Charley Miller** managed the Western House near the depot.

**Mrs. N. L. Bissell** was proprietor of the Farmers House, coming here from IL.

**John O. Donnell**, who came to Holdrege from Trenton, was the owner and proprietor of the

Denver House.

*All hotels of those days were on the American plan and served meals.*

**Banta and Vanosdol** were owners of the livery, feed and stables and furnished "first class rigs to travelers to any part of the country."

**C. M. Sheldon** was a land dealer and broom corn buyer. He had purchased 2,560 acres of Phelps County land for which he paid \$2.50 to \$3.00 per acre. He moved his family here from Lincoln in 1885. Mrs. Sheldon was an accomplished artist and had summer classes of students.

**J. L. Smith** operated a confectionery and cigar store in conjunction with a restaurant. He came here from Woodburn, Iowa.

**J. A. Ruby** was the first man to open a livery, feed and sale stable in Phelps County. He built a barn at Sacramento in the 1870s and was induced to move to Holdrege when the new town was established. The Lincoln Land Company offered him a fine corner lot in Holdrege if he would move his business here from Sacramento. The 52x102 feet barn was built on the corner now occupied by the Zephyr Cafe. The firm prospered, selling over 300 horses in the first three years here.

**W. O. Smith** opened the Holdrege Book store in 1886. He dealt in

books along with artist materials, games, musical instruments, stationery, etc.

**N. J. Cheline** opened a farm implement business here in 1884. He came here from South Dakota and did a booming business from the beginning. His wares included the Olds wagon, the Cortland and Abbott Buggies the Esterly and Minneapolis self-binders, and Tiger and Standard mowers and rakes.

**C. Boehl and Son** came from Orleans to take over operation of the Empire Roller Mills, which had been running at full capacity ever since. Their wagon delivered flour to all parts of the city.

**J. E. Cooper**, early day furniture dealer, also dealt in real estate.

**Max Ulig**, proprietor of the most extensive hardware store in this part of the state, did a \$30,000 business during the year of 1886.

**D. C. D. Whitcomb** opened a windmill factory here in July of 1884. He was born in Vermont but came to Phelps County from Wisconsin. The Holdrege Machine Shop did an immense amount of work in the general jobbing business. Mr. Whitcomb settled on a farm in Industry Township before moving to Holdrege.

To be continued...

# Phelps County Backed Orphan's Home With Love

Written by Lorena Smith in Sept 1977 for the Holdrege Daily Citizen

About 60 years ago during this season of the year, a farmer's wife would hear five long rings from the telephone bells.

She hastened to dry the dish water from her hands, or pull the cooking kettle toward the back of the stove, and run excitedly to lift off the receiver from its hook on the wall telephone, and listen for the message.

Five long rings meant a "general alert" to any of the subscribers on the rural lines. Almost always it meant that help was needed somewhere.

"Six cars of coal came into Loomis this morning" the Central voice might say. "We need ten farmers, each with a team and a wagon to help deliver to the Orphan's Home"

The housewife would hang up the receiver and go to the back door and call her husband. Sometimes he may already be in the field with work of his own to be done, but there were those who readily gave up their own time to haul the coal to the home.

It was a heart-warming sight to see. Eight or ten teams and wagons followed closely, one behind the other, kicking up clouds of dust on the dirt roads leading to

the Orphan's Home four miles east, three miles north and a half a mile east from Loomis.

In late winter a similar procedure was followed. Often there were ten cars of ice on the Loomis tracks, shipped in from Curtis where it was cut from the lake, and farmers would bundle up against the cold and load their wagons to bring the ice to the storage place at the home. They were not always the same ten volunteers---turns were agreed to between them.

Nearly everyone in Phelps County personally knew one or two or a family of children who were being cared for in the home.

Some may have been the farmer's own children left motherless for one reason or another or the fatherless families which a mother could not adequately support.

Acceptance was not varied by age or denomination. Eight grades of schooling were offered on the home grounds.

The home was founded in 1888 when a bachelor pastor of the Free Mission Church in Phelps Center took in three needy children and enlisted help from his mother to care for them.

The church cooperated and helped

support his efforts with donations, and a year later incorporated as an organization to support orphans. By 1891 cows, hogs, chickens and 90 acres had been purchased and a manager engaged to care for the lot. The number of children had increased to 35. The corporation decided it would have to build a two story house specifically designed as an orphanage.

The decision was made and plans began to take shape just as depression years of 1894-1897 made its general appearance, the funds were slow in coming in.

The men with teams and wagons came to the rescue and someone from each township was selected to call on others in his township for donations. Farmers responded with whatever portion of their crops they were willing to spare and the children were fed and the home was built.

In 1922 a maximum of 75 children were cared for at one time during the year. Twenty-two were admitted and sixteen discharged. More room and modern conveniences were needed.

In 1923 the corporation decided to purchase the Burlington Experiment Farm about a mile

*(Orphan's Continued on page 7)*

*(Orphan's Continued from page 6)*

west of Holdrege. They paid \$102.40 per acre or \$32,000 for the entire piece of ground.

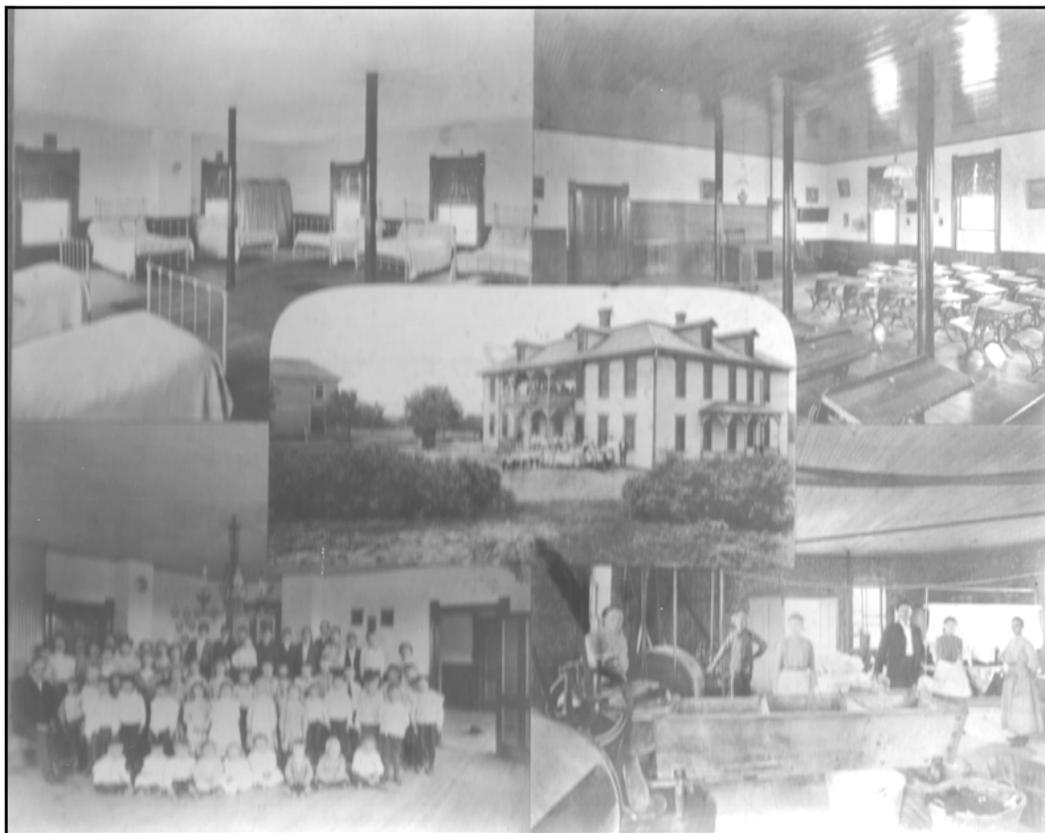
In August three of the local Board members resigned because they were opposed to the purchase. A year later the Evangelical Free Church of America took over full control of affairs and after a concentrated effort over many states, the home received \$100,000 in pledges, \$25,000 of which came from Phelps County alone.

In February of 1926 scarlet fever kept the children quarantined for months as one after another contracted the disease, but on June 21 they were able to move into their new home and it officially became known as the Christian Children's Home instead of the Christian Orphan's Home.

The old orphanage building at the Phelps Center location was sold for \$1,600 to Dave Peterson of Bertrand. A smaller building which had been used as a school house was brought by the Norberg Brothers of Funk for \$715.

Because of the changes in child welfare laws which resulted in children being placed in foster homes instead of an orphanage, the number of children steadily decreased until there were only 19.

At general conference of the Evangelical Free Church of America it was decided to remodel the building to make it useable for the elderly, and it has been operating in that capacity since 1955.



**ORPHAN'S HOME** – *In this picture can be seen the total number of children cared for at one time during the early 1900s; the Home which was built in 1892; one of the dormitories; and the school room. All that remains today is a marker in the far northeast corner of Laird Township. One of the county's first settlements, Phelps Center, was also located in this area.*

*(Edition Continued from page 3)*

George, "By Zounds," this has been a winter for the whiskers, hasn't it?" And we all agreed with him for it had been. George A. Arnold.

### **J. G. RUNDSTROM**

Emmett Idaho, December 15, 1916. To the Holdrege Progress: I am sure it will give me great pleasure to write a letter for your "home coming" paper at this Merry Christmas season. We shall enjoy reading the letters published from the other Holdrege people, and our memories will take us back when we lived among you.

Three years ago we left Nebraska and came west. After spending one year in Emmet in the sunny climate of southern California for the winter months, our destination for the most of the time was in Los Angeles. Here indeed we found the ideal climate where roses bloomed in our pathway and the sunshine was everywhere. From Los Angeles we went to San Francisco for a week's stay at the fair. Here every day was full of pleasure. The building and exhibits were wonderful, but we were keenly disappointed in not finding a Nebraska building. We had heard rather unsatisfactory comments about the fair in general, but our fears were groundless. Often time we ran across old friends which added to our pleasure.

After our sojourn in California we came to Emmet where we are now pleasantly and permanently located and I am interested in the furniture business with my son-in-law.

I shall indeed be glad to tell you of our little town of Emmett, the county seat of Gem County. It is situated in the heart of the Fayette valley and mountains and hills on every side and the river with its ever rapid course running through the northern part. The view we have of the mountains is magnificent and affords us change of scenery every hour of the day. The gorgeous coloring caused by the sun, especially at the evening is wonderful and we never tire of it. In the spring of the year when the little ranches in and around the mountains are dotted with new green it looks like paradise. We have stood on the porch and watched a blizzard sweep over the mountains when we were enjoying calm weather. We have a road leading over a foothill which enables us to get out of the valley and from the top of this hill is, I believe, the most beautiful bit of landscape I have ever seen. One can look over the entire valley and in the springtime when all the orchards are in bloom and the atmosphere is laden with perfume--irrigating ditches run through the rivulets.

The industries are fruit raising, grain raising, mining and now we have a cherished dream realized in

the establishing of the largest saw mill in the west in our town. The future of Emmett is secure. The surrounding country will supply enough lumber to keep the mill in continuous operation for 20 years. They say mill building alone will be 72 feet by 196 feet and the holdings of the company on which the mill was built comprise 700 acres. Another interesting industry is turkey raising. It is not uncommon to see 1,000 to 1,200 turkeys in a heard and the owner is called "turkey king" which name rightfully belongs to him.

Our climate is healthful in every respect. We have no wind and our winters are mild. Bracing mountain snow drifts lying among the forests on the mountains. Our summer heat is not intense and the night are cool.

But with all these pleasant surroundings we still think of our Nebraska friends and the thoughts that bring memories of these friends are cherished in our hearts. It is sweet to live in the memories of the bygone days and we send sincerest wishes for a Merry Christmas to all---

Cordially yours, J. G. Rungstrom

# The Fraser Story

From the Williamsburg United Methodist Church - Written by Linda Crandall

## 1885-1895

Andrew Fraser and Jane Stewart left their home in Scotland to come to America with their son John and daughters Jennie and Jessie in 1873. They lived for five years in Newark, New Jersey, where John worked as a master mechanic and met his bride-to-be, Eliza Cowan. Eliza had joined her older sister, Ann Cowan, in Newark also in 1873. According to accounts written by Ann's daughter, Annie Gilbert, Eliza and John were married April 6, 1878, and the following evening John left for Nebraska. His health had been poor and he thought working out-

doors farming might improve his physical condition. Seven months later, John sent for his family. He was in such splendid health, they hardly knew him. Annie continues her story.

Father Fraser and John purchased a team and covered wagon. With their purchase of \$150, they planned to migrate farther south and west. They headed for Beaver City, but when they got as far as Republican City, they met people fleeing east in all sorts of rigs and carriages----some were even on horseback---saying that the Cheyenne Indians were on the warpath. The family returned to

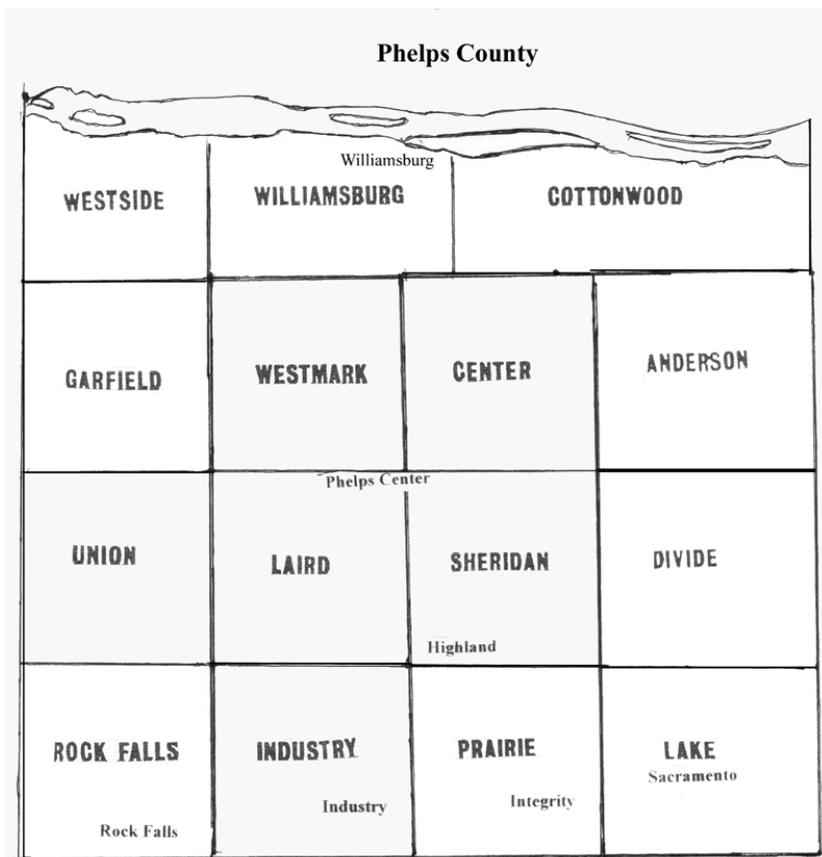
Kearney, where they were safe.

After a scouting expedition, the Frasers found a suitable location south of the Platte River, Some 25 miles from Kearney.

A claim purchased by Father Fraser for \$150 included 160 acres (25 acres "broke"), plows, cultivators and a harrow. Eliza's husband met a man by the name of Dan Lute who wanted to sell out, so John bought his claim relinquishments, which included, besides the land, a cook stove and other kitchen equipment for \$10. Shortly after the transaction took place, the men set about to make a soddie, already existing on the land, more livable. The soddie was 14 by 20 feet, made of sod, with a hard earthen floor.

Before the soddie was completely finished, John and Eliza were spending a rainy night in their new dwelling. Early in the evening the room began to leak, so the young couple made a bed under a heavy table which John had made. The roof supports were not strong enough to support the damp sod. As the sod absorbed more and more moisture, the roof gave way. Since the young couple had made their beds under the table, they were uninjured. John dug the way out for his wife and baby.

*(Fraser Continued on page 10)*



*(Fraser Continued from page 9)*

Though it was raining extremely hard, the little family started to walk to Father Fraser's house for shelter. They found three draws or creek beds completely flooded, so John swam with his wife and child on his back.

Andrew Fraser was born in Wisham, Scotland, November 15th, 1830 and died March 11, 1921 at the age of 91. May Marshall told me stories of how she used to walk to his house when she was a young girl and see the cabinets and furniture he was making. His wife Jane died August 15, 1891. Their daughter Jessie married John Grieve and lived in Kearney until she died in 1930. They had nine children.

John and Eliza had five children: Jane, who married Henry Schellhase; Eliza, John Andrew, Margaret and Willie. Eliza (Lizzie) married Clarence Larson, who was a son of Swedish pioneers Eric and Emily Larson, about whom the book 'Homestay' was written. The author, Edla Courley, was Clarence's sister. Clarence

and Lizzie had one daughter Luzetta. She married Earl Pushby and they had three children: Pamela, Sharon of Petrozzi, California and Doug, who lives in Lincoln. Eric, Emily, Lizzie and Clarence were all members of the Williamsburg Church. John Andrew married Hilda Lungren of Kearney. He was a cement contractor and was killed in a truck-train accident at the Ave. F. crossing in Kearney in 1952. Margaret (Maggie) married Ebbe Sear and lived near Kenesaw. They had one son Harris Dean. William and his wife Millie lived in California and had Willis, Maurice, Arnot, Lucille and Stanley. John and Eliza lived in Williamsburg for 17 years. He was postmaster before moving to Kearney in 1895 to work in the cotton mill. They celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary April 7, 1928 at the Club House Cafeteria on West Lincoln Way in Kearney. Eliza died August 12, 1930, and John on November 6, 1938.

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Holdrege Area Genealogy Club  
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