

Phelps Helps



Volume 12, Issue 1

Spring 2003

**Meetings held at the
Phelps County
Historical Museum on the
first Monday of the
month at 2:00 PM.**

The public is welcome!

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Early Days of Holdrege Happenings by Lois Barr

Nov. 27, 1967 Holdrege Daily Citizen

"My father, (County Judge) L. C. Barr, retired because of my mother's need for a mild climate and they went to California to visit friends and relatives and do some sight-seeing. He died on the train at Rock Springs, Wyoming on the return trip. He is buried at Prairie Home Cemetery.

The cemetery was made possible by E. D. Einsel, early day Holdrege Banker, Strangely enough, Mr. Einsel's burial was the first interment in the cemetery. A slender Stone shaft. marks the grave.

However, there was a tiny grave in the vicinity before there was a cemetery in Holdrege. At that time my father was postmaster of Highland post office at our homestead north of town. A neighbor's child died in 1879. The little coffin was made in our home, the tiny boards being softened in a tin wash boiler of boiling water, so they could be shaped. My mother padded and lined the little coffin with some white material she had.

My father, always an elder in the church and a superintendent of our Sunday school, conducted the burial service; said the words of consolation and the "dust to dust" biblical passages. Father and mother sang and father played hymns on the Story and Clark organ. No minister was available.

Our family, the children, searched the prairie across the road from our house for some wild flowers for the first little one grave on the prairie.

I have warm memories of those early days. We were a collection of Swedes, Norwegians, Germans and English, but I cannot recall any divisiveness, we seemed to blend in good spirit --- each appreciating the freedoms of the new land.

After coming to California, I visited Mrs. T. M. Hopwood (wife of the Holdrege Nugget editor) in her home in Sierra Madre. She told me wondrous stories and historical facts of those early days.



Library Corner

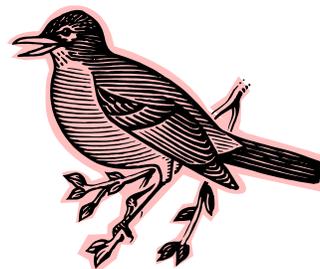
Many of you have seen several changes at the Nebraska Prairie Museum. This includes an addition to the Don O. Lindgren Library. Please excuse our mess but things will be better in the future.

We very much appreciate the museum board voting to expand the library, as we have become very crowded and are running out of shelf space. Events of our county and the families that reside here continue to MAKE HISTORY. It is so important that this information does not get lost for lack of room.

Holdrege Area Genealogy Club donated \$500 for the expansion of the library and member Virginia Lindstrom has do-

nated \$200 for a much needed four drawer file. Holdrege Area Genealogy Club has also purchased a \$1500 microfilm file. The microfilms that have been purchased have been stored in boxes so the file will be a much safer environment.

Thanks to all that help in the Library. There is always work to be done.



Clarence, Phelps County, Nebraska

This Information was from the Holdrege Daily Citizen Souvenir Historical Edition June 1958 One of our early post offices in Phelps County was Clarence. Robert T. Erickson of Funk found some old legal paper and notes, which were, datelined "Clarence, Phelps County, Nebraska."

According to Mr. Erickson, the Clarence post office was located at a point one mile north and one and on-half miles east of the present village of Funk, in Divide township. Mr. Erickson's father, Peter Erickson, homesteaded land a mile and half south east of Clarence, and that was his post office address in the early '80s

One of the papers was a homestead deed from the United States of America, signed by Grover Cleveland and another a timber claim deed signed by President Benjamin Harrison. The deeds were filed at the Bloomington land office. To be issued a timber claim deed the homesteader agreed to plant at least 10 acres of trees, "to encourage the growth of timber on the western prairie."

One of the legal papers was an agreement between the N. & C. (Nebraska and Colorado) railway and Mr. Erickson, whereby the railway was to pay \$100 for a right-of-way across the Erickson land.

There were several notes datelined Clarence. In amounts ranging from \$20 to \$90, mostly the farm machinery. One note for \$36 was a payment for a filing on government land, and was dated Nov. 1, 1882.

Another Phelps County post office was Dodge, also located in Divide Township on the Phelps-Kearney county line. Dodge was a stopover on the stage line from Kearney to settlements along the Republican River southwest of here.



Harlan County, Nebraska

Alma Weekly Tribune - The Storm at Oxford - July 3, 1884

This place was visited by a terrible wind and hailstorm, accompanied by a rain bordering on a waterspout, last Monday evening.

Out houses were blown in all directions, buildings lifted from their foundation, window panes and plate glass broken, and the frame work on the new hotel blown down. But the most serious part of it was the blowing of a flat car off the switch, on the main track, and driving it east at a rapid speed until it collided with the construction train, coming in from the work.

Four flat cars were ahead of the engine on which were several of the laborers, six of whom were on the front car when they collided. When they collided, the car running wild, slid upon top of the front car and knocked part of the men

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.

off, and caught two between the cars, crushing one to such an extent that he died next morning at 4 a.m.

One had his lower jaw broken and arms and legs somewhat bruised. But is getting along nicely at this writing. One had a severe gash on the right temple and

other slight scalps. Taking everything into consideration it was a small accident to what it might have been.

A. Arnsberger's stable was blown down and lodged against his house breaking his buggy. S. S. Dow has a new building and wind-mill on his farm east of town blown down. Both were demolished. Loss \$300.

Everybody was considerable frightened and a great many were in their cellars.



Harlan County News

Alma Weekly Tribune - 5 March 1885 - DROWN

On last Friday evening, Mrs. Thomas Whitmarsh and her babe were drowned in Crow creek, near their home about 10 miles south of Republican City. Her husband had been in Iowa on business and on last Friday she came to Republican City with a team and buggy to meet him. When she arrived at the City, she found that her husband had gone home with a neighbor, who happened to be in town. She started home with her babe and on crossing Crow creek, which was very high, the team and buggy were washed down stream and the buggy turned over and Mrs. Whitmarsh and the babe were both drowned. The teams also perished. The body of Mrs. Whitmarsh has been recovered but that of the babe is in stream.

BRIDGES GONE AND DAMAGES DONE GENERALLY

For two to three days prior to Tuesday the Republican River came up very rapidly, immense ice gorges were formed at many points along the river. Tuesday night two bents of the Alma Bridge went out before a floating mass of ice. One span that was cabled to the bank floated ashore near the crossing and is in good shape. The south span was carried down the stream about a half-mile where it floated out of the bank and remains in pretty good shape. During the same night the bridge across the Republican near the mill south of Orleans went out, as did the dam at the mill. At this writing, we have not learned of the condition of the affairs at Republican City, but is doubtful whether or not a bridge will be left anywhere on the river. The damages done already amounts to several thousand dollars.

New Members

1. Kim Heier, 312 Cedar, P. O. Box 128, Grainfield, KS
2. Denis J. Sutton, N3798 Primrose Lane, Wautoma, WI 54982
3. Iner Kongsvold, Bandygatan 63, 722 40 VÄSTERÅS
Sweden—Email inger.kongsvold@swipnet.se



The Life of James H. Carroll

As told by James H. Carroll

I was born seven miles west of Manitowoc, Wisconsin, on February 12, 1860. My parents were Richard and Mary (Clark) Carroll, who lived on a twenty-five acre farm, and who both came from Ireland. They were the parents of twelve children, seven boys and five girls. One girl died when she was about one year old. The other 4 children lived until the youngest was seventeen years of age. The next death in the family was brother Michael who died at Holdrege, Nebraska in the fall of 1885. I was the second oldest of the seven boys.

My brother Hugh and I started to work out for neighbors when I was ten. My brother Hugh was two years older. We continued to work out in the summer until I was twenty. During the winter we both went to Michigan and worked in a lumber camp a cross cut saw. In March 1880, we came to Orleans, Nebraska and rented a farm of Curt Chandler's, which was 320 acres. We put out a big crop. He furnished everything but the feed for horses. We did the work. We stayed on the farm and batched until June 20. On that date the seed hadn't sprouted, so we decided it was of no use to stay longer. We loaded up the things and turned it over to Mr. Chandler and told him that we were done. If there was any crop that year, he could have it all.

The next day brother Hugh started west on foot hoping he could find work of

some kind, but did not find any until he reached Denver. There he got a job.

I stayed at Orleans a few days, then one morning I started north. I walked to Kearney and slept in a boxcar that night. The next day I went all over the town, but could not find any job. Someone told me to go west and I might get a job on a cattle ranch or in a hay field. So I started up the Union Pacific tracks. I tried to get something to do to earn a few dollars, but no luck. I kept on going until I came to a gang working on the R.R. tracks. I asked the boss if he could give me some work as I was out of money and hungry. He said he had a full crew, but if I would take two buckets and go a quarter of a mile to the river and bring back water to fill a tub, he would give me a meal. I did that, then went to the cook car and there was a dandy meal waiting for me. Plenty of ham and everything to go with it, but the smell of that made me sick and I could not eat any of it. If I had told him of my condition, he might have given me a lunch to take with me, but I was too bashful to ask.

So I went on but did not find work until I got to Sidney, Nebraska. There I met a man from Falls City, who had a contract with the government surveying land. He wanted one more man to fill his crew paying \$25.00 per month. I told him I

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would be pleased to take the job. He said his outfit was driving out from Falls City, Nebraska, so we had to wait a few days before starting work. I tried to get some work during those days but no luck. I was quite hungry, as I had not had anything to eat for two days. I asked a lady for a handout, and she gave me a lunch, which I was very glad to get. That evening the outfit came and in a short time the sheet-iron stove was set up and a good meal was prepared which was very much appreciated by all of us. We went to bed well satisfied. The next morning we had a good breakfast and started north for Camp Clark, which is known as Scotts Bluff. On that trip from Sidney to Camp Clark (40 miles) we did not see a person. Our work started on the north side of the Platte River. My job was making the half mile and mile marks. Each half mile I would dig two holes, two feet long, one foot wide, and one foot deep, on a line with the compass. Each mile I would dig four holes, same as the other, and throw dirt in the center. We were supposed to make twenty-four miles each day. We would start out in the morning with a rifle, a belt of cartridges, a spade, a canteen of water, and twenty-four stakes two feet long strapped on my back. Our outfit would leave for a new place to camp and try to stop as close as they could to where our days work ended. They would take along a ten-gallon keg of water, but sometimes would fail to find water at the new location. We would come to camp tired, dry and hungry. The cook would tell us he could not get water in the new well and we would have to get along with the water we had. With no water to drink, we would be so dry we could hardly talk and when we ate supper we had to get along with just one cup of coffee. We would sit around a short time and then go to bed. One man would have to stand guard until midnight keeping watch for Indians. At midnight another

man would relieve him. It was not a pleasant job walking around that tent at night and hear coyotes howling all around you and everyone else sleeping. In the morning we would get breakfast and start off for another day's work. This job lasted for about three months.

Then we came back east by team. I stopped at Orleans. A short time later the Burlington R.R started to grade at Indianola. I got a job driving a team on the grade. I stayed with that job until the grading was done. Then I came back to the end of the track and got a job on the Iron Car stringing out the rails. Six men to the rail would carry one end out, two men staying at the other end to place it in the proper place and six men at the other side doing the same thing. We would string out about 3 ½ miles each day. I stayed on that job until the track was completed, connecting Chicago and Denver. I then came back to Orleans. That was the fall of 1882. I stayed at Orleans a short time but there was nothing doing, so I went out again on foot for Kearney and got a job carrying the sod for a brick layer. I stayed there a few months, but it got too cold for brickwork so I came back to Orleans.

The next spring I worked on a farm. That fall Jack Manning and I got a broom corn scraper and worked with that a short time when I got my left hand badly hurt. The scars still show today. My sister, Mrs. Mary Phelps and family came out from Illinois and I stayed with them until my hand got well. Then Mr. Phelps and I started to cut wood on the creek. That winter Mr. Phelps got a homestead twenty miles north of Orleans. He and I went up to the homestead and built a dug out. When it was completed, he moved his family to it. I stayed with them that winter and most of the summer.

That fall the Burlington built a track through Phelps County and the town of

(Carroll Continued on page 6)

Queries

Queries below from Sara Firehammer, 17108 Mayfair Ct., Granger, IN 46530-7488

Would like to share information with anyone researching these Phelps and Harlan County, NE families: SKOOG, BERGSTROM, McNIEL, LENEY, POWELL, LINDSTROM, MAGNUSSON, AND HAINEY.

Looking for descendants of John August Johnson 1834 Sweden - 1915 NE). Married first? son Carl Alfred Johnson. Married 2nd 1880 NE, Sophia ABRAHAM; dau. Adla. Adla's half brother was Emil NELSON, Associated

Surnames: BORG, McNIEL, LENEY.

Do you have a query you'd like printed?

Send it to Phelps Helps, PO Box 164, Holdrege, Nebraska.



(Carroll Continued from page 5)

Holdrege started. Brother Hugh and I went to Holdrege when the town was only a week old. That was the fall of 1883. We got work with the L. K. Morris Co. pilling lumber. That job lasted about a month for me. Mr. Morris told me the work was done, and I was out of a job. He made a deal with my brother Hugh by the month and Hugh stayed at that job for seven years. About that time, a man who owned a section of land just east of Holdrege wanted it fenced, so he hired me and another man to dig the post holes two and a half feet deep in frozen ground. He paid us 2 ½ cents a hole. We could only make about .80 cents a day working ten hours a day. We stayed with that until the fence was finished.

The man then offered me \$400.00 a year to work for him hauling and feeding the cattle. I took the job and stayed the full year.

It was then that H.O. Barber, a grain man, offered me a dollar a day to work for him. I took the job. My first work was at Atlanta in the elevator. I was there six weeks then went to Bertrand for a month, then to Loomis to help build an elevator. When that job was

done, I came back to Holdrege. Mr. Barber said to me, "Jim, if you will agree to do all the work in the elevator here, dump the wagons, and load the cars, I will give you \$45.00 per month." Up to that time, he had one man at \$30.00 per month. I told him I thought I could do it, so I was hired. Some days I dumped 65 to 75 wagon loads of grain and loaded four to five cars. At the noon hour, if there were no wagons between the office and elevator, I would run a block to get my dinner and be back in 25 minutes.

I stayed on that job for about three years, then Mr. Barber got a site for two elevators, one at Wilcox, the other at Ragan. He sent me to Wilcox to help build the elevator. When that job was done, I was sent to Ragan to do the same kind of work. When that was done, Mr. Barber said to me, "Jim, I am going to have you manage this elevator. I believe you can do it O.K." I said, "I will do my best." I managed the elevator at Ragan for fifteen years.

My parents, with my younger brothers and sisters came from Wisconsin to Nebraska in the spring of 1888 and a bought a farm four miles south of Holdrege.

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Everything went fine until the spring of 1891. It was then that father and mother got sick, and on April 1st mother died at 9 P.M. Father died April 3rd at 10 P.M. They are buried in the Holdrege cemetery in the same grave. They lived to see a Catholic Church in Holdrege. When they came to Holdrege there was no Catholic Church or graveyard. My mother got busy and with help put on entertainment that was a success. It brought in about \$300.00 which was a good start for the church.

On June 25, 1891, I was married to Margaret Murphy by Rev. J.J. Loughran of Minden. To this union eight children were born five boys and three girls. One girl died at one year and six months, and a baby boy died a month old. They were both buried at Holdrege by side of my parents.

In 1907, we moved to Cambridge, Nebraska. I bought a home and farm. We had a good crop that year and I sold the farm at a profit of about \$1500.00. I then bought a 480-acre farm eight miles southeast of Cambridge and moved to it that spring, which was the starting of five years of dry weather. Some years I did not get half enough to pay the interest. I kept it for six years and got rid of it in the spring of 1913 at quite a loss.

That year we got good crops and land went up about \$6.00 per acre. That same farm sold that fall for about \$400.00 more than I got.

My neighbor, Mr. Amen, who was chairman of the board of the Farmers Elevator, asked me if I would take the management of the elevator, as their manager was going to quit. I told him yes, so I had a sale and we moved back to Cambridge.

About one year later, I was appointed postmaster. I held that position during

the Wilson administration, but when Harding was elected, I was let out.

I went back to the Farmers Elevator as manager and held that until 1929 when we moved to Lincoln. I bought an elevator at Palmyra, Nebraska. We had it about two years when I lost it by fire and most of my life savings. We stayed in Lincoln about nine years then moved back to Cambridge where we still live.

The deaths in the Carroll family: first was brother Michael who died at Holdrege in the fall of 1885. He is buried at Orleans. There was no Catholic Church at Holdrege at that time. Next were father and mother in April 1891. They are buried at Holdrege. Then brother Hugh who was killed in the railroad yards at Butte, Montana. Next was brother Richard, who died in McCook, Nebraska in the fall of 1893. A mistake by the doctor caused his death. Brother John was next; he died in Chicago in 1914. Brother Owen was killed by a falling tree at Orleans, August 1927. Sister Katherine Miller died in Chicago, April 14, 1928, and sister Mary Phelps died in Silvis, Illinois, July 15, 1941. Just four of our large family left. Sister Nellie Cheline of Buhl, Idaho, and sister Elizabeth Lambert of Los Angeles, California. Brother Thomas W. of Lincoln and myself.

I became ill May 01, 1942 and have not been well since. I was in the hospital here in Cambridge 25 days then the Doctor thought I should go to Omaha for an operation for bladder trouble. I was there 44 days and still was not in shape for the operation. They told me to go home for six weeks and then come back. I went back September 22. My last trip to the hospital was of no benefit to me. I stayed there two weeks and they told me I was not in shape for an operation. So I came home October 6, 1943.

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The Year 1902

This ought to boggle your mind, I know it did mine! The year is 1902.

One hundred years ago - what a difference a century makes! Here are some of the U.S. statistics for 1902:

- The average life expectancy in the U.S. was 47 years.
- Only 14 Percent of the homes in the U.S. had a bathtub.
- Only 8 percent of the homes had a telephone.
- A three-minute call from Denver to New York City cost eleven dollars.
- There were only 8,000 cars in the U.S., and only 144 miles of paved roads.
- The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.
- Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa, and Tennessee were each more heavily populated than California. With a mere 1.4 million Residents, California was only the 21st- most populous state in the Union. The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower.
- The average wage in the U.S. was 22 cents an hour.
- The average U.S. worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year.
- Sugar cost four cents a pound. Eggs were fourteen cents a dozen. Coffee cost fifteen cents a pound.
- Most women only washed their hair once a month, and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.
- Canada passed a law prohibiting poor people from entering the country for any reason.
- The five leading causes of death in the U.S. were:
 1. Pneumonia and influenza
 2. Tuberculosis
 3. Diarrhea
 4. Heart disease
 5. Stroke
- The American flag had 45 stars. Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Hawaii, and Alaska hadn't been admitted to the Union yet.
- The population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was 30.
- Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and iced tea hadn't been invented.
- There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day.
- One in ten U.S. adults couldn't read or write. Only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated high school.
- Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at corner drugstores. According to one pharmacist, "Heroin Clears the complexion, gives buoyancy to the mind, regulates the stomach and the bowels, and is, in fact, a perfect guardian of health."
- 18 percent of households in the U.S. had at least one full-time servant or domestic.
- There were only about 230 reported murders in the entire U.S.

Just think what it will be like in another 100 years. It boggles the mind!



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On August 15, 1943, our corn was just at least 75%. We had a fair wheat crop. Prices on corn were 75 cents, wheat \$1.25. There was no rain the last 15 days. The weather was very hot and clear: 95 to 103 in the shade. There were no hot winds. How different it is now compared to what it was when I was a boy! The man at the head of our government did not do anything for the for the boys then, root hog or die, but thanks to the man at the head of our government today (FDR), he decided that there should be something done to give those boys something to do to stop this sight of seeing boys riding on freight trains by the hundreds, not knowing or caring where they were going. Just going to put in the time. But now our man at the C.C.C., V.P.A., Old Age Pensions, assisted the blind, etc., all to help the needy. Those boys and men bumming their rides on freight trains. They are all at work, thanks to our President. All credit is due him. \$15.00 per month was the best wages we got working on farms or in the lumber camps when I was a boy.

I have kept the best for the last: This refers to that wonderful day June 25, 1941, when Mrs. Carroll and myself celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary at the home of our daughter Mr. and Mrs. J. W. O'Connor. We were seated at that grand meal when what a pleasant sight for Mrs. Carroll and myself to look at that crowd and see all of our six children present. The first time they were all together including brother Thomas who was present 50 years ago when Mrs., Carroll and myself answered the solemn vows put to us by Father J.J. Loughran, when we both answered, "I Will", until death do us part.

Then came the surprise of all when our son Leon came over to his mother and in behalf of his twin

brother Linus handed Mrs. Carroll a round trip ticket for both of us to California. It was such a surprise to us both; nothing was said for a few moments then we both accepted the tickets with a thousand thanks. Also we received several gifts from our other children and friends. In all, it was a day that Mrs. Carroll and myself will always remember.

We left Cambridge on July 7 and spent two and a half months in California. Most of the time with my sister Elizabeth Lambert and family in Los Angeles. We went out sight seeing in all directions. To Long Beach, over to Old Mexico, up to Oakland and San Francisco. On our return home we visited my sister Nellie Cheline in Buhl, Idaho. Also our son Linus and family in Riverton, Wyoming and our son J.J. Carroll and family at Longmont, Colorado. Mary and Joe O'Connor met us at McCook, and brought us home September 19, 1941. So ended the most wonderful and enjoyable trip of our lives.

(Rosalie) wrote the original transcript in two parts in 1943 and 1944.

James H. Carroll passed away November 15, 1944 at Cambridge, Nebraska. Burial November 18, 1944 in Cambridge cemetery. Margaret Murphy Carroll passed away September 11, 1961, and buried in Cambridge, Nebraska.

Re-written on November 01, 2000 by William E. Cordero II

(Mr. William E. Cordero II would like to correspond with anyone who has information on the Carroll family. Please contact Bill Cordero, 22123 S. Figueroa St. #135 Carson, CA 90745. Email: bmlcordero@earthlink.net)





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